

There were nearly twenty of them—clean, bright-eyed, lovable boys and girls, so keen on their lessons that it had been a pleasure to teach them. One of them was missing, and as they sang their favorite hymn, "Around the Throne of God Above, Ten Thousand Children Stand," they thought of little Ibrahim, who, a few months ago, had gone to join that happy band.

She saw, on a Sunday afternoon during the annual meeting, the entire Mission assembled in the new chapel for its dedication. The building, in contrast with the room used for many years, was light, roomy, and appropriate. The liturgy was beautiful and impressive, and the singing of the hymn, "We Love Thy Church, O God," by so many voices was inspiring. Altogether it was an uplifting service.

And so the Cinema went on, showing picture after picture, until finally there was another Christmas Eve, with a prettily decorated tree lighted by colored candles, under which were grouped little gift parcels tied with red ribbon, bags containing oranges, candy, and popcorn; dolls for the little girls and drums for the boys. The children were reciting Christmas carols and singing lustily, "Where is the King, O where, O where?" But the best of all was the Christmas spirit which had prompted each one to do his best to make others happy.

As the missionary went over these memories of the year she felt that in spite of many failures and much that was sad and discouraging, it had nevertheless been a blessed year, full of God-given opportunities for service.

Maskat in Tears

MISS FANNY LUTTON

Maskat was a whole city in tears on the day of mourning for the deceased Sultan. For some time previous to his death the place had been in a state of unrest. Inland tribes were giving trouble, and serious rumors were afloat about deposing the Ruler. Very important centers had been captured and the rebels were forging their way nearer to the citadel. Town after town surrendered and the Sultan was losing possessions and men. The inhabitants of Maskat city were thrown into a great state of alarm when the news came that the rebels were drawing near and Maskat would be taken. All the people who lived outside the city walls left their houses, and, taking their possessions with them, fled for protection within the gates. Shops in the bazaars were closed and trade was brought to a standstill. The British government then came to the Sultan's rescue, and their troops were stationed back of Matrah, which is the town at the almost natural mountain gateway between Maskat and inland Oman.

Now all this worry of rebellion must have been hard for the Sultan to bear, and he became seriously ill, and grave doubts were held out for his recovery. On Saturday morning I was startled by hearing loud cries. Some Arab women were with me at the time, and we all ran outside to ascertain the cause. The sound increased on all sides and the women exclaimed, "Oh, the Sultan is dead!" I shall never forget this sound of weeping. The cries spread and soon there was not

a house of great or small, rich and poor, where its dwellers were not shrieking and wailing; and the beating of their breasts resounded all over the place. Western people can form no idea of Oriental mourning. They shriek on the highways and byways, for not one dreams of mourning in secret or in solitude. Men left their work, shopkeepers closed their shops, and children came out on the streets. People were running hither and thither, and every one was in a wild state of confusion. Then, just as suddenly came the news, "The Sultan is still alive," and the people became calm as the report was verified. They told me afterward in the palace how the false report had come



THE SULTAN OF MASKAT

out. The Sultan had been unconscious for many hours, and early on Saturday morning they thought the end had come. Then those who were watching by him began to cry, and soon all the palace were shrieking and the cries spread all through the bazaars, and every one passed it on until every house took up the cry, and Maskat was literally in tears. I can fancy I hear some people saying: "Oh, how the Sultan must have been loved to have called forth such expressions of sorrow and mourning." But all their sorrow is just as prescribed as is their religion. The Sultan lingered all that day, and just near midnight passed away. His wife said to me afterward: "We did not cry then. We waited until daylight, and at five minutes past six we commenced

to cry." I could not help thinking how, even in his own home, they were guided by the clock for the time to begin to weep. In these hot countries the bodies are interred very soon after death, and at nine o'clock on Sunday morning the funeral procession passed through the city gates to the Royal cemetery. The two photographs of the funeral procession do not give a good idea of the vast concourse of people. As the bier was jolted from shoulder to shoulder of the men who were seeking merit by having a share in bearing the burden, the procession was greatly retarded. The loud shrieks and beating of breasts from such a concourse of people all along the route can never be effaced from memory. People were shrieking out, "Oh, father of the poor!" "Oh, father of the orphans!" "O, my Lord!" These cries never abated for a second, but were kept up until some actually lost their voices. I met a slave woman some days after the funeral and her voice had not yet returned.



FUNERAL OF THE SULTAN OF MASKAT

For three days after the Sultan's death his house was thrown open for rich and poor to pay their visits of condolence to the members of his household. The first night when I went I could not get round all the mourners, so I had to pay a second call the next day; for they would have been greatly slighted had I failed to see them. My entrance was the signal for a fresh outburst of cries. While seated near one of the slaves I watched her beat her head and breast and at times throw up both arms and cry out, "Oh, my beloved!" "Oh, my Lord!" "Oh, father of my child!" and then she began to scream out, "Oh, you hiccough!" She repeated this several times and it quite mystified me, until afterward I remembered that the night when I was talking with her the Sultan's daughter had told me her father had had the hiccough for two days before he died. It seemed to me as if every woman in Mas-

kat entered the palace, now a house of mourning. At times there was not room to stand or sit down, for every bit of space was taken up with visitors, and this lasted for three days. The final act was a feast prepared for all the visitors, and this was the last tribute to the memory of the departed Sultan.

A Trip to Amara

MRS. H. R. L. WORRALL

At ten forty-five A. M. word was brought that the river steamer would leave Busrah at one P. M. The question was, could we get packed and on board at that time? Knowing that things do not always move on schedule time in the East, we thought we could. At least we were at the ticket office at one, and were told that the boat would not leave for two hours. After exchanging Indian rupees for Turkish majedies we went on board. My husband used the time of waiting to go to the custom house to see if he could not get out the drugs bought for the trip. They had been two days there, and for long hours he had used all the known means at command to try to get them through. But two days' work is not long, really, for getting things out of Turkish customs. Unfortunately some new officials had come recently and the price of the necessary tips was not yet definitely known. So although apparently the actual business had been seen to, the boxes emptied, and a list of the drugs made, all the necessary red tape gone through with, the boxes nailed up again and all that was apparently needed was the signature, yet it seemed that nothing could be done in two hours to get the job finished. So he had to give up the idea of going properly supplied with drugs on this medical trip and trust to some small traveling cases of tabloids. The hope was that the native helper in Busrah, who had been with the doctor looking after this business, could see it through the next day, and the drugs could be sent up on the next steamer. The two hours of waiting proved to be four. It was hot and trying, and there seemed no cool spot anywhere, though it was already the middle of October. But finally at sunset we started, but it was too late to see once again the reputed site of the garden of Eden at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates. But the river at Busrah and for miles above and below the city is beautiful always, and we enjoyed to the full the lovely groves of date palms. Then night settled down and it was time for dinner. This partaken of, we sat on deck a while, but as there were no lights and no moonlight, we soon retired for the night. The cabins were very small, each one contained one bunk. One had a washstand, the other none. Our dreams were not interrupted except occasionally when the barge on either side of the steamer would bump against the river bank at some narrow part of the winding river. At such times the gentle flowing of the water and the lapping on the banks soon lulled us to sleep again.

After two nights and a day we arrived at our destination. Amara is pleasantly situated on the banks of the Tigris. Beyond the boat landing is a bridge of boats. This is so arranged that if large Arab boats or river steamers wish to pass, a section of the bridge is swung