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A Visit Along the Coast

REV. G. D. VAN PEURSEM

FOR a long time it has been my desire to visit the villages along the coast southeast of Maskat. Although an opportunity presented itself for such a tour during the Christmas festivities, I did not feel that I could leave Maskat at that time. Then came the week of prayer, which only under rare circumstances I could afford to miss. However, on January 12th we left by sailboat for Koriat, the first important village thirty-five miles from Maskat. Before we arrived half way the wind was strong and the waves beat high and they roared angrily. The boat was not large but the sail tremendous, so we made time. But suddenly the rudder jumped off its hinge—as these rudders have a habit of doing—and the wind whipped the sail and nearly upset the boat. But like minute men the sailors loosed the ropes and lowered the sail. Though we were bobbing up and down for twenty minutes, the rudder was replaced and a smaller one hoisted, then we proceeded, though more slowly, and with less joviality and not without some anxiety. Our landing was made with difficulty in a small canoe, but no damage was done here except that our clothes and bedding got wet. Paul's voyage and shipwreck mean more to me since I have become acquainted with sailboats.

In Koriat we were entertained by the Wali. He seemed greatly honored by our visit. His specialty did not seem to me to be religion. When I opened religious discussion he had the habit of leaving. Asking why he repeatedly did this, the men told me that he went out to have a smoke. There was only one among his men who made any objection to Christianity and he must have been the religious leader. Most of them said that our religion is like theirs, although they know very well that we have no place for Mohammed. The Wali has thirty soldiers under him and their main occupation is eating dates and drinking coffee and escorting him on his morning walks. I was asked to walk with him one morning. At three different places we squatted on the ground for the purpose of eating dates and drinking coffee. Waste