

News from Mattrah.

It took some time for the work at Mattrah to pick up, after our return from India, as nearly all the poor people were back in the date groves, several days journey away, picking dates; and the merchants were too busy with the date packing business to come for treatment unless they became very ill. Then, too, the greater part of the first fortnight was spent in Muscat treating Abdul Messiah in his last sad illness. After his death Ramadhan, the month of fasting, began, when no one will take medicine unless he is very sick, in which case he will break his fast and make up the time when he recovers.

We are now treating about one hundred patients a day, with frequent eye operations.

We performed a cataract operation on a man who had only the one eye and greatly feared losing this by the operation, but who finally, against the advice of one of his friends, gave himself into our hands. We did our best with a splendid result. He is well known by the Sultan, and the day following his discharge he was called to the palace and asked to tell all about the operation. The operation is attracting much attention, especially so because a friend of the patient's went to a native "hakim" who claimed he could do the operation. He was operated on the same day with the result that he lost what little sight he had.

The Compounder shown in the picture [on the cover] is a convert from Mohammedanism in Afghanistan, who was trained in an English Mission Hospital in North India and came to me a few months ago. He has made wonderful progress in Arabic and is a most consecrated Christian.

He is really a missionary himself, having left his family behind and come to this strange and desolate country and work in the land of the Prophet, whom he once revered and now knows to be false.

We need another assistant badly, so his brother, who has been partly trained in the same hospital, is expected by next boat to assist us as dresser. I wish we could still find a competent woman to assist with the female patients, especially so as my wife has not been able to help with them since her long siege of low fever.

We have already booked our passage as far as Genoa, which place we expect to reach April next, and then we shall soon be at home where we can tell you the rest of the story.

S. J. THOMS.

The Use of Amulets Among Moslems.

One of the real hindrances to the spread of the Gospel and to simple faith in Jesus Christ among Moslems is the burden of groveling superstition which rests upon so many hearts. The widespread illiteracy of the Moslem world, including from eighty to ninety per cent. of the whole population, is a constant stimulus to all forms of childish credulity. One of the most common forms of superstition is the use of amulets, called in Arabic *Hama' Il, Ta' Widh, Hijah or Azeemah*.

The use of amulets is almost universal in the Moslem world from Sierra Leone to Java, and men of intelligence and education in Turkey and Egypt are still often the slaves to this custom, which, doubtless, like so many other things in Islam, was borrowed from Judaism. Yet



[By courtesy of Fleming H. Revell Co.]

A MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER FROM TUNIS, WEARING SIX AMULETS
TO PROTECT HER CHILD AND HERSELF.