

# The Golden Milestone

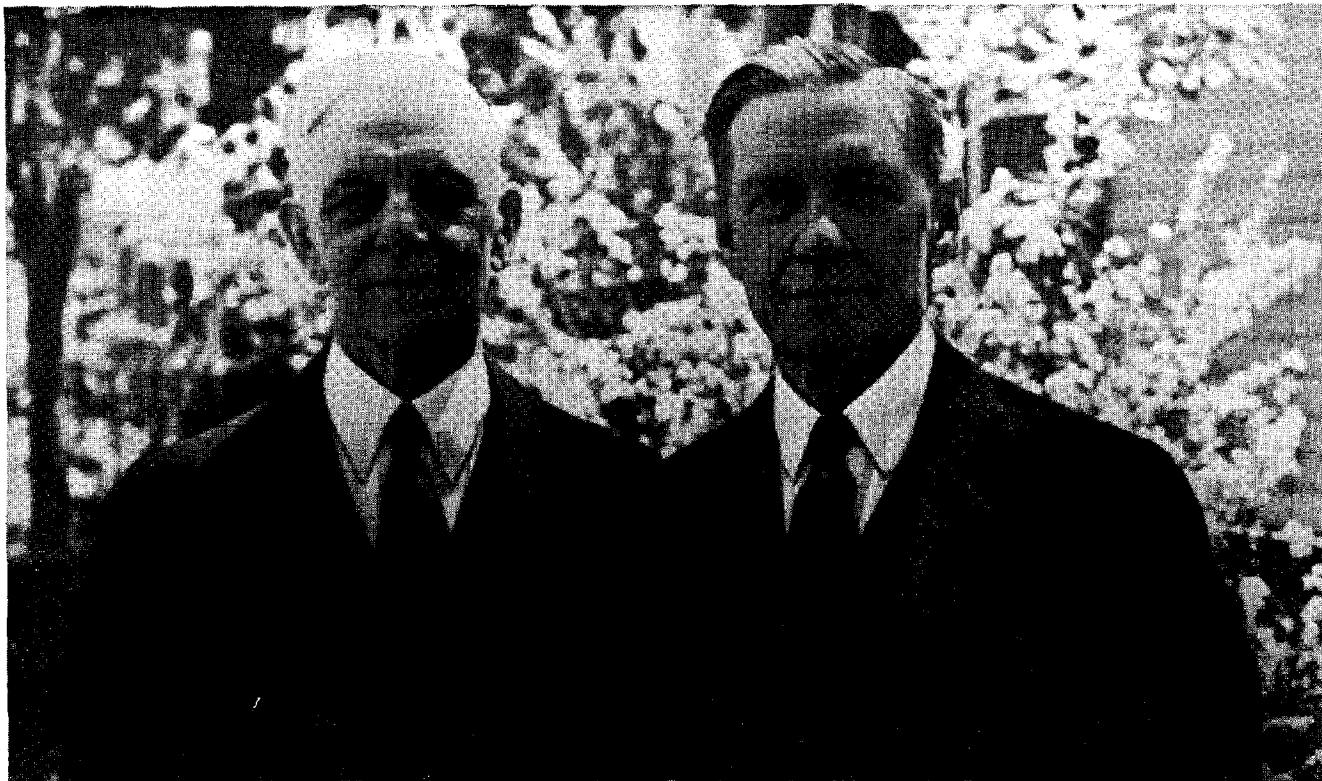
Reminiscences of Pioneer Days  
Fifty Years Ago in Arabia

By  
SAMUEL M. ZWEMER  
and  
JAMES CANTINE

Introduction by  
LOWELL THOMAS



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JAMES CANTINE

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

AFTER FIFTY YEARS

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## INTRODUCTION

**THE** explorer, the missionary, the soldier and then the merchant. That, I believe, is the traditional order. Since the dawn of history the explorer, of course, has been the first to penetrate unknown or little known parts of the earth, the first to unroll the map. And for the past two thousand years the missionary has been the second to arrive on the scene, usually a few leagues ahead of the soldier and the merchant.

The names of great explorers are usually emblazoned across the pages of history. Not so with the missionary. But in the region where he spends the active years of his life the great missionary is often a legendary figure, and frequently exploration is his sideline.

Among the names now a legend along the romantic coast of Arabia, are the two Americans who are the authors of this book. From the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb to the Gulf of Oman, from Mokka to Muscat, from the mysterious Arabian city of Sana'a to Basrah the home of Sinbad the Sailor, from Aden to Bagdad, the names of Zwemer and Cantine are now a part of the Arabian Legend.

Today along the whole Persian Gulf coast the sheiks of Araby still talk of these two pioneer missionaries who had the courage to tell the story of Christianity to the fanatical Moslems, Musulmen who believe that to kill "a dog of a Christian" is one sure way of earning admission to the paradise of the Prophet.

In the white coral skyscrapers of the seaport of

Makallah and among the pearl fishers of Bahrain, Zwemer and Cantine accomplished missionary miracles. And this is the intimate story of their voyages, voyages as interesting and romantic as those of the fabled Sinbad.

Ever since my own visit to Arabia, twenty years ago, I have dreamed of visiting the forbidden city of Sana'a. So the chapter describing Zwemer's successful journeys to that mysterious Arab capital was of particular interest to me.

"The Golden Milestone" is a story of dauntless courage and high adventure.

LOWELL THOMAS.

## AN APPRECIATION

THIS little book is a treasure. No doubt part of one's delight in it springs from affection for its authors, but even to those who have not known Dr. Cantine and Dr. Zwemer, this story will be a joy and an inspiration. The writers have given an account with modesty and charm of one of the truest missionary adventures of the Christian Church, the establishment of the Arabian Mission. One lives with them through all their experiences from the beginning of their purpose as college students. And the brave endurance of difficulties and dangers and the steadfast development of their work in one of the most romantic areas of the world, to the successful and fruitful establishment of their Mission. They met what Doughty and Lawrence met, but did so with a constructive Christian purpose and have left behind them not books of travel or the memory of fading military exploit, but the foundations of abiding Christian churches and the fruitages flowing from them. It is a lovely story, beautifully told. One's heart is warmed by it and one's faith and courage are renewed.

ROBERT E. SPEER.

*Lakeville, Conn.*

*“ One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”*

*“ They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.”*

*“ Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.”*

—PSALM 145: 4, 7, 13.



## PREFACE

It is very difficult to trace the origin of anything, most of all the origin of a Christian enterprise. The roots of such an adventure run back further than people imagine, and deeper than they think. Every mission is a faith mission in the deepest sense of the word. And who can tell where faith begins?

In two homes, one in New York and one in Michigan, there shines the light of pure, though simple faith. A brilliant Professor of Arabic and Hebrew inherits from his father, who was a missionary at first in Damascus and afterwards in Egypt, a passion for the Arabs. Three undergraduates in a Theological Seminary knit a friendship that continues for a half-century. The Student Volunteer Movement in its infancy sweeps through the colleges, and kindles missionary enthusiasm. Groups of Dutch prairie farmers, trained in the hard school of pioneer adventure, lend an eager ear to the appeal for a new mission. But through it all, and back of it all, are the web and woof of God's Providence, His own handling of the tangled skein, and the result is the story of the establishment of a new mission in a very difficult field. These various factors must, however, all be taken into account, and then the thoughtful mind can only conclude: "In the beginning God."

A period of fifty years calls for a golden anniversary, but only students of Scripture remember that this idea of celebrating the end of a half-century goes back to Israel and the Book of Leviticus. Fifty years of mis-

sions in Arabia surely calls for grateful remembrance and thanksgiving, and we have been asked to record the memory of the early years.

The Golden Milestone at Rome was a point of departure as well as a goal of arrival. One can imagine that Paul the Roman citizen thought of it when he spoke of Illyricum and Spain, or when he landed at Puteoli and passed milestone after milestone along the Appian Way, marching as prisoner to the Eternal City.

So to us, who have each done our bit in preparing the way of the Lord and making it straight in the deserts of Arabia, the Golden Milestone at the end of fifty years is a symbol. The way behind we cannot and would not forget—for to us both there are other stones that mark it—stones for those who have fallen asleep, far more eloquent than any milestone. But the way ahead is more important. We have laboured and others have entered into our labours. We have made mistakes which others can now avoid. It is not by idle boasting we celebrate these fifty years, but by looking wistfully backwards. We would forget the things which are behind (everything except God's goodness and forgiveness), and press forward in the days that remain.

“ For the graves of our friends, too, are milestones  
To the land where all roads meet.”

Our Golden Milestone also reminds us that, as Longfellow put it, the symbol represents something personal and homely:

“ Each man's chimney is his Golden Milestone,  
Is the central point from which he measures every  
distance  
Through the gateways of the world around him.”

What follows in these pages is an attempt to unburden our consciences of a promise, made long ago to our fellow missionaries, to put in writing stories we may have told them of the early days of the Arabian Mission. As this is not to be an historical study, but merely a few reminiscences from our own experience and observation, its very personal outlook will be understood.

We have put together this story of the early beginnings, each in his own way (each chapter bears an initial), and we trust that the reader will have no difficulty in finding a real unity in which all the chapters find their place—a unity of faith and hope and love for Arabia and a mutual friendship like that which knit the soul of Jonathan to David.

JAMES CANTINE,  
S. M. ZWEMER.

N. B.—These reminiscences deal only with pioneer days. For a fuller account of the Mission consult *History of the Arabian Mission*, by Alfred DeWitt Mason and Frederick J. Barny, and the Quarterly letters from the field in *Neglected Arabia* (25 East 22nd Street, New York); also Chapters XXX–XXXVI in Zwemer's *Arabia the Cradle of Islam* (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1900).



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articles and addresses setting forth the history, status, work,  
outlook etc., of the Mission. I shall probably do this and send  
same to the Missionary Review. Does it meet with the approval  
of the Committee of Advice that I should then have a number of  
extra copies struck off for distribution among contributors and  
others?

New Brunswick Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 1889

J. G. Lansing

LETTER-HEAD OF THE MISSION SHOWING "THE WHEEL"

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# I

## HOW THE MISSION STARTED

JAMES CANTINE

*"When it pleased God who . . . called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood . . . but I went into Arabia . . ."*  
—GALATIANS 1: 15-17.

WHEN one is getting along in years and has nothing better to do, it is often interesting to look back and note how, if at all, one's early years have fitted him for the part he has played. I was born in 1861 on the old farm in Ulster County, New York, which has been the family's home for several generations. I can now see that the wielding of an old-fashioned flail on the barn floor during long winter hours would teach patience and attention to little details of work, and that hoe and pitchfork, summer after summer, would build up, if not great bodily strength, at least an endurance of heat and physical strain that has stood me in good stead in Arabia. And I like to think that some qualities of spirit I have found useful can be traced back to this out-of-doors association with a simple, lovable, hard-working father.

School days of a rather haphazard nature at last led me to Union College where I graduated as a Civil Engineer in '83. Then followed three years with the Westinghouse Company in Schenectady. I have often wondered what of value to a pioneer missionary in Arabia these ten-hour days over a draftsman's table wrought. Easier to trace is what I gained during this

time through outside associations. My brother was an elder in the Presbyterian Church, and I naturally found a place as a teacher in the Sunday School and afterwards as superintendent in the church's city mission. As treasurer of the city Y. M. C. A., I also widened my outlook upon united Christian effort.

Meanwhile, any special talent as an engineer failed to show itself, so that at the end of these three years I was led to reconstruct my life plans. Gradually there appeared, in clearer focus, the vision of a ministerial life which I had glimpsed in early student days. A theological course was decided upon, but where? I have never found it easy to ask advice for myself, so, during the summer, I visited both Princeton and New Brunswick. The Princeton buildings seemed too large and imposing, and I felt I would be more at home at New Brunswick, though, doubtless, the deciding factor was the appeal of the denomination to which my family had belonged for two hundred years.

What relation my seminary course bore to my life work in Arabia may be of more interest. When I entered I had no particular leaning toward a foreign missionary career. The Student Volunteer Movement was started at that time, but, somehow, its pledge did not appeal to me. I never was a joiner! Most likely I would have been a missionary somewhere, at home or abroad, but the first definite step in my case came through association with Dr. Lansing—in his classroom and in his home. With his inherited interest—his father was a pioneer worker in Syria and Egypt—and with his burning zeal for the evangelization of Moslems, any active display of missionary interest was sure to be drawn into his orbit. Through his class in the study of Arabic, and later in a little weekly prayer meeting

for divine guidance, it was gradually made known to three of us—Zwemer of the Middle Class and Phelps and myself of the Senior—that it was God's will that we should offer ourselves for work in Arabia.

Waiting upon our Board in New York, we laid the matter before them. They, especially Dr. Cobb, to whom all the missionaries of that period owe so much, were sympathetic. But a hampering debt and the fact that our fields, notably China, were already undermanned, offered real ground for hesitation. Our offer, therefore, was referred to the General Synod, meeting that year at Catskill. Here Dr. Lansing plead eloquently for the Church's acceptance of this new mission field. He plead in vain; but not even this rebuff caused him to desist. Some time during that summer the three of us met with Dr. Lansing in the Catskills to draw up a detailed review of the movement—its origin, its aim, and the means to be employed, together with a respectful statement of our belief in the need for independent action. This paper was signed by Zwemer and myself; Phelps, because of family and health considerations, having finally concluded that his place in the Lord's work was not abroad but at home.

Our plan appeared in the church papers, and aroused considerable interest. Whatever there was of favourable response was due, at least in the East, to Dr. Lansing's position, ability, and lovable personality. He gave himself unreservedly to the launching of our project. The Arabian Mission was in truth his child, and one of the saddest pages in its history reveals the fact that he did not live to see it successfully pass all its initial difficulties, to be finally and unreservedly accepted as an integral part of our church's work abroad.

Having announced our purpose, the next thing was to

achieve it. Money was necessary, but how and from whom was it to come? Most providentially, though very unexpectedly, the new mission fell heir—thanks to Dr. Lansing—to a bequest of \$5,000 from a Miss Halstead, who was not, I believe, a member of our church. Zwemer and I were sent out to bring the appeal to a few of Dr. Lansing's friends and acquaintances. My own experience showed no genius for high pressure salesmanship. Like the Arabs, who, in calling, leave their sandals at the door with the toes pointing outward, so, I fear, the thought of a speedy get-away was often uppermost in my mind. The rebuff most vivid in my recollection was that offered by a prominent doctor of divinity in a city church, who, after the presentation of my case, said, "My young friend, I do not think it is the Lord's set time to favour work among Mohammedans." Doubtless, if he were living today, he would say, "Was I not right?" But there were other more cheering responses. I remember calling upon Dr. Chapman at his study in the First Church, Albany, where he told me that while it was entirely outside his custom to furnish names of parishioners for such solicitation, yet because of his confidence in and affection for Dr. Lansing he would make this an exception. One result was a very substantial contribution from the Misses Sumner. These contributions continued for many years until their death, and bore fruit in after years in a memorial gift of \$1,000 by William Page-Smith in memory of his aunts.

Another time I called upon a member of our Board of Foreign Missions. He engaged me in conversation for some time, trying, it seemed, to persuade me to volunteer for China, then really in need of workers, but ending with, "Well, if you are fully persuaded that

it is God's will that you go to Arabia, you can put me down for ——" naming a sum far in advance of my expectations.

I judge it was a stroke of genius on the part of Dr. Lansing to introduce the syndicate plan into our financial scheme. One joined a syndicate as an individual member by the payment of \$100 or \$50, or whatever it was; or, as was sometimes the case, certain members of a church or even a group of churches formed a syndicate and obligated themselves to contribute certain definite sums to the support of the work. Naturally, after a score or more of years, the syndicate plan died out, but only recently I met a lady who said she was still a member of a contributing syndicate formed nearly fifty years ago.

The names of individual and church supporters were published year by year in the annual report, and one can imagine how hopefully we on the field scanned its pages and took courage at the continued interest in our work. Here we owe much to the genuine sympathy of Dr. Cobb and members of the Board of Foreign Missions and to their attitude of benevolent neutrality toward this venture, which might have been considered likely to detract from the resources of the three established missions. We, on our part, sought to emphasize the desire that our supporters would not diminish their gifts to denominational objects, and I remember Dr. Cobb's telling me in after years that he did not believe the work in the other fields had suffered financially. We do not forget that a gratifying response came from many outside the Reformed Church to whom the idea of a definite mission to Moslems was strongly appealing.

Perhaps, while speaking of the home end of the new

project, I can pay tribute here to the devoted services of Dr. J. Preston Searle, a member of the Board and a close friend of Dr. Lansing, who after the illness ending in the death of the latter, gave much time and energy to the interests of the mission. Also in the same terms should be mentioned Rev. Frank Scudder, of the Seminary Class of '90, who, in addition to his pastoral duties at Mount Vernon, assumed for a year the secretaryship, having his desk in the Board rooms. This, however, would seem to have involved too much overhead for our small enterprise, and other direction was sought. I was told by a member of the Presbyterian Board that they had been approached, but considered themselves unable to assume this responsibility, and I remember, during these early years, receiving a letter from Dr. Cobb asking if I would object to working under the American Board. The reply to this was that we would work under any organization that would help us in Arabia—anything other than the Church of Rome. Happily for us, the additional office work was taken over by the Reformed Board, and later the Arabian Mission became a part of the foreign field of that Church.

During the summer of 1889 sufficient interest had been aroused and enough money collected to justify sending out the first worker, and as I was in the Class of '89, while Zwemer was in that of '90, I was the first to leave. I did not think much about it at the time, but now, looking back, it is interesting to recognize a kindly Providence, not alone in the inception and launching of the Arabian Mission, but also in its personnel. I might quote an estimate of the new enterprise, reported to have been given by one of the Seminary students. "That is a strong outfit: Zwemer

is sure to get somewhere, and there Cantine will stick." Without doubt, Zwemer was the active member of the partnership. His broad family connection with the western branch of our church, his missionary outlook during all his scholastic career, his natural ability as a speaker, and his zeal for the cause gave him many opportunities during his last months at home to gain support for a going concern.

