

investigation, is also a means to that end. Nevertheless, I have known of cases where printed Arabic gospels were bought to be used as amulets and where patients tried to rub off ink from the printed paper used to wrap powders in at the hospital in order to drink the solution as a remedy!

S. M. ZWEMER.

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Abdul Messieh — In Memoriam.

On September fifteenth we laid to rest in our little Christian cemetery the remains of a man who was born a Moslem, but who lived and died a Christian. His name was Abdul Messieh, i. e., Servant of Christ, which name was given him at his own request, and was in itself a testimony to his faith in Christ. But more valuable than this outward confession were the fruits of the Spirit that so abundantly showed themselves in his life and character. He was a man without an enemy, as he showed love toward all and malice toward none. A faithful servant, a loyal friend, a trusted companion, he adorned his confession by a beautiful and manly character. During the year and a half in which I came in touch with him I have never heard him speak a word or do a deed that would not adorn a Christian character at home. And this means the more in his case as his opportunities for spiritual growth were less. Born among an Arab tribe up in the river country, in an environment thoroughly heathen and wicked, he started life at a great disadvantage. He early developed a desire for trade and travel, often making good money in trade, but spending it as often in travel, and also losing much in gambling. But with it all he had a spiritual side to his character, which kept him from losing his life altogether, and which, in the providence of God, brought him into contact with the missionaries and their message. The manner and the result of his contact with the missionaries may be gathered from the following letter by Mr. Moerdyk:

“Abdul Messieh came to us first in Muscat in 1903. He was then in town on business for the Sheikh of Kuweit in purchasing and delivering guns and ammunition. He came to my house and to that of the colporteurs with the purpose of asking about the Truth. He told me that he had been a Sunni, Shea, Wahabi, and Babi in turn in his search for Truth and rest, which he could not find. He had visited all of the principal shrines and had also been to Accha, the shrine of the Babis, to get peace. He had read many controversial books of the Christians, and some in the Bible, and felt that the Christians had the truth to give him. During his stay he came regularly to prayers and services, and in the evening came to read and talk about the Truth. After his

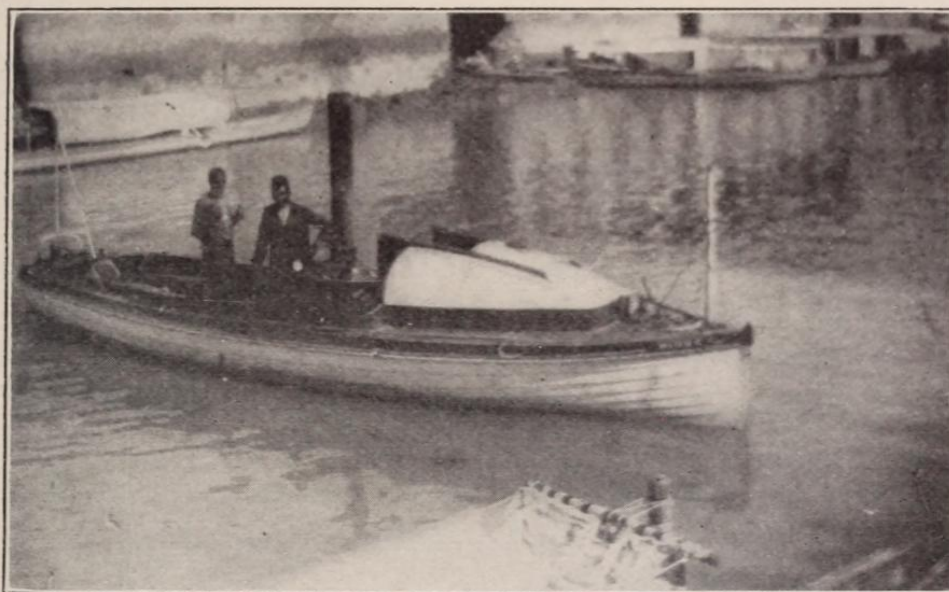
departure he left the employ of the Sheikh, visited at Busrah and Bagdad, and then returned to Kuwait, where he opened a shop. Here he remained for a period of about two years. He did not proclaim himself a Christian, but continued as such in secret. Whoever of our people called there always visited him, and his testimony was always true and strong. About this time the Sheikh must have learned about his being a Christian and not taking part in Moslem worship, for he was suddenly seized and sent away by the Sheikh's orders in a ship which went all the way to Zanzibar. From there he worked his way slowly back to the Gulf. He was on his way to Busrah or Mohammerah when he stopped off at Bahrein and was persuaded to settle down here. His first year was successful as far as a living went, and especially so far as his Christian life was concerned. He was honest and careful in his life, and diligent in the study of God's Word. He had a very good general knowledge of the Bible. He did a good deal of reading when alone in Kuwait, and his coming among Christian brethren helped him to understand what he had read."

