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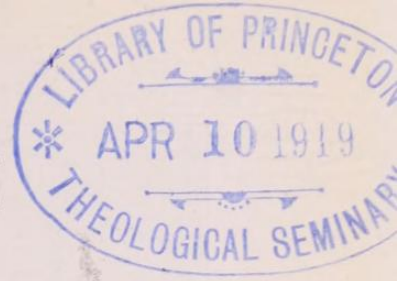
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# Neglected Arabia

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## In the Steps of the Great Physician

MRS. EDWIN E. CALVERLEY, M.D.

It was a great day for the Arabian Mission when the first woman missionary took her place among its membership. There were to be no women in the mission, our pioneers had decided. They thought that the field was not ready for women and that the Arabian living conditions were too hard for them. Cupid smiled when he heard that decision, for he was not of the same opinion. And then, suddenly, one of our pioneers changed his mind (though he was a man, or, *perhaps*, because he was a man), and he realized that the work needed nothing so much as the life of a certain young lady now known to you all as Mrs. Zwemer.

It was well that she, whose privilege it was to take the Word of Life to the Arab women for the first time, was a medical missionary. In this most fanatical Muhammadan country, never could she have done so much to break down the wall of prejudice and hatred had it not been for her nurse's training. Lovingly, patiently, untiringly, she ministered to her suffering Arab sisters until the opening wedge had done its work and the way was prepared for the ever widening woman's missionary work of our mission.

The Arabian Mission is now twenty-nine years old. It has on its roll besides the list of evangelistic and educational workers, the names of seven women doctors and seven trained nurses. Of these there remain available today only two doctors and three nurses, two of whom have not yet finished language study and have not yet (1918) been appointed to work. Need one say more to emphasize the urgent need for recruits?

Of the seven women doctors referred to, there were two who stayed for only a year or less and then retired. Two others have laid down their lives for Arabia, and their memorial is not so much the modest stones that mark their graves in Bahrein and Basrah, as the loving and grateful memory in the hearts of those they served. Marian Wells Thoms and Christine Iverson Bennett were splendid women. The Arab women love to tell you about them. There are



A YOUNG SHEIKH

those whose eyes still brim with tears as they tell you how these talented, unselfish women, even in their own weakness and suffering, were ever ready to forget self and to spend their strength for others.

No other woman has given so many years of medical service for Arabia as Mrs. Worrall. After sixteen years on the field she is now staying at home, superintending the education of her children. It was through her enthusiastic efforts that the mission hospital in Basrah was first opened, in the face of untold opposition. Its first beds were supplied with sheets from her personal linen closet. Those who were associated with her in Basrah remember how she toiled to meet the demands of a large and ever-increasing practice. During an epidemic of cholera I have

known her to rise at earliest break of day, before the children waked or medical calls began to come, in order to prepare a pamphlet for Arab women, teaching them prevention and first aid in combating the terrible disease raging in their midst.

Mrs. Worrall's place in Basrah was later taken by Mrs. Bennett, who carried on that, our heaviest woman's medical work, for five years, and who then succumbed to typhus fever, contracted during ministrations to sick Turkish soldiers. Shortly after her death the doors of the hospital had to be closed for lack of a doctor. In all our great America is there no woman doctor to open those doors for the Arab women of Basrah?

Of the two remaining physicians on our list, one, Dr. Hosmon, is now on furlough, and the other is working in Kuwait.

Trained nurses in Arabia have to take upon themselves many duties they never guessed would be theirs when they volunteered. Seldom can they confine themselves to the superintendence of a hospital. The great majority of Moslem women will not even permit a man doctor to see their faces, so that the nurse, if there is one, must diagnose and prescribe, as well as administer treatment. She must generally carry the responsibility of the work alone, meeting emergencies as best she can, and hoping for the day when the mission's resources in personnel will allow us to have both a woman doctor and a trained nurse to work in the same station.

Only one nurse of the seven on our roll was enabled to concentrate her efforts on nurse's work alone. This was Miss Holzhauser, who accomplished wonders in organizing the Basrah Hospital while Dr. and Mrs. Bennett were there. Miss Holzhauser was also a sufferer from typhus fever, as was Dr. Bennett himself, at the time when Mrs. Bennett died. Fortunately, she was able to resist the disease and later to return to America, but it is doubtful whether she will ever be able to attempt work in Arabia again.