On October 1, 1889, I was ordained as a missionary by my classis in the Fair Street Reformed Church, Kingston, New York. Dr. Lansing preached the sermon from the text, "*Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee.*"

My decision thus to spend my life abroad had not received a too enthusiastic approval at home, one of the family saying, "Don't go now, Jim! Mother is over seventy and naturally will not be with us much longer. Wait at least until she has passed on." Mother, herself, never said a word to discourage me, and in her secret heart I think she was a bit proud of the baby of the family. It is interesting to note that she lived to within a few months of a hundred and had me at home with her for four of my furloughs.

I sailed in October on the old *City of Rome*, with quite a number of missionaries bound for the Near East. As a group, we were quite overshadowed by a troupe from Barnum's Show, living skeleton, bearded lady and all, who were to make a tour of England. During the voyage they gave a concert, one of the songs being something about "McGinty and the bottom of the sea." Afterwards a dignified Englishman came up and said, "Don't make a mistake; that sort of thing will do for America, but not for England." I wonder!

During our missionary study at New Brunswick we had received much inspiration from the story of Ian Keith Falconer, of the Free Church of Scotland, who had just begun mission work for Moslems at Sheikh Othman, near Aden. There was a somewhat nebulous possibility that we might work in connection with that mission, and, introduced by a letter from Dr. Lansing, I spent a delightful week-end in Edinburgh, at the home of Dr. George Smith. I had the privilege on Sunday of gathering with them at the Lord's Table, receiving a token for the same. Dr. Smith was the convener of their Board of Missions, with which I met, receiving from them their favourable outlook upon our possible coöperation in southern Arabia.

I remember that I landed in Beirut, Syria, where I was to stay until Zwemer arrived, just in time to be invited to the missionary Thanksgiving dinner, a happy beginning of the many, many kindnesses received from those missionaries, individually and collectively.

Dr. Dennis, a friend of Dr. Lansing, at once took me in hand, seeing to it that a room in the Theological Seminary and meals with the young professors of the University were given me. He also met a more vital need by providing a language teacher. I was then twenty-eight, a bit oldish to tackle such a difficult language as the Arabic, especially since all my pre-seminary studies had been directed toward a mathematical and scientific goal, so that I was handicapped in acquiring proficiency in this, the first qualification for a successful missionary. In fact, as I now look back upon it, this lack of proficiency in the use of the Arabic was the one fly in the ointment of my life work. At this time, so far as I know, there were no courses of language study available for new missionaries, and



I had to struggle along as best I could with teachers who seemed to lack essential qualifications for the task.

Being given the privilege of attending some of the stated meetings of the Syria Mission, I learned much of the organization and activities of a successful work. I have seen more than one enterprise manned by workers, perhaps as well equipped as were we, wrecked upon the rocks of initial difficulties, seemingly because of the lack of the wisdom which comes from contact with men of ripe experience. And I never have been able fully to estimate what the Arabian Mission owes to the Syria Mission of the Presbyterian Church.

Most of my time in Syria was spent with the Rev. O. J. Hardin at Suk-El-Gharb on the Lebanon, though I did live for some months with a family named Saleeby, among whom I thought I would learn more Arabic. One memorable experience was a walking trip down along the coast, taking in Sidon, Tyre, and Haifa, and through Palestine to Jerusalem. There were three of us: a slight, but active, English evangelist, a brother of Bishop Hannington of Uganda; a burly Scotch missionary, and myself. We made a congenial company, seeing and learning much at a very small financial outlay. It was thought a rather hazardous trip, and we were questioned as to what we would do if we were attacked by bandits. The answer was: "The Scotchman will fight; the Englishman, pray; and the American, run for help." However, we were not molested, except that at the end of the return journey I was shut up for a short time in a Turkish guard-house at Beirut, because of some irregularity in my passport. This was only amusing to me; but, unfortunately, I told the American Consul at Beirut about it and was compelled

at considerable inconvenience to remain in the city until an apology could be demanded and received. I have always been ashamed of the unwilling part I played in this scene, and it is not the only time my American citizenship has been used to support the dignity of the flag, rather than, as is so often reported, as an excuse for running to the flag for protection.

In July, 1890, Zwemer arrived from America, and we spent several weeks together before we received a wire from Dr. Lansing asking us to come to consult with him at Cairo. We left Beirut with the cordial well wishes of many friends and probably some good advice. I remember what Dr. Henry Jessup told us: "When you finally settle down, see that you are living in a clean and sanitary house; you can do your *work* almost anywhere." He did not know, nor did we, that in some places clean and sanitary houses were not to be found.

Another, whom we had come to know quite well, was Cornelius Van Dyke, the Nestor of the missionary force. I had been greatly honoured when he told me that, through his mother, he was related to the Cantines, and he was kindness itself to us during our brief stay in the city. Among my happy recollections is that of seeing him in his Eastern gown and smoking cap, sitting back in his armchair during mission meetings, generally with his eyes closed, seldom speaking unless he was asked a question. At one time the matter of buying a native dwelling house came up, with a plan for remodelling it for church services well in the background—the building of a church being forbidden by the government. One of the younger members of the mission asked Dr. Van Dyke's opinion of the ethics of the transaction. He did not open his eyes, but replied,

“ Well, brethren, if you can cheat the devil, go ahead and do it.”

Dr. Van Dyke was much interested in our purpose to work definitely among the Moslems of Arabia, and, doubtless thinking of his own unfulfilled early ambitions for the evangelization of the Moslems of Syria, he said, on our last call upon him, “ Do not be discouraged if the number of converts is small. I have never forgotten what my father said to me as I was unsuccessfully trying to bring down a bird from the flocks of crows that were flying over the old Kinderhook farm. ‘ Keep on shooting, my son, they will fly into it sometimes.’ ”

What a host of kindly faces take form to enrich one’s life with their memory: The Bridgestocks and Mackeys among the English people at Beirut; the devoted workers in the several little British societies in Beirut and on the slopes of the Lebanon; the older American workers in the city—Jessup, Post, Dennis, Porter, Van Dyke, President Bliss of the University,—men who, we hope, did not afterwards regret having welcomed us into their fellowship.

At Cairo we met Dr. Lansing, whose health had broken down, and who was seeking its renewal in the environment of his old home city. Together we threshed out all possibilities for our location, finally holding to our early hope of working with the Scotch Mission at Sheikh Othman. In June I took a direct steamer from Suez to Aden, Zwemer remaining longer with Dr. Lansing and then taking a coasting steamer down the Red Sea, which allowed him to go on shore at various ports. A memorable experience of his was having as a fellow passenger the venerable Bishop French of the Anglican Church, one time missionary

Bishop of the Punjab, India, and always very jealous for the evangelization of the Moslem world. At this time he was travelling around the Arabian peninsula, looking, as we were, for the best location in which to establish a new mission.

## II

### SECURING A CONSTITUENCY AND LEARNING ARABIC

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

*"He who furnishes the sower with seed and with bread to eat will supply seed for you and multiply it . . . for the service rendered by this fund does more than supply the wants of the saints, it overflows with many a cry of thanks to God."—II COR. 9: 10, 12 (Moffatt).*

*"These signs shall follow them that believe . . . they shall speak with new tongues."—MARK 16: 17.*

IN writing these reminiscences of the origin and early days of the Arabian adventure I, unfortunately, have not the accurate memory and the skill of my colleague. But I have the advantage of a set of diaries begun in 1887 and continued for nearly twenty years. The following account of my own call and some supplemental facts will complete the story of how we both felt called to Arabia, and went out, Cantine preceding me by one year.

The missionary spirit in New Brunswick Theological Seminary during 1888–1890 was due to several co-operating causes: the Student Volunteer Movement, under the leadership of Robert P. Wilder; the Graves Missionary Lectures by men like Dr. A. T. Pierson and Dr. E. M. Wherry of India, the fact that most of our professors, and especially Dr. Lansing, were missionary-minded, and the Society of Inquiry, which discussed missions at its regular meeting. All these worked together, so that even around the dinner table there would be hot discussion on home and foreign missions.

In January, 1888, the students formed a plan to send out and support their own missionary in the foreign field. Afterwards, Rutgers College joined in the effort, and I recall that Dr. Lewis R. Scudder was the missionary selected and supported for a time in India. The small band of student volunteers had a daily prayer meeting. Some wrote for the religious press. Others made speeches in neighbouring churches. There were also the conventions of the Inter-Seminary Alliance. For my part, I tried to secure some knowledge of medicine, as I hoped to go to a pioneer field. Through the kindness of Dr. Dowkonnt, of the International Medical Missionary Society, I met Dr. W. J. Wanless then taking his internship before his brilliant career in India. Every week-end found me at the Bleecker Street Dispensary picking up scraps of knowledge, and I bought several books which afterwards, at Bahrain, were invaluable.

Cantine has not mentioned the various meetings with the Board in New York and how, step by step (or was it stop by stop?), we were fully persuaded that God wanted us in Arabia. An authentic statement in regard to these matters appeared in print in an article by Dr. Lansing in the *Christian Intelligencer*. It is given in the Appendix.

My parents consecrated me to foreign service before my birth and I remember my mother telling me (the thirteenth child of the Michigan manse) how, like Hannah, she named me in fulfillment of a vow. My oldest brother, James, was in the ministry and, like my father, was known everywhere in the Dutch Reformed Church of the West. Another brother was a pioneer preacher in the Dakotas. Providence shaped my early training at Hope College and at New Brunswick

toward a definite aim which I have never had reason to regret. I longed to be a medical missionary, but the training required would have meant far larger resources than were available.

When we three met, after the Synod's action, in the Cantine homestead at Stone Ridge, New York, the die was cast. We all signed the plan of action, sealed it with prayer, and sang the new Arabian missionary hymn written while there by Dr. Lansing. On August 15, at Kingston, in the Union Avenue Hotel, we prepared subscription blanks and plans for syndicates, which were printed at the Kingston Freeman Company. The next day we secured our first subscription for the Arabian Mission. While Cantine prepared for departure I was sent West to solicit subscribers to the new venture. Bishop Foster of the Methodist Church, whom I met on the sleeper at Syracuse, was interested and asked for a copy of "the Plan" for the *Christian Advocate*. On September 2 my diary reads: "Was engaged so busily on behalf of the new mission that I found no time for daily entries until October 6." During that month Dr. Lansing secured a constituency in the East and I canvassed the West. It may be of interest to give the list of churches where offerings were given or syndicates started: Free Grace, Orange City, Newkirk, Sioux Center, Alton (Iowa), Milwaukee, Alto (Wisconsin), Zeeland, Holland, Overisel Graafschap, and several churches in Grand Rapids (Mich.). The total amount collected was only \$313.72. But many of these charter members and churches have for half a century been faithful in prayer and sacrificial in their support of the Arabian Mission. Their names are in the annals of the Kingdom, and but for them and their successors the mission would have stranded on the

rocks. A reception was given to Cantine on October 14 before sailing, and the students presented him with a pair of field-glasses. He surely needed them, for he went out to spy the land. That year Dr. Lansing's influence enlisted many, churches and individuals, although there was naturally some opposition to what was termed a quixotic enterprise. Our Western church paper even questioned the wisdom of using the prayer of Abraham, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee," as contrary to the spirit of Old Testament missionary promises.

At the church in Warwick, New York, the mission for many years found a warm friend in Mrs. Welling. She was specially interested in Peter Zwemer's work at Muscat. The Newark churches which Dr. Lansing frequently supplied were among the earliest and best supporters of the Arabian Mission.

From the outset, our mission was truly interdenominational. Our first legacy came from a Presbyterian lady. In the West, the Christian Reformed Church gave occasional offerings. A few years later, a lady of the Southern Presbyterian Church undertook the support of a missionary family for several years. We had close relations with Anglican friends, such as General Haig and Bishop French. The Presbyterians of Scotland watched the early progress of the mission with fraternal interest, while we owe a debt beyond words to the Presbyterian missionaries of Syria for their example, counsel and inspiration. Among our missionaries today are those whose church affiliation goes back to the Congregationalists, Methodists, or Anglicans. A Plymouth brother, Mr. Lethaby of Kerak in Moab, joined us for a time at Bahrain, and our first Christmas celebration at that station was with



a Goanese Roman Catholic Christian and a liberal Shiah and his family, while it was a Roman Catholic priest who ministered unselfishly to my brother on his last weary voyage. Our little mission has really been an example of ecumenic Christianity.

I was ordained by the classis of Iowa on May 29, 1890, and the churches of Sioux County again gave liberally to the mission. Mr. S. H. Schoep of Sioux Center sent \$200 and afterwards undertook the support of Kamil at Basrah. In Michigan and in Wisconsin we found friends who proved faithful in their intercession and sacrifice for many long years. One marvels at their faith in continually sowing on such desert soil, when all evidence of a visible harvest was absent.

Professor Lansing preached at a farewell meeting in the North Church, Newark, on I Samuel 30: 24, 25; and I sailed on the S. S. *Obdam* on June 28. After a visit to Edinburgh and to the home of the Countess Dowager of Kintore, the mother of Ian Keith-Falconer, I spent a few days in London, where I bought, among other books, Doughty's *Arabia Deserta!* Those two volumes were to me a second Bible for many years, until I sold them at Cairo during the World War to Colonel Lawrence. But that's another story.

My father and older brother had come with me for a brief visit to the Netherlands, and there meetings were held at Rotterdam, Leiden and Middelburg to interest those churches in Arabia. My father preached in his native tongue and met the friends of his youth. I had prepared one or two short addresses in Dutch and used them frequently in Iowa. But here, in the circle of Dutch literature and culture, I was beyond my depth and felt decidedly nervous. In speaking of the cradle of Islam I had the words "Bakermat van den Islam"

on my outline, but raised a laugh when I pronounced the first word so that it meant "baker's assistant." Nevertheless, the offering for Arabia was not lacking. At Leiden, Amsterdam and Zeist I was able to learn something of the missions among Moslems carried on by the Dutch societies, and those contacts and friendships proved valuable in later years.

We went up the Rhine by boat as far as Mainz, and there bade each other farewell. My father returned to America, and I went on to Venice and from there to Beirut. When the steamer arrived on August 7, Dr. Jessup and Cantine met me, and the following day I was introduced to my Arabic teacher—and to a language which one can never master perfectly.

Cantine, Phelps and I began to study Arabic at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Dr. Lansing's *Manual for Classical Arabic* had just been published, and our teacher was enthusiastic, but his frequent illness and our other studies, which were *not* elective, interfered with any great progress. At any rate, I knew the alphabet and elementary rules before reaching Beirut. Professor Lansing's brother, Dr. Elmer Lansing, was at that time practicing medicine at Haverstraw, New York, and I recall how he drilled me in some of the gutturals during a week-end visit. Both Cantine and I procured excellent native teachers in Syria, and for a short time I sat at the feet of that prince of Arabic scholars, Dr. Cornelius Van Dyke. He told me it was a seven-day-a-week job and that one could become proficient only by neglecting all English papers and books!

This so-called "language of the angels" is celebrated among those who know it for its beauty and, among all who try to learn it, for its difficulty. Dr. Lansing

at the meetings of "the Wheel" often expatiated on this language which he had himself learned from childhood in missionary environment. He had a large library of books on Arabia and Islam, some of which he gave us before we sailed. His favourite book in the Bible was Job, the Arab Sheikh as he called him. He also introduced us to Arabic proverbs and the treasure-trove of the Arabian Nights. When he occasionally chanted the Koran for us we had to admit that there were elements of beauty in this language. There is, first, its logical structure, which we were told surpasses that of any other language. Even the order of the alphabet is more logical as regards form than the Hebrew; its grammar is altogether logical; the exceptions to its rules can be formed, so to say, into a syllogism. Palmer's and Lansing's grammars show how this logical structure can be discovered in the minutest detail, so that, *e. g.*, the three short vowels control not only the forms, but the significance of roots, and are the key to the interpretation of all grammatical mysteries! Our teachers in Beirut spoke of the vast vocabulary and pointed to the wealth of dictionaries, but this made the actual study no easier. Lansing's own father wrote in 1864: "I would rather traverse Africa from Alexandria to the Cape of Good Hope, than undertake a second time to master the Arabic language."

The first difficulty is its correct pronunciation. Some Arabic letters cannot be transliterated into English, although certain grammars take infinite pains to accomplish the impossible. The gutturals belong to the desert and, doubtless, were borrowed from the camel when it complained of overloading. There are also one or two other letters which sorely try the patience of the

beginner and in some cases remain obstinate to the end. Then the student soon learns, and the sooner the better, that Arabic is totally different in construction from European tongues and that, "as far as the East is from the West," so far must he modify his ideas as to the correct way of expressing thought, and this means to disregard all notions of Indo-European grammar when in touch with the sons of Shem. Every word in the Arabic language is referred to a root of three or four letters. These roots are modified by prefixes, infixes and suffixes, according to the definite models, so that from one root a host of words can be constructed and vice versa, from a compounded word all the servile letters and syllables must be eliminated to find the original root. This digging for roots and building up of roots is not a pastime at the outset because of the extent of the root-garden and the dullness of the spade.

One difficulty, we soon discovered, was that there are dialects. Our teachers at Beirut and in the Lebanons spoke Syrian-Arabic; Dr. Lansing knew Egyptian Arabic and despised the Syrian colloquial; while in Yemen and the Persian Gulf there are other variations. And the Oman dialect differs considerably from all those mentioned. With all these changes of dwelling and with all the early inconveniences and the terrific heat of summer, I am rather surprised that both of us somehow got a working knowledge of the language and within two years actually became an examining committee for newcomers.

### III

## FROM ADEN TO BASRAH

JAMES CANTINE

*"Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out and none came in. . . . Ye shall compass the city seven times . . . and the wall of the city shall fall down flat. . . ."*  
—JOSHUA 6: 1, 4, 5.

At Aden we were welcomed on arrival by Mr. Brunton, an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to whom we were much indebted for many kindnesses.

