Ellice, and Gilbert groups, and of Niue, or Savage, Island. It may be said that important as is this group by its strategic position for controlling the commercial and military operations in the South Seas, it is thus more important as a radiating center of missionary influences for promoting Christian civilization in that part of the Pacific. A people so teachable as are its inhabitants, and so active as they are in the noblest benevolent enterprises, deserve the sympathy of the civilized world in the dissensions fostered amongst them by foreign nations, and should be enabled to so adjust their difficulties as to enter on an era of uninterrupted prosperity and of great usefulness in the other islands of the South Seas.

THE PRESENT CENTER OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.

BY REV. SAMUEL M. ZWEMER, F.R.G.S., BAHREIN, ARABIA.
Missionary of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America.

Mohammedanism has been throughout its history responsible for the slave-hunt and the slave-market as the necessary accompaniments to the slavery it recognizes and sanctions. The African slave-trade in recent years has been maintained solely for the supply of the Moslem markets. And while the awful traffic in human flesh has somewhat abated, it is still carried on outside of Africa to an extent above belief, along nearly the whole Arabian coast. The cradle of Islam is the center of the "honorable business." For we must never forget that, according to the Koran, slavery and the slave-trade are divine

institutions.* From these texts we learn, that all male and female slaves taken as plunder in war are the lawful property of the master; that the master has power to take to himself any female slave, either married or single, as his chattel; that the position of a slave is as helpless as that of the stone idols of old Arabia; and that, while a man can do as he pleases with his property, slaves should be treated kindly and granted freedom when able to purchase it. Slave-traffic is not only allowed, but legislated for by Mohammedan law and *made sacred* by the example of the prophet.† In Moslem books of law the same rules apply to the sale of animals and slaves. Some Moslem apologists of the present day contend that Mohammed lookt upon the custom as temporary in its nature, but the slavery of Islam is interwoven with the laws of marriage, of sale, of inheritance, and the whole social fabric, so that its abolition would strike at the very foundations of their legal code.‡

Consequently, whenever and wherever Mohammedan rulers have agreed to the abolition or suppression of the slave-trade, they have acted contrary to the *privileges of their religion* in consenting to obey *the laws of humanity*. There is not the least doubt that if it were possible to do away with the slave-trade by the writing and signing of treaties, it would long since have been abolisht. The war against the traffic has been waged *on paper* most vigorously and unanimously by all the powers. The general act of the Brussels Conference, 1889–90, drawn up in French, *au nom de Dieu Tout Puissant*, and signed by Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, United States, France, England, Italy, Holland, Persia, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Turkey, is a noble document. The convention between Great Britain and Turkey for the suppression of the African slave-trade, bound the latter power indisputably "to absolutely prohibit the traffic in and mutilation of children." "With a view to the more effectual suppression. . . . his Majesty agrees that British cruisers may visit, search, and, if necessary, detain . . . any Ottoman vessel which may be found engaged in the traffic or suspected of being intended for that traffic." And the provisions of the Brussels Conference define the maritime zone, where slave-trade still exists, as extending "on the one hand between the coasts of the Indian Ocean and those of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf included, from Baluchistan to Cape Tangalane;" in plain English, the coast line of Arabia.§ Ten years after the date of these treaties this coast is still the center and hotbed of the slave-trade. Let us begin at the Persian Gulf littoral. At the

---

* Surahs iv : 3, 28, 40; xxxiii : 49; xvi : 77; xxx : 27; xxiv : 33, and Moslem Commentaries.

† Mishkat, Book xiii, Chap. xx.

‡ Hamilton's Hedaya (Grady's Edition), Vol. II., page 458.

§ Hertslet's Commercial Treaties, Vol. XV., page 417–421. Convention between Great Britain and Turkey, Jan. 25, 1880, Englisn text. Act of Brussels Conference, Arts. VIII., XX., XXI., XXV., LXVIII., and LXIX.

