

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



SONS OF THE RULING FAMILY OF NEJD.
A Picture taken in the Sheikh's Castle at Kuwait.

evening to tell us that he was now ready to show us the house the Sheikh had provided for us to begin work. That we were a little disappointed at first sight, I must confess. The house was large, and had been one of the finest houses in Kuwait in its time—in fact the former Sheikh had lived in it—but it was now very much out of repair and had not been occupied for years. Several inches of dust covered the floor, the walls, which evidently had often done service as a towel for the hands, were well nigh black, while heavy cobwebs adorned the corners. Only one room was provided with a window. But after a little inspection it was evident that the house was not so very bad after all, and that some repairs would soon transform it into a place well suited for our work. After about a week the house could scarcely be recognized inside. The floors were covered with a thick layer of cement, the walls were white-washed, and windows were

provided to let the blessed sunshine in. And when this had been done the house was suitable both for medical work and for living purposes.

At first the number of patients was rather small, for the work was unknown and besides many seemed to have a kind of secret dread of us. The fact that we were under protection of the Sheikh, who had asked the doctor to come, seemed to lessen the dread, so that after a week or two the number of patients rose to fifty, sixty a day, and even more. One day ninety-five were treated.

The attack, which the Sheikh was meditating when we arrived in Kuwait, took place about two weeks after we arrived. The Sheikh's forces were defeated, and for some weeks afterward quite a few wounded came for daily treatment. The Sheikh, after the defeat, at once resolved to make another attack, this time with a much larger army. Accordingly he imposed a heavy tax and enrolled a great many men from Kuwait. This caused not a little disturbance, and as a result the number of patients dropped considerably for a while. Had there been peace, the number of patients would undoubtedly have been much larger. As it was, some 1,500 patients were treated the first two months, and we feel that a good beginning has been made in this place from which we were so carefully shut out before.

Moreover, the Mission has obtained from the Sheikh a lease of the house for a term of five years. The contract, at the suggestion of the Sheikh himself, was registered at the office of the British Political Agency in Kuwait, and by this means our foothold has been considerably strengthened.

This means that we have made an important step in advance as a Mission. A place where work was once begun on a small scale, and from which we had been shut out carefully for years, has again been opened for work, and it seems we have gained a stronger hold than ever before. It requires but a short stay in Kuwait to reveal what an important place it is for missionary work. First of all as a place to reach Mohammedans. There is perhaps no other port on the Gulf where Islam has a stronger hold on the people. With but one foreigner in the city (The British Political Agent) and having comparatively no commerce with the outside world, the city has felt little of the influences that in other cities cause indifference and neglect of religious observances. Where one man performs his prayers in Busrah, ten do so in Kuwait. When walking along the shore at sunset almost every board and boat seemed to be occupied by men praying. Even small boys perform their prayers, something I had not seen before. Though there are no minarets, the number of mosques is large, and all are well attended. As one walks along the streets in the

daytime, every now and then one hears the busy hum of a school of boys studying the Koran. In the house of a man whose child the doctor attended, and who afterwards became very friendly, there was a school where little girls were taught the Koran. On all sides there was the greatest zeal in the performance of the external religious duties. At the same time the evil fruits of this religion were very much in evidence, seemingly in proportion to their devotion to it.

Again, Kuwait is an important center with reference to the extension of the work inland. A glance at the map will show this. Kuwait lies at the head of caravan routes, and is one of the natural entry ports for the interior of Arabia. Large numbers of Bedouins are always encamped outside the city. They come here to trade, remain a while and then depart into the desert. Besides there is a very intimate connection between Kuwait and Nejd, with which there is a constant caravan trade. A great share of the goods landed at Kuwait finds its way into the interior. Many of the inhabitants have seen Nejd at some time or other, while not a few of them were born there. Kuwait is often visited by some of the powerful rulers of Nejd. While we were still staying in the Sheikh's castle, Mohammed, the brother of the ruler of all southern Nejd, called on us in our room and was very friendly indeed. Afterwards we had the privilege of calling on that ruler himself, Abdel Aziz bin Saoud, in his own tent, for he is at present at Kuwait assisting the Sheikh of Kuwait in his wars. From this it is evident that systematic missionary work done at Kuwait cannot fail to exert an influence over all the eastern part of Arabia, and even to Nejd itself. In fact the only hope, it seems to me, to open up the interior effectively and permanently for missionary work consists in doing effective work in a strategic center like Kuwait. By these means prejudice and opposition will be disarmed, as those who have received treatment return to the interior, and the way is prepared for the permanent settling of a missionary in Nejd itself.

We used to pray for Kuwait that its doors might be opened. The door has opened now to a great extent, and our prayers are being answered. May we now as a Mission and a Church have grace and wisdom to enter in and possess the land for Christ.

G. J. PENNING.