A room was found in the old native city called "the Crater," where we had our first real Arabian experience, learning how to work, eat, sleep, and clothe ourselves, all with an eye to minimizing the effect of the heat. Here I learned to note the rustle of a scorpion running over the matting, and, much less interesting, the taste and aftereffects of quinine. We promptly made acquaintance with malaria, and the reassuring (?) dictum of the doctor, "These low fevers will run on, you know," was to become an old story.

One or two Americans at the American consulate were at least affable, especially when they learned that we were not to be permanent residents, and it was there I first heard that a "peg" was a drink of whiskey and soda.

Aden was not uninteresting. I climbed Shem-Shem, which overlooks the harbour at Steamer Point, and visited, of course, the remarkable tanks which for hundreds of years had conserved the slight yearly rainfall. The better class of natives drank the brackish water

brought in camel carts from wells inland, while quality like ourselves could thank the British occupancy for insipid distilled sea water.

To a Yankee, to whom a uniform was a novelty, the sight of British soldiers on church parade, mounting guard, and engaging in sham battles was appealing, and won a soft spot in my heart that never has hardened. I even sympathized quite unavailingly with a soldier of the Connaught Rangers who stopped me one evening with the appeal, "For God's sake, sir, can you tell me where I can get a drink?"

The Scotch missionary, W. R. W. Gardner, successor to Keith Falconer, who died in 1887, was a very lovable man, and upon our visits to Sheikh Othman it was a joy to hear him read a Scotch tale or tell a Scotch story. Shortly after my arrival, he told me that he was expecting very shortly to marry an American girl, a nurse in the Lady Dufferin Nursing Band, whom he had met at Bombay the year previous, and asked me to perform the ceremony. But I had no license for this part, and he had to call on the local chaplain of the Church of England. That dignitary was quite willing, after pointing out that I must use the Church of England liturgy. Gardner had no objections to that, though he did ask that the bride's promise to obey should be deleted. This the chaplain said he had no authority to do, but consented to put it up to his Bishop at Bombay. That dignitary replied by wire that no word of the service could be changed or omitted.

Gardner was in despair. His fiancée's steamer was due in a day or two, and he was sure that if there was an "obey" there would be no marriage. The lady was talented and devoted, but I afterwards came to the conclusion that he was quite correct in his inference.

At the last moment General Job, the commanding officer at the station, took pity on him and said I could read the service in his presence in his office, and that would give it official legality. So, on the arrival of the steamer, Gardner and I escorted the future Mrs. Gardner up the hill to the general's headquarters. The ceremony was quite swank with general and aides in uniform. There was, however, one complication in the long and involved Church of England service. I, of course, left out the "obey," but when it came to the words expressing the hope that they would "live long and happily, even as Isaac and Rebecca," I, casting my eye ahead to see what was coming next, repeated it "even as Isaac and Jacob." They never could agree as to who was who!

After Zwemer's arrival, it did not take us long to come to the conclusion that mere coöperation with the Scotch mission would not do for us. Sheikh Othman itself was small. Nearby Aden, as a military station with a preponderant Somali element in its native population, did not appeal to us. The hinterland was under strict military supervision, and it was not far to the Turkish boundary, to cross which required a formidable amount of red tape. What to do? The Turkish ports along the Red Sea could be considered, though one or two attempts at missionary residence had previously been made and given up. But there were other towns along the coast line of this immense peninsula, and we decided that I should visit Muscat on the southeast corner, then make my way up through the Persian Gulf, while Zwemer should investigate the ports on the southern coast and also have a look at inland Yemen, the Arabia Felix of history.

Bishop French left Aden a month or two before I

sailed, and I well remember his kindly farewell: "I understand that you also are intending to visit Muscat and the Persian Gulf coast of Arabia. Do not let the fact that I am preceding you change your plans. I am an old man, and it may be God's will that I can only view the promised land, while it is for you to enter in." Prophetic words!

I sailed for Bombay on the line we were to come to know so well during the next two score years—the British India Steam Navigation Company.

I remember nothing of my stay in Bombay and probably was able to transship immediately, but I do recall the trip, six or seven days, up to Muscat. The southwest monsoon was on and, as the second-class cabins in rough weather were rather trying, I spent most of the time between ports, both day and night, in my steamer chair, lashed to a midship stanchion. These coast steamers were generally small and very old, with all that this implies, but they were our only connection with the outside world, and, indeed, with each other in our several stations, so that the names "Kilwa," "Pemba," and half a dozen others are certainly fragrant in our memories. The officers were always ready to do us a favour, from allowing us to purchase a basket of potatoes from the ship's butler to bringing photographic supplies up from Bombay, or, indeed, anything that the local bazaar could not supply, from a black clerical hat to a winter overcoat. Among them were sincere Christians like Captain Carré, and their fellowship brightened some of our rather somber hours. When we were settled in our own homes at Basrah and Bahrain I think they enjoyed accepting our invitations for dinner or a night on shore.

On the way to Muscat I heard how Bishop French



had been a passenger on their preceding trip, and how he had emphatically entreated the ship's officers, who offered him their cabins, to leave him alone in the company of the Arab deck passengers. Perhaps he, as well as I, was glad enough when the barren, rocky hills of Muscat hove in sight. The steamer service was fortnightly, and this interval I was expecting to spend on shore, learning all I could of this important town and its hinterland. On landing I, of course, reported to the American vice-consul, a Scotchman named McCurdy. He was kindness itself, finding me the room so lately occupied by Bishop French, and inviting me to mess with him. This was the beginning of an acquaintance—"friendship" is a canny word and should be used sparingly with a Scotchman—that ripened with the years and is replete with much of genuine fellowship both before and after my marriage. Poor fellow, he retired later on, but did not live long to enjoy the competence acquired during his score of years of service in this trying climate.

I was, naturally, much interested in the story of the last days of the good old Bishop. He had utterly refused to trade upon his rank and reputation, refusing to accept of the hospitality of the English political agency, preferring to live among the Arabs, with whom he soon gained a reputation for great sanctity. Unfortunately his Arabic was of too classical a brand to be understood by the common people, though they listened most courteously as he gathered groups about him in the city gate. I was told that he was not very tolerant of advice and persisted in wearing his black clerical hat. It was midsummer, and exposure, perhaps unavoidable, in a trip by small sailing boat up the coast, resulted in sunstroke, from which he did not

recover. He was buried in a nearby small, sandy cove, only a few yards distant from the wide sea, but not wider than was his love for his fellow men; and now lies within sound of its ceaseless waves, a fitting accompaniment for his ceaseless prayers for the children of Ishmael. Nearby two of our missionaries, George Stone and Sharon Thoms, rest from their labours, making of this lonely place a Mecca for the thoughts of those who love Arabia.

One of the duties and privileges of a newcomer was to make a formal call upon the Sultan, a young man then not so long in office. Again and again, McCurdy asked for an audience for me only to be put off on one pretext or another. I was not at all insistent, but the honour of the country McCurdy represented was at stake, and at last he was notified that I could come at a certain hour. I found the reception room lined with big, turbaned, ecclesiastical dignitaries. I was told afterwards that when Bishop French had called he had given the Sultan an uncomfortable half hour by turning the conversation upon religion, in the discussion of which he, the Sultan, was quite outclassed. He was not to be caught again by another missionary, and so, when he could no longer postpone the audience, he had the proper authorities on hand to whom such questions could be referred. Suffice it to say, I was as greatly relieved as the Sultan must have been when no religious dispute arose.

From a missionary standpoint, I did not think Muscat sufficiently inviting to cancel further exploration. The British political agent also expressed the opinion that the coast cities further north offered advantages not possessed by this town. Doubtless he thought that, as Providence had relieved him from

worry over the presence of one missionary, he might himself take a hand in speeding the journey of another.

The next stop on the Arabian side of the Gulf was Bahrain, where I spent an hour or two on shore with the mail officer. Here there was not much to see and no white man to talk to. So I went on to Bushire on the Persian side, where, in the office of the political resident, I thought I could find all that they knew about the possibilities of Bahrain as a residence for Anglo-Saxons. The medical files were placed before me, and I read that, owing to high temperatures and great humidity, together with ever present malaria and occasional cholera, the island of Bahrain was judged the most unhealthy place in all the areas coming under the purview of the writer. This did not seem a very promising place for pitching our tent, and my thoughts turned approvingly to Zwemer's report on the mountain valleys and streams of Yemen.

On the journey up the coast we had picked up an American miner who had been prospecting in the mountains of Persia. I do not know what he brought away, other than a strength sapped by malaria and a body livid with prickly heat. His headquarters were at Bushire and, as he badly needed someone to care for him, I remained for two or three weeks at his house.

My purse, through my own fault, was getting rather empty, and I will confess that I was considering the possibility of returning to Aden when Providence intervened.

During my trip up from Muscat I had told my tale to the captain, and while he laughingly said that on his return from Basrah he would take me back to Bombay, yet what he did do was to bring a letter which virtually decided the entire future of the Mission. It was from

an English doctor, Eustace by name, a one-time member of the Church of England Mission at Ispahan, Persia, who had resigned that appointment and was then the resident physician for the English community at Basrah. He wrote very cordially, saying that he had heard I had been visiting the Gulf ports with a view to the location of a new mission, and that he hoped I would come on and be his guest while I looked over the possibilities of Basrah. Of course I went, and it did not take many days to realize that his invitation had been providentially inspired, and that I should write to Zwemer to come on and see for himself. He at once agreed with me. The trustees at home took our word for it, and the Arabian Mission had at last taken root.

A great blessing was the understanding and hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Eustace. It meant so much during those first months, when we were more or less blindly reaching out to make contacts with our future work, to have the peace and comforts of a home to fall back upon. Eustace was somewhat of a belligerent Irishman, always "green mouldy for a fight," as he expressed it, often in trouble with his co-patriots, but as quickly out. His wife was a young English girl not very well equipped for life away from home. At one time we had great hopes that Eustace would join our Mission; but family influences prevailed against it. His mother wrote from Dublin that he surely was being tempted by the devil, and eventually he rejoined his old mission and was sent to Quetta on the border of Afghanistan. Here I again spent a few happy weeks with them on my first vacation to India.

I had not been many days in Basrah when Eustace started me up the river to make a call upon our nearest missionary neighbours at Baghdad, five hundred miles

away, as the Tigris winds through the Mesopotamian plain. The whole trip was intensely interesting. The boats were run on the European plan. One paid the company for his lodging and the captain for his food. As I did not take liquor, Eustace got a special reduction for me. I remember the personnel so well. There was Captain Clements, a great photographer, urbane and kindly. Many of the photographs that came home those early days were printed from his negatives. There was, too, the chief engineer, who got two or three others together for a Sunday service; the clerk, of Italian extraction, with whom I went shooting several times, being dropped ashore at the beginning of an immense loop in the river to be picked up when we had walked across the narrow neck of land.

A missionary at Baghdad has just written me about the possibility, owing to improved railroad service, of spending the Easter week-end at Kuwait. Splendid! But they will never know the joys of those peaceful days on a river steamer. A week, perhaps, to make the five hundred miles! Who cared? A steamer chair under the afterdeck awnings, with all space forward crowded with Arabs, affable and courteous, trying to understand my poor Arabic, and being persuaded now and again to invest a small coin in *The Story of Joseph*, or the *Life of the Prophet Jesus*, the monotonous voice of the Tel Kaifi at the prow calling out the depth of water measured by his six- or eight-foot pole, the mild excitement as we grounded in midstream, the anchor taken out ahead, the boat pulled over into deeper water by a noisy, heaving crowd around the capstan, or, if unhappily this could not be done, then a wait of a couple of days to take some of the cargo ashore. How it all comes back after nearly fifty years

—the Garden of Eden, Ezra's tomb, the Arch of Ctesiphon, and at last the minarets of Baghdad.

I had a very cordial welcome from Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Sutton and the Reverend, afterwards Bishop, Stileman, and found that they of the Church Missionary Society were very glad to know of our purpose to settle at Basrah. I recall at this time meeting a very interesting person in the wife of the Russian consul, named Ponafadine. She was from a well-known missionary family at Teheran, Persia, and afterwards wrote a very interesting life story containing an account of life in Baghdad at that period.

Another rather casual acquaintance made at Baghdad was the United States vice-consul, whose name I have forgotten. In those days our consulates in this part of the world were run in a very shabby way, the consuls receiving only office rent and what moneys they could collect from invoices, fees, etc. It was rather humiliating to him to know he was being laughed at for doing, with his own hands, the daily raising and lowering of the United States flag. It was worse still when the flag was entrusted to the care of someone who was leading a known vicious life. Happily a change was soon made, and career men appointed to major posts, and useless consulates given up.

Soon after my return to Basrah I met the Rev. Mr. Hodgson, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society for Mesopotamia, Persia, and the east coast of Arabia. He proposed that his society turn over the Bible work in Basrah and adjacent territory to the Arabian Mission, they paying a liberal share of the shop and colporteur expenses, besides supplying us with Scriptures at a very reduced rate. This we were glad enough to do, and thus began a happy relationship

that lasted as long as I was in Arabia. Scripture circulation was the one thing that we could do at this time with but little government opposition, and we did our very best, having, I judge, the complete confidence of the British and Foreign Bible Society at London. At one time I had a large sum of money at my disposal for the purchase of property for a Basrah depot, but this fell through. An interesting memory is their offering me their Persian agency when Mr. Hodgson was transferred to Constantinople. The reason they gave for proposing this action was that the Persian field had been divided between them and the American Bible Society, and as there had been some difficulty in adjusting differences to the satisfaction of both parties, they thought that their appointment of me, an American, might help to bring about complete harmony. This offer I did not consider, except to thank them; but I have since wondered if I would not have made a better Bible agent than an evangelistic missionary! Not long before I was transferred to Baghdad they sent me an honorarium of one hundred pounds. This sum is now in the Board's hands, earmarked for the beginning of a fund for establishing a hill station in the mountains of Northern Iraq.

## IV

### DOWN THE RED SEA AND TO MAKALLAH

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

*"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. . . . So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."—PSALM 107: 23, 30.*

*"And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness . . . and received us every one. And when we departed they laded us with such things as were necessary."—ACTS 28: 2, 10.*

It has been my choice, or my fate, to be the "Flying Dutchman" of the Arabian Mission. In our adventure it seemed the part of wisdom to both of us to gain some knowledge of those areas on the coast that were accessible. So, in travelling from Cairo to Aden, where Cantine had preceded me, I took a small coasting steamer. These "tramp" ships, as they were called, offered few comforts but plenty of adventure. One was never sure at what ports the captain would call for cargo, how long there would be delays, or what fellow passengers would be encountered. I remember, a few years later, travelling from Basrah to Aden on the *S. S. Gorgi* loaded with dates for London and pilgrims for Mecca. By the time we got to Aden there were sick pilgrims and dead pilgrims. The food was bad and the voyage rough. The only passenger received as a gift from the captain "a book someone left on board, of which none of us can make any sense." It was Carlyle's *French Revolution* and it was a godsend on that lonely voyage!

On January 8, 1891, I left Cairo for Suez, paying



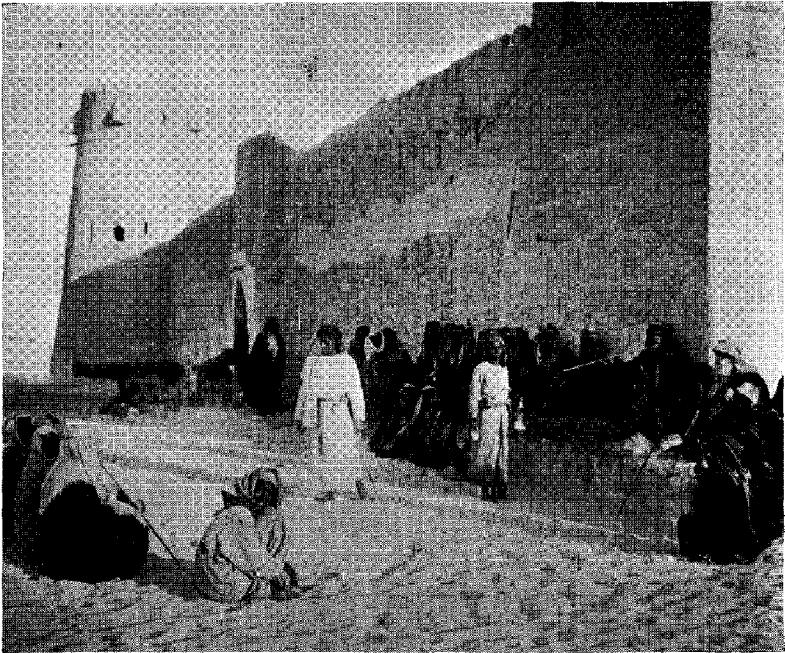
seven pounds for a second-class ticket to Aden. The Rt. Rev. Thomas Valpy French and his chaplain, Mr. Maitland, were the only other white passengers—the rest mostly were pilgrims for Jiddah. It was a great experience to meet this saintly Bishop who, after long years of service at Lahore, was on his way as pioneer to Muscat, where he died soon after.

On January 12 we went ashore at Jiddah (my first sight of Arabia) and visited the tomb of Eve near the Mecca gate. "From the immense length of the grave, 110 paces," I wrote in my diary, "the apple tree must have been a giant poplar." We saw the bazaar and made some purchases. Meanwhile, the Bishop had taken his large Arabic Bible on shore and was preaching to the Arabs in a café. His venerable appearance and high classical phraseology doubtless preserved him from the fanaticism of his listeners. At Suakin I met General Haig. His dromedary was tied to the door of an old, rambling house. He lived in camp style, however; "a table, chair, and camp bed, books scattered everywhere—Arabic and missions on the top." He was engaged in relief work for the famine-stricken and orphans. Some sixty orphans were cared for in one large tent, and Dr. Harpur was teaching them the Lord's Prayer. On Sunday the Bishop held a Communion service for us all at the home of the Belgian consul. From Suakin we sailed for Massawah through a heavy sea, and I was seasick even after landing. Just outside the city, at the Swedish mission house, we were entertained and saw something of their work in Ethiopia. At Hodeidah we saw the bazaars and learned that the way to Sana'a was open for merchants. I met an Italian trader who was very friendly later when I travelled inland. Through the straits of Bab-el-Man-

deb, after passing the island of Perim, we reached Aden fifteen days after leaving Suez. Cantine had rented some rooms in "the Crater," and a convert from Syria, Kamil Abd ul Messih, was already busy winning friends and preaching. Alternately, according to my diary, we were down with malarial fever, and our finances were never before or since in such straitened condition. We prayed and even fasted one whole day—and the answer came in a long overdue remittance for salaries. How well I recall those two months at Aden together. Climbing to the top of Shem-Shem, reading Arabic, visiting the Scotch missionaries at Sheikh Othman, planning for the future and preaching in the Institute for nonconformist soldiers. With Ibrahim, a colporteur of the Bible Society, I also went inland as far as Lahej, where a number of sick folk welcomed treatment and Scriptures were sold, after some difficulty with the Kadi. The Sultan of Lahej was very friendly and hospitable.