When Dr. Zwemer was called to his literary work in Cairo, Arabia lost another nurse in Mrs. Zwemer. A few years later Mrs. Vogel retired from the field after seven years of service.

Mrs. Cantine, who by training is a nurse, has for some time been appointed to evangelistic work, by her own choice, but she finds frequent use for her medical knowledge and skill as she comes in contact with the women in their houses.

The mission is expecting great things of Mrs. Harrison and Miss Van Pelt when they shall have finished their language examinations. It is hard to be patient and wait two long years for a knowledge of Arabic before entering practical service, but experience has proved this to be wise.

There is still another nurse in the Arabian mission not yet mentioned, and she is the only one at present in active work. For several years Mrs. Van Peurseem superintended the Mason Memorial Hospital

in Bahrein, besides taking charge of the woman's dispensary. To her is largely due the friendly and trustful attitude of women patients, so noticeable there now. At present she is carrying on, unaided, the Woman's Dispensary in Maskat. This work in Maskat was founded and built by Dr. Hosmon, and, but for Mrs. Van Peurseem, must have been closed during the doctor's furlough.

This is a meagre chronicle of the woman doctors and trained nurses of the Arabian Mission. But we must not stop here for much of the medical work for Arab women has been done by missionaries who were neither doctors nor trained nurses. At times when there has been no qualified worker to keep open the medical work, evangelistic mis-



CHILDREN OF KUWEIT

sionaries have accepted temporary medical appointments while the emergency lasted. Mrs. Mylrea, through her love for the women, and her interest in Dr. Mylrea's medical work in Kuwait, has learned to do much to relieve sickness, and has been able to take charge of the woman's department of the hospital when, but for her, the work must have been discontinued. In fact, she so won for herself a reputation for skill that some of her former patients later declined to consult the newly arrived woman doctor, preferring treatment by her whom they had already learned to trust.

Miss Lutton, too, has been appointed to medical work at times, and in fact she always has her little stock of medicines which she administers, well mixed with her ready humor, when need arrives.

Miss Scardefield has also made good use of the medicine and surgery she learned in the missionary training institute where she prepared for service in Arabia. To thousands of Arab women she has been both doctor and nurse, handling with success instruments intended only for physicians. Indeed, I suppose there is hardly a woman in our mission who has not in some degree tried her hand in treating the sick around her. It takes a stout heart to turn away sufferers unaided, when sometimes even the simplest remedies which every American housewife knows, would be sufficient to relieve distress. And you, too, gentle reader, if you should come to Arabia, I should not be surprised if you would soon learn to put drops into sore eyes, to pull teeth, and even to open an abscess, rather than turn away those who come to you for help and have nowhere else to go.

Having been introduced to the personnel of our woman's medical force, you may want to know something about the character of the work. Much of the medical effort in Arabia is still along pioneer lines. In some of the stations, however, the labor of a quarter of a century has won such a reputation that prejudice and distrust have almost disappeared. Were a medical woman to volunteer to open the closed doors of the Basrah Hospital she would be immediately besieged by rich and poor, Moslem, Christian and Jew. Opportunities for medical and surgical work of every description would be so great that she would soon find her practice a severe tax on her physical strength.

On the other hand, were she to be sent to open a dispensary in one of the more fanatical coast towns or if she were very fortunate and were allowed to settle in the heart of Arabia, that longed-for goal as yet unseen by any woman missionary, her need would not be so much for bodily strength, as for patience. She would find herself weighed in the balance with native midwives and found wanting before she had even been given a trial. She would hear of hundreds dying through the ignorance of these untaught women, and yet would not be allowed to profane the homes of the sick ones by her presence. She would be looked upon with scorn by the veiled true believers in the Prophet Muhammad, on him be prayers and peace! But after some years the women would learn to trust her and cease to fear her remedies.

