

"It is now nearly three years since I first met Abd-el-Aziz Ibn Saoud. He was at that time in camp some twenty miles west of Kuwait, near a small town called Jahreh, and had come up from El-Hassa, which he had conquered from the Turks some two years previously. He wanted to discuss the then burning question of British and Turkish relations with Central and Eastern Arabia. He could not be persuaded to accept Kuwait's hospitality, most probably fearing Turkish treachery; for there were several Turkish agents in the town at that time, and Ibn Saoud's head was a tempting prize. In his own camp, however, he was absolute master, and could protect himself.

"In response to an invitation from the Sheikh, I went out to his camp to treat him and some of his people professionally. Having come up from malaria-stricken Hasa, many of Ibn Saoud's men were down with fever, and needed the benefits of modern medicine. His camp was a fine sight, and the two hundred odd glistening white tents made a brave show in the strong sunlight of a May morning. I was rather surprised to find white tents, but 'the black tents of Kedar' are going out of fashion among the aristocracy, and the 'house of hair,' the true Arab tent, is now the dwelling of the Bedouin only. As a matter of fact, the true Arab tent has been much overrated by travellers; for when it is a little bit old, it leaks like a sieve in a shower of rain.

"The Sheikh's marquee was at the end of a long avenue of tents pitched much truer to line than one expects in this part of the world, where no one has a straight eye. On my arrival I was at once conducted into the presence of Ibn Saoud. He rose to welcome me as I entered, and pointed me to the seat of honour beside him. The tent was furnished in the typical desert style. Persian carpets covered the floor, and, for pillows, camel saddles overlaid with sheepskins were ranged along the sides of the tent. A pleasing dash of colour was added by the gaudy camel housings which hung from the tent poles; but the air of comfort was toned down by rows of exceedingly good rifles which were hung up ready for instant use.

"The minute Ibn Saoud stood up, I was struck with the personality of the man. In stature he is a good six feet, and with his broad, powerful shoulders presents a truly athletic figure, clean cut and symmetrically developed. He has all the graces of a polished Arabian nobleman, and, in addition, his open countenance invites confidence. As he talks, you feel that he is sincere; there is a ring of truth in all he says. His frequent gestures accentuate the beauty of his shapely hands. Our conversation touched upon many subjects, but perhaps the following instance shows up the man's character in all its desert ruggedness. We were talking of the opening up of Central Arabia to the white men. He said, 'They will be welcome, but on one condition only, that they do not interfere in religious matters. In Central Arabia, we are not only one religion, we are all one sect. In many parts of the Mohammedan world you have all the principal sects living together—Hanifi, Maliki, Shafi, Hanbali. In Central Arabia we are all Hanbalis,

and there is absolute harmony in consequence. Introduce new faiths, and there will be an end of peace.' (The Sheikh's idea of peace, when one considers the endless raiding and petty fighting for which the Arab is famous, is obviously relative.)

"It was on November 19 of last year that Ibn Saoud next visited this part of the country. The circumstances were markedly different. On the former occasion the vague claims of Turkey to Kuwait were a subject of discussion, and the Crescent and Star still flew from Mubarek's flagstaff. At that time the decision of this question was of momentous importance to Ibn Saoud. England and himself regarded one another as unknown quantities, and the Turk was standing by, waiting to see how the sum would work out. Then Ibn Saoud would not trust himself in Kuwait even with the powerful Mubarek as his host; but now he is not afraid to take up his residence in the palace, in the very centre of the town. A new standard now floats over the palace, a simple flag, the word 'Kuwait' embroidered in white letters on a scarlet ground. As on the occasion of his last visit, he has come up from El-Hassa, not overland as formerly, but by sea, an honoured guest on board H. M. S. ———, under the personal escort of the Commodore. The sea is a strange element to the Sheikh. As he himself puts it, he is a son of the desert, not of the sea. He is not a little impressed with the wonders of a modern ship of War.

"On the following day a durbar was held at the palace, and it was then that I had the opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with Ibn Saoud. Among all the richly dressed Arabs in the room, he was easily the conspicuous figure. His magnificent bearing still commanded attention. The three years had only improved the attractiveness of his personality, and when presently the Chief Political Officer decorated him with the K. C. I. E., and the beautiful ornament glittered on his handsome brown cloak, he would have made an unusual subject for an artist.

"There were several fine speeches made at the durbar, but that of Ibn Saoud was remarkable for its importance and transparent sincerity. He laid great stress on the fact that Turkey had no real love for the Arab, and that, amid all her pretensions of friendship, she had always sought to promote enmity between tribe and tribe. England, on the other hand, was doing all she could to unite the chiefs of Arabia into a powerful and harmonious confederacy.