While Cantine was in correspondence with Syria and planning to go up the Gulf, it was agreed that Kamil and I should tarry at Aden and if possible study openings on the coast. The south coast of the Arabian peninsula, from Aden to Muscat, measures 1,480 miles, and includes the three provincial divisions of Yemen, Hadramaut and Oman, whose names have come down from the earliest times. Aden commands the commerce of all Yemen on the south; Muscat is the key to Oman, and its capital; Makallah is the great seaport of the central province.

We left the harbour of Moalla, near Steamer Point, Saturday evening, April 19, on board a native sailing vessel bound for Belhaaf. An Arab sloop, or *saai*, as it is here called, is different from anything else that



SHEIKH ZAID HOLDING COURT AT ABUTHABI, OMAN



CAMEL CARAVAN NEAR AL HASA. (See Chapter XI)

floats. Built for freight and for people who have never dreamed that time is money, it is slow and heavy in all its proportions and arrangements. A wooden-shoe hulk, one short, heavy mast, a long yardarm supporting a small sail, rigging of palm-leaf ropes, a small poop deck where the immense tiller swinging to and fro tells everyone, except the helmsman, to get out of the way—such is the *saai*. There is no cabin of any kind, so we, as first-class passengers, were assigned to the *flook*, a canoe belonging to the ship and placed on board between the bales of cotton and coffee. The only fellow passengers besides the crew, who numbered a score, was an old woman from Lahej—a pitiable object, crouching down in the shade of a bale of dates during the whole voyage. No one seemed to regard her as anything else than a piece of freight. She took to sea, we were told, “to get rid of the devil in her leg.”

It was the month of Ramadhan, a strict fast for Moslems, but the crew showed us every kindness in preparing meals, and after sunset we broke fast once more with them also. Kamil soon became an authority, on all learned questions, to the simple sailors, and many discussions they held together on the subject of religion, as a result of which several bought copies of Scripture.

The wind was not favourable, and for nine long days we slowly skirted the coast, passing Al Salih, Sugrah, Maketein and Sheikh Abd Al Rahman. The last-named place is a famous Bedouin encampment, and the site of an old tomb. The crew went on shore for water, and I begged to accompany them, but the captain judged it unsafe, as the tribe was hostile.

We anchored off Belhaaf; the crew began to unload their cargo, and we set out to find some means of travel

to take us on to Makallah. We were shown to the tent of the Sultan of Belhaaf (a proud title for an Arab dressed in a loincloth), and had no end of trouble in bargaining and arranging for our departure to Makallah. Camels were too dear; horses could not be had, and there was no *sazi*. Finally we agreed to go in a *flook* along the coast, the sailor promising to be at Makallah in three days at the most. His promise was better than his small, leaky boat.

Passing the three island-cliffs near Hisn Ghorab, our little boat brought us the first evening as far as Bir Ali. Kamil went on shore to buy our supper, and while he was gone several people waded to the boat, asking for medicine. A specially interesting case was a deaf and dumb boy, whom we made happy with a Gospel picture card. Early the next morning we were again at sea. At about eleven o'clock, near the promontory, Ras Kelb, the sea became so rough that our boatman was forced to run on shore. It was barren coast, and all of us feared the Bedouins, but there was no alternative; so we drew the boat on the sand, piled our baggage together and made a fire to boil some eggs. Soon our alarm was confirmed. Bedouins arose from all sides, as if born from the soil, and ran toward our boat, spear in hand. They protested against our landing and demanded coffee, money, and other impossible gifts. After much palaver and vain attempts to open our baggage, Kamil's eloquence and our united efforts succeeded in restoring friendship, though they still insisted we had to leave their coast. We gave them a present of a tin cup which they had tried to steal. Together we launched the boat, and before setting sail, like good Moslems, we had prayers on shore. Kamil's prayer was a sermon. With eyes open he

showed from the Koran and the Gospel that robbery and lying were accursed of God, that the sons of Abraham ought to know how to receive strangers in better style than *they* did, and closed with a prayerful presentation of the Gospel. Troubles never come singly. Our boat was having a rough time with the waves; baggage and passengers were fairly drenched; and, to add to the general fear, a couple of sharks made their appearance. The "shark drum," a skin stretched over a frame of wood and struck with a stick, was called into service, and the boatman said the sharks were now afraid!

Nevertheless he turned the rudder, but not for Makallah. Instead, he put back to Bir Ali, saying that the sea was too high to proceed any further. No sooner were we in sight of Bir Ali than a large sailing vessel bound for Makallah and Muscat sailed into the harbour. Could anything have been more to our desire? So we paid the fare and went on board. It was a Muscat trader, large, clean and full of passengers from the various towns on the coast. The captain and crew were very kind to us in many ways. Before next morning Kamil had sold thirty parts of Scripture in Arabic to the passengers and crew, I had treated some ten people to eye lotion and other simple remedies, the captain purchased all the Arabic books on medicine we had with us for study and gave orders for other scientific books to be sent to him at Muscat, and three Moslems who had heard us at evening prayers came to ask for copies of those prayers to use themselves, as they said they liked them better than those they used. Next day they were reading and learning the Christian prayers that Kamil had copied for them.

After all our delays and continual contrary winds,

we came in sight of Makallah on Friday evening. It is a second Jaffa, with high and well-built houses, two prominent mosques, and a large Bedouin encampment west of the city. The harbour and docks would do credit to a European government, while the row of fortresses, the public wells, and the large market place prove that the ruler of Makallah is a sultan in more than name. We had letters of introduction to him, obtained through Ibrahim, the Bible Society agent at Aden, from the native governor at Camp. The sultan found a lodging for us near the sea and provided for all our wants. For a Moslem he is a man of liberal ideas. Before the second day of our stay had closed, all our Arabic Bibles (118 in all) were sold. Kamil was busy all the time in the house and in the market, proving from the Scriptures (theirs and ours) that Jesus Christ is the Prophet Who has come into the world, and that salvation is in Him alone. Many sick here desired treatments, and some I was able to help. Two little children suffering with ascites I was able to relieve by the use of the trocar. In one case the father felt so grateful that he forced us to accept as payment what to him was a large sum of money. It covered the price of a copy of the Psalms which we gave him in return. The next day the news of the arrival of an American missionary spread abroad, and this was another reason that hastened our departure. It was impossible for anyone, except a regularly qualified physician with an assistant, to treat the number and character of cases that came for cure. On the morning when we left the stairs were crowded with those who clamoured for medicine.

Our journey from Makallah to Aden, the entire expense of which, food and passage, was paid by the

Sultan for us, was more rapid than our outward voyage. After four days we were back in Aden. Kamil wrote to Dr. Jessup:

“ We reached Aden in peace and found our brother, Mr. Cantine, in health. We congratulated each other on our safety. Mr. Cantine is soon going to Muscat, and we told him of the various incidents of our blessed journey, and he greatly rejoiced at the door which God had opened to us for the entrance of His word. During the day our brother, Ibrahim, called with Mr. Rasheed and read a chapter from the Bible, and we offered thanksgiving to God for His providence over us in this journey.

“ From Mejrud, the limit of British jurisdiction, to Makallah, in the wild there is no safety for travellers except by paying money to each sultan to take you through his territory to the next, and so on. From Belhaaf to Makallah there is less danger. From Makallah to the east it is remarkably safe.

“ But the best and the sweetest and the most delicious of all the glad tidings which we have written is this: We have planted in the Lord’s vineyard, in this blessed journey, one hundred and ten copies of the Arabic Scriptures. Eight remained over, which I have sold in Aden.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Setting of the Crescent and the Rising of the Cross: The life of Kamil Abdul Messih* by Rev. H. H. Jessup, D.D., Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1899.



## V

### FIRST MISSION HOUSE AND FIRST RECRUITS

JAMES CANTINE

*"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."—ACTS 28: 30-31.*

*"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. . . . Only Luke is with me."—II TIMOTHY 4: 9-11.*

IT is time to say something about my missionary activities that first year or two. Zwemer was away on tour or at Bahrain so much of the time that our little Bible shop in the bazaar was pretty much my responsibility. I have a distinct recollection of sitting in it those days before we could find a colporteur, watching the slowly spreading stain of perspiration coming through my white cotton suit, and returning home quite elated if I had been able to sell ten cents' worth of Scriptures. The town of Mohammerah, some twenty miles down the river on the Persian side, and ruled by an Arab sheikh of considerable notoriety, was visited several times. A different political background deterred us from making this our first out station; but the trips to and fro made a delightful change. Our *bellum*, which, by the way, was paid for by a Beirut Sunday school, was just the thing for an all-day or all-night trip, being long, narrow, and flat-bottomed. If the wind was behind us, a big sail sent us along merrily. At other times, it was a matter of oars or poles, depending

upon the tide. Probably these trips did not amount to much, as Scripture sales were but few. However, there were one or two Christians in this Moslem town who appreciated a little fellowship, and it kept our Master and His message to the fore.

Another missionary project was to visit any of the various British cargo steamers that might be loading or unloading cargo, holding religious services whenever we could, and supplying the crews with small libraries of books that they could pass on after reading. It was on a Christmas day that we were due to hold service on one of the Strick line steamers, only to find our one door opening on the narrow street between us and the creek completely blocked by sticky mud four feet deep, thrown up by the Arab tribesman who had been brought in to do a periodical cleaning. As was usual for safety's sake, there were no outside windows on the lower floor, and we were quite shut in. However, there happened to be a crowbar handy, and an hour's work opened a temporary door to an adjacent garden, and we held our service as scheduled.

This brings me to the matter of dwelling houses. When Dr. and Mrs. Eustace left for Quetta, we retained their large house, which was in an admirable location, for the unexpired term of their lease. But the rental was thought to be too much, and we moved into a small place right in the Arab quarter, which sufficed for the modest needs of Zwemer, Cantine, and the doctor. In fact, we made room for the Jewish headmaster of their large school, a man just out from London, who felt rather unhappy in a formal, legalistic, Jewish environment. He had stopped me one day on the street with, "I beg your pardon, sir, but are you the rector of this parish?" I believe he did not stay

long, having been caught too often smoking on their Sabbath. Our yearly lease of this house expired shortly after our major engagement with the forces of the Ottoman Empire, in which we had come off completely victorious, or so we thought. I went to the owner, expecting he would snap at the chance of rerenting, but he demurred. I raised my offer, but to no purpose. I found another vacant house; but the owner of that thought he might like to live in it himself, and much to my surprise could not be moved by any jingle of coin. However, houses of a sort were plentiful, and I was not worried until several owners, on various pretexts, refused us as tenants. I asked an Arab friend what was the matter. He replied, "Don't you know? The governor has posted notices that no one in the city is allowed under severe penalties to rent a house to the American missionaries." (The story of this trouble with the Turkish Government will follow later.) This was serious. The authority of the governor was absolute. The few English business men were in no position to antagonize the local authorities, even if they were interested, which they were not, except to be amused at our predicament. What could we do? Nothing. Then there came into operation that wonderful proverb, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Not long before, in our attempts at friendliness, Zwemer had called upon the Persian consul. It so happened that he was suffering from some slight illness which Zwemer, with his handy Burroughs and Wellcome medicine chest, was able to relieve. He was the one man in all that city who was able to defy the governor, and, due to the veiled hostility then existing between the two governments, glad to do it. He sent for us and said, "I have an empty house much better than

the one you are in which you can have at the same rental." Can you not see us thanking God and taking courage?

Some months later we were able to make a contract with a responsible Catholic Christian to build us a house according to our own plans and on a very desirable location. The terms were not easy, as the sum of \$800, paid in advance for a lease of five years, was, we thought, sufficient to pay the entire cost of building. The money was found at home and sent out, but before it was paid over we naturally wanted the contract registered in the British consulate. There was no objection to this, but when I took the paper to the consulate, I found that it had to be recorded in the local land office. This I thought would be impossible, as we were still on the blacklist of the authorities, and who would dare to register a building contract for the outlawed Americans? I very regretfully explained to the contractor that the deal was off. "Oh," he said, "you don't know how things are done in this country. Give the paper to me." Very much to my surprise, he did return it duly stamped and signed, and in due course we had our own house. Being thus recognized as permanent residents, our standing was assured, and we had no further difficulties on this score. A year or two afterwards I asked Yusuf, "How did you manage to get that registration through?"

"Oh," he said, "I gave the head man a little present."

"What was it?"

"Never mind," he replied. "It was not much."

"But I would like to know."

"Well, if you must know, it was a case of whiskey."

Was there any connection between the case of

whiskey and the fact that when the five years were up we were unable to renew the lease and afterwards the house was confiscated by the Government?

I have spoken of the religious services on the steamers in the harbour. Those on shore were somewhat of a further development. A Church of England chaplain from Bombay or Karachi was expected to visit Basrah once or twice yearly, but when the missionaries offered to hold regular Sunday services, the response from the English-speaking residents was most cordial. We fitted up, as best we could, a large lower room in our house, improvised a sort of reading desk, and were indebted to a Mr. Chalk, an enthusiastic Church of England man, for a rather nice-looking altar. However, when he brought around a cross to place on it, I hesitated and was wise enough to consult with Mr. Buchanan, a staunch Scotch Presbyterian. Needless to say, the cross never appeared in public. As most of the English residents had Episcopal affiliations, I used the English Prayer Book, to which, in the course of years, I became greatly attached. When we resided in the little house in the Arab quarter, the services were held in Mr. Chalk's large drawing-room. I must say that the attendance was better there, perhaps because he regularly served whiskey and soda after the services!

Some years afterwards my wife and I entertained a young English lad who seemed to be stranded in a city which provided but scanty entertainment for a white man, a stranger. When, after a week or two, he left, it was with many thanks and a gift of a gold piece or two for our work. We were quite undecided as to how we should use this small sum, until one of us said, "Why not begin a fund with it for building a chapel?" We circulated a statement mentioning the

inconvenience of having to depend on the courtesy of individuals, and pledging the use of the proposed building for the services of the chaplain whenever he came up the Gulf.

Somewhat to our surprise, and much to our gratification, this met with a cordial response, from both individuals and business firms, and the sum total was considerably increased by gifts from Englishmen who, in the past, had visited Basrah. The missionaries from our various stations also helped, until the subscription list at last reached about \$2,000, and this without making any inroads upon our regular appropriations.

Although of no architectural pretensions, the chapel was well fitted for our purposes, both as to audience and as to Sunday-school room, and I was a bit proud of its inception as well as its construction. Money had to be expended very carefully, and I recall that I put on the rubberoid roof all by myself. I think it was well done, but my khaki suit was a sight when it was finished. During the war, when a sizeable contingent of nonconformist soldiers worshiped with us, the military put in electric fans and at one time raised the question of enlarging the building and using it as the station church. We signified our willingness to consider plans; but eventually the civil authorities wisely decided to put up their own church.

The story of the growth of our missionary force is well told in Mr. Barny's *History of the Arabian Mission*; but I can add some personal recollections which perhaps have not been printed. We will begin with our first doctor. As soon as it became evident that Dr. Eustace would not join us, we wrote home that our first and urgent need was for a medical man. As our first comer told us, he saw a request in a medical

paper for a doctor to go out to a mission just starting in Arabia. He was at the time very despondent over a misspent life and wasted opportunities, even to the point of attempting suicide, and when the hardships of our field were made known to him, it seemed a God-given chance to balance the account. He volunteered and was accepted. I never afterwards had the heart to question Dr. Lansing, so know nothing of the correspondence or interviews leading up to his commission.

You may imagine our joy when a letter from home told us that a well qualified and enthusiastic M.D. would reach Basrah in two or three weeks. We met his steamer and welcomed our new comrade to our hearts and home. The first surprise came when he shook his head on our request that he ask a blessing at the table, and later, when the question of leading our morning devotions came up, he told us very courteously that he had never done anything like that, that we could call upon him to the limit for any medical services, but anything more was quite out of his line.

We lived happily together for a time, but his lack of appreciation of and interest in things spiritual cast a shadow over our fellowship, until one day he said, "Boys, why is it that you two seem to have more in common with each other than you do with me?"

"Why, doctor," was the reply, "isn't that unavoidable? You don't believe in what we are trying to do for the Arabs. You don't believe as we do about God."

"Well, I don't believe, as you seem to, that God came down from heaven and became a little babe! But no one believes that nowadays."

Finally, we suggested that both he and we write to the committee about our differences and leave it to them to decide what they wanted in their workers.

"All right," said he, "but you boys will get the surprise of your lives."

He wrote quite fully and, I think, candidly. We thought our views were well known. All three of us agreed that harmony was impossible and asked that some action be taken.

The reply came very soon, stating that "the relationship between the doctor and the Arabian Mission is herewith dissolved." He bore his disappointment like a man, but said, "And what am I to do? Am I to be stranded out here with no resources and no way to get back home?" It seems that the committee came to the conclusion that he had joined the Mission under false pretenses, and that they, acting under legal advice, were under no compulsion to pay his way back to America. We were very, very sorry for it all, but could do nothing.

He at once decided to move into another house, taking all the medical outfit with him, and proposed to support himself through his practice. While moving out, his attention was called to his rifle, hanging on the wall.

