THE ARABIAN MISSION.

FIELD REPORT.

Number Four, October 1 to December 31, 1892.
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

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OCTOBER 1st to DECEMBER 31st, 1892.

It is with deep gratitude to God that we review the work of the past three months. The Mission at Busrah has passed through a period of determined opposition and open hostility on the part of the Turkish local government, and though at times we feared our work would be seriously hindered, or totally prohibited, yet we begin the new year with every branch of effort in operation and many new doors of opportunity opening. Again, while during the previous quarter we were severely tried by the loss of more than one-half of our staff of workers, this quarter has given us the joy not only of welcoming a new missionary from America on December 27th, but we have also been able to obtain two efficient native Christians, David and Naoom, as colporteurs. The immediate and visible results of our work may not be such as to awaken enthusiasm, and it may seem that we "have labored in vain and spent our strength for naught;" yet we know that "our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God," and that it is not for those who sow to be anxious about the harvest.

As a picture of the peculiar circumstances under which our work was conducted it is necessary to speak first of

GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION.

Although it is well known that the Ottoman Government has nowhere and never been friendly to Protestant missionaries, yet the opposition or permission of mission-work depends largely upon the attitude of the local governments. The new Wali, or Governor, who came into power shortly before Kamil's death, has from the outset, either of his own accord or because incited by leading learned Moslems, shown bitter hatred toward our work. The circumstances of Kamil's death, Jakoob's arrest,
and the increasing sales at our Bible depot attracted attention to our work. On November 6th the government censor, or official inspector of books, visited the Bible shop and declared that it was necessary to search the place for books of a character subversive of the religion and the government, which we were said to sell and give away. Nothing objectionable was found, however, as the sales of Scriptures are permitted by treaty-right, and all other books were stamped with the customary government permit at the Beyrout Press.

An attempt was then made to search our house on the same plea, and on our protest the matter was referred to the English Consul. A long, red-tape correspondence took place between the latter and the Acting Governor, and during the whole time soldiers were put on guard at our door to prevent any books being carried out, and also naturally hindering any Moslems from visiting us. The guard at the door was not only a personal annoyance, but put us in a disgraceful light before the people. About this time the Moslem young men receiving English instruction told us that they had been forbidden to attend English lessons. A few other Moslems also, who had been visiting us frequently, were called to account and accused of turning Christians. A petition was also circulated by leading Moslems, and is said to have been signed by some Jews and a Roman or Chaldee priest, asking our expulsion from Busrah; it is needless to say, without result.

The guard of soldiers remained until November 21st, when it was quietly removed. The pretext given for the attempted search was that we “gave lectures in and sold books and papers from the house as well as from the Bible shop.” Happily, we were able to deny these charges categorically, and the Consul’s protest, together with a telegram sent by us on his suggestion to our Ambassador at Constantinople, kept us and our personal books and papers from what would have been a seizure as well as a search. Since the guard was removed no special trouble has arisen, except that a box of Hebrew New Testaments, sent us for free distribution among the Jews by the Mildmay Mission, has been seized at the Serai, and although we have repeatedly represented that the books are Hebrew Scriptures and that their circulation is undoubtedly allowed, the books are still kept, under pre-
text that a sample copy has been sent to Constantinople for inspection and approval. All the above, together with what has happened to Jakoob Johann, of which we speak presently, show under what circumstances our work was carried on.

**EVANGELISTIC WORK AND TOURING.**

The Arabic Bible-class at our house in Busrah was continued every Sabbath morning as heretofore, although the attendance was small because of the guard at the door. English services were held seven times on five different steamers in Busrah harbor, and twenty-three calls made on board of steamers with books or papers, besides those to native boats in the harbor. Grants of papers, tracts and books were made to our mission in its work for seamen by Miss A. Weston, of Portsmouth, by the Religious Tract Society, and the Missions to Seamen of London, the American Seaman’s Friend Society, and the Board of Publication of the Reformed Church.

Although street preaching at Busrah would at present be unwise and detrimental to future work, yet there was ample opportunity to proclaim the Gospel by word and conversation to individuals, either in their homes or at ours, which we have tried to embrace as far as possible. And from our Bible sales, as well as personal experience, we have reason to believe that the number of Moslems who search the Scriptures here is increasing.

