

Remarkable tales of lawlessness, wild adventure and mystery center around these dead cities, and Kishm is a name to conjure with. One story concerns the adventures of Thomas Horton, an English tailor's apprentice, whose later life was one long chapter of intrigue and daring. In the early years of the 19th century he left the merchandise in which he was then dealing at Busrah and became commander-in-chief of the "naval forces" of the Arab Sheikh of Kishm. This Sheikh he afterward murdered, had himself elected ruler in his stead, and settled down to the life of an orthodox Moslem. For twenty-five years he governed kindly and justly the people whose customs and religion he had made his own, and with which he was so contented that he never returned to the land of his birth.

This forgotten corner of the East is full of more recent stories of strange careers, some surprising almost to the point of incredibility in our prosaic Western world, but with a farewell sigh for its vanished greatness we must hasten on our way until we finally reach our destination,—the pearl islands of the Gulf, where your missionaries are to-day adventuring for God.

Picnics in Kuwait

MRS. BESSIE A. MYLREA.

What does the word picnic bring up to your mind? A cloudless sky—a warm but fresh invigorating day—a shady grassy spot—lovely trees with graceful drooping branches and a brook or spring near by.

When I tell you that Kuwait is exactly the opposite I am sure you will say, "Then there is no word for picnic in the Arabic language." Kuwait has the sea in front of it and then sand, sand, sand stretching off into —, the very last place for picnics and yet this spring I have realized as never before how much man is the same the world over.

There are two small hills, about 35 ft. above sea level, just outside the town of Kuwait to the west. The first one is called the Hill of Joy and the second the Hill of Light. The mission doctor's residence now stands on the Hill of Joy, and many of our callers consider it still quite a picnic to come to the Hill of Joy, but of course the Hill of Light is *the* place for picnics.

The last of February when the coldest weather was over—the cold which the missionaries revelled in and which our Arab friends said "ate them"—the picnic season began. Our friends with a certain light in their eyes would say, "Have you been picnicking yet? Will you go with us some day?" We used to see little black groups on the Hill of Light, sitting in the full glare of the relentless sun, enjoying themselves as much as if they were in a lovely woody spot. They know no better. The joy to the women and young girls is to get outside of their walled-in courtyards, throw aside that everlasting fear of men seeing their faces and to feel the freedom and vastness of the desert and the sea.

The Moslem schools have from a week to ten days' holiday, and the little girls, dressed in their best bright coloured silk gowns with gold ornaments on their hair and bedecked in all the bracelets and rings they own or can borrow, looked like little groups of butterflies when we met them on the roads. They spend the first few days in the school courtyard learning to dance and finally the day comes when their teacher takes them to the Hill of Light. If it is a cloudy day so much the better. They are all up soon after dawn, and as the toilet consists in dabbing a little water on face and hands, feeling each gold ornament to be sure it is firmly attached and then slipping on the silk gown which was reluctantly laid aside last night, the little butterflies are ready. They are too excited to drink much tea and so after hard play and dancing are ready for their picnic lunch, consisting of rice and fish or mutton. Their mothers are much relieved when they come home safely with all their jewelry. Many times a nose-ring, a bracelet, or perhaps a hair ornament is missing and of course it is sure to be the borrowed one.

One day some very nice neighbors of ours asked Miss Schafheitlin and me to go on a picnic with them. We went to their house at 11 A.M. and found they had decided to have our lunch at home and just take our tea with us. This pleased us, as the sun was pouring down the Hill of Light and we had not looked forward to eating our lunch on the sand. Lunch over, a small basket was packed. A few pieces of charcoal were put in first and then a bit of camel thorn and on top the cups and saucers, a little bundle of tea and a bundle of sugar. The young girl put the basket on her head and carried a kettle filled with water in each hand. The daughter-in-law carried the little son and led the little girl by the hand and the mother followed a little behind us all. The hill was very popular that day and as soon as the different groups spied our white toppees they rushed upon us. This did not suit our hostesses and yet we could not get the women and children to go back to their own picnics. We were almost carried off bodily by our friends but our hostess said to them, "If you want them you must invite them and take them from their house as we did." Finally they left us and we were able to start our fire and make our tea. After that we played games and tobogganed down the sandy hill.

We promised to go with them soon again dressed in our Arab clothes, hoping in that way to attract less attention. We went again in about ten days and all would have gone well if our big dog had not caught the picnic spirit and insisted on going with us. As soon as the children saw him they knew we must be near and soon spied us by our feet. We can't go bare-footed when we dress as Arabs and I am afraid it always gives us away. However, we had a very good time.

Our last picnic was only a few weeks ago. The Sheikh's wife invited us to go with her to what is called Sheikh Jabir's Castle, a house in the Eastern end beyond the town and near the sea, where the Sheikh or the harem go for a few days to get away from city life.

The Sheikh's wife came for us in the carriage about 9 A.M. As it was strictly Ladies' Day we were entertained in the big airy room belonging to the men. There were a number of women and children there and every one seemed ready for a good time. The children all had birds to play with. I wish I could have counted the number of pretty little birds that were tortured that day. As at home the season comes around for marbles, hoops, jumping rope, etc., so the time comes here when every child must have a bird. These birds can be bought in the bazaar, and the older boys catch them with clever little traps. The children cut or twist one wing and tie a string around one leg. Every few minutes the little bird thinks he is free and is pulled back with an awful jerk.

The middle of the morning we were given Arab bread and sweets and then were told that there was to be dancing in our honour. When we went back to the big room there sat a slave with a big mandoline and soon girls took turns dancing. It was amusing for a while but soon became monotonous. There is none of the gracefulness which we are used to in our Western dancing.

The lunch was prepared in town and sent out on donkeys, so was very late in coming, but was very good when it came. About 4 P.M. I asked if the carriage were ready. They said it was ready, but they would be delighted to have us stay on to supper. We made our excuses and said good-bye. Our Christian home looked so inviting when we got back—we were once more thankful that we were not Moslem women.

Entering the New Doors

BY REV. CHARLES R. WATSON, D.D.

There has come to us in these days a very unique stimulus. We are beginning to analyze our devotion to Jesus Christ and to ask ourselves whether, after all, it has amounted to much, viewed in the light of the exhibitions of men's devotion in other quarters.

A few months ago I returned from the nearer East by a route that took us through the war zone of Europe. Whatever one may see passing through that war zone, I am sure he can never get away from the impression made by the devotion that men are revealing in their defense of earthly kingdoms and earthly causes . . .

On the way to London we passed through Cambridge and Oxford. Ordinarily there are thirty-five hundred students in each of these colleges but now there were only seven hundred. They told me that every man who was able to pass the physical examination had gone to the front. . . .