"Yes," he said, "I was leaving that for the last, so that if you had interfered with my taking the instruments, I would have plugged you."

All the interference we had exercised was to call his attention to the name on the instrument cases, "The Arabian Mission." In fact, I fear that our unexpressed sympathies were largely with him.

He was a lovable man in many ways; but his life according to his own story was stranger than any fiction with which we had been acquainted. He was utterly shameless in telling about his exploits in the underworld, even confessing that he had no regrets at



having killed a man in a duel. He certainly was an enigma. Sometimes I judged him a little unbalanced, and at other times wondered if he was not more clever than we.

One day he said, with all apparent seriousness, "Boys, I think you are working at the wrong end of this Moslem problem. I'll tell you what I will do if you will finance me. I will go in disguise to Mecca and there hire me a house. From the cellar I will drive a tunnel over to the Sacred Kaaba, and steal the Black Stone. With that gone, the whole religion will go smash, and you boys can go home."

On the other hand, he once told me, after we had separated, "Cantine, I have a mother at home who will feel very badly when she hears of this; but if you could only help me to get inland among the Arab tribes, I will promise never to come back, and she will never know."

Poor fellow! When alone in his own house he went to the dogs rapidly and completely. Finally, we told him that if he would leave behind the instruments, we would personally pay his passage back home. This he did, travelling by way of the Pacific. Later one of our Amoy missionaries wrote, "What sort of a mission are you, anyway? I was on a steamer about to leave the harbour when a red-bearded man came alongside swearing horribly at his boatmen. When he learned who I was, he introduced himself as a fellow missionary from Arabia!"

From San Francisco he wrote to me: "Here again my luck has been against me. With another medical man, we had set up a fine sanatorium and were getting along nicely when he up and runs away with the cash and the head nurse."

Thus ends my story of our first recruit in Arabia; but it is God Who writes "Finis," not we. A year later another letter came to me from New Orleans: "My brother, whom you knew in Arabia, has spoken of you most kindly, and I want to tell you that shortly before his death from pneumonia, he was converted under the preaching of Moody in Chicago." I shall rejoice when again I clasp his hand in the better land.

Our next medical recruit came to us under more favourable auspices. Dr. J. T. Wyckoff was a clergyman's son with a wide-flung relationship with men and women engaged in missionary activities. Dr. Peet of the American mission at Constantinople said of him: "He got through his examination and obtained his diploma to practice in Turkey on his smile." Our high hopes were again doomed to disappointment. At Bahrain he contracted an obstinate form of dysentery. A long vacation in India helped him not at all. We may have made a mistake; but when it was found that he would work his way to New York on a date steamer, we agreed to his going home to recuperate. He never returned to the field; but he left behind a memory of happy comradeship that helped us through many moments of loneliness.

The arrival of Dr. Worrall the next year, and his marriage a few years later to a missionary doctor from India, put our medical work on a permanent basis, which has steadily broadened as the years go by.

Turning to our clerical line, Peter Zwemer was the third appointee. Strong and self-reliant, he brought with him a fresh outlook upon the problems facing us. I remember that he was somewhat impatient with our caution in meeting social questions.

"This matter of the equality of the sexes," he said,

“ is one of the glories of Christianity, and why should we not treat the women of Islam as we treat our own? ”

A few days afterwards in a solitary walk he passed a Moslem graveyard bordering a small village. A lone woman was mourning over a grave.

“ Here,” he said, “ is the opportunity to put my theory into practice,” and he made what he thought was a sympathetic approach.

The woman was aghast, insulted! Never before had a strange man spoken to her, and now this English dog of an unbeliever! Her screams were loud and continuous. The villagers with sticks and stones charged to her rescue. Peter was always willing to learn, and never again had occasion to prove how good a runner he was.

Photography was one of our diversions. A set of three snaps which caused some amusement among our friends was labelled “ The Three Missionaries at their Favourite Occupations.” “ Pete ” was busily engaged at the dining table. “ Sam,” minus coat, vest, and shirt, was pushing a pencil over a sheet of paper, while “ Jim ” was sound asleep in a long-sleeve chair. It was not long before Peter, perhaps feeling that his brother and I had gotten the start of him in pioneering, and determined to be second to none, announced his intention of going to Muscat and there opening a station. This he did, and it was not long before the freed-slave school, a printing press, and extensive tours into the interior gave evidence of his whole-hearted devotion to his missionary career. But his first term in Arabia was his only one, and the Master took him for other service.

My personal relations with Peter Zwemer were perhaps more intimate than those usually known by the

missionaries of our scattered stations. I was at Basrah to welcome him when, in 1892, he responded to our first call for volunteers, and was also the one to say good-bye as he left behind him the rocks and hills of Muscat and Oman, among which the precious cruse of his strength had been broken for the Master's service. His course was more trying than that of the others of our company, as he came among us when the impulse and enthusiasm which attach to the opening of a new work were beginning to fail, and before our experience had enabled us to lessen some of the trials and discomforts of a pioneer effort. A thorough American, appreciating and treasuring the memory of the civilization left behind, he yet readily adapted himself to the conditions found here. Of a sensitive nature, he keenly felt any roughness from friend or foe, but I never knew him on that account to show any bitterness or to shirk the performance of any recognized duty.

Of those qualities which make for success in our field he had not a few. His social instincts led him at once to make friends among the Arabs, and while his vocabulary was still very limited, he would spend hours in the coffee shops and in the gathering places of the town. His exceptional musical talents also attracted and made for him many acquaintances among those he was seeking to reach, besides proving a constant pleasure to his associates and a most important aid in all our public services. And many a difficulty was surmounted by his hopefulness and buoyancy of disposition, which even pain and sickness could not destroy.

## VI

### TWO VISITS TO SANA'A

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

*"The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts, yea all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper."*

*"He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba."—PSALM 72: 10, 14, 15.*

ALL missionaries in Arabia are agreed, I am sure, that the qualified medical practitioner and surgeon has a passport that opens closed doors and wins hearts no matter how obdurate. The hospitals in Arabia are places where "mercy and truth meet together, where righteousness and peace kiss each other." All honour to the medical missionaries for what they have accomplished and are daily doing. It requires to be said, however, that many journeys into the interior of Arabia were made in the early years by the clergy of our own and of other missions and that *every one* of the present occupied stations was first visited or opened by preachers—Aden, Sheikh Othman, Muscat, Matrah, Bahrain, Kuwait, Basrah, Amarah and Baghdad.

In 1891, and again in 1894, I was able to reach Sana'a, the old capital city of Yemen. The two ventures, it is true, did not lead to permanent occupation or to any visible results, except the distribution of Scripture. Nevertheless, I look back to them as among the most interesting of my missionary experiences. Looking back, one can see how even forty-five years



SANA'A IN YEMEN

ago Italy and England were rivals then in this corner of the world as they are now.

On June 27 I left Aden on the steamship *Tuna*, and arrived on the 29th at Hodeida, where I was most kindly received and entertained by Mr. Vitorio Cremaschi, the Italian consul and also agent of an American firm. Learning that to ask permission to go to Sana'a would probably be to meet with a refusal from the Turkish Government, on account of the recent rebellion and war near Sana'a, I hired a muleteer and set out on my own responsibility. There had been trouble and war in the interior and northwest from Sana'a for some months. The Bedouin tribes of Seba had rebelled and been at war with the Turks near Sana'a for a month. Two thousand troops held Sana'a; six thousand Bedouins were said to be in the mountains waiting for a good time to descend upon Sana'a. At Hodeida two steamers came with Turkish troops from Syria as reënforcement.

I found no trouble or difficulty, however, anywhere on the road to Sana'a, although the country generally was unsettled. The journey took six days on mule-back. The natural scenery all the way up to the mountains is beautiful, and the terraced hills are covered with vegetation. When I left Aden the temperature was 104° F. but halfway to Sana'a, at Suk-el-Khamis, it was 58° F. at sunrise. The plateau around Sana'a is pasture land. We saw camels, cows and sheep by hundreds. But the mountainsides are cultivated for coffee, millet, grapes, and other fruit. I am still surprised, as I look back, that the Turks were so friendly and the people so hospitable at that time. "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" . . . and I was then only a kid!

I had no special difficulty in Sana'a in visiting the city or speaking about the Gospel in a quiet way. An Italian merchant entertained me at his home for one night, but politely asked me to leave as soon as possible, for he feared to offend the government by entertaining a missionary. So I went next day to a *kahwah* (coffee shop) and found a small room. Here the officers came and asked for my passport; it was approved, but held until I should leave, in order to get backsheesh. The next night I left the *kahwah* and went to stay with a Syrian—a friend of Kamil, the Moslem convert at Aden, a captain in the Turkish army. I went on *his* invitation and was kindly received. But the next day *he* received a letter from his superior officer, saying “that in the present state of the country and the danger from war it was very undesirable for a Turkish officer to entertain an American missionary in his house, for reasons which you can easily understand.” In consequence, I again went to the *kahwah*. On the second day of my stay at Sana'a I met a Syrian Christian, Jusef Abood. During the five days that I spent at Sana'a I visited the city freely. At my room in the *kahwah* I could speak with those who came in, and read a little from John's Gospel without any hindrance. On Sunday Jusef and I held a short service there together, praying for the evangelization of the great city. I sold a copy or two of the Gospel and gave away a half-dozen others to Arabs in Sana'a and along the route. In every instance they were received and read with avidity. I can never forget the old sheikh at Bagel who, when I told him the book I had read from was the *Injil*, took it and kissed it reverently and then wanted to buy it. On my return to Aden I was determined, if the opportunity came, to



see Arabia Felix again, and, if possible, to go beyond Sana'a into Nejran.

In 1894, the Mildmay Mission to the Jews in London, having heard of my first visit, invited me to distribute two cases of New Testaments among the Jews of Yemen and offered to pay all expenses. So the mission gave me leave of absence and on June 3 I left Bahrain for a vacation.

On July 2 all arrangements for the inland journey were completed and I left the same day. I took the overland route to Sana'a for two reasons: first, because I hoped to supply the Jews of Taiz, Ibb, Yerim and Dhamar, in this way; and, second, because I had reason to believe it easier to pass the books through the customs there than at Hodeida. The sequel shows that it was a choice between two evils.

After leaving Sheikh Othman, we reached Wahat at noon, and left again at seven P. M. to avoid the heat. Noon temperature in the shade at Wahat was 96° F. Our course during the night was through a barren region, and at daylight we entered Wady Mergia, which has scanty vegetation, resting at a village of the same name, where, under an acacia tree, I soon found an audience. At three o'clock in the afternoon we left, and soon entered the mountains, where rich vegetation indicated a cooler climate. We passed several villages, Dar Al Kadim, Khoteibah, Suk-el-Gooma, and, as this was said to be a dangerous part of the road, all the caravan (which we joined at Wahat) was on the lookout, with rope-wicks for their firelocks lighted and swinging from their shoulders in the dark, like so many fireflies. At three o'clock in the morning we had ascended to the head of the wady, and rested for the day at Mabek.

On July 4 we left Mabek. During the night there had been talk among the wild Arabs of the village of forcing me back to Aden or holding me as a hostage to obtain money from the English! But Nasir quieted them with a threefold Bedouin oath that I was not a government agent, and not English, but American. The day after leaving Mabek we passed up the valley, through beautiful fields of cultivation and amidst *kaat* and other shrub trees. At eight A. M. we reached a small castle called *Mufallis*. Here, unexpectedly to any of our party, we stumbled on a Turkish custom house, which I thought was located at Taiz, as the boundary of Turkish Yemen on my maps did not extend further south. An unmannerly Negro, calling himself Mudeer of customs, looked out of a port-hole and demanded that I come up. Over dirt and darkness I reached his little room and stated my errand and purpose. No kind words or offered backsheesh would avail; "all the baggage must be opened and all books were forbidden entrance into Yemen by a recent order," he affirmed. First, therefore, I unscrewed the covers of the two boxes with an old bowie knife (screwdriver there was none). The boxes were critically examined by eyes that could not read and the boxes seized; then my saddle-bags were searched, and every book and map found also were seized.

I was refused even a receipt for the books taken and to every plea or question the only reply was to go on to Taiz and appeal to the governor. Despoiled of our goods, we left the "custom house" at eleven A. M., taking along as guide and defense an old man riding a donkey and armed with a spear, because Nasir heard there was disturbance also in this quarter. At two o'clock we rested half an hour under the shade of a

huge rock in the bed of the wady, and, warned by peals of thunder, we hastened on, hoping to reach Hirwa before dark. But in less than an hour the sky was black, rain fell in torrents, and urging the slow camels on through the wady was hopeless. There was no house or shelter in sight, and so we crouched under a small tree halfway up the mud bank. The rain turned to hail—large stones that frightened the camels so that they stampeded—and we became thoroughly chilled.

When the storm ceased, our donkey man came to tell us, with looks of horror, that his poor beast had fallen down the slope and was being swept away by the torrent! What half an hour before was a dry river bed now was a rushing rapids. We decided to climb up the terraces of the mountainside to a house in sight. The camels had preceded us, and after a vigorous climb over mud fields and up the rocks we reached the house and hospitality of Sheikh Ali. Over the charcoal fire, after drinking plenty of *kishr* (made from the *shell* of the coffee bean), we had to listen to a long discussion on the lost donkey. Finally, matters were smoothed over when I offered to pay one-half the price of the animal on condition that our guide proceed with us to Hirwa.

We were off the next day early, and, because of the steep ascents, I was obliged to walk most of the way. I sprained my ankle severely, but did not feel the pain until night, when it was swollen. It kept me on crutches for several days. Hirwa is a small Arab village with a weekly market, and we found shelter in the usual coffee shop of Yemen. The following day we reached Sept ez Zeilah, where we found cleaner quarters than we had had the night before. At about midnight

a war party of Bedouins came and frightened the peaceful villagers with demands for food, etc. They had just returned from setting fire to a small castle, and, numbering sixty hungry men, were not to be intimidated. They were about to force their way into our quarters when Nasir and the woman promised to give them food. Within, I kept quiet and listened to the noise of grinding and baking and coffee pounding; without, some of the Arabs seized a cow belonging to a poor woman and butchered it for their feast, at which there was a crying of women and barking of dogs and swearing of oaths by the great Allah, such as I hope never to hear again. Finally, the Arabs went away with full stomachs, and we slept a sleep broken for fear they might return. The next day we proceeded to Taiz, and arrived at noon, just one week after leaving Aden.

The Muttaserif Pasha, or governor, was satisfied with my passports, and expressed his regrets that the books had been seized at Mufallis, but such was the law. He would, however, allow me to send for them for inspection. *What is written here in four lines was the work and patience of four weary days!* A soldier was sent to Mufallis; I must entrust him with money to pay the custom dues; must hire a camel to carry the books; must finally pay for two sticks of sealing wax (price in Taiz one rupee), with which to seal the books and maps lest they be tampered with. The first messenger never reached Mufallis; on the road he was attacked by Arabs, stabbed in the neck, robbed of his rifle, and carried back to the military hospital at Taiz. And then there was more delay to find and send a second soldier with the same camel and money and sealing wax, but with a new rifle. He returned with the books safely after five days! No Turk in those

days could set a value on a book, and so the law is that books are taxed by weight, boxes included. The customs receipt was for "200 kilograms Jewish books (at 20 piastres a kilo), value, 4,000 piastres, and custom dues amount to 288 piastres;" in the same document I am spoken of as "the Jew, Ishmail, Dhaif Allah,"—a rather curious combination of names.

While waiting for the books to reach Taiz, I had opportunity to meet the Jews of Taiz, as well as those in the Jewish village of Magrebeh, south of the town. The population of the latter is about 200; their synagogue is a low, stone building 25 x 15 feet, has a few curtains of silk with embroidered texts, a printed diagram of the ancient candlestick with the names of the tribes, a high reading desk—for the rest, no furniture. Such are all the synagogues of Yemen. Here I disposed of a few copies of the New Testament and Torah, and spoke and prayed in their synagogue. At Taiz, as everywhere in Yemen, the Jews have been so long oppressed and taxed that they have grown content under great injustice. Many of the old Moslem laws against infidels, as regards their being forbidden to *ride* or carry arms or wear fine clothes in public, were still rigorously enforced.

When the Hebrew Scriptures reached Taiz I was again disappointed, for the governor would not permit the boxes to be opened, but they were to be sent sealed and under guard to Sana'a. I afterwards learned that the "guard" was for me as well as the books, and that the soldier carried a letter with this accusation written: "This is a converted Jew, who is corrupting the religion of Islam, and sells books to Moslems and Jews." I had no alternative but to proceed to Sana'a; taking a Dhamar Arab as servant, having dismissed the

Aden camels. I left Taiz on a mule July 26. The following night we reached Ibb. Here I was forced to lodge outside of the town, as the guard had instructions not to let me "see things." I endured this impatiently, until I learned that our servant had been imprisoned on our arrival because he told me the names of the villages on the route! I then appealed to the mayor, and, by virtue of my passport, demanded the right of going about the town and the release of my servant. After some delay, both requests were granted.

On Saturday the soldier and I hastened on to reach the large town of Yerim before Sunday and rest there while waiting for the baggage camel. It was a long ride of twelve hours, but through a delightful country everywhere fertile and terraced with coffee plantations and groves of *kaat*. The latter plant is universally used in Yemen as a stimulant.

Yerim is a dirty, ill-built town, on a plateau, marshy, with frequent rains, and has about fifty Jews among its population of Arabs and Turks. A Jewish family were stopping with us at the caravansary, en route for Taiz, and at night I spoke for over two hours with them and the Arabs about Christ. There was no interruption, and I was impressed with the interest of Jew and Arab alike in what I told them from Isaiah 53, reading it in Arabic by the dim candlelight amidst all the baggage and beasts of an Oriental inn.

At the little village of Khader, eight miles from Waalan, there was trouble, and angry words arose from the "guard" against me because I tried to speak to a Jew. When I spoke in protest they began to strike the Jew with the butt end of their rifles, and when the poor fellow fled my best defense was silence. On my return journey, I inadvertently raised trouble again by men-

tioning that Jesus Christ and Moses were *Jews*—which was an insult to them as God's prophets, the Arabs said. Anti-Semitism existed there, as in Palestine today.

