



educational needs of the female population, and has the advantage of thorough, well-trained Christian teachers. The great need is for workers, both native and foreign, well grounded in the essentials of Christianity, steadfast in allegiance to Christ, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

E. M. MARTIN.



A Visit to Katif.

Beyond Bahrein, with the mission houses, the hospital and the school, the mainland of Arabia stretches westward for eight hundred



HOUSE OF HAJI MANSOOR PASHA, KATIF.

miles across the province of Hassa, lower Nejd and Hejaz to the Red Sea. All the way from Bahrein to Jiddah there is no witness for the Gospel. Bahrein is the gateway to East Arabia, even as Jiddah is to the west, and to go from here into the interior there are two routes, one by way of Ojeir, the miserable landing place of the caravans for Hofhoof, and the other northwards to Katif, which lies fifty miles across this part of the Persian Gulf from Menamah Harbor.

On Monday, April 24, Mrs. Zwemer and I left Bahrein in a sailing boat, with Ibrahim and Salih as joint captains, to visit Katif once more. Our last visit together was fourteen years ago, when we met with rebuff and were practically prisoners of the Turks, who were filled with suspicion and prevented any sort of open evangelization.

On this occasion, although we went with some fear and trembling lest we should again be turned back, we were surprised to find the doors wide open, partly due to the change of the Turkish Government, yet more particularly, we believe, because of the visit of Dr. Worrall two years ago. Even when we were still on the boat the sailors spoke of "Dr. Mission," their jolly passenger whom they had carried over, and who had made a name for himself and for the Mission at this gulf port. Twelve hours' sailing with a not very favorable wind, and twelve hours more tossed at anchor during the night, brought us to Katif on Tuesday afternoon.

Katif has no good name among Hassa Arabs; its location is low and marshy; its inhabitants are mostly weak in frame, sallow in complexion, and suffer continually from malaria. The town itself is badly built, woefully filthy, damp and ill-favored in climate. Yet it has a good population and brisk trade. The inhabitants are mostly Shi'ahs of Persian origin and are held in abhorrence by the Wahabis and the Turks as little better than infidels. The present location of Katif corresponds to the very ancient settlement of the Gerrhs of the Greek geographers, but no exploration for ruins has ever been made.

The town first gained its importance as the capital of the Carmathians in A. D. 287. Abu Tahar al Karmoot from his capital at Katif carried on devastating wars throughout two-thirds of Arabia, held the caliph a prisoner at Bagdad, menaced Aleppo, and filled the precincts of the Kaaba and the well of Zem Zem with Mohammedan corpses. This was the sect that carried away the Black Stone in triumph all the way across Arabia to Katif, and attempted to set up a rival shrine there. It was afterwards carried back, washed in rose water and restored to its position; and when the Carmathian sect broke up, the whole region around Katif and Hassa for a long time remained estranged from Islam—in the words of Palgrave, "a heap of moral and religious ruins of Carmathian and esoteric doctrines." The Wahabi invasion and the attempt of these stern Puritans, at the beginning of the last century, to make all Moslems orthodox did not restore the former glory of Katif. The whole region went from bad to worse.

When the Wahabi revival died down the Turks came and took Katif in 1871. They are still endeavoring to subject the Bedouin tribes, and only three and a half years ago the town was besieged by the Arabs and nearly lost to the Turks. Everything today looks very different from the villages of Bahrein, where safety and good government have made commercial progress possible. Everything in the town wears a mouldy look. The water supply is plentiful, bursting out in hot springs which water the gardens for nearly thirty miles along its coast; but the water is full of germs and worms, and the people in

consequence suffer many of the chronic diseases due to their uncleanly habits. Only the ruling classes and a few merchants are orthodox Moslems.

We landed from our boat, going through the surf on donkeys, and carried our letters of introduction to Shakir Effendi, who bore the lofty title of "Amir el Bahr" (Lord of the Sea). No trouble was made in regard to our passports nor the character of our errand, and in a little room set apart as our lodging, none too large and yet clean and airy, we received thrice daily the dole of rice and stew, supplemented by our own lunch basket.