It is not surprising that confidence is so hard to win. Arab women know nothing of the outside world. They have scarcely heard of the

existence of those seemingly shameless women who do not cover their faces in the presence of men. To them the greatest of all sins is unbelief in the Moslem Allah, and the Prophet Muhammad. To them we are shameless infidels. Why should they trust us? I remember in the early days at Kuwait how I sat in my dispensary day after day, waiting and wishing some patients would come. Those who did consult me were usually chronic, hopeless cases, for whom I could do little or nothing. And then, one day, a delegation of women came to my house to investigate my claims.

"Who taught you to treat sick people?" they asked. "Did your father?"

"No," was the reply.

"Well then, did your husband?"

"No."

"Then, who did teach you?"

It was not easy to explain to these women about the medical schools in our country where women can become doctors, but I tried to make them understand. So much being settled they began to investigate the extent of my qualifications.

"Can you treat eyes?" they demanded.

"Oh, yes!"

"Can you treat rheumatism?"

"Yes." I refrained from saying I could cure it.

"Can you treat abscesses?"

"Yes."

And then the object of the conversation came to light, for there was a woman among them who had an abscess. Finally, after a whispered consultation among my callers, I was given permission to treat that abscess. Not to open it, however. Oh, no! But to treat it with applications, and so I passed my first practical examination in Arabia.

If all the opposition to pioneer work were sincere, our task would be easier. The Evil One does not like to see us open a new station. As soon as we begin he starts circulating a lot of false reports about us. The Moslem leaders tell their people that we live immoral lives, that we steal little children and put them to death, or that we put poison into the wells of drinking water. We must learn to have our "good be evil spoken of."

Only last winter a woman who is now a loyal friend of ours told me of a conversation she overheard on the streets years ago, before she knew us personally. It was in regard to a woman who had been brought into the hospital with a stab wound of the lung. For a month we treated her and cared for her as tenderly as we could, but the injury had been very severe, and at last she passed away. During her dying hours we did not leave her at all, but did all we could to relieve her suffering, assuring her of Christ's love for her and of His power to save her if she would but trust Him. And yet this is the conversation which our friend heard between two women of Kuwait:

"You know Lulu, that woman who was stabbed and was taken to the American Hospital?"

"Yes."

"Well, they kept her a month and then got tired of having her around and gave her poison so that she died."

The people believe these lies about us. Why shouldn't they? Even now there are hundreds in Kuwait who have perhaps never even seen us, and yet have heard so much against us that they would die in agony rather than be treated by those whom they believe to be thoroughly wicked and unscrupulous.

When the odds against one are so great, the joy one feels in the realization of progress is correspondingly keen. The constantly increasing size of the clinics, the greater frequency of out-calls, the fact that many women are now willing to submit to surgical measures, and, best of all, that sometimes we are allowed to supplant the dirty midwife in obstetrical work, all this progress after six years of waiting is to us a source of great encouragement. Just to open the eyes of one



MRS. MYLREA AND MRS. CALVERLEY CONDUCTING GOSPEL SERVICE  
AT THE DISPENSARY, KUWEIT

sightless from cataract, just to save the vision of sadly neglected babies, to set the broken bones, to bind up the burns and ulcers of the adorable little Arab children, even to pull the teeth that have ached for days and nights in a country where there is no dentist, even these physical achievements make the medical missionary's life worth while.

And yet you know and I know that we are not in Arabia primarily for medical achievements. We are here because Christ sent us to preach the Gospel by word and example. No matter what the discouragements in our work, nothing can rob us of the joy of the knowledge that we are Christ's instruments for the building up of His kingdom in the cradle of Islam. He has deigned to use us, though we be vessels of common clay, to carry His most precious gift to the women of Arabia. No matter how commonplace our duties nor how trivial our service may seem, it is He who gave the task, the results are in His hands, and the victory is sure.

## My First Year's Experience

MRS. HENRY A. BILKERT

It is evident from requests of the assignment committee that a person in addition to having a certain amount of the language at the end of the first year is also supposed to have acquired something called experience. As I attempt to write down this something a hundred memories crowd before me. They are strange and varied memories and now seem but an unconnected mass. I cannot analyze them nor take a meaning from them all, much less explain them to some one else. One comes suddenly into a new land where every custom, every manner of thinking is different. Yea, everything is different from the heavens above to the earth beneath and the waters under the earth. Is not the sky like brass, the ground dry and unproductive of anything green and the water under the earth is it not salty and bad of taste! But aside from all variations of customs, all differences in living, God has fashioned the human heart the same. That is a wonderful discovery. Underneath all outward differences there is one place where we all stand alike. The common weal and woe of the human heart and soul is the strand that binds us all together. But it is for those longer in service to speak of this in full. It is for those new and untried only to make the discovery, and their experience can be related only by a few simple incidents and impressions.