"Ibn Saoud is possibly quieter and more deliberate than he was three years ago, but his beautiful smile is scarcely ever absent from his face even when he is apparently engrossed in thought. There was never a trace of conceit in his kingly bearing, and I was reminded of Mark Twain's description of King Arthur where he made the King himself say, 'Armour is a proud burden, and a man standeth straight in it.'

“After the durbar I saw Ibn Saoud twice in the Kuwait Sheikh’s *mejlis* and once when he made a personal call, and I was able to chat with him informally and further study the man. It is always an extremely difficult thing to estimate Arab character from a political point of view; but a straightforward friendship will, without doubt, make a valuable ally of Ibn Saoud, and go a long way towards bringing all the chiefs of Arabia into harmony—an event far more likely to-day than yesterday. Once the Arab chiefs can be made to realise that their welfare lies, not in constant feud, but in peace and mutual confidence, what England desires for Arabia will be accomplished. It may be that Ibn Saoud is the instrument that can bring those desires to pass.”

The invitation from this strong Sheikh to Dr. Harrison to visit his capital and the welcome which he received on his arrival promises great things for the future. The prayers and the sacrifice and the patience of twenty-five years will not be in vain. The purpose of the founders of the Arabian Mission under God will yet be accomplished and the interior of Arabia will be occupied. It is imperative that we, as a Church, do our utmost this year to hold our own in our missionary contributions that we may be prepared when the time comes to “go up and possess the land.”

N. B. In connection with this article read the latest word from Dr. Harrison in his article on the Present Urgent Medical Situation, written from Hassa probably on his way back from Riadh. His own report on the trip will be published later.—EDITOR.

Some of Maskat’s Shadows

By MISS CHARLOTTE B. KELLIEN.

The tears of a thirteen year old girl are usually neither rare nor alarming, but come, like sudden April showers, refreshing and sweetening, and making sunny smiles shine all the more brightly; but in Moslem lands where there is little or no carefree girlhood, such tears often spring from a tragedy too grave for the young heart. The child who came to the mission house to bid her friends a long farewell, was weighted down with a woman’s sorrow, and from that sorrow there is no redress in Islam; indeed, not even a consciousness that redress is needed.

Why should she weep, the father would say, when all he intended was to give her a husband; but women are such unreasonable creatures, never satisfied with what Providence—at the hands of their exalted menfolk—has decreed for them. The girl, however, looked at the prospect before her with different eyes and a truer vision because of the experiences of women all about her. On the far-off western coast of Arabia lived an older cousin,—how much older it may spare our feelings not to know, and to this strange kinsman the father had determined to give her in marriage. In vain the mother pleaded for

delay, for the choice of a husband nearer home; her only answer was abuse and finally divorce and, hardest of all to bear, a refusal to allow her to see her child before she was forced away into a new servitude under an unknown master. Was it any wonder that she wept on the eve of her departure from the familiar scenes of her childhood, with a long and terrifying journey by sailing vessel before her, and in her heart a fear of the new husband and his relatives far greater than her dread of the deep and its dangers. And to leave behind her the only real love she had ever known, and perhaps would ever know,—this was the crowning grief as she faced the uncertain future.

And what of the mother's heart? It is for this that Moslem women rear their daughters and are mute.

Beggars seem to be an inescapable feature of life in the East, and need not surprise us wherever found; but as we take our walk at sunset along one of Maskat's dusty roadways, we are moved to wonder concerning this large company of suppliants that line the way, until the hideousness of some of the outstretched hands tells its own story. We have reached the leper colony outside the city gates, and here, when the heat of the day is past, the victims of this dread disease assemble, hoping for a few mites to meet the morrow's needs. Many of the passers-by are themselves miserably poor, and yet the appeal for alms is never made in vain; for in addition to the constraining impulse of compassion, they are moved by the thought of the reward stored up for them in the next world for every kindness shown to a fellow believer on earth. There are suggested horrors behind the covered faces of these suffering men and women, and other sadly marred faces which ought, in mercy to the public, to be veiled. Their houses are close by, small, mean places where the poor unfortunates drag out a miserable existence, without special medical work or organized charity to alleviate their lot. One feels a shock of apprehension at the sight of little children, at present free from the scourge, playing about unconcernedly in such surroundings, and one longs to be able to rescue them before the taint has entered and made of their young bodies a living tomb. There is a courage and an uncomplaining acceptance of their fate more pathetic than tears as the outcasts return our greetings and in reply to our inquiries answer only, with Islamic resignation, "Praise be to God." His name is constantly on their lips, but their hearts are as far from Him as their poor, diseased bodies are from purity. Would that they might understand and accept the message of the One who can grant them the cleansing that will give them the right to enter in through the gates into the city.