On Thursday, August 2, we entered Sana'a by the Yemen gate—a little over three years before I had entered it from the other side; then in time of the Arab rebellion, and now myself a prisoner. I was taken to the Dowla and handed over to the care of a policeman, until the Wali heard my case. After finding an old Greek friend from Aden who offered to go bail for me, I was allowed liberty, and then for ten long days I went from official to official and office to office to get the books inspected and approved. The whole official system of Turkey was then carefully arranged for the purpose of collecting backsheesh. I was unable to offer *that*, and so, by continual coming, I at last wearied them, and on Monday, August 12, obtained my books. I received notice from the Wali, however, that I must not delay at Sana'a beyond seven days.

So I returned to the coast and by steamer to Aden. One lesson I learned and have never forgotten—it is a costly mistake to *give away* Christian books or Scriptures promiscuously, no matter how prayerfully and carefully it is done. Mr. Cantine from the outset made this the rule for all our colporteurs. Men prize what they pay for and despise what is given for nothing.

The Mildmay Mission at that time believed in free-gift Scriptures. But both of the great Bible societies, after long experience in many lands, do their distribution by sale. One also learns by sad experience that the Scriptures need an interpreter and that one should point out simple passages and direct the ignorant, otherwise they will straightway be offended.

## VII

### WITH THE TURKS IN BASRAH

JAMES CANTINE

*"But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak."*

—MATTHEW 10: 19.

*"They then that were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him."—ACTS 22: 29.*

BEFORE I turn from those first few years at Basrah, I should say something more about my contact with Government representatives, both British and Turkish. As regards the British officials, I have nothing but varied kindnesses to remember. It is true that at the request of Washington they had been asked to use their good offices for us in places where there were no United States consuls; but they often went far beyond this. One time, while calling upon the British Resident at Bushire, I was told that a delegation of Arabs from Bahrain had recently come and asked what he would do if they should expel the American missionaries from the island.

His reply, as he told it, was: "I have no authority to bring the forces of the British Empire to the aid of American citizens; but I should call your attention to the fact that the ties between the two countries are very close, and if the Prince of Wales, now in America, should marry the daughter of the President, they will be closer." Needless to say, no further action was taken by the Arabs.

We sought the protection of the British flag only



once, when Muscat was taken over by revolting tribes and the Mission house seized and sacked, and I never went to them for advice, or, what was far worse, gave it. Personally, I avoided, as far as I conveniently could, expression of great interest in their political activities, and they certainly avoided meddling in mine. This aloofness did not extend to social and personal matters, for in that connection I have many pleasant memories. At one time the steamer from which I was to land at Muscat had unhappily touched at a port that was under suspicion of being infected with cholera. When the yellow flag did not come down, it was reported that all passengers intending to go ashore would be taken to an improvised quarantine station—a deadly mass of rock and sand.

While I was standing by the rail, the consul and his wife came alongside in their neat consulate boat. I knew them quite well, and incidentally mentioned that I did not know what would happen to me in quarantine. The lady turned to her husband and said, "Why, John, you are not thinking of sending Mr. Cantine to *that* place?" He shrugged his shoulders, replying, "But what can I do?" I never asked what he did do; but an hour or two later word came on board that, owing to some irregularity in the papers, quarantine would not be imposed until the next boat!

With the Turkish authorities during those early days our contacts were but infrequent and formal. As regards customs, smuggling was a game carried on with a considerable amount of polite consideration on both sides. The custom house was at the mouth of the creek up which our boat had to pass as we came from the steamers in the river. It was generally allowed to pass unchallenged if there were not boxes and trunks

piled up somewhere. The only things I was ever guilty of smuggling were books, which were more or less suspect. Once when I had left a book on top of my possessions, the customs man said, "Why did you do that? Now I will have to send it to the Serai, where it will have to be translated, causing us a lot of trouble for nothing." I will admit to smuggling all my personal library of a couple of hundred books, and that was some job! I think it was rather expected of one, and now I have no remorse.

That brings me to the story of how one book did bring us to the notice of the government at Constantinople and cause us much trouble.

At first the government rather ignored us, doubtless thinking that if we survived malaria and cholera, a summer or two of the Basrah climate would discourage us. But when we showed no signs of leaving and when the interest caused by the brave testimony and death of the convert, Kamil Abd-el-Messiah, brought us into the limelight, they seemed to have come to the conclusion that we were public enemies meriting deportation. As there was nothing they could criticise but our public venture, our little book shop was kept under careful scrutiny, in the hope that they might find something derogatory to their prophet, Mohammed, or their religion. This could easily be used to arouse a fanatical outbreak, or at least for representations at Constantinople, which we would find hard to combat. They had made several fruitless searches and I was rather surprised when, one morning, the dragoman of the British consulate came to take me for another search. I think I was alone in the station that day, at least it was I who put on my hat, a pith helmet, and went on to the shop, having previously picked up a couple of Arab

police at the Serai, or Government House. The policemen gave only a hasty glance along the book shelves and said, "There is nothing here."

With a smile, I replied, "You would not expect us to keep anything here that we were afraid of?"

"Certainly not," was the polite response, "and now we will go and search your house."

At this, the smile left my face not to return, I think, in several days, and, turning to the dragoman, I said, "Did the consul tell you to search my house?"

"No," he replied, "nothing of the kind."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"I—I," he stammered, "I think I had better be going back to the consulate." And off he trotted.

I was feeling rather dismayed at this turn of affairs, and when the minions of the law said with an oath, "Come on!" I went on meekly enough toward our house. It was some little distance away, and I had time to recall a conversation with an Englishman only a few days before about the Capitulations. I also remembered that St. Paul had appealed to his citizenship and decided to follow his example. So, just as we reached our house, I stepped in the doorway and turning around said, "You can't come in."

They were utterly surprised, and said, "Why, we are police and have orders from the governor to search your house. We must come in."

To this I replied, "This is the house of an American citizen and you cannot come in without an order from the consul."

I think I looked more determined than I really felt, for they hesitated to lay hands on me. And they were quite right in hesitating, for they had no orders as to what to do in case search was resisted, and they very

well knew that if the governor found that he had exceeded his authority he would lay the blame on them and they would be severely punished. So, at last, they said, "We will go and report."

The governor also, for the same reason, hesitated to use force. But now he felt quite sure that we had books in our house for which we were afraid, and, ordering the police to watch our house day and night, he awaited definite instructions from Constantinople.

The policemen on duty were not greatly interested and they and we, as the days went by, became quite friendly. We would stop and chat as we went in and out, often giving them cigarettes and coffee and finally supplying them with chairs to sit on. However, we did not know what would eventually happen and thought it wise so far as we could to discount a possible search. I had one book that I did not want the police to find. It was a short life of Mohammed by Sir William Muir and, in places, quite uncomplimentary to the great prophet. Of course, I could have burned it, but being of a frugal nature I thought this a great waste. Then the idea occurred to me to send it out of the country by the same English mail by which I had received it. So one day I wrapped it up nicely, directed it to a friend in America, put on an English stamp and started off for the post-office.

I knew no great secrecy was necessary and, holding the book only half concealed against my side, I stopped to ask the policeman about his health and then stepped around the house and up a narrow street, rather congratulating myself on the successful violation of the local law and order. But, alas, coming in my direction was a Turkish sergeant of police! He had been drinking, but was able to recognize a suspicious parcel, now

in full view. Before he could collect his wits I was past. He called out to me to stop, but I was too intent on the road ahead to pay attention to what was behind. My friend the sergeant was fat and rather unsteady on his legs and I would have gotten safely away had not there come into view, from a cross street, two Turkish soldiers. He called out to them to stop me, which they did. When he came up and had gotten his breath, he demanded what I had in my hand. It was one of the occasions when the whole truth and nothing but the truth are indicated, and I boldly said, "A book."

"Ah, a book! Give it to me."

"No!" I replied.

"What!" said the sergeant, "will you resist the government? I will order these soldiers to take it away from you."

Then I had what I thought at the time a bright idea. "This book," I said, "is going to the British post-office and do you see this little picture up in the corner? That is a picture of the English queen, and if your soldiers put their hands on her there will be war between England and Turkey." Now, in those days and under normal conditions the bluff might have worked, but the sergeant had either imbibed too much or too little and could not appreciate its fine points.

I have but a hazy memory of what did happen just then, but when it was over I did not have the book and was brushing the dirt off my clothes and examining a slight scratch on the back of one hand. I was agreeable to dropping the matter for the time being, but the sergeant was not. "Yullah, walk!" he said.

"Where?" said I.

"To prison," was the reply. "You have resisted the

soldiers of the government." And this was something fairly serious. I had heard of foreigners being kept in prison for days before their friends outside heard what had happened. I had seen the outside of Turkish prisons with gaunt hands thrust through barred windows begging for a crust of bread, and I did not want to see the inside.

It must have been an interesting spectacle to the crowd rapidly falling in behind—the two soldiers before, then a sober-looking missionary followed by a triumphant sergeant. As we were going along I saw in a conveyance at one side an Englishman whom I knew, with his head clerk, and I called out, "Darby!"

He looked up and replied, "Hello, Cantine, what's the matter?"

"I have been arrested; will you send Yusuf along to see what becomes of me?" So Yusuf was added to the procession. At the *Serai* the sergeant stopped to straighten up and buckle on a sword, and leaving me just outside a heavily curtained door guarded by a couple of soldiers, he went in to report to the governor. I will admit that I was not feeling very happy, when there occurred a diversion for which I will always be devoutly thankful. Yusuf, a Catholic Christian, actuated, I hope, by a kindly feeling for me as well as a sure dislike of the Turk, sidled up to me and whispered: "Don't let the sergeant accuse you first; you go in and tell the governor that he is drunk and has no right to arrest you." It was good advice, and before the guard could stop me I had brushed aside the curtains and stepped in. The governor was sitting at the other end of the room, behind a heavy table, listening to the tale of how a desperate criminal had been arrested and was outside awaiting judgment and punishment. The

glance I got was not a kindly one as I strode up, and, after saluting, I said in English (the governor, being an ex-naval officer, knew a little English), "Your Excellency, I have come to protest. This man has arrested me on the street, which, as I am an American citizen, he has no right to do. Moreover he is drunk."

"Stop," said the governor, getting quite red in the face. "He isn't a man, don't you dare call him a man. He's an officer of the Sultan."

"Apologies, your Excellency; this officer of the Sultan has arrested me without an order from the consul, and I demand his punishment. Moreover," showing him the scratch on my hand, "he has wounded me and this is a serious matter between your government and mine."

The poor man, being a bit shaky on international law and being certain that the least mistake would cost him his position, said, "You may go, I will attend to this matter." I saluted and went, glad to feel that our house was again our castle, even though two real soldiers with rifles and bayonets searched us whenever we went outside.

As the days went by there was absolutely nothing that we could do except send to our minister at Constantinople a brief statement of what had happened. Is there anything that would make one feel so helpless as to be arrayed against an organized government? All our acquaintances thought our days in Basrah were numbered.

One day, instead of two soldiers at our door, there was only one. The next none and we were left to our own devices. It did seem a direct exercise of the Divine Power in answer to prayer, and it was only after several years that we learned what human agencies had been

used. Travelling on the Mediterranean, I happened to meet Dr. Peet of the American Board at Constantinople and was told how he had taken the matter up with the Turkish authorities, and how, after long-drawn-out representations, the governor at Basrah had been ordered to apologize and restore my property. I am rather glad that we missionaries never heard until long afterwards of this order, and I have often wondered what would have happened if we had not this one time appealed unto Cæsar.



## VIII

### A MESOPOTAMIAN JOURNEY

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

*"The God of glory appeared unto . . . Abraham . . . in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran."—ACTS 7: 2.*

*"Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia . . . Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our own tongues the mighty works of God. . . . Others mocking said, They are filled with new wine!"*  
—ACTS 2: 9-13.

WHAT is now the independent kingdom of Iraq was in those early days called by its old Bible name, "the land between the rivers"—Mesopotamia. In July, 1892, the hottest month of the year, I escaped Basrah and took the river steamer for Baghdad, with the purpose of reaching Hillah, if possible, and returning down the Euphrates. The object of this tour was to study the country and villages along the less known rivers as regards present conditions, and as future centers for Gospel work.

The river Tigris from Basrah to Baghdad has been often described, as it is the regular route for Turkish and English steamers. The journey from Basrah to Baghdad was without special incident. I was enabled to dispose of a few portions of Scripture to some Moslems, and had ample opportunity to speak with many of them.

We arrived at Baghdad on July 25, and I remained at the C. M. S. Mission with Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Sutton until the 27th, making preparations for the overland journey. I was cautioned by the British consulate and friends at Baghdad against attempting the overland

journey until after Moharram, as at this season the Shiah population everywhere, and especially in the vicinity of the sacred shrines of Kerbela and Nejf, are in the fervour of fanaticism, rehearsing the death and martyrdom of Ali and Hussain. Nevertheless, I obtained a special passport through the kindness of Colonel Mockler, the British resident, with the privilege of engaging a police escort in case of necessity. Although there are many and real difficulties to travel in Arabia, nothing is so frequently exaggerated by the fearful friends or the enemies of missions as the fanaticism of the Arabs. I found no trouble in that quarter.

At Baghdad I met Jakoob, our native helper, who had to leave Basrah and was under police surveillance and could not leave the city because he was a Christian. Though closely watched, he had not been idle; for some time he had a couple of Moslem inquirers come to him, and instructed them in the Word of God. One of them I took with me from Baghdad as a companion and servant on the road. We hired two mules and left the city of the old caliphs with a caravan for Kerbela, at four P. M., July 27, and made our first halt that night four hours from Baghdad, sleeping on a blanket under the stars. An hour after midnight the pack-saddles were lifted in place and again we were off. It was a mixed company: Arabs, Persians, and Turks; merchants for Hillah, and pilgrims to the sacred shrines; women in those curtained, cage-like structures called *taht-i-vans*—two portable zenanas hanging from each beast; derwishes on foot with green turbans, heavy canes and awful visages; and, to complete the picture, a number of rude coffins strapped crosswise on pack-mules and holding the remains of true believers, long since ready for the holy ground at Nejf.

The caravan travelled along the desert road mostly at night to escape the fearful heat of midday by shelter in the public khan. Nothing could be more uninteresting than the country between Baghdad and Babylon at this season of the year. The maps mark six khans on the route, but three of these are in ruins and the others are stages of a caravan rather than villages or centers of cultivation. The soil appears excellent, but there are no irrigation canals, and everything has a deserted appearance. A few low shrubs between the mounds and moles of an ancient civilization; mud houses near the khans and some Arab encampments; camel skeletons, shining white by the wayside, under a burning sun; and a troop or two of gazelle making for the river banks—that is all we saw until we came to the palm-banked Euphrates at Hillah.

On noon of the day after leaving Baghdad we rested at Khan Mahmoudieh. These khans consist of a large enclosure with heavy walls of sun-dried or old Babylonian brick. In the interior are numerous alcoves or niches, ten by six feet and four feet above ground. One seeks out an empty niche and finds a resting place until the caravan starts at midnight. In the center of the enclosure are a well and a large platform for prayer, utilized, as in our case, by late arrivals who found no niche reserved for sleeping and cooking. The rest of the court is for animals and baggage. Usual Arab supplies were obtainable at these resting places, but every comfort is scarce on this route, and the innkeepers are too busy to be hospitable.

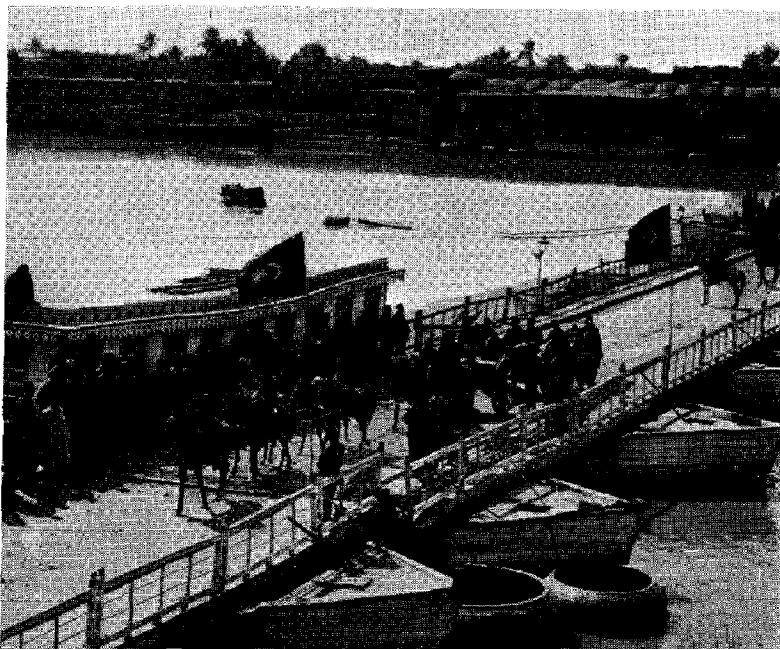
Khan Al Haswa, where we arrived the following day, is the center of a small village of perhaps three hundred population. I had a long talk with the sheikh of the place, an old Arab, who was seated on the ground

among his greyhounds, which are used here to hunt the gazelle. Accompanied by the venerable Arab, I visited one of their mat huts to deal out quinine for fever, and before I left the khan I met a Turkish soldier who could read and wanted a New Testament.