Till the day of his illness he continued to read and to study his Bible, and his prayers were models of simplicity and childlike trust. He was often found reading and recommending the Bible to others, and, since his death, one of his companions has expressed his desire of walking in the way that Abdul Messieh had walked. He did not make a business of proclaiming his faith from the housetops, as he was of a quiet and unassuming disposition. But he did not fear to confess when occasion called for it, as may be seen from the fact that before one of the highest tribunals in this land he appeared under his new name of Abdul Messieh. His steadfastness in the faith is probably nowhere better shown than in his continually refusing the offers of his relatives to pay all his indebtedness if he would only come back to his old religion. He forsook all and followed Christ. For reasons beyond his control his business failed, and he unhesitatingly accepted a position where he had to do much menial work, a position that an unconverted Arab of his rank would consider much more disgraceful than begging. He not only accepted the position, but glorified his Master in his service, proving himself to be a faithful servant under all circumstances. He so won his way into our hearts that, at his death, we felt that we had been bereaved of one of our nearest and dearest friends. Why he had to go we cannot understand, but we know that his life has been a blessing and he, though dead, yet speaketh. His lonely grave in our cemetery may well bear the inscription: Here lies Abdul Messieh, whose life and death testify to the power of God's grace to save sinners, even Moslems.

Difficulties without Discouragement.

BAHREIN NOTES.

Some months ago two helpers were sent to the Oman coast to visit the towns of that district with Scriptures for sale and for distribution, and with instructions to use the time and opportunities during their stay in preaching the Gospel. Several years ago missionaries visited this district and sometimes lived there for a few months at a time without any apparent trouble, being welcomed and received by almost all the Arabs upon whom they called. The doctors, too, have visited there and were always received gladly and even at times asked to come and make that district their permanent abode. But at the time of the visit above named everything seemed to be different. The men were set upon almost from the first and were opposed from every quarter. They stayed on for a few weeks but things did not seem to improve, and at the last they were practically obliged to leave the district. In one of the towns where they first landed there seemed to have been a change in the person of the kathi, or prominent religious leader of the people, and this man was of the fanatical kind, who with great zeal came down upon the man accompanied by his retainers, who had probably reported the arrival and work of the men, and demanded to know their business. He condemned their books and the people of the Book, and publicly prohibited their selling or producing the Book in the town. Although not the real ruler in the place he openly defied the authority of his superior to allow anything contrary to his dictate in this matter. The helpers then proceeded to a neighboring town, but the kathi sent out his men to this town also to announce the business of the travelers and to condemn their Book and their work. The result was that at this place they were met by a slave-servant of the ruler of the town and taken to meet the complaint made by the religious enthusiasts that they brought with them a Book which taught things contrary to their religion and which was forbidden by their own holy book. Our helpers then succeeded in renting a shop which was to be their house while they were in the town. Of course, the people of the place would come and visit them, and then was their opportunity to bring out the Scriptures when many listened to the reading of portions, although not many could be persuaded to accept a copy for their own use. But every opportunity of taking the Scriptures with them in their visits in the town or in their hands on the streets was denied them. They did not think it wise to visit any more towns for the reason that the people of those parts seemed determined to oppose them wherever they went and to frustrate all their efforts to place the Scriptures.



ARABIAN MISSION LAUNCH.

