



shall go on to attack and win for Christ the great citadel of Islam, and cause the attractive power of God's love to be shown and our Saviour's words verified even in the Cradle of Islam:

"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

J. C. YOUNG.



A Day's Picnic with Arab Ladies of Muscat.

Perhaps the Arab ladies would not like me to speak in this way of the day I spent with them, because from their standpoint it was a religious ceremony; but I am sure if you had been with me you would have said, "This is just like a picnic." The Muscat women are not nearly as fanatical as the Arab women of Bahrein. They are more sociable and invite me to their functions and ceremonies where others would not dream of doing so. They do more than merely tolerate, they seem to enjoy my company. This week I was invited to attend a ceremony at a place a short distance out of Muscat called Sudab. Here there is a tumble-down building which is called "The House of the Vow." The lady who invited me was going to make a vow. I did not ask her the nature of the vow because so many visitors were present and I thought they might make unfavorable comments, and then I could ask her another time when she was alone. I had never attended a ceremony of this kind and I really wanted to know all about it, so I accepted her kind invitation and went to the place.

I wish some one could have taken snap-shots of me at different intervals. I was the only European in the midst of a goodly number of Arab ladies and all of them belonging to the aristocracy. Oh, what a gay company! The ladies were dressed in colored silk gowns. All Muscat ladies wear "hobble skirts," and long, narrow trousers, and men's hose on their feet. I noticed one lady had on a silk pair of hose (pale pink). You might truly name their dress, "The Harem Costume." The long, narrow trousers were made of various colored satin—bright orange, green, purple, blue, pink, magenta, etc. Their jewelry consisted of enormous, massive gold anklets and beautifully engraved bracelets reaching far up the arms. Their fingers and toes were covered with rings,—I counted five rings on a lady's toes. The noserings and earrings were of various designs and shapes. In Eastern lands a woman's jewels is her bank and so many banks were represented at this gathering. I looked very insignificant beside my Arab sisters in my plain white linen dress and wearing the Woman's Board Pin as my only jewel and adornment.

This gathering of women, dressed in their very best, were out to

spend the day in feasting. The one who was going to make the vow had bountifully provided for all present, and the feast was to be in a tumble-down building which was a sorry contrast to their expensive garments. As we entered the building every one made some pious exclamation and one and all removed their shoes before stepping on the mats that were spread for us to sit on. This place, or really ruins, is occupied time after time by wealthy people who come to make a vow, and although they revere the place they never think of giving any money to repair it or keep it in good order. Just near the building there are three graves containing the bodies or remains of three saints. The one who makes a vow chooses one of these graves and says to the saint reposing there, "I want so and so, etc. If you grant my petition, I will return and place good things [perhaps sweets] on the grave." I forgot to mention that she walks round and round the grave while asking her favor in making the vow. After this ceremony our lady returned to the assembled company and the sweets and coffee were passed around first while the contents of the huge pots were cooking merrily near us. The smoke was driven in clouds to where we were seated because the wind happened to be in that direction; and the ground in front of the building was saturated with the blood of the slain animals. These people deny that Jesus shed His blood for us, but they seem to have no ceremony without the shedding of blood.

I hope I was not like the Pharisee, but my thoughts were most of the time, "Lord, I thank Thee I am not a Moslem." I felt sick at heart as I listened to these women who were not a bit concerned about the real object of their gathering. Not one of them expressed any noble desires, nor was there any kind of elevating conversation. Not one dreamed of answered prayer. If I had said, "I pray to God in definite petitions and He hears my cry and answers my prayers," they would have exclaimed, "Ask forgiveness of God for talking like that!" Their prophet is dead. Their religion is a dead thing. They are dead in trespasses and sins. Oh, pray for them and the missionaries who labor among them. May God the Holy Spirit quicken these dead souls that they may live and serve the living Sinless Prophet, the Son of God, the Saviour and Redeemer who has promised to those who love Him, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do."

FANNY LUTTON.



Arabs Who Come to See Us.

This topic reminds one very much of the work of Peter Zwemer, the founder of Muscat Station. He was gifted with a bright, sociable nature that drew the people to him and sent him out to seek the people. He visited and was visited, not in Muscat alone, but in the ways and mountain-fastnesses of Oman. His successors have followed in his footsteps and now the habit certainly of the Arabs, is well established. But one is not allowed to forget the beginnings. A sheikh with his followers is announced, the name is not familiar, and the place they come from is barely known by name. On going to the reception-room one is not enlightened as to who they are or why they have come, until after the copious greetings customary one finds out that the sheikh is returning the visit of one of our number fifteen years ago. Yes, they recall the name, Zwemer. We are building on foundations.

The reception-room referred to is a large hall, similar to many a *Sibla* of the Arabs. It has direct access from the street, the door is always open and whoever wishes may come in. It is an excellent feature of this Mission house. The Mission owns a house nearby, where the colporteur lives, and where we can put up guests who wish to stay in Muscat a while. This is our Guest House, and it proved extremely useful this Spring when a chief of an important town was pleased to accept this hospitality. The object of this writing is not to present an appeal for funds, still I may say that a few hundred dollars for improving this Guest House is a real need of this Station.

But who are the people who come to visit us? They are sheikhs, chiefs of tribes or towns with their followers. These followers may be few or they may be many, according to the importance of the man. This Spring one came with eighty of them and, as many of them carry their arms, our place had quite a warlike appearance. They come from the coast to the East and the West and from Inland. Wherever missionary or colporteur has been they come from. Sometimes one who has heard of us makes a first call and invites us to visit him at his place, but the rule is that they have been visited first. So this feature of our work is a complement to Touring. A good deal of Oman has been covered and a good deal remains as new territory, but the list of towns visited is constantly growing and thus we have reason to hope that the number of visitors will also grow. Winter and Spring is the time when they come to Muscat to pay their respects to the Sultan. This season an unusually large number have come. In the nature of the case detail information of these visitors cannot be given. Enough has been said to show that many do come to our house and that they are often men of importance. I may add