On October 21st Mr. Cantine went to Bagdad on mission business in connection with the proposal of the C. M. S. missionaries at Isphahan. Of which, later in this report. On November 22d S. M. Zwemer went to Mohammerah to try and obtain a house as refuge and residence for Jakoob Johann and his family, whom we were expecting from Bagdad; but his errand was unsuccessful, as all property in this Persian village is in the hands of its Sheikh, who, though friendly to us, dare not be to our work.

Jakoob Johann made an unsuccessful attempt to escape from Bagdad about the end of November. His family and baggage were already on board a river steamer, and permission had been given him to go outside of Turkish dominions, but they declared he was only intending to go to Busrah, and so he was forcibly
taken from the steamer and forbidden passage. When Mr. Can-
tine visited Jakoob and his family they were still living in the
small house with a poor fisherman, and although their young
child suffered from continued fevers Jakoob and his wife and
mother seemed to be contented in all their troubles, and con-
tinued faithful to their Saviour Jesus Christ.

On December 27th we received the following letter from Dr.
H. M. Sutton at Bagdad:

"I have sad news to tell you of poor, dear Jakoob. He
was imprisoned and then brought before the Wali, who ordered
him off to Hillah. He was hurried off on foot, the soldiers who
conducted him riding. We hear that he was beaten and very
badly treated. What they mean to do with him at Hillah I have
no idea. His poor wife went after him the next morning, with
her baby, accompanied by the old fish woman, whose house they
live in. If they found him the fish woman was to come back to
bring us news, but no news has yet come. I quite hoped to hear
that he would be set at liberty in Hillah. Perhaps they will keep
him in prison for a time and then let him go. If so we will do
all we can to get him away to a distant place. Meanwhile, if he
is in prison we may be able to provide him with food and other
necessaries. I have confidence he will be faithful to his Master,
and will not deny the faith."

Up to date of this report we have received no further news,
except a letter from Jakoob himself, from Hillah, of similar im-
port, and without a word of complaint. The witness for Christ
by word and conduct of this faithful fellow-helper and his loving
wife, who have hazarded their lives for the Gospel, cannot remain
fruitless.

S. M. Zwemer was away from Busrah from November 24th
to January 3d, on tour for the Mission to Baherein. At Bushire
he met Rev. Mr. Hodgson, the Superintendent of the B. and F.
Bible Society's work in the Persian Gulf, and made arrangements
to extend the territory which the Arabian Mission occupies and
works for the Bible Society, so as to reach from the Shat-el-Arab,
along the Arabian coast, to and including Baherein. The details
of this arrangement are the same as those with regard to our terri-
tory north of Busrah, along the rivers, and we believe the annual
appropriation from the B. and F. Bible Society will be increased
in proportion to this extension of territory as soon as the field is occupied.

Mr. Zwemer remained on the island of Baherein from December 7th until January 1st, and visited most of the villages on the main island, and also Moharrek, the seat of the local Government. Baherein is an independent State, under English protection, and governed by an Arab Sheikh. The population of the island is about 50,000—all pure Arabs except a few Persians and sixty Banian merchants. There are no Turks. The main industry is pearl fishery, but there is also a large export of horses and dates in their season, and constant import of general merchandise for the islands and the cities along the coast. Contrary to expectation our visit was welcomed, and there was no special difficulty in obtaining permission to reside on the island at the town of Menameh for a time. Simple drugs and medical advice for the many unfortunate sufferers that daily came for help proved the best way of making friends and disarming prejudice. Forty-four portions of the Scriptures were sold, and there was unusual opportunity for presenting, and willingness to listen to, the Gospel. After living among the people, and experiencing much kindness at their hands for some time, we believe the island to be open for mission work, and that it should be occupied by our Mission. After a Bible depot has been secured and opened it could be left in charge of a native colporteur for a large part of the year. Not only are the islands in themselves populous, but they are an exceptionally strong vantage point on the East of Arabia for reaching the large Turkish-Arabian city of Khatif and the fertile provinces, El Hassa and Katar, with the word of God. As Mr. Zwemer is about to return to Baherein on a second visit, further particulars can best be given in our next report.