The four days of our visit were crowded for Mrs. Zwemer by a ministry of healing to the multitude of sick. Some of them were old patients from the hospital, who had returned home, and others had heard through them and came to our lodging or besought us to visit their houses. Ahmad (the colporteur) and I sold Scriptures in the bazaar, talked with the soldiers, answered questions on present day politics, and exchanged opinions regarding the Yemen rebellion with Turkish officials. I was surprised to notice the demand for Scriptures, and we sold out our stock very soon. The effect of the work at the hospital, and especially of Dr. Worrall's visit, has greatly disarmed former prejudice, and the people were to a degree friendly and unsuspecting.

The West has invaded the East, even at Katif. Every night, and even in the early morning, our host tried to entertain us with a Victor phonograph grinding out café chanté selections from Cairo, while the machine, for lack of a table, rested on an old case of the Standard Oil Company. The rifles carried by the soldiers were made at Springfield, Mass., and the one rusty cannon which defended the entrance to the old castle was doubtless made in Germany.

On April 27 the town had a holiday. The custom house and the serai were decorated with palm branches and illuminated at night, for it was the Sultan's accession day. As representing all the foreign governments of the world, I took part in the proceedings, and heard the address given by the Kadhi from Stamboul, in which he asserted again and again, as though it were a matter of doubt, that the present Sultan was caliph of all the Moslems, and that his kingdom would have no end until the day of judgment. The soldiers received one cigarette apiece and a drink of lime sherbet in view of the occasion. The whole performance reminded us of how Americans would try to observe Christmas on a desert island, and was a pathetic apology for the new régime at the outskirts of the Ottoman Empire. It will be a long time before Katif draws on the treasury for harbor improvements or education.

The following day we paid a visit to the castle and village of Anaj, where the colonel and his family extended the best of hospitality. Katif with its surrounding villages may have a population of perhaps twenty thousand. The following are the most important places: Darain, Tarut, Senabis, Eth Thania, Anaj, Shehad, Safwa, Karoodija and El Amair. The cavaran route to Hassa from Katif is not safe, nor is there much intercourse with the interior westward or north, but the population is too large to be permanently neglected, and affords an open door to all the villages of this coast. In recent years steamers have begun to carry cargo from Busrah and Bahrein to Katif at uncertain intervals, and the trade of the place seems to be on the increase. Will you not join us in prayer that the seed sown here may spring up and bear fruit, and that these people, too, in their miserable surroundings, physical and spiritual, may know something of the law and liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

S. M. ZWEMER.



Life at Zobair.

The question is sometimes asked, does touring pay? My experiences this past year may help give the answer.

About twelve miles southwest from Busrah we find the typical desert town of Zobair, which can be reached, if the roads are in good condition, within two hours, at other times it may take five hours and more; it all depends with whom and at what season one travels. The road goes through uninteresting desert land, a part of an old crumbling mosque whose leaning tower threatens to fall any day and a coffee shop opposite the same are the only landmarks on the journey. Having passed these the city itself becomes visible, stretching from east to west. The one large unsymmetrical tower, like a parallel to Islam, indicates where the main Mosque is situated. Many unpretentious ones exist almost in every street, for Zobair is famous for its orthodoxy, and many Moslems look upon the people of Zobair as especially pious; some go there to gain spiritual footing. The town used to be governed by one big Sheikh whose mansions cannot be mistaken. One sees at the first look that they belong to a man of rank, but, unfortunately, he has absorbed all the vices of the civilized world and lost his dignity and the respect of the citizens; thus it happens that each one is at present his own master. Only when friendly tribes visit the place the Sheikh is expected to entertain them, any affairs which need arbitration or prompt decision have to be brought before the Mudir of the place; if he is unable to give satisfaction to the parties he refers them to the court in Busrah. Zobair has about