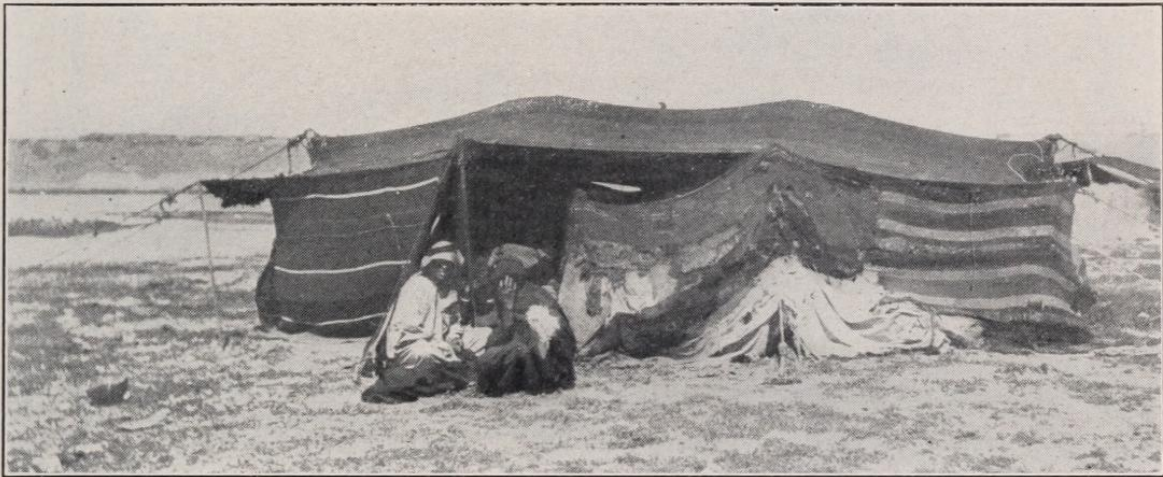


## A Note on Northeast Arabia.

The occupation of Kuwait as a station by our mission, and the cordial welcome given to our doctors by its ruler, Sheikh Moharak, calls attention once more to one of the principles of our mission, laid down in its book of rules (adopted in 1897), viz., "Our aim is to occupy the interior of Arabia from the coast as a base." The strategic importance of Kuwait as the future terminus of the overland railway and as the best harbor in the Gulf, is evident. Kuwait also is the best possible place of departure for the occupation of Northeast Arabia and the Nejd.

