

much impression has been made. But the fact remains, also for Arabia, "The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

Not that we despise the day of small things, or ever doubt that the mustard seed can grow into a large tree. But this does not say that the Church of Christ may be satisfied with small things. If the smallness of the effort is due to the lack of interest or unwillingness to sacrifice, the Church has no right to expect great results. He that soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly, is true in this respect. May the Church of Christ, in view of these conditions, increasingly labor in prayer to the Lord of the harvest, for now, as in the days when Christ was upon the earth, the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

Odds and Ends of the Bahrein Girls' School.

MRS. MINNIE W. DYKSTRA.

It is not to introduce to you a new department of the work, or to introduce you to new friends, that this letter is written, but to renew acquaintance, to increase interest, and to benefit the work.

Through lack of help the teaching in this school has been done by the different missionary ladies as they have found time to add it to other work. The attendance is not of Arab girls, as many suppose. According to the law of their prophet, Arab girls of eight years old and upward practically become prisoners in their own homes, and so attending school is entirely out of the question, however much they might wish to come. The Persian girls and women, however, enjoy much more freedom, and it is from among these that the roll is made up. This, of course, brings its own difficulty. The teachers ought to know Persian as well as Arabic, but till now it has been impossible for them to do so, either because of lack of time while still studying Arabic, or because of inability to find a Persian teacher. The total enrollment, of Persian girls only, has gone above forty, but, of course, not nearly all of these are in regular attendance.

There is no compulsory school law in Bahrein or anywhere in Arabia, neither is there any law against child labor. The parents have not been taught, and why should the children be taught, especially the daughters? If garments are to be had, or at Christmas time a doll and some candy is given, perhaps a covetous mother may send her little girl, or encourage her to go, in the hope of obtaining a gift. In such a case the teacher must use much discretion in distributing the gifts, so as not to foster this spirit of begging,

nor to discourage even such attendance, however paltry the motive, much less to offend those in regular attendance by treating the irregulars like themselves. It is often quite a problem, for jealousy is not an unknown quantity among these girls. But absolute sincerity and justice in dealing out rewards of merit has its own reward, and gradually the girls begin to appreciate the system.

To encourage regular attendance, rewards were given every Friday to those who were present every one of the five school days. It often seemed hard to abide by the rule. For the children have no calendars or timepieces at home; all days are alike to them, and the recess of Saturday and Sunday is a difficult thing to remember. And so it frequently occurs that, instead of beginning on Monday, they come in on Tuesday morning, and, quite unable to remember or to keep track of the days, expect a prize on Friday with the faithful ones. Then it is not an easy matter, when tears of disappointment fill their eyes, to keep firm, knowing that they are not to blame for their ignorance. But as the larger girls, through hard experience, are being educated up to this rule, they explain it to the smaller ones, and help them to understand its justice and necessity. To help them, the teacher carefully explains every Friday morning at the close of school that there is no school on the next day, nor the day after that, but on Monday. And still on Saturday and Sunday mornings most of the girls are sitting about the gate, ready for school, not knowing whether it is the next day, or the day after, or Monday, and they seem to think it safer to come each day till the open door on Monday tells them that school has begun for another week.

The girls display as varied traits of character here as in the schools of America. There are the industrious and idle, frivolous and serious, good and bad tempered, sunny and morose, bright and dull, loving and beloved, and friendly and friendless. An introduction to them and the lives they live may help to bring our little Persian girls nearer to the love and prayers of all who read about them.

First, there is Chargooly, a little girl of about six, with beautiful, soft brown eyes, a very regular face, one of the prettiest little girls in the school. She seems like a little American girl in her actions, more than any other. Full of imagination and spirit, she imitates all that is being done in school. If she does not know the song that the others are singing then her lips are always trying to form the words as she sees them forming on the teacher's lips, and during prayer she has a little play all by herself, in imitation of what is going on. When first the missionaries saw her she was as

sly as a wild deer, for all these children were, and in some homes still are, taught that the infidels will cut their throats if once they come within their reach. But gradually Chargooly's fears have been dispelled, and now when we go out for a walk and pass by her house, Chargooly and her bosom friend, Zahary, run out to meet us, and, each taking a hand, walk far out with us into the desert. Or if we go out on some errand, they trot along contentedly, always humming their favorite hymn, "There is a Happy Land;" then they wait patiently for the errand to be accomplished, and go back with us to the house. Truly, she is a child that no one can help loving, with all her winsome, loving ways.