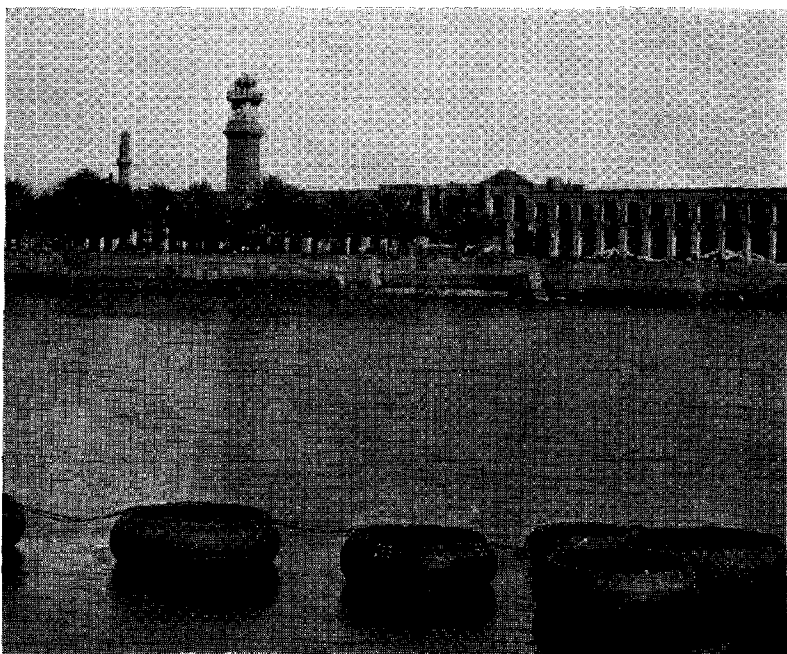
At three o'clock in the morning we left Haswa, and, because of a delay on the road, it was nearly noon when we reached the river. The bazaar and business of Hillah formerly were on the Babylonian side of the stream, but are now principally on the further side of the rickety bridge of boats, four miles below the ruins of Babylon. After paying toll, we crossed over and found a room in the Khan Pasha—a close, dirty place, but in the midst of the town and near the river. The two and a half days at Hillah were very trying because of the heat. I am reminded of what Dr. James T. Wyckoff wrote for an American paper a year later from Basrah, after escaping the Bahrain heat:

“ June 10.—I write; it is too hot to do anything else. I cannot sleep, nor read, nor do anything; it is 107 in the coolest part of the veranda. The pen is hot, the paper is hot and the ink won't run. I am sitting with a wet towel on my head to prevent my being overcome with the heat. Oh, it is nice and comfortable here, but you have to be very fond of heat to enjoy it. My head feels as big as a barrel, and the wet towel is all that keeps me from having another sunstroke. Yesterday was nice and cool; it was only 98° in the coolest place in the house, when before that it had been 103 and 104. You see it was really chilly. When we use a medical thermometer we are obliged to put it in a glass of water to bring it down to normal temperature.”

I think we have all felt that way, not once but often during the early years when houses were not screened,



OLD BRIDGE ACROSS TIGRIS AT BAGHDAD



BAGHDAD. MOSQUES AND KUFFAS

when there were no electric fans and when ice was an unheard-of luxury.

On July 31 we left Hillah and sailed down the river in a native boat similar to the *bellum* of Basrah, but without awning. The Euphrates is more muddy than the Tigris, and its course, though less sinuous, is broken here and there by shallow rapids.

We sailed all night and did not stop until we arrived at Diwaniyeh the following afternoon. Many of the villages on the way appeared to have a considerable population; date groves were plentiful, and we passed two or three tombs of Arab sheikhs, including that reputed to be of Job, "the greatest of all the sons of the East."

At Diwaniyeh I was directed to the Serai, or government house, where the Muttaserif Pasha of Hillah was forcing taxes from the unwilling Arabs. I was kindly received, and, probably because of my passport or for safety, was entertained at the pasha's table, where I enjoyed Turkish civilization and tried to answer many questions on European politics from an American and missionary standpoint. Ignorance of modern history and the map of Europe is not confined to the nomad Arabs of Iraq. I remember his asking me whether Lincoln's son had succeeded to the presidency!

Diwaniyeh has only a small population, and its importance is wealth of palms and the wheat trade down the river, which give another opportunity for a toll-bridge and custom house. There was no chance to sell books, although I gave away two copies of Scripture to the police guard. The Arabs are notorious here for their piracy on native craft. As no steamers are allowed on the Euphrates and the only Turkish gunboat lies anchored off Markaz, unable to penetrate the narrow

morass-channels branching from the river, where forests of reeds hide mat huts and naked Arabs, it is easier and more correct to say at all times: "The river is unsafe, but we will supply you with a guard." And so I left Diwaniyeh with two soldiers. Sa'ad and Salim were as happy as their names. Patching their uniforms, asleep in the bottom of the boat, eating of our bread and dates, or polishing their single-shot rifles, marked "*U. S. Springfield, Snider's Pat. 1863,*" they and we reached Samawa safely. During the day we passed the following villages: Um-Nejris, Lamlam (also the name of a tribe), Abu Juwareeb, Rumeitha and Sheweit. These river tribes are not true nomads, but live in one place on fish and the products of the river buffalo. It is a strange sight to see a herd of large, black cattle swimming across stream pursued by shouting, swimming and swearing herdsmen. And this was once the home of Abraham, the friend of God!

The distinction between true Arabs of the nomad tribes and the Ma'dan was made as early as 1792 by Niebuhr in his travels, and the river boatmen answered our question with contemptuous accent: "Those are not Arabs, they are Ma'dan."

Near Rumeitha there was a large *menzil* of the Lamlam tribe; there may have been a hundred tents. Here we fastened the boat for the night, as our company was afraid to cross certain rapids in the river by starlight. Some of the Arabs came to our boat, armed with flintlocks and the *mikwar*, a heavy stick knobbed with sandstone or hard bitumen, and in Arab hands a formidable weapon. But most of the people were asleep, and we could get no supplies of any kind except, finally, two roast fowl from the Turkish garrison in a mud-brick fort opposite. Even one of these fell, by accident, to

the share of a hungry jackal during the night while I was asleep.

We left early in the morning, and, after some difficulty in crossing the shallow rapids, reached Samawa in four hours. Dismissing the guard, we found a room in the Khan of Haj Nazir on the second floor and overlooking the bazaar, a much better place than at Hillah.

It was the day before Ashera, the great day of Moharram, and the whole town was in funereal excitement. All shops were closed, the Shiah were preparing for the great mourning, and the Sunni sought a safe place away from the street. As soon as I came, the local governor sent word that I must not leave the khan under any circumstances, nor venture in the street, as he would not be responsible for Shiah violence.

I remained at home, therefore, until the following day, and saw the confusion of the night of Ashera from the window, the tramp of a mob, the beating of breasts, the wailing of women, the bloody banners and mock-martyr scenes, the rhythmic howling and cries of "Ya Ali! ya Hassan! ya Hussein!" until throats were hoarse and hands hung heavy for a moment, only to go at it again.

The following day I went about the town freely, and spoke and sold books to those who came to the khan. Samawa is smaller than Hillah; four-fifths of the population, I was told, are Shiah, and there are forty Jews, but no Christians. A bridge of boats crosses the river and leads from the Serai to the Sunni coffee houses on the eastern bank. West of the town stretches the open desert plain, fourteen camel marches to Hail, the capital of Al Nejd.

On August 4 we took passage in a *mehelah*, or large



river boat, loaded with barley for Basrah. There was no place for us except a sort of low cabin under the aft deck, full of boxes and old clothes, ropes, lanterns and provisions; yet here we found shelter from the sun, and here I taught the Baghdad inquirer and servant *aleph bay*, and read John's Gospel to him, until we reached Kurna.

The river begins to broaden below Samawa, and its banks are beautiful with palms and willows. Before reaching Markaz we were again delayed at a toll-bridge, but it gave me an opportunity of going on shore and talking with some Arabs. Markaz, also called Nasiriya, is quite a modern town, and better built than any along the river. Its *suk* is large and wide and the government buildings are imposing. A small gunboat lay near the landing opposite the colonel's house and near the Persian consulate. I went first to the *suk* of the Sabians or Disciples of St. John, a remnant of the sect known also as Mandaites, who here number about forty, and to whom I had a letter from one of their number in Basrah. I found they were supplied with Bibles from a previous colporteur visit. The mudir of the telegraph was a Christian from Mosul, and when we met he took me to his house, where I had dinner with two other native Christians. We had a short Bible reading, and then I went to the *kahwah* near the river bank and sold some Testaments. On the opposite side of the river are two large walled enclosures, wheat granaries protected from Arab robbers; three hours west are the ruins of Mugheir—Ur of the Chaldeans.

Our *mehete* sailed down the river before daylight and five hours later came to Suk Al Shiukh, "the bazaar of old men." Abd Al Fattah, in whose Persian *kahwah* we found a place, was a cosmopolitan. He had

seen Franjees before, had been to Bombay, Aden and Jiddah, knew something of books, a little less of the Gospel, and spoke two English phrases, of which he was very proud, "Stop her" and "Send a *geri*." He was a model innkeeper, and, had it not been for his tea and talk, the three days of stifling heat under a mat roof would have been less tolerable.

I had a letter here, also, to one of the Sabeans, which undesignedly gave them and me much trouble. The man to whom it was addressed met me, read the letter of introduction, and then carelessly tore it up. Two hours later, all the Sabeans in the place were summoned to the Serai to give an account of their plot with an Englishman, and produce his letter! I went to their aid, and, after long palaver, we were dismissed. I was forbidden, however, to sell books until they had been approved by the government. Probably only a pretext to prevent sales, as they were all restored to me when I left. The general uncivility I met with here was so much an exception to the rule that I can only account for it by the intense heat, which wore on the tempers of Turks and Arabs alike, as well as on that of the missionary.

On account of this day's delay, not on our programme, we were short of provisions before reaching Kurna, and our boatmen were such prejudiced sectarians that it required argument and much backsheesh to bargain for some rice and the use of their cooking pot. We were *najis*, *kafir*, and what not all; and the captain vowed that when he got to Basrah he would have to wash the whole boat clean of the footprints of the unbelievers. Here are many wide, waste marshes, growing reeds and pasture for the buffalo cattle—a breeding place for insect life and the terror of the

boatmen because of the Ma'dan pirates. We were three days on this part of the river, and often all of us were in the water to lift and tug the boat over some mud bank.

Al Kheit is the only village of any size the whole distance, but the Bedouins of the swamp, who live half the time in the water and have not arrived at even the loin-cloth stage of civilization, are a great multitude.

On August 11 we arrived at Kurna, where the boat had to stop one more day at the custom house, so we sought for another chance to reach Basrah during the night. The local governor kindly entrusted us to an Arab, who was to see us safely back in a native *mashoof*—a canoe covered with bitumen, light, and well adapted for paddling downstream.

It was an interesting night's journey, and gave time for rehearsing my adventures up the river. The same steamer that took me to Baghdad passed us during the night coming from Basrah; it was just twenty-one days ago. I wrote in my diary:

“Seven hundred miles of touring along populous rivers and historic ruins; seven hundred miles of Moslem empire awaiting the conquests of the Cross; one missionary at Baghdad and two at Basrah; what are these among so many? The Euphrates and Tigris are the natural highways for the Gospel in North Arabia, even as the Nile is for that other land of the patriarchs, Egypt. And even so should they be occupied, village after village, by schools and Gospel agencies.”

## IX

### EXPERIENCES IN MUSCAT

JAMES CANTINE

*"Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier and your messenger and minister to my need . . . for indeed he was sick nigh unto death . . . bazariding his life."—PHIL. 2: 25, 30.*

*"Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."—JOHN 12: 24.*

IN the spring of '98 I left Basrah for Muscat to take over temporarily from Peter Zwemer, who had not been well, and whose furlough was overdue. He had engaged passage on an Austrian Lloyd steamer from Bombay, and to make connections was to leave Muscat on a certain date, expecting that I would arrive shortly before he left. I was, however, delayed a couple of weeks which I have never ceased to regret; and Peter, instead of going on and leaving affairs in the hand of the trustworthy Indian teacher, elected to postpone his sailing from Bombay until the next Austrian Lloyd, something like two weeks or a month later. He said that he wanted to tell me about the little black boys and also go with me for a tour inland; but shortly after my arrival he came down with a very stubborn case of malaria, day by day growing weaker. He had the best of care the station provided, but on the next sailing day, on the doctor's advice, we carried him down to the landing and off to the steamer. As is so often the case, the change benefited him greatly, but it was his last glimpse of the harbour, the town, and his boys, all that had become so dear to him.

The following year an attack of typhoid, with sub-

sequent weakness, made advisable the transfer of Mr. Barny from Muscat to Basrah, and it was decided that I should take his place. Again something interfered with my prompt arrival, and in the interim George Stone, a newly-arrived recruit studying at Bahrain, was sent down to "occupy" until my coming. When I reached Muscat a cholera quarantine prevented Stone's leaving by steamer, either north or south. The only available change was to one of the rather attractive date gardens a few miles up the coast, easily reached by sailing boat, and there I sent him, accompanied by a very competent teacher, Yusuf Seso. He had been having boils and seemed run-down; but no one considered him to be seriously ill. His letters expressed appreciation of the change and told us of his fair physical condition. It was perhaps two or three weeks later that, as I was lying on the couch one afternoon, I opened my eyes and saw Yusuf standing in the doorway looking at me. Instinctively I seemed to know what had happened and said only, "Where is he?"

The reply was, "At the landing."

Wordlessly, we walked down to the seashore, and there, lying on the sand, wrapped in a piece of old sail, was the body of George Stone. For a few days he had had some fever, and Yusuf had cared faithfully for him. Then, suddenly, his temperature had gone up, and he died. The next day, in a coffin draped with the American flag, he was taken by boat and laid to rest near the grave of Bishop French. His own grave is marked by a stone on which is the legend, "And he rose up, left all, and followed him"—so true of George Stone.

I do not know of a missionary who had come to Arabia so bereft of his own church associations, of

friends on the field, or of part in our Mission's history and development; one who had left quite so much to "follow," or one in whom so many have found inspiration. Often in after months on my daily walks I would scramble up the mountainside and down again to the little cove, where the surge of the ocean was ever present, to sit by his grave, drawing strength from his devotion—a softened heart as I could almost see the tears of his mother, and renewed confidence as I thought of the boundless resources of Him Who could thus release from service one so well fitted to carry on, or of the immeasurable love that could dare to bring such sorrow to hearts that loved him.

Thus began a long period, eight years, including furloughs, of work in Muscat—a period which might have been indefinitely extended if my wife's health had not made a change advisable. As someone said, Muscat came to be known as Cantine's station, and certainly *there* were spent, especially after my marriage, the happiest days of my forty years of missionary service. Several of the younger recruits stopped over for longer or shorter visits on their way to the other stations, and the annual mission meetings, together with the regular summer's exodus considered necessary, greatly relieved the isolation of the one family. Very helpful in this connection were the cordial relations between the missionary home and those of the American and British consulates. McCurdy, the American vice-consul, also the agent for the mail steamers, and, therefore, doing considerable business with America importing American sheeting and exporting Fard dates, was, as I may already have mentioned, most kind and helpful. Captain, afterwards Sir Percy Z. Cox, and his wife, with their boundless hospitality, made the days a recurring

pleasure for a lonely missionary. In a place where there were only half a dozen white people, we would naturally tend to pool our social resources. Most of these were found at the British Agency with its tennis, badminton, boat, and billiard table; but once I recall I scored when Cox, wanting to take their cook on a long trip inland in a fruitless search for coal, asked if I, with my cook, would not eat at the agency until his return.

The frequent visits of the English gunboats were occasions for a formal exchange of calls and an invitation to come aboard on a Sunday morning to conduct services. A boat manned by four English sailors was always sent to the landing for me, and I would feel quite important as, with tiller ropes in hand, I would round to at the ladder, calling out at the proper time "bow," and again, "way 'nuf." On these small boats, on which there was no chaplain, the captain, who was obliged to conduct Sunday services, always seemed glad to have someone carry on for him. Of course, it was the Church of England service we used, and as the grand old hymns were sung so lustily, and the responses so ready and seemingly sincere, there grew in my mind a valid argument for a State church. In contrast with this was my experience, when asked by the commander of a small American gunboat, the *Isle de Luzon*, to come and talk to the men on a Sunday morning. I went off, to be met at the head of the gangway by a none too sympathetic-looking American seaman, who, when I asked for the commander, replied, "Gone on shore to play tennis, sir."

"And the officers?"

"All gone on shore to play tennis, sir."

To my questions as to hymn books and about the



SAYYID MOHAMMED, BROTHER OF THE SULTAN OF MUSCAT  
AND OMAN  
(His four sons attended the Mission School, 1904-6)



SHEIKH 'ISA IBN 'ALI, RULER OF BAHREIN,  
AND HIS THREE SONS, 1901



possibility of getting the men together for a little service, he was quite noncommittal. However, I cornered a few of them for a not too successful half-hour. The next day, on casually meeting the commander, I did think he was rubbing it in a bit when he said, "I was disappointed in you yesterday. You should have told the men about your life among the Arabs instead of trying to hold a Gospel service."

I brought my bride to Muscat about the time the Coxes moved up the Gulf, their place being taken by a Major Grey, who came with his mother and two sisters. I had by this time rebuilt the mission house, providing a good lower room for religious services. We could always count on five from the agency, including the English doctor. The latter, however, was quite High Church and always absented himself on Communion Sundays.

I might here give expression to my unqualified admiration for Sir Percy Cox. From our early acquaintance in Muscat, when he was still Captain Cox, to our last meeting at Baghdad, after he had been so highly honoured by his government, he was always sympathetic and helpful in all our personal and social intercourse. I treasure the thought that I may have been able to make a slight return for his kindness. When he first came to Muscat, I must have given expression to the opinion that his predecessors had neglected opportunities for gaining the good will of the Arabs and had confined themselves too much to the "tail twisting" program so generally in vogue in dealing with native rulers. At any rate, he asked me if I would not put my views in writing so that he could refer to them in trying to get his plans endorsed by the Indian Government. I told him that we missionaries were supposed not to

meddle in local politics, but that I would write an article for our church paper and give him a copy. I am not sure how he used it; but it is certain that during his stay in Muscat his relations with the Sultan were most cordial. He was something of a scientist, much interested in the Oman hinterland, and some non-political notes I made on my tours were thankfully received.