**BIBLE WORK AND COLPORTEURS.**

The Bible and Book Depot at Busrah was open every day except Sundays throughout the past three months, and although at one time the number of Moslem visitors decreased, the sale of Scriptures more than doubled that of last quarter, and the sale of religious and educational books also largely increased. By far the largest number of books sold were in Arabic, and next in
Hebrew, besides some in Persian, Turkish, Greek, Syrian, English, French, German, Hindi, Portuguese, etc., to the mixed population of Busrah harbor.

Frequent visits were made by us and our colporteurs on board of steamers and native boats in the river. No extended tour was made by David, the colporteur, because he was daily in charge of the depot. Now that a second colporteur has been engaged, touring will again be possible. Had there been no delay in obtaining educational and religious books from the Beyrout Press the total sales would be still larger in number and value. The following summary shows, on comparison with our last report, the increase of sales during the quarter:

### NUMBER OF BOOKS SOLD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bibles</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
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### TEACHING AND LANGUAGE STUDY.

After the class of Moslem boys was prohibited by Turkish interference no regular teaching has been carried on at Busrah. There is, however, still a demand for a good English school, and frequent inquiries come to us as to when we will open one.

P. J. Zwemer began the study of Arabic immediately after his arrival, with our colporteur, David, as teacher, and the other missionaries continued their studies privately. A superior Arabic teacher for the Mission, who could devote his whole time to the work, is still an unsupplied need.

### THE NEW MISSION HOUSE.

After numerous difficulties because of Oriental delays, government opposition, and in the preparation of suitable plans and specifications, the contract for building a mission house for the Arabian Mission has been signed, a copy filed at the British Con-
sulate, and building has commenced. All the plans and specifications were drawn up by Mr. Cantine, and a copy of contract with outline plans is enclosed with this report. The location of the new mission house was selected after long deliberation, and is, we believe, the best obtainable in Busrah, with a view to the needs of the Mission and the comfort of missionaries and their families in the future. The plot of ground is on the left side of Busrah Creek coming in from the river, above the Custom House, the Consulate and the Governor's residence, and opposite to a bridge which crosses the creek and leads to the Magans bazaar, a large and growing quarter of the city near the harbor. A good road and the creek, the two main avenues of traffic, pass the front of the mission house. Back of the plot are date gardens, and it is very probable that the vicinity chosen will always remain as it is now, a residence quarter, and never be over-crowded with bazaars or native houses. The drainage is, we believe, good, and the building will be comfortable and healthful.

NEW STATIONS.

The new arrangements with the B. and F. Bible Society, for work in the Gulf, make it essential to have a Bible depository within easy reach of colporteurs for working from Baherein northwards along the coast, and it is, therefore, our purpose to hire a small depot at Baherein, and occupy Menameh village, at least during the Winter months, as a sub-station.

The correspondence with regard to Bagdad and the proposal of the C. M. S. missionaries has already been forwarded to the Board of Trustees. The following letter from Dr. H. M. Sutton shows the present state of the question:

"Bagdad, December 20th, 1892.

"My dear Cantine:—I had a telegram from Rev. W. Gray of the C. M. S. saying that the committee would not agree to conjoint action of you and me. I understand this to mean that they would not agree to conjoint action of the C. M. S. and your Mission as a permanent arrangement. When this telegram was sent off they had not had my letter suggesting that we should ask you to come to Bagdad next Summer to work with us tentatively. What they will think of this suggestion remains to be
seen. Carloss [a missionary of the C. M. S., Ispahan] and I both adhere to our original opinion that it would be better for Bagdad and the field around that your mission should occupy our place. The native Protestants are opposed to the transfer because they are afraid that you will go in too strongly for aggressive work amongst the Mohammedans, and that troubles will arise in consequence!

Besides this letter no official news has reached us on the matter in question. We have no desire to enter the field of another society, except at their request, the guarantee of a medical missionary, and a plain understanding on all sides that the Bagdad field is permanently to be a station of the Arabian Mission.

JAMES CANTINE,
S. M. ZWEMER, Sec'y,

Busrah, January 12th, 1893. P. J. ZWEMER.