

A Trip on the Persian Gulf.

The Arabian Mission is one of such magnificent distances that a month is the least time in which it can be seen, and two-thirds of that time is spent en route; but even this brief glance amply repays the effort.

On the morning of the fourth day out from Bombay, Maskat is sighted. Picturesquely situated at the foot of rugged mountains which encircle the harbor, it is very attractive in December, but it is not difficult to believe that those same bare mountains make the hot season almost intolerable.



PEARL BOATS DRAWN UP ON SHORE

The visitor, met at the ship with "welcome to Maskat," is not left in any doubt as to the sincerity of the welcome from the members of the Arabian Mission.

One of the great interests of a trip to mission fields is seeing the people in their homes, and at Maskat and Matrah there was opportunity to visit all grades, from the two wives of the Sultan, to the poor, living in huts, besides some of the Christian helpers. It was very satisfactory to hear the cordiality with which the missionaries were greeted by them all, and the strangers, too, because they were the missionaries' friends.

The medical work at Matrah is greatly hampered by lack of suitable accommodations; the wonder is that so much can be accomplished in

spite of the conditions—over 14,000 treatments in seven months. It is to be hoped that land may speedily be secured for a hospital.

Passengers wishing to stop at Bahrein and Kuwait must travel on the slow mail boat from Maskat; it sails back and forth across the Gulf from Arabia to Persia, stopping at various ports to attend to cargo, and taking five days to reach Bahrein. On this leisurely voyage there is a chance to study many phases of Arabian and Persian life among the deck passengers, sometimes too intimately.

If the tide is not right the sail boats which take people ashore at Bahrein cannot make the landing, and then donkeys are used for the last stage. A donkey is hardly a reassuring means of locomotion over



MASKAT—THE PORTUGESE CASTLE

rolling stones, through water, with the unstable saddles used in Bahrein. The stop there only permitted making a few calls in the afternoon, and a hurried view of the hospital and other buildings the next morning. However, it was a great pleasure to actually see all that one has heard so much about, even though so hastily.

Kuweit is more thoroughly Arab than the other stations, the town is cleaner and more prosperous looking, with some signs of business activity. Here again the hospital, that important part of work in Arabia, is being conducted in very unsatisfactory surroundings: but the new building will probably be under way before long, and it seems

very necessary that a house for the missionaries should be built as soon as possible, as the native one now in use is most unsuitable.

A walk through the bazaar at Kuweit out to the edge of the desert is an experience to be remembered. Evidently white women are novelties to the citizens, and create as much sensation as a woman of Maskat, for instance, with her strange clothes and hatchet-shaped face mask, would in a town at home.

Busrah, surrounded by its date gardens and waterways, which make it a small Eastern Venice, is a relief to the eyes after the sandy desert and barren mountains of the Gulf scenery.

A boys' school of over sixty bright-looking lads, and a newly organized girls' school, give promise of successful educational work at this Northern station. The splendid things being done at the Lansing Memorial Hospital are so well known it hardly seems necessary to mention them, but it was a great privilege to become familiar with them, personally.

Eight miles back from Busrah lies the out-station Zobair; the route to it is just as one expects it to be—a plain and then the desert, along which are met horsemen, travelers on donkeys, caravans of camels, a shepherd and his flock; even the mirage is not missing.

The visit there was in response to an invitation to the doctors from a merchant who wished members of his family treated. After a visit with his wife and daughter, who were very pleased to see people from the outside world, as are all these shut-in women, he entertained his guests at an Arab meal, with a few European touches, such as knives, forks, spoons and napkins. Altogether it was a delightful way in which to spend the last day in the mission.

One impression made by this voyage up the Persian Gulf is that an influence for Christ that cannot be estimated is being exerted along the eastern coast of Arabia, that must make for the coming of His Kingdom in that land. There are discouragements, as in all Christian work, but there is also God's promise that His word shall not return unto Him void, and the seed is being well sown.

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