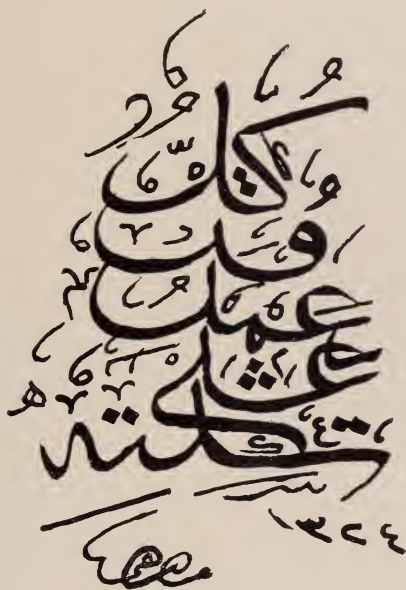
Then there is Majey, poor, one-eyed Majey. Her home life is not conducive to sweeten her temper. Adopted, fed, and sheltered, only that merit may be gained, the nine-year-old orphan earns more than all she gets. Her present home is back of the Mission compound, and from early morning until dark the call can be heard, "Majey! Majey!" Majey must run errands, do the family marketing, mind the children, bring the firewood—which latter means going out with a large gunny sack, hunting and gathering the stray pieces of wood, and when the sack is full, a bundle as large as herself, carrying it, coolie fashion, to her home, be it near or far. Quick to resent a correction or a cruel sting or taunt from unkind and thoughtless schoolmates, her face often threatens a tempest, which clears off like April showers, leaving in its wake only sunshine and smiles. She is a loyal little soul, and, to the children of the home she lives in, she is a watchful guardian, and always ready to take up the cudgels in their defense. In writing she has made the most rapid progress of any in school, and a word of commendation and approval lights up her face. One cannot but realize that in her heart there is a chord that responds to love and kindness.

Fatimah is a little girl of about eight, who very seldom comes to school. She is too busy. Early in the morning she is at work, sweeping the yard around the hut she calls her home, gathering firewood and running errands to the bazaar to get the day's supply of "delin" (grease), fish, etc. When this is done she takes her little stock of supplies, consisting of bundles of kindling and matches, sits down on the road directly in front of the school—a shop mistress now, ready for any would-be customer. And here she sits all day, in the fierce blaze of the sun or in a cold shemal, when her scanty clothing is quite insufficient to keep off the chill wind. But Fatimah does not lead an idle life here, although the work itself might be conducive to idleness. She is a clever little girl, and out of stray pieces of wood and rags picked up on the rubbish heaps

she makes dolls and toys. No one has taught her, and there is no inducement for her little fingers to work so skilfully and industriously except the pleasure it brings to her. Often it happens that there are no customers, and then if a few playmates join her she gets a chance to play, but usually she is alone. Fatimah's face is always a pleasure to look at. No matter how busy she is, she is always smiling and happy. Her untrained hands show great skilfulness, and her crude toys indicate good imagination and judgment, and she might be trained into a very skilled worker if only she came to school more regularly. But she cannot; she must work. Perhaps her father lounges about the house and smokes his nargeeleh, while his little girl is the bread-winner. The profit of the sales at the close of each day amount to but little, but if it is enough to buy a few provisions for the family, why should Fatimah go to school? No "baises" are earned there, and Fatimah is only a girl.