Grim tasks await the woman physician who would help remove the age-long burden of suffering from the women of Islam, some of them so revolting in their details as to remain forever untold. The proud, passionate nature of the Arabs is easily roused to unreasoning anger,

and since there is no demand in their religion for self-restraint and the keeping under of the body,—except in the yearly fast of Ramahan, when the feasting and rioting of the night time provide abundant compensation for any discomfort by day,—the result of a man's fury is sometimes so terrible as to surprise even himself in a saner mood. A man and his wife disagree over a daughter's waywardness and unwillingness to stay at home! As usual all the blame is placed on the mother, who does not acquiesce in her husband's opinion as dutiful wives are supposed to do, and the sequel is that she is brought to the mission dispensary with a great gaping knife wound in her abdomen, almost unconscious from loss of blood and shock. The husband meantime feigned himself mad, and because the woman was a former slave of one of the town's great men and the mother of his daughter, nothing could be done to punish him, lest that noble family be touched with a breath of scandal by even this remote connection with a criminal.

An immediate operation was necessary for the woman, and as one went about the unlovely work of preparation, the heart was not strengthened by the thought that a husband's hand had dealt the cruel blow. There was a question and a dumb wonder in the eyes she sometimes turned on us, as if the *Why* of her fate was a problem too big for her simple mind and she sought from us the answer to the riddle. The women of Islam are trained to suffering from childhood and survive much, but in this case the death wound had been dealt and could not be combated. All the doctor's efforts were in vain, and the neglected, sinful spirit went out through the darkness into the presence of the Great Judge. Remembering His justice, as well as His mercy in which Moslems so implicitly trust, we wondered then, as we wonder now, how the soul of this, our Moslem sister, found a resting-place for eternity.

The First Lady of Kuwait

By MRS. C. STANLEY G. MYLREA

As we entered the room our hostess stood up and with a merry smile said in reply to our greetings, "Welcome, welcome, how are you? If God will, I hope you are well." She motioned us to the chairs which were obviously arranged for European visitors, while she sat on a rug on the floor. There were large hard pillows against the wall and a small and softer pillow was near her so that she could lean her elbow against it when she got tired.

She was small and stout with fair skin and her pretty Arab clothes falling gracefully about her made her a real picture. Her close fitting dress was of a delicate shade of pink silk and over that was a full robe, golden brown in color and also of silk. Around her head was the black veil of milfa which came down under her chin and was spread out over her chest making the pink and brown underneath even

more artistic. Peeping through her veil was a row of little gold coins sewed to the edge of a cap which fitted close to the crown of her head. Her cloak or abba, black crêpe de chine embroidered in gold thread around the neck and shoulders, was on her head, for the women wear their cloaks on their heads instead of their shoulders so as to be ready to cover themselves quickly if a stranger appears.

After we were seated we again asked about her health and the usual salutations passed between us. On the floor in front of her was a box of cigarettes as well as matches and an ash-tray, and very soon she put out a pretty little fat white hand and took up a cigarette. The hands looked all the whiter because of her rings. On both of her middle fingers were three narrow chased gold bands, on the third fingers were turquoise rings and on her little fingers were rubies and pearls. She threw off her cloak, letting it fall behind her, as she lit her cigarette and then we had a chance to see her bracelets. There were five on each arm, each bracelet being from a quarter of an inch to an inch in width. One pair consisted of plain gold bands, the next of pretty fret work and then another of filigree work and pearls. The last pair nearest her hands were of large amber beads. But she was really very plainly dressed to-day for we had seen on previous visits her many necklaces, loops upon loops of chains coming down to her waist.

It was a warm day and we had walked a long way and were very grateful when she called one of her maids-in-waiting to turn on the electric fan. Bye and bye various women came in from the harem and sat down quietly on the floor around the sides of the room and the conversation became more general. It was an upper room with one window opening towards the sea and another looking down on to the courtyard below. The room was an exceedingly plain setting for such a pretty picture, but the little lady graced the room rather than the room the little lady. There was a cheap European carpet on the floor and a black iron bedstead at one end of the room. The bedding was rolled up at the foot of the bed and underneath were odds and ends of china, a little tin trunk and a basket full of sewing.

On the verandah and round the door sat the women of the harem, both slave and free, all interested in the foreign callers. As the little lady lit her second cigarette one of the women sitting by her asked if we did not smoke and our hostess answered for us. Then she called her special maid, Fatum, the endearing form of Fatima. Presently she came and smiling faintly to us leaned down to take her mistress's order. She disappeared into an outer room but soon reappeared with a tray loaded with glasses of sherbet and we could hear the ice tinkling as she walked. Behind her came another maid with a folded bath towel thrown over her right shoulder and as we finished the sherbet, she offered us this towel to wipe our lips with.

