

is to the front and an asylum for lepers and other unfortunates has deeply impressed the Mohammedans. Out of a population of thirty-five millions in Java, there are nearly thirty thousand Moslem converts. With those in Sumatra and the other Islands won from Islam, we may count over *forty-five thousand*. The results among the heathen tribes are tenfold and the total number of native Christians in the Dutch East Indies is close to six hundred thousand. The character of the Moslem converts compares favorably with that of those from Animism. They are more sturdy, more eager to carry the message to others and more independent. It was a new experience to speak Dutch as well as Arabic before gatherings of Javanese Mohammedans, and to receive long letters in the Dutch language from Moslems inquiring about the Bible and Christian doctrine. The Church at Solo (see illustration) sent a special greeting to the workers in Arabia.

Three "Homes" in and About Kuwait

MISS GRACE O. STRANG

A City "Home"

IT was a burning August afternoon—not a day one would choose for calling. But the Mother of Ahmed had issued her invitation and it would be ill-advised indeed to refuse a visit to one who had never entertained a Christian before. At last she came to fetch us. Panting and exhausted she sank down upon a floor-divan, withdrew her heavy woolen cape somewhat to wipe the streaming perspiration from her face, and drank the glass of cool water offered her. Then she hastened to conduct us to her home that we might be there as long a time as possible before the return of the men of the household at sundown. Between the heated white walls of narrow streets and through the sleeping bazaar our donkeys carried us, the Mother of Ahmed laboring after. A sharp rap at a wooden door in the wall started a babel of sounds. The door swung open, and we were literally pulled in, donkeys and all, by that numerous company of women and girls known as the harem. The three older women embraced us with some show of dignity, but as for the younger, they almost consumed us with their salutations, and rushed wildly about in their excitement, thereby setting fowls a-flying and lean cats a-running, while a long-eared goat found hurried safety in bolting up some half-ruined steps to the roof.

We were taken to a long, narrow room where rugs and cushions had been placed for our comfort. Some burning coals at one end, with tea and coffee pots at hand, explained the smoke, some of which had probably escaped from the one window. Our hostesses seated themselves opposite to us and fanned us vigorously with large peacock-feather fans. The confusion was now somewhat abated, although the several infants of the household were being passed in and out of the window and from hand to hand, and even Moonira, a handsomely dressed bride of fourteen or fifteen years, jumped through it to save herself a few steps to the door, upsetting at least one cup of tea with her flowing robes. After serving us with food and drink and after satisfying the

demands of their imperious baby boys, the patient mothers were more at ease for conversation. The Mother of Ahmed shows us her only son, a boy of two years, and he not healthy. He is the only living child of her ten babies. But how young she looks! She was married at ten years of age, she tells us. Moonira brings other pretty dresses for us to see and tells us about her husband who is a customs' official in another city and whom she seldom sees. But who is the sad-faced girl peering in at the window? Oh, she is only Fatma, they explain. She is a strong-willed girl. When her husband took another wife she was very angry. He beat her. So she ran away and came to her father's house and now she has been divorced. She is a naughty girl, they say; she worries the children and is disobedient and careless.

Lastly we were taken to see the aged mother lying ill in the courtyard. Nurse Mary brushes away the swarming flies and tries to diagnose her case. She gives a few simple directions and whispers that she fears she is near to death. We then take the Bible and read words of comfort and salvation, explaining as best we can. Then in accord with our Lord's command, we pray for the house which has entertained us so hospitably, including the poor old mother—a prayer which our God seems to be answering, for from that day she began to recover. "This is good teaching," the women say, "and we must know more."

Parcels of food, large and small, are heaped upon us when we leave, and reckless Fatma calls out after us, "I am coming to live with you."

A Persian Home

Who does not like to go to a wedding? An infidel could hardly be at the formal ceremony in Arabia, but she could be and was invited to the feast. The poverty of the place was immediately apparent, but our generous hostess had provided a delicious meal of rice and chicken as tender as any chef could produce.