Bahrein did not stir at our coming. We are probably the only ones who will remember the great day we arrived! I remember so well the first sight of the low, white-walled city. It was like being introduced to a friend you longed but dreaded to meet. The officers on the boat laughed loud and long at our stopping here. They said they wouldn't even come ashore at such a place as this. (The best joke is on them.) As I said, the city did not stir at our coming. It lay stretched out and quiet like some sleepy Arab taking his noon-day nap. We were led through what extreme imagination might term streets and I laugh now to think of my first ideas of those "crude walls." What a grand surprise to see the mission compound with its yard bordered with trees; my blessings on the one who planted them. We came to the house and I was presented to my first Arab friend, a shy little lady who smiled and took my hand. I tried not to think about her queer draped clothes, her bundled head and bare feet. But what did unnerve me was when a second later she gave a scream and a jump, grabbed her gown over her face and ducked her head behind us. I thought at least she had been hit on the head. Imagine my un-Arabic disgust at being told she was only covering her face from a man, and that man walking by a safe distance away! It is a long way from the land of suffrage parades to one where a woman must not even let on that she possesses so common a thing as a face; that is, before her august superior, MAN.

The first days here we were examined rather thoroughly. We will admit that even in America a stranger in church is usually the

center of a few curious gazes. But here a newcomer is a target. No doubt you have never been looked at from behind a mask and cannot imagine our sensations. A woman sat on the chair beside me, all covered save one eye. But oh, that eye! There it was turned on me like some merciless searchlight. I turned and smiled, I turned and looked serious, I didn't turn at all—that one black eye never relaxed its gaze! It began to be almost uncanny. As for the woman behind the eye—why she was seeing one of the new “ladies,” and it was the thing to do to look at her. What a splendid opportunity. “Wasn't she a queer thing, anyway, with her pale hair and eyes, and wasn't she ashamed to sit there with her face uncovered?” The sermon began and I listened to those new strange sounds. What miracle could ever happen to bring understanding out of that babel of words? Surely, I should never learn that sort of a language.

Later came the calls among the homes and our first experience with Arab etiquette. The first event was a real Arab breakfast, where we waited for long hours till the platters of rice and meat were at last brought on. Never had I sat so long on the floor before and my bones were full of aches. Eating with one's fingers was great joy. I believe it is something the “natural man” longs to do once in a while, a sort of a lingering desire from our previous natures, maybe. Then the women sat around and listened to the reading of the Bible. It seemed the most wonderful picture I had ever seen—those strange, dark-skinned women listening to the same “Old Story.” Surely they loved it, too. Certain things we always met in the houses. One was “helwa,” a greasy sweet, one was Arab coffee and the other was the question: “Are you married and have you any children?” They never failed. My ignorance of the language was a never-ending source of wonder and sometimes pitying scorn with them. “Not know how to talk Arabic? Why, how had she ever gotten along in life so far without talking it! What? They don't need to know Arabic in America? Nobody speaks it there? How queer. What kind of a place could America be if they don't speak Arabic there.” One thing soon impressed me—and that is the great impassable gulf between men and women here. In our calling on the women we go in the daytime when the men are away. We go to the women's quarters to be all undisturbed. Undisturbed is the word to use, for if a man happens to come within seeing distance there is much of disturbance indeed—with all the ducking of heads and grabbing of veils. Men are absolutely tabooed in our work. Only on most rare occasions do we recognize a salutation from a man. On the other hand, the men of the mission visit the men in the bazaar or call on them in their houses in the evening. Then a woman is never seen. For a missionary and his wife to call together on an Arab and his wife is as improbable as to talk by wireless with people on the moon.