We were asked a good many questions about our country and there were gasps when we said it took two months by sea to get there.

One woman said "But the sea! Aren't you afraid and don't you get sick?" Our little hostess said, "No, they don't get sick, they have become used to it." One of us turned to her and enquired if she ever was seasick. She replied, "No, but I have only been from here to Basra on a launch, I might on a long journey. But you! You are a daughter of the sea."

Another maid now came in and placed a low table or stool in front of us and yet another brought in a large tray perhaps three feet in diameter, and set it down on the stool. We were each given a bath towel to spread on our laps and then we were invited to begin. In the centre was a plate of apples and all the other good things were grouped around it. There were plates of water melon cut up in little squares, plates of musk melon cut up in the same way, a plate of meat balls, plates of different kinds of nuts and plates of Arab sweets. We were urged to try each kind and when we had finished without making much impression on the bountiful provision, we were told that we had eaten nothing. We were given knives and forks and spoons and so, in their opinion, there was no reason why we could not do justice to such a repast. One woman however who was sitting in a corner remarked that of course we couldn't satisfy our hunger if we ate with knives and forks. Our hostess laughed a merry laugh and said, "They know how—we—we—are Bedouh and eat with our hands; we could never satisfy ourselves if we ate with spoons." Cups of hot milk with a suspicion of tea in them and a great deal of rose water were now brought in and we were asked if the tea were tasteless or insipid. Alas! Would that it were. In addition to the rose water, each cup was half full of sugar.

We had asked if we might sit on the floor around the large tray and when all was taken away we all had pins and needles in our feet and were glad to go back to chairs.

The sun was getting low in the west and we felt that we had imposed ourselves on our kind hostess long enough, but we could not make a move to go until the coffee was served. Eventually we heard the clatter of the little coffee cups piled up one inside the other and there then appeared a slave woman who carried a pretty brass coffee-pot in her left hand and the cups in her right. She poured out a few thimblefuls of coffee for each of us. It was strong coffee and we had to drink three cups. The slave woman would have gone on pouring out cup after cup but when we had finished the third cup we gave it a little shake and as we handed it back, we said, "May your coffee never be cold" meaning, "May there always be some in your house with health and strength enough to make the fire and put the coffee on it."

We all rose then, and though our hostess said there was still time before sunset we began to say good-bye. Our little hostess asked us not to wait so long before coming again and in reply to our good-byes she said, "May you be in the faith and keeping of God."

And then we wended our way through verandahs, down steps, and across courtyards, until finally we reached the street.

Dr. Zwemer's Visit to China

Mohammedism was brought to China in 628 A. D. The number has grown until there are now about 40,000,000. The missionaries have been so busy with the task of reaching the heathen Chinese that up to this time very little attention has been given to this problem. Dr. Zwemer's visit was calculated to stir the missionary body to a realization of the need and the opportunity, and the resolutions adopted at the various conferences show the purpose to reach out systematically to win these Chinese Moslems to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Zwemer left Cairo on May 18th. En route to China, he visited India and held conferences with missionaries at Gujran walla, Mussoorie, and elsewhere. At Penang and Singapore he was also able to meet with the missionaries, while the steamer on which he travelled was in port. He arrived in Shanghai on July 7th, and began at once on the program which had been arranged for him by the China Continuation Committee.

He first visited the province of Honan in Central China, which has a considerable Moslem population. He was able to go to four of the largest cities, in three of which he addressed public meetings of Moslems. These meetings aroused a great deal of interest, and they made clear that Christian work among Chinese Moslems is possible, especially if it is done separately from the work done for those who are not Moslems. In each city, meetings were held with the Christians in which work in Moslem lands was described, and plans were proposed for further work among them in China.

Dr. Zwemer then visited the four missionary summer resorts of Kuling, Chikungshan, Peitaiho, and Chefoo. In these places large conferences with the missionaries were held, which have brought the problem of evangelizing the Moslem population of China more clearly before the missionary body than ever before. At each of these places, strong resolutions were adopted, and these have been referred to the China Continuation Committee to follow up and endeavor to realize.

Several days were spent in Peking, where an almost complete exhibit of Moslem literature in Chinese was secured. A number of the Moslem leaders were interviewed. An interesting incident was the presentation of a letter which they requested Dr. Zwemer to forward to President Wilson, asking the President speedily to end the great war. A considerable quantity of literature was distributed here and in the other cities that were visited. Dr. Zwemer left Shanghai to return to Cairo on September 13th.

The results of the investigations made during this vacation visit, in which Dr. Zwemer made ninety-two public addresses, will be published in the October number of *The Chinese Recorder*, the monthly missionary magazine published at 18 Peking Road, Shanghai.