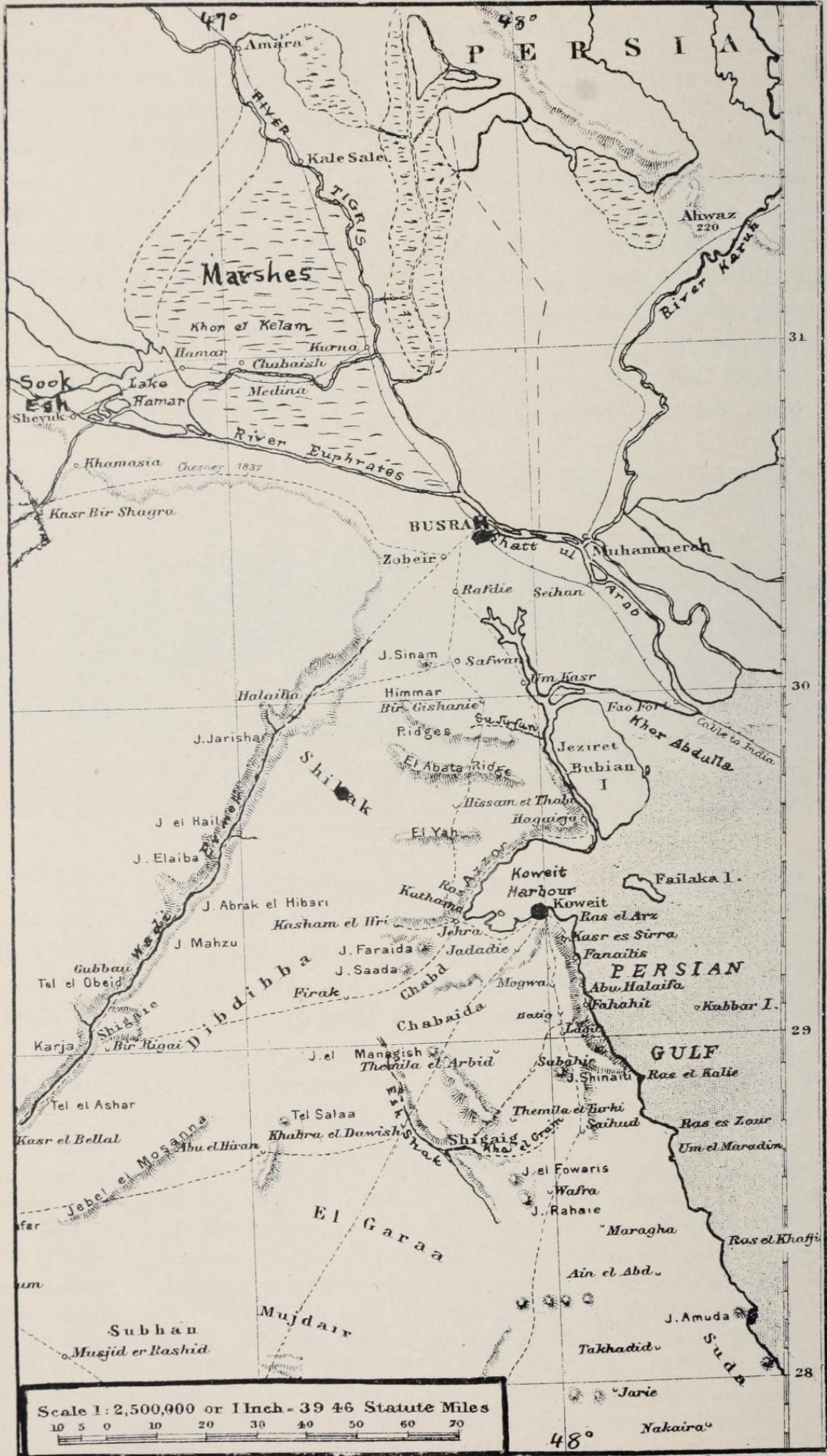
I was therefore specially interested to read of a recent journey in that part of Arabia by Captain G. E. Leachman, of the Royal



A BEDOUIN TENT NEAR KUWEIT.

Sussex Regiment, in the *Geographical Journal* for March, 1911. He traveled from Bagdad southward through the territory of the Anaeze Arabs as far as the Nefud desert; then went through the territory of the Muntifik along the Euphrates to Samawa. It was a fortunate chance that led him to the camp of the Emir of Hail, the ruler of Nejd. The whole account of his journey is interesting and the reception he met with indicates that the country is becoming more accessible. He writes concerning the political changes in the last few years:

"The present Emir of Hail is Saud ibn er Rashid, a boy of twelve, son of Abd ul Aziz, who was killed in battle in 1906, his eldest son Mitaab succeeding him; in 1907 he met an untimely end at the hands of his cousin, Sultan ibn Hamud er Rashid, who put to death at the same time the remainder of the family with the exception of the present Emir, who was taken to Medina. Sultan was shortly after murdered by his own brother, Saud ibn Hamud, and he, in his turn, was murdered by his uncle, who then brought the present Emir, Saud, from Medina. This last event took place in the winter of 1908-1909. On arrival in the Shammar camp I was called to the Emir, who was sitting in audience in a great tent with the regent, Zamil ibn Sabhan, by his side. Saud is a handsome



little boy with beautiful features and fine hair. He is a fine horseman, riding in fact being his only amusement, and being but a child, he becomes very weary of the long sittings in the "maglis," where tribal affairs are discussed at an inordinate length. He exhibits at times a most violent temper, which, with his features and other characteristics, he seems to have inherited from his father Abd ul Aziz. Zamil ibn Sabhan, the regent, is a man of thirty-four, but in spite of his youth, is probably a stronger man than the Ibn er Rashid Emirate have seen for many years. He is largely responsible for a very great change that is taking place in the position and character of this Central Arabian power."

According to Captain Leachman, fanaticism and opposition to foreigners is on the decrease, and the Emir, as well as the regent, show a conciliatory attitude towards the Turkish Government. In reproducing a portion of the map accompanying the article, we throw down the challenge to ourselves and to the churches that support us, to look away from the coast inland, and see that there is yet much land to be possessed. Special prayer should be offered for those who are holding the fort at Kuwait that their influence may prepare the way of the Lord into the interior.