Another little girl who is a type of many is Sheery. She has very defective eyesight—perhaps incurable—and, through the squalor and filth in which she lives, the trouble will no doubt be aggravated until Sheery becomes blind. She is only about nine, and is now little better than one-eyed. After painstaking efforts on her part and infinite patience on the part of teachers, she has learned her letters. Not that she is so dull, but all her vision is crooked. She writes her letters upside down, and has learned them topsy-turvy, but she persisted in spite of all these obstacles, and began to read. Very few have shown such persistence and courage, and it gives great satisfaction and pleasure, especially to the teacher, to see such good results and to realize that there are such possibilities even in unpromising surroundings. In a large measure Sheery's success was due to herself, for she was teachable and tractable as well as faithful in attendance, and the importance of this last virtue cannot be overemphasized. Many bright girls with the best advantages, through their fitfulness of disposition and general irregularity, fail to make progress as this little plodder has done. Then, too, she endeared herself by her peaceable nature. Some of the girls can fight like tigers, as their mothers, and on the least provocation will revile one another. But Sheery knows how to mind her own business and how to refrain from quarrelling with others. She is an affectionate child, and often refers to her home, her parents, and particularly her little brother. Not many take the trouble to talk about their home life, and if they do it is about the probability of being whipped, a fight, or similar gossip. Sheery's home is one of the very poorest among the poor Persians, and it

was pitiful to see her come some mornings in such scanty and ragged clothes, and so, during the sewing hour, she was given every assistance and advantage, that as much as possible might be done to alleviate her poverty and want. She had been so regular and was making such good progress that it seemed particularly hard to have her stop all at once. No one seemed to know the reason why Sheery was absent day after day. And then one day she was seen on the streets, and when inquiries were made why she was not coming any more, the answer was, "My father is dead, and I must work and earn money." Poor child, the present offers but little to her in her girlhood, while the future promises still less to her in her womanhood.



ARABIC MONOGRAM.

Written by an eleven-year-old Moslem pupil in the Busrah School.

As has been stated, there is not the least conception on the part of the parents of the importance or necessity of educating the girls; the sewing brings many, because a quilt, when finished, goes to her who sewed it, and others will come for a few days, or once a week, just because there is a crowd. Then others often come into the school after the session has begun, with a kettle or dish on their heads, on their way to or from the daily market. These usually are older girls who are married, and the first remark often is, "Hurry up; I must go home, or my husband will beat me."

However, the teacher becomes hardened to these remarks. It may often be the truth, but the girls do not in the least mind telling untruths. They usually act like spoiled children and as if their coming means showing us a favor, and so threatening us to gain an advantage for themselves. Letting them feel our independence is often the best cure for such cases. Then there are the girls whose eyesight is so defective that they are almost blind. When these are little girls they expect to be put in the lower classes. But if they are older girls they want to be with those of their size. The motive of gaining knowledge has not yet been fostered; all they want is to be with the crowd, and so when divisions into classes are made they are not always willing to keep on coming.

While the results may not be immediate and impressive, the daily round of duties will have its own reward, as these Persian girls so often sing:

“Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.”

New Fields.

DR. SHARON J. THOMS.

When we started for our annual meeting in January everyone thought we would remain in Bahrein, where we had been since 1900, and that Dr. Mylrea would go to Muscat to take up the work for which he had been preparing for the last two years, but certain reasons were brought forward for our going to Oman to establish the medical work there. So we were assigned “to Medical Work in Oman,” to open work, if possible, at Muttrah, a city about three miles from Muscat.

This sudden transfer was a great surprise. I at once began to wonder what the “mem sahib” would think of it. She had stayed behind at Bahrein with the children, and intended doing the annual house cleaning in my absence, her school being closed a part of that time.

On account of poor mail connections between Busrah and Bahrein, I could not let her know until I returned three weeks later. The awfulness of moving and of taking the children to Muscat, or, what seemed worse, to Muttrah, where only a native house could be secured, loomed up pretty hugely. Soon the house that had just been put in order was in disorder; all books, pictures, stores, furniture, and children’s playthings, etc., etc., were being put into boxes.