Brussels Conference the shah consents "to organize an active supervision in the waters off the coast of the Persian Gulf and *on the inland routes*, which serve for the transport of slaves." His Majesty has *one* gunboat stationary, rather than stationed, at Bushire; nor has this vessel ever attempted to track or pursue slave-dealers. Recent testimony is conclusive that an active trade is carried on along the entire Persian coast. Mr. Budgett Meakin writes:

During my sojourn in the city of Shiraz (Persia), I have been making inquiries as to how the ranks of the slaves I see in all the well-to-do houses are recruited and what is the lot of the slaves themselves. It seems that since the English have been so energetic in their patrol of the Arabian and African coasts, the prices in Persia have risen considerably, on account of the difficulty of importing them, but that the demand is sufficient to make it a paying business to those engaged in it. The simplest way is the running of them across the gulf in native sailing boats, which can not, of course, be controlled by the one English vessel stationed there to prevent them, while it is the interest of the officials and people on both sides to encourage them. Many are bought in Mecca, and brought in, by way of Bagdad, as members of the families or suites of pilgrims, and it is in this way that the eunuchs required in every Persian household of standing are imported, being brought, while still boys, in the impenetrable and inviolable guise of women.

SLAVE-TRADE UNDER THE FRENCH FLAG.

After the "rise" in prices, Abyssinian boys could still be bought at Shiraz for £18 ($90), and Bombassi girls for £16 sterling; in the same town a good riding horse cost £12, and a baggage mule £14. The variety in the market included Abyssinians, Nubians, Circassians, Georgians, Kurdish, and Bombassan. Not only is there an active trade in Persia, but this trade is largely due to the gulf slave-trade proper, carried on in native boats under the French flag. Here is the testimony of the Bombay *Times* in an editorial of Dec. 24, 1898:

The French vice-consul at Bushire has been careful to repudiate the assertion that the refusal of France to accept the convention of Brussels has rendered moral support to the slave-trade in the Persian Gulf. For the sake of strict accuracy it would have been better if it had been made clear that the refusal applied only to certain stipulations in the convention whose importance that functionary recognizes. We have been presented with a series of citations from a circular addrest by the minister of marine to the French consular agents in Bushire, Zanzibar, and other ports, in which the refusal of the French government to recognize a right of search in vessels carrying the French flag is announced and defended. This refusal is justified by "the national traditions," and by an appeal to the principles of the modern law of nations. We are not quite sure, however, whether the law of nations, which is an inference from the sustained and general practise pursued between nations who have arrived at an equal stage of moral and political development, is necessarily applicable to the relations between European powers and the pirates and slave-dealers of the Persian Gulf. Before laying down prin-

ciples in a case such as this, we ought to have some regard to the facts. Constructively, no doubt, French statesman may, if they wish, regard as a French ship any battered baggala to whose mast a half-naked Arab may choose to nail a strip of tricolor. Whether this is for the greater glory of a flag that has splendid traditions of its own, is a question not to be answered outside of France. But to allege that the principles of the law of nations apply to vessels of this description, only in a constructive sense possessing the character of French vessels, is to strain them to breaking point, and to put solemn rules of international law to a contemptuous use. . . . To put the matter plainly, the French flag is being prostituted for the benefit of slave-traders. Certificates of protection are granted to owners of dhows without any regard to the use to which they are likely to be put. Fifteen hundred to two thousand slaves are annually landed at Sur, many of them in craft carrying the French colors, coming from ports adjacent to Madagascar. We take for granted that so much of this trade as is carried on in dhows provided with French papers is unknown to the French consul at Muscat, and that he would prevent it if he knew of it, and if he had a naval force at his disposal for intercepting it. But the fact that his vigilance is eluded only strengthens the argument for abandoning the vicious system of indiscriminately granting letters of protection to all who apply for them. If these were limited to people who have a *bona fide* right to them, the French consul at Muscat would have less to do, but the slave-dealers at Sur and elsewhere along the coast would find their business most happily curtailed.