S. M. ZWEMER.

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### The New Station, Amara.

At the Annual Meeting of the Arabian Mission in November, 1910, a missionary was assigned to reside at Amara and thus the sixth regular station of the Mission was opened. Amara is located on the West bank of the Tigris River, about a day's journey by river steamer from Busrah. It is preferable to Nasariya on the Euphrates as a residential station because its superior and constant steamship connections make it almost as convenient as Busrah itself.

The town was founded in 1861, as a coaling station, and has grown to be an active trading center. It is in the midst of date gardens and fields of wheat and other grains. The population in 1895 was reported to be 9,500. Of these over 1,000 were Sabeans and 600 were Catholics of Chaldean, Armenian and Latin type. At present there are not more than twenty Christian families, of whom only the members of the Mission staff are Protestant.

Arabs, Persians and Turkish officials and soldiers form the bulk of the population, but the Sabeans, who are also known as the Mesopotamian Star-worshippers, Mandæans and St. John Christians are not less interesting. They are equally famous for their composite religion and for their skillful composition in silver and gold and antimony. Their religion is a mixture of Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, without enough of the last to save them. It is as

hard to get them to give up their religion as to have them give up the secrets of their silver work.

The Mission has kept in close touch with Amara from the earliest days. Dr. Cantine noted the place while on a trip to Bagdad in 1892, and in the summer of the next year sent a colporteur there with Scriptures. In a report dated January 1, 1894, Dr. Cantine suggested Amara as a place where "a good corporteur could profitably spend some time opening a shop for book sales and preparing the way for other and more permanent occupancy." Although it was only last year that the idea could be carried out in full, yet the suggestion was



BAZAAR AT AMARA.

a most fruitful one, for Scripture sales have been large there and several converts first came in touch with the Gospel at Amara.

In 1895 a Bible Shop was opened without opposition at first, but it was closed and sealed by the Turkish Government when it was learned that "the Protestants" intended to establish themselves there permanently. It was reopened after urgent appeals by the American Consul at Bagdad and the books seized were returned from the Custom House, and 122 of them were sold in the following three months.

The work there has had several setbacks. In 1896, the corporteur left because he was caught praying with an enquirer and threatened

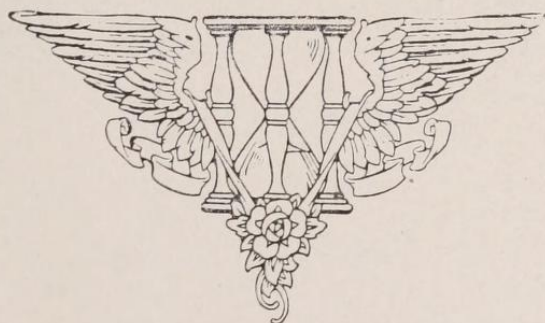
with imprisonment. Another corporteur stationed there had to be dismissed for misconduct. In 1903, the shop, with its supply of 400 Scriptures and some educational books, was destroyed in a fire which burned 165 other shops in the bazaar.

The value of the shop has varied with the earnestness and ability of the colporteurs stationed there. One was able to bring together eight or more Moslems to join him in the daily prayers. At times, the Mission doctors have done dispensary work there, winning new confidence and friends for the Mission. But whenever evidences of successful evangelization began to show, persecution followed. The first earnest enquirer was exiled from the town and his family found refuge with the missionaries at Bahrein, where they were baptized and remained faithful until their death.

Another Moslem who permitted Christian prayers for his fellow-laborers in a date garden was accused of being a Christian "Kaffir" and severely beaten upon his head and body. A third Moslem was converted and is now serving his Master as a colporteur of the Mission.

So great has been the success of the witness-bearing at Amara, that the Moslems look with great suspicion upon the location of a missionary in their midst, but tact and faithful living and teaching are winning friends and undoubtedly greater results may be expected.

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY.



N. B.—The Arabian Mission depends for its support and the extension of its work, not on the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, though under its care and administration, but upon contributions specifically made for this purpose. The churches, societies and individuals subscribing are not confined to the Reformed Church. Members of other denominations are among its supporters and its missionaries. Regular gifts and special donations are invited from all who are interested in Mission work in Arabia. Regular contributors will receive quarterly letters and annual reports, without application. All contributions, or applications for literature or information, should be sent to "THE ARABIAN MISSION," 25 E. 22d St., New York.

