



hundreds of bales are imported at Kuwait every year. Another activity is the transport of dates from the Busrah district to Indian, South and West Arabian and East African ports. A fleet of perhaps thirty sailing boats, of about three hundred tons burden each, leaves Kuwait each year in October, and the following August returns with firewood, ship- and house-building lumber. The third and main source of wealth is the pearl-fisheries, in which thousands of the people engage every year. The ready cash realized from this last source forms the capital without which little business could be done. And yet, but for the firm, and on the whole, just government which the city has enjoyed the last few years, the present prosperity would be impossible, and the capital would have been transferred elsewhere.

Whether the railroad will ever come here to alter the character of the city is hard to say. Before the railroad from Baghdad to Busrah has been built many a sun will rise and set, and even then it is doubtful if it will be extended to Kuwait.

The Opening of Kuwait

ARTHUR K. BENNETT, M.D.

Much has been written about the strategic position of Kuwait from a political point of view, and I well remember that during my first four years on the field the Mission kept emphasizing the importance of Kuwait from a missionary standpoint, and not a few attempts were made to re-open our work in Kuwait. In 1903 Dr. Zwemer had succeeded in placing a colporteur in the place, but the footing was never secure and when Sheikh Mobarrek sent the colporteur away, after less than a year, he is reputed to have said that he never wanted anyone from the Mission to come there again. Mr. Moerdyk however attempted to regain the foothold in 1904, but was unsuccessful, and later Dr. Thoms landed there for a day, hoping that surgery and medicine would help out, but he was sent abruptly away in a native boat.

The Mission continued praying that the station might be occupied, and from time to time colporteurs were sent to make the attempt. One colporteur succeeded in disposing of seventeen Scripture portions. Mr. Van Ess made the next attempt, and timed his arrival at the shore with the departure from the harbor of the ship that had brought him. He was treated with more courtesy than his predecessors had received, but was as firmly told to leave by the next steamer that called. This however gave Mr. Van Ess a week or more in which to become known to the people of the place. And it is worthy of note that the hill just outside the city, from which he had a vision of the whole town and upon which he prayed for the evangelization of the town, has now become the site of the medical missionary's residence, and the hospital in which the latter works is at the foot of the hill.

So it was that our eyes were very often turned toward Kuwait, waiting for the opportunity that would open for us this most desirable port and Bedouin center, just as now that we have occupied Kuwait,

we are looking longingly after the caravans of camels that slowly wend their way into the forbidden country of Nejd. This country, too, will open up to the Gospel in God's good time.

Late in the year 1909 I was called down from Busrah to see Sheikh Khazal, the Ruler of Mohammedrah, and as I saw that Sheikh Mobarrek of Kuwait was there at the same time, I spoke to Sheikh Khazal who very kindly introduced me to him. After several visits, in which I became better acquainted with him, Sheikh Mobarrek asked me if I would not come to Kuwait and stay. I at once told him that I would be glad to make him a visit. So after our annual meeting, Rev. Van Ess and I were scheduled to make a visit there and see if the promises he made were really meant. We were most cordially received, and I was told that a dispensary would be very welcome in the place. In March of the same year (1910), Rev. Pennings and I went down to Kuwait and spent four or five months there. It was not long before we had won the good will of the common people and we began to have quite large clinics each morning and were able to perform some operations which quite satisfied them that in spite of our preaching, they could tolerate us.



THE SKELETON OF THE HOSPITAL AS SEEN FROM THE BEACH.

The Sheikh himself became more and more friendly, and when his favorite daughter became ill, he allowed me to use chloroform and perform an operation which fortunately proved successful. From this time on our hold in Kuwait became more strong, and a little later we were able to lease a house and Bible shop for a term of five years and then we felt that Kuwait was at last open to the Gospel.

NOTE.—It was Dr. Bennett who conducted the negotiations with Sheikh Mobarrek for the purchase of property on which to place the

Mission's "plant." It had not been especially hard at the last to secure concession which had a temporary and conditional character, but an outright sale meant an irrevocable surrender of the town to Christian influence. There was tremendous reluctance to make this surrender in a town of almost exclusively Moslem inhabitants and of exclusively Moslem institutions and government, and Dr. Bennett had to exercise much tact and earnestness, not to mention faith and prayer, to hold the good-will of the Sheikh and to gain the willingness of a score of his advisers, and, indeed, of the public in general, since all the negotiations were conducted in open mejlis and lasted some days. The desire of all, however, for medical ministrations overbalanced their religious prejudices and other objections.

In 1914 Dr. Mylrea approached the Sheikh for the addition of a plot of land behind the purchased ground, as it would give the house to be built a much better situation on the hill, and the Sheikh, in a highly dramatic and public speech, gave the land desired as a free gift to the Mission.

E. E. C.

Evangelistic Activities at Kuwait

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY

In 1911 the Mission was able to appoint a clergyman to Kuwait for only part of the year. When Mr. Pennings arrived he at once began making friends among the people by visiting them to induce them to visit him. It was his best and indeed almost his only means of influencing them, for the Sheikh had requested him not to open religious discussions outside of the Bible shop and the dispensary,—“lest,” the Sheikh said, “the ignorant Bedouin should become fanatic.” As he lived in the dispensary, he was able to make an extended use of the permission outside of clinic hours. The temporary character of his appointment did not allow him to do more in school work than some tutoring in English for a few young men.

When Mr. Calverley came the next year the same methods were continued for a time. Then advances were made by the gathering together of half a dozen boys for schooling along the usual lines. Also the sale of Scriptures at the Bible shop was pushed so that in one month more copies were sold than had been disposed of the whole previous year. The school boys were gathered into a Sunday School class. Dr. Harrison made an increased use of the advantages afforded by his medical work. These efforts were perhaps begun too soon. At any rate, they coincided with a visit to Kuwait of the editor of an influential Moslem journal in Cairo, who knew the methods and universal tendencies of Christian missions. He had in us a “modern instance.” In daily lectures in the principal mosque of the town, he urged them to avoid association with us and to make it unnecessary for the people to come to us by themselves providing medical and school facilities along progressive lines. The whole town agreed with him as regards the advisability of avoiding the Christians, and sermons to that effect were preached in the other mosque. But not all