



## A Note on Northeast Arabia.

The occupation of Kuwait as a station by our mission, and the cordial welcome given to our doctors by its ruler, Sheikh Moharak, calls attention once more to one of the principles of our mission, laid down in its book of rules (adopted in 1897), viz., "Our aim is to occupy the interior of Arabia from the coast as a base." The strategic importance of Kuwait as the future terminus of the overland railway and as the best harbor in the Gulf, is evident. Kuwait also is the best possible place of departure for the occupation of Northeast Arabia and the Nejd.

I was therefore specially interested to read of a recent journey in that part of Arabia by Captain G. E. Leachman, of the Royal



A BEDOUIN TENT NEAR KUWEIT.

Sussex Regiment, in the *Geographical Journal* for March, 1911. He traveled from Bagdad southward through the territory of the Anaeze Arabs as far as the Nefud desert; then went through the territory of the Muntifik along the Euphrates to Samawa. It was a fortunate chance that led him to the camp of the Emir of Hail, the ruler of Nejd. The whole account of his journey is interesting and the reception he met with indicates that the country is becoming more accessible. He writes concerning the political changes in the last few years:

"The present Emir of Hail is Saud ibn er Rashid, a boy of twelve, son of Abd ul Aziz, who was killed in battle in 1905, his eldest son Mitaab succeeding him; in 1907 he met an untimely end at the hands of his cousin, Sultan ibn Hamud er Rashid, who put to death at the same time the remainder of the family with the exception of the present Emir, who was taken to Medina. Sultan was shortly after murdered by his own brother, Saud ibn Hamud, and he, in his turn, was murdered by his uncle, who then brought the present Emir, Saud, from Medina. This last event took place in the winter of 1908-1909. On arrival in the Shammar camp I was called to the Emir, who was sitting in audience in a great tent with the regent, Zamil ibn Sabhan, by his side. Saud is a handsome



little boy with beautiful features and fine hair. He is a fine horseman, riding in fact being his only amusement, and being but a child, he becomes very weary of the long sittings in the "maglis," where tribal affairs are discussed at an inordinate length. He exhibits at times a most violent temper, which, with his features and other characteristics, he seems to have inherited from his father Abd ul Aziz. Zamil ibn Sabhan, the regent, is a man of thirty-four, but in spite of his youth, is probably a stronger man than the Ibn er Rashid Emirate have seen for many years. He is largely responsible for a very great change that is taking place in the position and character of this Central Arabian power."

According to Captain Leachman, fanaticism and opposition to foreigners is on the decrease, and the Emir, as well as the regent, show a conciliatory attitude towards the Turkish Government. In reproducing a portion of the map accompanying the article, we throw down the challenge to ourselves and to the churches that support us, to look away from the coast inland, and see that there is yet much land to be possessed. Special prayer should be offered for those who are holding the fort at Kuweit that their influence may prepare the way of the Lord into the interior.

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### The New Station, Amara.

At the Annual Meeting of the Arabian Mission in November, 1910, a missionary was assigned to reside at Amara and thus the sixth regular station of the Mission was opened. Amara is located on the West bank of the Tigris River, about a day's journey by river steamer from Busrah. It is preferable to Nasariya on the Euphrates as a residential station because its superior and constant steamship connections make it almost as convenient as Busrah itself.

The town was founded in 1861, as a coaling station, and has grown to be an active trading center. It is in the midst of date gardens and fields of wheat and other grains. The population in 1895 was reported to be 9,500. Of these over 1,000 were Sabeans and 600 were Catholics of Chaldean, Armenian and Latin type. At present there are not more than twenty Christian families, of whom only the members of the Mission staff are Protestant.

Arabs, Persians and Turkish officials and soldiers form the bulk of the population, but the Sabeans, who are also known as the Mesopotamian Star-worshippers, Mandæans and St. John Christians are not less interesting. They are equally famous for their composite religion and for their skillful composition in silver and gold and antimony. Their religion is a mixture of Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, without enough of the last to save them. It is as