Sometime after the helpers had returned to the station and had busied themselves in visiting the towns of the islands as is their custom while on duty here, it happened one day that one of them returned to the missionary with an account of what seemed at the time a determined effort to persecute in the neighboring town on the second largest island of this group. His visits thither had been quite regular every week and he had reported very encouraging conversations and opportunities to witness among the men in the bazaar and in their coffee-shops. He had also placed quite a few Scriptures among the people of that place. But this particular day they all seemed to combine to oppose him and to condemn his Books. They set upon him while he was seated in the doorway of one of the shops talking with the proprietor of the place. They attacked him in language which even those standing by and listening rebuked, and the proprietor of the shop was almost included in the quarrel because he took up the case of the colporteur defending his speech and behavior. But when the mob noticed that their attempt was not successful, as they had expected, they laid hands on the man and thrust him forth out of the town, threatening him with the judgment and punishment of the ruler of the islands.

The above reference to two successive attempts to cast us out from their towns would almost seem as if the old spirit of opposition and violence had again taken hold upon the people, and that we should be prohibited from visiting where once the Gospel has entered. But it is not all so bad as it seems at first thought. Men from the Oman coast who met our helpers when they were there for the few weeks in which they were badly treated, have since come to the station and have

of their own accord sought out the Bible-shop to purchase books and have also carried with them Scriptures. The helper who was in charge of the shop at the time happened to be one of those who had been thrust out from the district referred to, and now had his opportunity to witness and speak to them of better things. After a few weeks, when the colporteur was instructed not to visit the neighboring island, another has gone there and has been graciously received, so that we are now able as before to visit the town and talk to the people in the shops. And there is this which is encouraging in these little events, viz., that it is a fairly sure proof that some of the Books which had been placed there were read and re-read by the people, and that some of the Gospel work which has been done there in the past has not been without result. We witness and some are beginning to give us their attention.

Early in the year we rented a Bible-shop in a new neighborhood in the bazaar. The shop in the old location was beginning to be misused by the Arab pearl merchants, and, partly through neglect of the shopkeeper, was fast becoming a rendezvous for the merchants and their customers to spend hours of each day to talk over the prices and sales of pearls. Many a bargain was concluded right there. This became so bad that it was no longer an opportunity for the shopkeeper to lead the conversation but, instead, the merchants took away from him the right to use his time. The new shop is at the head of a new line of shops of a newly-built bazaar leading from the first road in the bazaar to the sea where the people embark to take ferries for the adjacent island. At first we were rather doubtful as to the locality, for very few of the shops had as yet been rented and there was not much business transacted there; but we think that now everything has improved and that we have a favorable position. The number of people passing that way for the ferries is constantly growing larger and they are a class of people we would not be likely to get in the old location. Moreover, more of the shops have been rented and we hope that very soon the bazaar may become as busy as in the other locations. At first the attendance of callers at the shop was perceptibly smaller, but the numbers have constantly grown larger, and more of those call now who never ventured near before. So that, in a sense, we have changed our center but have gone where before there was no preaching in any sense of the word.

Men come and go, and strangely enough the men whom we seem to get nearest to are those who do not belong here at all, but come from other parts and happen through here only on business or by some mistake, only staying for a little while and then returning to their own towns or proceeding to other places in their wanderings. Some of

these seem to become very much interested, but very few of them return to us or send us word about themselves, so that we almost feel as if they were lost as soon as they leave here. One man who had before been in the hospital, and since for months lived among the Arabs in the southern part of the island, came to town and remained for almost a month. He came to prayers quite regularly and always attended the Sunday services. For several weeks he had come for his weekly lesson as well, with another of our Christians who came to receive and to give from the Book. The man made excellent progress in understanding as well as in simple lessons of questions and answers. But very suddenly he made up his mind that he could not earn a living here and must go elsewhere. He took with him portions of Scripture and a few pamphlets, for which he asked of his own accord, and, although he could not read himself, he said that he would persuade others to read to him. He purposed returning here again in a few months, when he would call, but up to the present he has not returned, to our knowledge.

Others have come and asked for instruction, but these have not been so promising and did not seem to be in such earnest about their search for Truth. They, too, have gone and have not been heard from since. We can only feel that we have had at least the opportunity to witness, which witness we pray may be carried by them to other parts where we could not go ourselves.

JAMES E. MOERDYK.