BRITISH SPHERE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

The mention of Sur (Soor) brings us to that part of the present slave-trade zone for which certainly England is primarily responsible. The entire coast from Aden to Muscat is practically under English protection, for the native rulers are subsidized by the English. Sur itself is only one hundred miles from the Muscat consulate. And while we must acknowledge that whatever has been done, and is being done, to interfere with the traffic in both the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, has been by English gunboats; yet the fact remains that the occasional capture of a slave-dhow near Muscat harbor is not an effective patrol of the Hadramaut coast. More serious still was the unrestricted and wholesale importation of firearms under the British flag into Oman and East Arabia during the past five years. Thousands of modern rifles reacht the Arabs on the coast, and from there went inland.* Yet the Brussels Conference states, Art. VIII., "The experience of all nations has proved the pernicious and preponderating part played by firearms in the slave-trade." Happily we can at this date record that the Indian government has, out of self-interest, at

---

* Said the *Times* of India, Dec. 10, 1898: "Perhaps the facts which have now come to light will put an end to the agitation organized by the gunmakers of Birmingham, and benevolently supported by two or three members of parliament. Any one acquainted with the conditions of life in the Persian Gulf must be aware that 27,000 rifles can not be poured into that region every year from England alone—to say nothing of exports from continental countries—without a proportion of the weapons filtering through to the frontier."

last rigidly prohibited all importation of firearms into the Persian Gulf and Oman coast.

Lastly, there remains to consider the Red Sea littoral and its slave-traffic. An American, long resident in Africa, estimates that at present over eleven thousand slaves are sent yearly into Arabia from the African coast! The late J. Theodore Bent wrote respecting the slave-trade in the Red Sea:

The west coast of the Red Sea is in portions still much given to slave-trading. From Suez down to Ras Benas the coast is pretty well protected by government boats, which cruise about and seize dhows suspected of traffic in human flesh, but south of this, until the area of Suakin is reached, slave-trading is still actively carried on. The transport is done in dhows from the Arabian coast, which come over to the coral reefs of the western side ostensibly for pearl fishing. At certain seasons of the year slave-traders in caravans come down from the dervish territory in the Nile valley, and the petty Bedouin sheiks on the Red Sea littoral connive at and assist them in the work.

THE MECCA SLAVE MARKET.

Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje describes (Mekka, Vol. II., pp. 15–24), the public slave-market at Mecca in full swing every day during his visit. It is located near Bab Derebah and the holy mosque, and open to everybody. Altho he himself apologizes for the traffic, and calls the anti-slavery crusade a swindle, he yet confesses to all the horrible details in the sale of female slaves, and the mutilation of male slaves for the markets. Eunuchs are plentiful, and are specially imported to act as guards for mosques; they can be bought for £24 apiece. The explorer, Charles M. Doughty, who spent years in the interior of Arabia, writes:

Jiddah is the staple town of African slavery for the Turkish empire; Jiddah, where are Frankish consuls! But you shall find these worthies, in the pallid solitude of their palaces, affecting (Great Heaven!) the simplicity of new-born babes; they will tell you they are not aware of it! . . . But I say again in your ingenuous ears, *Jiddah is the staple town of the Turkish slavery, or all the Moslemeen are liars.* . . . I told them we had a treaty with the sultan to suppress slavery;—Dog, cries the fellow, thou liar—are there not thousands of slaves at Jiddah that every day are bought and sold? Wherefore, thou dog, be they not all made free if thou sayest sooth? * †

After such testimony it seems almost impossible that the special commissioner of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in 1895 should report on the condition of the Red Sea slave-trade without ever

* That there is extensive slavery prevalent in all of the interior, is evident from the fact that in 1898 fifteen male and forty-three female slaves were assisted by the Busrah consulate in obtaining their manumission papers. This is the average each year of slaves who escape from their masters in the direction of Busrah. The possession of a domestic slave is not an offense in Turkey; it is only the slave-trade which is forbidden. Consequently, it is no easy matter for a slave to obtain his freedom, nor will they take the task of seeking it unless driven by cruel treatment.

† Arabia Deserta, Vol. II, pp. 53, 167, and 491.

visiting Jiddah or any port on the Arabian coast north of Hodeidah.* Yet such is the case, for cholera at Jiddah prevented Mr. Donald Mackenzie from calling at that port. Stranger still, *notwithstanding this important omission*, he has a very strong indictment left. Speaking of the long stretch of African coast, between Cape Guardafui and Kismayu on the south, avoided by British ships because, almost without shelter or harbor, he says:

> The natives of those regions are able to do as they please, and I was informed, on very reliable authority, that a considerable amount of slave-trading is carried on with Arabia, and, as the coast is not watcht, there is nothing to prevent the Arabs carrying away slaves continually. There is one fairly good harbor near Cape Guardafui, called Ras Hafun, in which the dhows take shelter in case of bad weather. The dhows that usually resort to this part of the coast hail from Maculla, Shuhr, and other places on the Hadramaut coast. When they have obtained their cargo of slaves and other products, they run for Ras el Hadd, and should they meet any of the European warships on the way, they hoist the French flag, but it does not, therefore, follow that they have authority to use the flag of that nation, their owners simply buying one and using it when they find themselves in difficulties. . . . Neither the British, French, nor Italians, do much to check the export of slaves from their spheres of influence on the Red Sea coast. While I was passing along the coast from Massowah to Assab, I observed a large number of dhows at different points waiting for business. We must have passed hundreds, but I did not observe a single war-ship looking after these dhows.

The following is a list of slave-traffic ports as given by Mr. Mackenzie: Debab (between Aden and Mocha), Musa, Khauka, Zebid, Hodeidah, Jiddah, Lahaia, Gaizon, Konfidah, Fursan Islands, and Mede—all on the Arab coast. "*The Turkish authorities charge so much a head on every slave introduced into Arabia at these points;* in other words, they charge a duty on the slave-trade." Mr. Mackenzie acknowledges in his report that the one peculiar and serious difficulty that stands in the way of the abolition of slavery in the Red Sea is Turkey:

> It appears that, in the Anglo-Turkish Slave-trade Treaty, any slaves or dhows caught in the Red Sea, must be handed over to the Turkish authorities at the nearest port. These authorities are supposed to punish the slave-traders, and liberate the slaves, but in reality these latter only become slaves of the Turkish government. British cruisers are not allowed to pursue a dhow inside the three-mile limit on the Arabian coast, the result of such arrangement being that it is practically hopeless to put down slavery in these waters, unless the slave dhows are caught on the African coast of the Red Sea.

But he is not at a loss for the remedy, and recommends: Greater activity on the part of the Aden authorities; the establishment of British consulates at Sanaa and Hodeidah [why not at Mecca as well?]; the prohibition of the importation of arms into Abyssinia.

---

* *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, December, 1895.

But all these are *political* remedies—porous plasters, which will not heal "the open sore of the world." The disease can not be cured by politics; there is a more excellent way.

The true method of dealing with the slave-trade was pointed out long ago by Mackay of Uganda, in his celebrated plea for a mission to the Arabs of Muscat. The way to root out the slave-trade is to evangelize the slave-trader. The entire west coast of Arabia has not a single witness for Christ. Aside from Aden, the entire southern coast of Arabia has never been toucht by a missionary society; and the same is true of nearly all the African Red Sea coast north of Massawah. It is the ambassadors of the Great King who must occupy the vantage points, and not mere consular officers of earthly governments. Why has Jesus Christ no resident agent at Jiddah or Mecca, or Hodeidah? Why has not the Christian church occupied these direful cities in the name of humanity, if not to raise the banner of the Crucified? The time has come, if we are really in earnest about the slave-trade, for a mission to the west coast of Arabia. He who undertakes it will help deal the death-blow to the traffic in human flesh, and bring the answer to Livingstone's prayer.

If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it?

REFLECTIONS AFTER A WINTER TOUR IN INDIA.

REV. F. B. MEYER., B.A., LONDON, ENGLAND.

India is now the scene of a mortal conflict between Christianity and Hinduism. The issue is not doubtful, but the conflict is severe, and demands all the thought and prayer that the Christian church can give. The hoary system of Hinduism is not yielding her ground without a strenuous resistance, and, especially in South India, there is every appearance of a revival. The temples have been refurnisht; the festivals were never more zealously maintained; the crowds of devotees were never more numerous. This was specially notable at the vast temple at Madura, which can easily accommodate 40,000 pilgrims within its vast corridors and courts. This imposing structure within the last twenty years has been encircled with walls and railings, paved with magnificent granite blocks at great cost, and redecorated. Immense and costly additions are also being made to its splendid Buddhist shrines at Rangoon, and tho there is a vast difference between Buddhism and Brahmanism, yet the great extensions which are in progress in Burma are evidence of the reaction which is taking place in the non-Christian world of the East, as tho every effort were being made, and every nerve strained, for the last scenes in the mortal strife.