The establishment seemed to afford only one room, the one in which we sat. There bed-clothing was piled up, utensils were tucked away here and there, and a small chest with a lock contained the scanty store of food. The pretty wee bride came running in, all too well pleased with her borrowed finery. Heavy rings, bracelets, necklaces and the like, of pure gold, she wore in profusion. Her long purple frock was pretty indeed. Her eyes were blackened and her hands and feet made yellow with henna. She sat beside me putting her little head on my shoulder during most of our visit. So tiny was she, being not ten and small for her age, it was hard to believe this was more than a play wedding in the nursery. But no, it was a real wedding. The mother of the child sauntered about the court-yard, hardly featuring in the wedding. Wretchedly dressed, she could scarcely be persuaded to enter. She carried a thin, starving baby in her arms, with no sign of a garment upon it. When I inquired about its clothes, she produced a miserable rag with holes in it for arms. And this was the mother and brother of a bride at the wedding feast!

A drumlike instrument began to sound, and we knew there would be dancing. A place was arranged in the narrow courtyard for us, a mat having been loaned by the neighbors for the occasion. We were not

obliged to watch this indelicate performance long, for we managed to persuade the chief performer, the groom's mother, that she was far too tired for such vigorous exercise. In the meantime throngs of neighbors, Arab and Persian, had gathered in, perhaps as much to see the foreigners as to see the bride. It is an excellent opening for a gospel message! How attentively they do listen. A leader among them, hearing a muffled note or two from the drum, breaks out in loud rebuke: "Do keep still! Don't you know we want to hear this preaching?" Probably the little bride understood little of what was said, but we will hope the words will be interpreted to her. At least she understood our love.

We spied the groom in an adjoining courtyard and asked him if he would not like to let us have the little bride to train for a time till she should be a bit older. He came to see us to discuss the matter, but reported the unwillingness of the entire family for such an arrangement. They will soon go to Persia, he said. May some seed of truth have found its way into her heart to grow and bless her in her certain misery.

A Bedouin Home

A few minutes' ride brought our beasts to the city gate and to the open desert, where the black and striped tents of the Bedouin stretch away and away till they vanish behind a desert ridge. There is no invitation to visit them, so we pray as we go that some friendly person will see us and invite us in. As we skirt the encampment we are spied by a figure in black, who calls silence to the howling dogs and comes out to greet us and to lead our donkeys to tether at a tent pin. A few yards of homespun are thrown upon the ground for a mat and a thieving goat boxed away from the sack of grain against which we will lean. Woolen sacks of provisions and heaps of dry, grayish fodder for the camels occupy most of the space under the tent. Neighbors come flocking about, especially boys with bright eyes which will miss no detail of the novelty, from a bit of gold in a tooth to a shoe lace. After admiring and entertaining the babies, who fortunately are not afraid of us, we bring out the Holy Book and read and explain, while they both listen and ask questions with commendable reverence. Oh, yes, they reply, they know that Jesus was the son of Mary. But did they know that He died for their sins, and that He is in Heaven praying to His Father for them? "Did you hear that?" says one. "She says He calls God His Father." "Yes," says the missionary, "and God hears every prayer which the Son offers, and He will hear His prayer for you." Then we drank some very sweet tea, prayed for the household, and were off. One old soul snatches Nurse Mary and pleads, "*Do* come into my tent! Do! Step inside if but for a moment. I want that my house should be blessed, too."

Our hostess is at hand to assist us to mount and to lead the donkeys for a distance. Others accompany us on our way, some protesting vigorously that we have not visited them. One woman, who has visited our hospital, comes running from a distance, covering us with kisses and entreating us to come to her. But the city gate will close at sundown, so we give our promise that we will come again, using the phrase constantly upon Arab lips, "If God wills."

Pearls

MRS. LOUIS P. DAME

HAVE you ever stopped at a jeweler's window and gazed on the costly pearl necklaces and the brooches and other things set with pearls? Did it ever occur to you to wonder where they came from and what they had gone through before they were placed in the window display? It may seem strange to you to learn that this little island on which we live, this far-away, forlorn little town, is the real center of the pearl trade of the world. If it were not for the pearls this town would fade away, there would be no reason for its existence.

There are the divers, who make a bare living diving under the blue waters to bring up the oyster shells, there are the men who hold the



PEARLING BOATS

ropes, and the rest of the diving boat's crew, there are the men who go out from boat to boat to speculate on the success of the catch and bring in the pearls, there are the merchants and brokers who buy and sell the pearls, and there are the other folks who supply the necessities of life for all these groups. Indeed everything in this island centers directly or indirectly on the pearl industry.

The main diving season began after the fast month of Ramadhan, and we saw hundreds of boats with their white sails flung to the breeze going out to sea. It is really a very pretty sight to see, like a great flock of big, white-winged birds on the deep blue water.

A diver's equipment is very crude. When he dives he dons no rubber