At first, all the women seemed alike to me. Clothed in their long black abbas and veils there didn't seem to be any difference between them all. Now I can distinguish some of them at a distance, and just as I have learned their outward appearance so I have come to learn

their own lives. I learned the story of M——, our Bible woman; how she heard the message for the first time some sixteen years ago when she earned her living by carrying huge skins of water strapped to her back; how she felt the sin in her life and came up from the position of concubine and other vice to a life of Christian following. No one who has ever heard M—— pray for forgiveness and courage and freedom of soul has ever doubted that she is a child of God. Her steadfastness through persecution and her childlike faith have put us to shame. There was R—— who was driven from home and child because of the Gospel. Beaten and divorced by a cruel husband and scorned by a fanatical mother she has yet dared to take her stand with the hated Christians. There was U——, who named her son "the beggar" to fool the evil eye. Married at the age of nine she knew very little but the hard things of life. A sick boy was the means of bringing her to the hospital and in contact with the missionaries she has learned to love, and through them she has learned also to love the Christ she dare not confess. I think of Z——, who seemed to love the songs and reading and all. But one day she disappeared and we have not seen her since. She told the women that the "jinn" had called her and she must go. She believed she had jinn, and that when the other jinn called her jinn she had to let them obey. Poor, ignorant girl! And so it goes—as I come to know them I find each has her own story. And somehow our wonderful Christian message can and must meet them all. But it is hardest to think of all the many who do not feel any need, who do not care to think about themselves or their sins. Then there are those who know but who dare not make the break, and we who have never had to face such sacrifice, such possibilities, such risk, what shall we say? How wonderful to be able to turn them to One who made the complete sacrifice and counted not His life dear.

The people of Arabia are like their country. How barren and dry it is, and yet here and there out of the barrenness bubble up springs of pure, sweet water. Whence these pure, cool springs? The secret is this: In the heart of Arabia among the green hills are streams, the sources, and nourished well by the rains of the mountains they make their way underneath the ground all unseen until far from their head they come up into the light and pour forth their riches onto the hard, dry sand. Outside the lives of the Arabs seem hard and barren; there seems no good in them. Yet out of their hearts, way down beneath their exterior, issue unseen sources of good and kindness. God is not without witness of His truth even in the hearts of the Arabs. The best, the highest we can do for them is to increase in them the thirst for the "Water of Life." My first year in this land has shown me the vast work only yet begun and sometimes it seems unsurmountable. Yet one who works in such a land is forced back to God's promises, and we believe that by His Holy Spirit the time will come when even in Arabia "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."



## The First Visit to Dohah

REV. G. J. PENNINGS

Upon examining a map of the Persian Gulf, you will notice in the southwest corner a large tongue-shaped piece of land projecting into the gulf for some seventy miles in a northerly direction. It is the Peninsula of Katar. In the gulf formed between this peninsula and the coast of Arabia, which here runs in a northwesterly direction, lies the Island of Bahrein. The northernmost point of Bahrein lies about twenty-five miles straight west of the northernmost point of Katar, Cape Rukan. On the eastern shore of the Katar peninsula, and about sixty miles south of Cape Rukan, lies the city of Dohah. It is to this place that Dr. Harrison and I made the first missionary visit in the early days of last summer. True, Dr. Harrison had been to the place about three years before, but at that time the Turks were still in control. He was hardly allowed to land, and after he had been ashore but a few minutes he was unceremoniously and expeditiously hustled back to his boat and the captain ordered to return to Bahrein at once. This time conditions were entirely different. The fame of the Bahrein medical work had extended even to this remote place, so that the sheikh, Abdallah bin Jasim, had sent Dr. Harrison a personal invitation to come.

When we began our journey we had full need of the amount of patience normally required by anyone who starts off on a trip in an Arab sailboat. We had been told to be on hand at sunrise. Instead, we took the precaution to come about an hour later, only to find that the captain was not yet on hand, so that it was fully an hour and a half later before we actually hoisted sail, and then only because we hurried them up. All we did, however, was to sail round a small point of land, after which we dropped anchor and lay till 4:00 P. M. The main passenger who was to make the trip with us had spent the day finishing his business, we were told afterwards. They might have told us that in the morning, saving us a tiresome day on the boat