

Quarterly *Fra Arabien* (of which the title page is given in facsimile) until their prayer, and ours, in the words of the Patriarch Abraham be fulfilled: "*Gid Ismael maatte leve for dit ansigt.*"

S. M. ZWEMER.

Rifa'a: The Town Set on a Hill.

Morning prayers are just finished and as we come out of the chapel we hear the jingle of donkey-bells and the shouts of donkey-boys. It

is that of the donkeys hired for the long postponed visit to Rifa'a. Since it is late in the Spring we are very fortunate to have such a fine day, with high, fresh air after the rain, and a cool breeze which tempers the heat of the sun. After the usual preliminaries we are mounted and off, entrenched behind black



ON THE WAY TO RIFA'A.

glasses, and wearing heavy sun topees. Straight across country we go, over well-beaten paths formed by the feet of many donkeys, through date gardens with lovely green patches of alfalfa, and onions, and squash here and there, all so grateful and refreshing to the eye.

We must ford an arm of the sea, and it is near high tide. The donkeys go in bravely, and splash, splash we proceed. The smallest of the donkey-boys has only head and shoulders above water, and we have to lift our feet to keep them from getting wet. Here comes a party going the other way—women heavily veiled, servants wading leading the donkey. There has been a wedding in Rifa'a this past week, of one of the sons of the Sheikh, and the festivities are just over. Here comes the party of musicians, with their queer drums, and queerer native pipes. A little farther on, after we are out in the open, we see a large party of black-robed women on foot, also returning to Menama after the wedding.

And now the wide desert stretches before us; to the east is the sea, to the west the mounds of Ali just visible, and to the south the higher

plateau-like country of Rifa'a, whither we are bound. The desert attracts and appeals on this clear morning; it is making us forget its vastness and barrenness by its herbage, which, though scant, is rich in color, varying from deep russet brown to pale green. Here and there a graceful camel's thorn waves in the breeze, and along the path are low-bushed flowers, the spreading umbel-like clusters of which vary from deepest purple to palest lavender. As we reach the higher ground we gain a clear view of the sea far out, and the green gardens surrounding the town we have left behind. And presently the barren, fortress buildings of Rifa'a come into view. In the valley to the right are clusters of green trees, the location of fresh water wells; farther beyond we recognize at closer range our friend, the peak of Jebel Dokhan, visible from the mission-house.

After a final climb we reach the town itself. The Sheikh's dwelling is easily found, and here we part company for the day, Mrs. Dykstra and I, with Makeia, going to the women's quarters where we are cordially received, and soon find ourselves sitting on the floor next to our hostesses, and the other women to the number of about twenty, ranged around the long room, the black serving-women at the farther end. The little oval-faced woman at the head of the line, with the sweet expression, is the young wife of the local Sheikh; she is of highest rank, but the tall, well-formed, noble-featured woman who sits next her is virtually head of the house at present, for the young wife is only fifteen and not experienced enough to preside at the wedding festivities just passed through, hence this older woman, who is of high lineage and the mother of two sons, has come and taken charge. We are fortunate in finding her and her women still here.

There are many interesting faces in the circle and soon we are busy replying to their numerous questions. This town has the name of being very fanatical, so we are surprised to be asked to read. Portions of scripture and the Arabic hymnal are produced, and selections read and explained. They ask for hymns, and we gladly sing several for them, as it appears to give them an especial pleasure. The young wife of the Sheikh is absent while we read and sing, and when she returns we are asked to repeat the performance. One of the women reads fluently, and is interested to the point of buying a portion of the Gospels. And so the hours pass quickly and pleasantly, until it is time for the midday meal which we eat in true native fashion sitting on the floor, and using only the right hand. A large round mat is spread, and upon its center is placed a huge salver of rice cooked in fat and mixed with bits of meat. There are sheets of crisp native bread, and dishes of meat with gravy very rich in fat. Add to this dates and a dish of sliced cucumbers for our especial enjoyment, and you have our

complete repast. The great feat is to eat the rice cleverly with the right hand, squeezing out enough each time for a mouthful.

After the meal we recline for a nap and conversation lulls, but does not die down entirely. The visit is too interesting to permit going to sleep. And presently the sun's rays begin to slant, and we are talking of starting on the long return ride. We are served with coffee and tea, and then finally take our departure. The women assure us that they have enjoyed our visit greatly, and we feel that we have won their good-will and confidence. Some of the serving women accompany us to the foot of the hill where we mount our donkeys, and we are started on the homeward trip. The men report a satisfactory day also, and we all feel grateful for so cordial a reception in a place about which we felt uncertain. Doubtless other influences have gone before, and we can but believe that the seed, though sown perhaps in stony places, will find soil to root and sprout and bring forth fruit in its season.

CHRISTINE IVERSON.

Work at Kuwait Reopened.

When in January, on his way back from Bahrein, the writer saw Dr. Bennett and Rev. J. Van Ess land at Kuwait, he wondered what kind of a reception they would receive upon landing. Little did he think that he would so soon have the privilege of writing a sequel to the report of that visit, and report the successful opening up of Medical work there.

The Sheikh not only gave permission to open up medical work, but even promised to send his launch to Busrah to get the doctor as soon as he was ready to come. True to his word, he sent the launch as soon as we were ready, and though it took some time to get started from Busrah, when once started we proceeded without hindrance, and reached Kuwait the next day.

Upon our arrival in Kuwait the Sheikh was absent. He was mustering an army which was about to make an attack upon a northern tribe. Meanwhile we were lodged in the sumptuous castle of the Sheikh, where we lived for an entire week. For though the Sheikh returned after three days, Oriental leisure and propriety forbade him to speak about any business for two or three days more. We were anxious to get settled in a house of our own, but comforted ourselves with the thought that we ought to be happy to wait a few days when we had so nearly attained an object for which the Mission had been praying and waiting for years.

Finally, after a stay of about a week, the Sheikh's man came one