



## Impressions of the Arabian Mission.

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Having lately had the pleasure of spending a month in the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church, the thought occurred to me that your readers, and especially those who have friends in the work and who give it money and prayers, might like to see it through the eyes of an "outsider." The first contact was really gained at the Lucknow Conference, where four of its members were present; one, Dr. Zwemer, being chairman of the meeting, which, like the one at Cairo, owes so much to his inspiration and leadership. He belongs so truly to the Church at large, and has been so manifestly raised up for the part he has taken in directing attention to the evangelization of the Moslem world, that all Christians must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for him to the Reformed Church.

The first station visited was Muscat, where Ibrahim the colporteur had just come in from Muttra, near by, for a new stock of books, having sold out all he had. His face shone in telling of his work and how Dr. Harrison is kept busy from morning till night. Mr. Barny had about eighty guests, Arabs, in the guest room, and fine opportunities are secured through them to reach the homes. Miss Lutton has work for the women systematically planned. In Bahrein, from which place she has been transferred to Muscat, many were the loving inquiries made by Arab and Persian women for their "Lady of Light," as they call her.

In Bahrein a stay of three weeks made me familiar with the routine work of the station. At 7:30 a. m. workers, missionaries and Arabians gather for prayers in the church, then scatter for their respective duties—the school, the medical department, literary work, study, etc. The neat little book shop, standing in a good location, is opened, books and reading matter brought out, nor is it long before passers-by begin to drop in. There are many readers, even among the Arab women, so extensive use is made of the printed page. The out-patients have meanwhile gathered in the waiting-rooms of the hospital, the men on one side, the women on the other, and the first thing is reading of the Scriptures, an evangelistic talk and prayer, the missionaries taking turns in conducting this service, often visiting the in-patients as well to give them the Gospel message. Here they find Arabs, Persians, Turks, and even men from India. One cannot but wish that the friends in America who support this work could see how well the patients are cared for. In one bed is a Moslem sailor from India, just brought from the steamboat, partially paralyzed from an accident. No one knows his language, or that of his comrade, who

has come to care for him ; it is doubtful if he can recover ; we can only reach him by prayer. In a bed near by sits a man from Persia with bandaged eyes, having been blinded by an enemy. A remnant of light lingers in one eye, so he has come several days' journey hoping that the doctor can help him. A jet black Moslem in another bed has been badly burnt, but is recovering, and vows he will never leave the missionaries, but stay and become a Christian. The helpers take good care of the patients. One nurse is a young Afghan, one a converted Moslem. The hospital alone should command the time of an evangelist and offers fine opportunities to the missionaries for work which is far-reaching and successful.

The school work is also progressing, and a night school is held for some who cannot come by day. On the island is located quite a large colony of black slaves, freed by the British Government, whose good influence is much in evidence. Bahrein, like the other mission stations, made one think of a hive of bees all at work, and with good results to show. They have a good report, also, from "those who are without," especially on the steamships, on which they travel.

My stay was much shorter in Busrah, but I was most fortunate in seeing the new hospital just occupied and the meetings for men and women. The spirit and work were the same as elsewhere. I had a glimpse of Mr. Pennings, the solitary worker at Kuwait, recently reopened to Christian work, the ruler there having asked for a hospital and a medical man. It was a disappointment not to see Mr. Moerdyk with Mr. and Mrs. Calverley, at Amara on the Tigris, as our boat passed in the night. Mrs. Vogel, too, was absent from Busrah on a tour.

The Reformed Church is to be congratulated on its location on the Persian Gulf, which before many years will probably become very important in the commercial world. Business men and governments are making large plans in which this portion of the world plays a conspicuous part. It is to be hoped they shall not prove to be wiser in their generation "than the children of light."

It is the time for great projects and swift execution in the mission field. How desirable that not only the Arabian, but the Persian side of the gulf, as yet untouched, should be occupied for Christ ! It would be so easy to put mission work into Bandar Abbas, Lingo, Bushire, Mohammerah, where capital has already gone and men and women are sacrificing much in purely commercial enterprises.

Can anyone looking for a life work find a better place for his energies to tell for God? Can capital be invested elsewhere and meet with a higher return in the shape of treasure laid up in heaven? Is not this a good place for one to use his spare hours in prayer for the Moslem population of the Persian Gulf?

N. B.—The Arabian Mission depends for its support and the extension of its work, not on the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, though under its care and administration, but upon contributions specifically made for this purpose. The churches, societies and individuals subscribing are not confined to the Reformed Church. Members of other denominations are among its supporters and its missionaries. Regular gifts and special donations are invited from all who are interested in Mission work in Arabia. Regular contributors will receive quarterly letters and annual reports, without application. All contributions, or applications for literature or information, should be sent to "THE ARABIAN MISSION," 25 E. 22d St., New York.