Again, at Basrah, in the early days of the war, when civil interests were perhaps difficult to integrate with the military occupation, my wife and I were able to extend to Sir Percy and Lady Cox the hospitality of our home for a few weeks. He was a man of few words; but one evening, as we were sitting beside our fireplace, I ventured to ask, "Sir Percy, do you think the activities of the Arabian Mission in this part of Arabia have been prejudicial to the interests of the government?"

His reply was, "No, quite the contrary."

In Sir Percy I have always visualized that heart-stirring description, "A gallant English gentleman."

Lady Cox, too, was invariably kindness itself, from nursing me when I was ill to passing a critical eye over my bachelor's house furnishings. With but scanty experience from which to generalize, I would say that she was the ideal wife for a diplomat. Her gracious hospitality is remembered by many of her countrymen, as well as by more than one of my fellow missionaries.

During these early days the Freed Slave School, bequeathed by Peter Zwemer to his successors, was a major interest at Muscat. The general health was good, though I do remember treating some trying scalp infections. Only two died while they were with me, one by a fall from the parapet of the roof where, contrary

to orders, he was sleeping at night, the other during a cholera epidemic. This latter was the most trying of my cholera experiences—sleeping at night, or trying to, with one ear open to hear the tread of one of the boys on the stairs and a frightened voice saying, “Sahib, John is sick!” Our house was outside the wall, and at night both doctor and medicine were on the other side of the barred gates—but what could be done for cholera patients? It was hard to keep them alive and, in a Moslem land, hard to find a resting place for them after death.

Most of the boys were lovable little fellows, and we easily understood the hold they had on Peter’s affections. He had given them English names, beginning with names of members of his own family, the dearest of all being called Adrian, after his father, and the biggest of all, James, for his brother. James, like some Bible characters, did not live up to his name. Eventually, when the school was disbanded, a place was found for him in an Indian industrial school. Here he discovered that one name was not sufficient, so added to the James “Cantine.” A year or two later, a missionary friend in India sent me a newspaper clipping telling of my arrest for chicken stealing or some equivalent crime!

Not only did the boys want to be fully equipped with names; their ambitions went further. One afternoon a knock on my door brought word that the boys wanted to see me. When they had all come up I was surprised to learn that they wanted “birthdays.” On further inquiry, I found that they had been reading in their little English reader about an American boy who had a birthday. They argued that as they were now American boys, they also must have birthdays. Their

reasoning seemed sound, so after telling them that our birthdays went back to the birthday of Jesus Christ, I found a big calendar and allowed each boy with eyes shut to pick out his own date. They never forgot to remind me of the dates, recalling also that, according to the story, a birthday meant a present.

One was never sure just what would happen from day to day. One of the daily tasks of the boys was to fill the big tank with water for watering our little garden, the water being pulled up from the well in a small leather bucket and the rope being wound around a very creaky wooden windlass standing over the well. One afternoon I was almost lulled to sleep, so steady was the creak of the windlass, when, suddenly, I heard a tremendous whir and rattle. I aroused sufficiently to realize that the boys would never work the windlass as fast as that, and decided I had better take an interest in the proceedings.

So I called out, "Boys!"

The prompt reply came back, "Sahib."

"Has anybody fallen down the well?"

"Yes, Sahib!"

On investigation, I found that one of the boys had slipped on the curb and had gone down head first, catching hold of the rope as he went. I lowered one of the bigger boys and got the victim out safely. He felt quite proud of his experience.

Peter Zwemer had expressed the thought that the boys might be trained to be of some assistance in our mission work; but when they approached the time at which we had agreed with the British Government to let them go out into the world to earn their own living, they lost their desire to study, and proved better fitted for manual labour of various kinds. As the years went

by it was difficult to keep track of them all, but to our certain knowledge some were, and are, living sincere Christian lives.

As had been found elsewhere, the matter of Christian burial was a difficult one to settle. After considerable hesitation, the Sultan had given us verbal permission to wall in a bit of vacant ground back of the mission house. The British consul wisely thought it would be best to have the ground formally consecrated so that there might be no future withdrawal of the concession. So, during his visit to the station, Bishop Le Froy came to the mission house, donned his full canonicals, and walked around the boundaries followed by myself, Prayer Book in hand, and giving the proper responses. I do not remember what clerical vestments I wore or symbols I carried, but I have often wondered what some of our supporters at home would have thought if they had seen it.

As regards the Sultan, Seyyid Faisul, I must say that I grew to be quite fond of him, which, doubtless, is more than he would say of me, for again and again I found it necessary to ask for some material favour—a bit of land adjoining our property, or permission to close an unused street and add it to our garden. Once he was heard to say as I left his reception room, “I take refuge with God from a country that has missionaries in it!” This was an adaptation of an old saying, “I take refuge with God from Satan the accursed!” But he never refused to give me letters of introduction to his deputies inland whenever I wished to make a tour.

If I was *persona grata* with the powers that be both inland and at Muscat, it was due in large measure to my good wife, who did more than her share of visiting in

the city, and who always accompanied me on my tours. Somewhat to my chagrin, I found that the sheikhs would often talk more freely with her than with me. Perhaps it was the novelty of finding a woman able and not afraid to talk on religious matters. One dear old man at Wadi Muawwal, after maintaining the defensive for some time on the question of plural wives, retired gracefully from the argument by saying, "If I could find an Arab woman as learned as you have, I might be content with one wife."

As the years went by my wife and I became quite proud of our station. We had built a school building in memory of Peter Zwemer and another dwelling house for single women. In the two Moskov brothers we thought we had the best of native helpers. A guest house for the entertainment of Arab visitors had been obtained, and we had purchased a house, inland, at Nachal. Best of all, an entire Moslem family had moved down from the mountains so that they might openly follow Christian teaching. I recall saying to my wife one day, "Beth, it seems as if everything were coming our way." To the Arab way of thinking you must never praise the looks of a child, lest some evil spirit, listening, may hear and, out of jealousy, injure the one praised. It was not long after that many of our plans were quite wrecked and that we ourselves, because of ill health, had to leave the station.

Here I might go back several years to the spring of 1889, shortly before the close of the seminary year. One day, after the Hebrew class, Dr. Lansing said to Zwemer and me, "Come over to my house at four o'clock."

We went and heard him say, "I want to talk about your future. You know that you are going to a pioneer

field where, without doubt, life will be at first rough and uncertain. It will not be wise to ask any woman to share with you those first years. And, again, you should be free to explore and travel among the Arabs under any and all conditions. You, I am sure, agree with me, but, to reinforce your resolution, I think it wise for each of you to sign this paper, which reads, 'I hereby agree, from the time of my arrival on the field of the Arabian Mission, to remain unmarried for the term of one, two or three years.' Here are the three dotted lines. You can each sign on one of the three." I think Zwemer signed on the "one-year" line. I, who had never thought of matrimony except to agree with Paul that it was an honourable estate, signed across all three. The future fully repaid Zwemer by giving him, *after five years*, the first single woman missionary to pass by our field on her way to the C. M. S. Mission at Baghdad. I had to wait fourteen years until the first recruit, Miss Elizabeth De Pree, was sent out by our Woman's Board. We were married in 1904 at Mussoorie, India, by Doctors Wherry and Ewing. Then followed twenty-two years of loving fellowship in Muscat, Basrah and Baghdad, during which my wife was always a missionary in her own right and to me an unfailing "comrade, guidon, golden spur."

## X

### THE OPENING OF BAHRAIN STATION

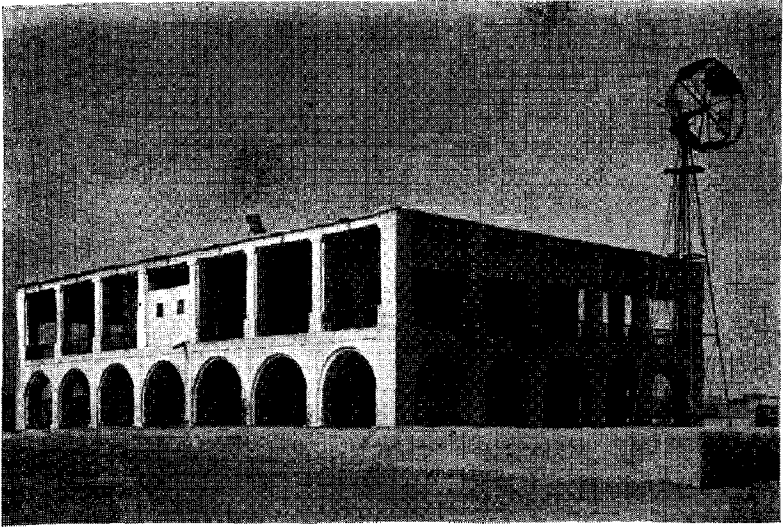
SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

*"The men of Dedan were thy traffickers; many isles were the mart of thy band . . . in precious cloths for riding. Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they were the merchants of thy band; in lambs, and rams, and goats . . . and precious stones."—EZEKIEL 27: 15 ff.*

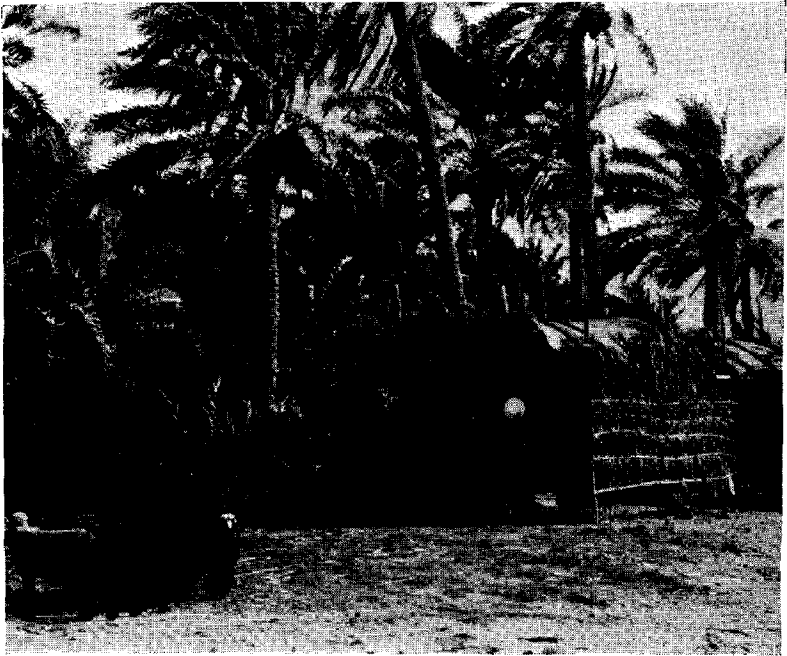
*"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls."—MATTHEW 13: 45.*

It was at the end of November, 1892, that Cantine and I decided that it might be well for me to investigate the opportunities at Bahrain, which he had visited on his way to Basrah the year before. From the outset, the mission policy seemed to be expansion rather than concentration. On December 7, the slow Gulf steamer arrived at Bahrain. Conditions were not altogether encouraging, and there was considerable doubt whether I would be allowed to remain when the steamer took its departure. I, therefore, deposited my box of books and medicine case with the Goanese postmaster, who proved a real friend. Then I took a walk away from the town into the date gardens, until I saw the smoke of the steamer disappear on the horizon. When I came back, the Arabs were surprised and thought I had missed my steamer. Mr. Gunsalves extended hospitality, and after two weeks in his home I obtained an upper room in a house adjoining a mosque, where I could receive visitors on my own account. The Arabs received me with less prejudice than I had expected. The chief *qadhi*, though he received letters from other Moslems in Moharrek which he showed me, asking





MASON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, BUILT 1902



THE SUMMER LODGE AT SITRAH WHERE THE ZWEMER  
CHILDREN TOOK ILL, 1904

him to send me away from the island, did not do so, but was very friendly. I suppose the medicine chest I carried, and a wonder-working, marvellous, electric machine were the indirect cause of their kindness. All Arabs are hospitable to strangers, but on the whole Arabian coast they have learned to suspect Christians who come with the Book. Great numbers came for treatment every day, and many of them I was able to help in some way or other. Fevers, rheumatism, and ulcers were most common.

Two weeks before my arrival colporteurs of the British and Foreign Bible Society from Bushire met with rough treatment in the bazaar and had to leave. Because of this I was, perhaps, too cautious at first in selling Scriptures openly. However, of the sixty portions of the Word of God which I took with me on my first visit forty-four were sold before I left.

On December 12 I visited the inland villages as far as Rifa'. Riding on donkeys, we followed the seashore and passed Senabis, with perhaps fifty houses, and a place called Shiyukh. To the left is Suk-al-Khamis, with its baths and an old Kufic mosque. The road then leads through date and aloe groves to Sel Mobad and the ruined Portuguese fort. From the fort we crossed pasture lands and passed more date orchards coming to Ali, a larger village. South and west of Ali stretches a barren plain full of rocks and curious sand-covered mounds. The Arabs told us that here there had been a great and wicked city of unbelievers and that all the people had been turned to boulders. The mounds are about thirty or forty feet high, and those opened resembled the pictures by Doughty of the ruins at Medain Salih. The entrance was toward the east; the chambers, though small, of hewn rock, two-storied and

with upright niches in the walls and curious round holes four feet above ground and quite deep. Could they have been for supporting candles or ornaments?

From Ali the road leads southwest, to Rifa' Sharki and Rifa' Gharbi, which, in plain English, mean east and west Heightstown. These are the largest villages next to Menameh and have a more healthful location and much better water. While here we also sold Arabic Scriptures and met a brother of Sheikh 'Isa, who is chief ruler. In consequence of my admiring an old greyhound, as we sat in Arab fashion at dinner, I received the animal for a present, but it proved a "white elephant" on my hands afterwards. We rode back by another road and passed other villages, Tubli, Belad-al-Kadim and Zinjee, the latter apparently a nickname for a Negro village. On December 17 I made a state visit to Sheikh 'Isa and also visited among the people at Moharrek. In February, I passed over to the opposite coast and spent three days on invitation with the pearl merchant who lives and rules at Darain near Al Katif. The visit, although interesting, was not important in itself, but it made plain to me that here is the natural and most open gate to Al Nejd.

At that time the rulership of the islands was still a bone of contention. In 1867 'Isa bin Ali (called Esau in Curzon's *Persia*) was appointed ruling Sheikh by the British in place of his father, Mohammed bin Khalifah, who plotted piracy. An English agent, a Shiah Moslem from Lingah, held the ends of the reins of government, and the Arab sheikh was allowed to sit in front and drive. The sheikh was a typical Arab and spent most of his time in hawking and the chase; everything was peaceable, at least on the surface; the watchmen cried through the streets all night, robbers

were summarily punished, all minor disputes found their tribunal at the *qadhi*, and the people were content with the government. Except for an occasional squall caused by Ottoman rumours of war, or Arab rebels from the coast, Bahrain enjoyed political calm.

On February 4, after much difficulty, I rented a small shop in a most excellent location for our work. Where the bazaar of the tinsmiths crossed that of the grocers, on a corner, near the big iron-bossed gate that leads to the custom house and the sea, our Bible work had found its home. It was a dark, Oriental shop, with its front open to the street, and closed at night by upright boards slipping (sometimes with awful perversity) into parallel grooves secured by two padlocks. Inside were a low bench covered with palm-leaf matting, a dry-goods box for a table, a home-made bookcase with Bibles and Testaments and other books in many languages. On the walls hung a copy of the Lord's Prayer in Arabic, the English and Arabic alphabets and, among others, a text telling all men everywhere to "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

Ever changing was the group of gazers who laughed or listened or bought or beat down prices at the door of the shop. Arab pearl merchants paused to look in while they pressed in busy crowds to the customs; there were Persians who sat down to chat and drink coffee with their countryman, an armourer, who squatted all day opposite our shop, grinding swords, repairing flintlocks or putting new handles to bowie knives; Turkish soldiers returning gory or footsore and hungry from the wars of Katar; chance pilgrims from India, who came on the last steamer; Banian merchants, different in dress and mien from the "true-believers" of the island; Negro slaves from Abyssinia,

or free-born in the house; rich and poor, illiterate the many, intelligent the few, wild Ishmaels and sedate sheikhs, half-naked *hammals* and closely veiled women—all such passed the door of the Bible shop every day. (Here, as at Basrah, we called our salesroom a *shop* and not a depot; we hoped always to make it a place where we *work with the Bible* and not a place merely where Bibles are stored.) During five months in that first year 198 Scripture portions and 162 religious and educational books were sold to a total value of 106 rupees.

“*Ta'al shoof!* Come and see. Here is an Arabic Gospel, a portion of the whole Injil of Isa the prophet—only one anna. Have you read it? The Koran says it is ‘light and guidance.’ Or do you want to read the wonderful Psalms of Nebi Daood in this pretty green binding for three annas? Here is the whole Torah in Persian for one rupee or a gilt-edged New Testament almost ‘*Bilash*’ at two krans. You don’t care to read the Holy Book because it has been corrupted, you say? How do you know if you have not read it? Does the caravan call the water bitter before they reach the well?—Don’t go away; we sell other books besides the Scriptures. Here is an atlas, all in Arabic; there are science primers, grammars, poetry, stories. Have you read *The Greatest Thing in the World*, or *Swiss Family Robinson* put into Arabic by the learned men of Barr-es-Sham?”—and so the hours went by. Sometimes there were those who lingered and had patience to sit and read some portion of the Word selected for them. Often there gathered about the door the curious to hear a Franjee talk the language of “the Book,” or read from the Sermon on the Mount.

On April 25, Mr. William Lethaby, a Wesleyan lay

preacher who had carried on a mission at Kerak in Moab, independently and successfully, in the face of great difficulties, was my guest. His purpose was to cross over into the interior with Bibles, and, while tarrying, he attended the Bible shop mornings when I was busy with patients. For some days our sales had been very encouraging, but suddenly, from a clear sky, a storm of anger burst out over our work. We were summoned to the *qadhi*, were forbidden to sell Scriptures or Christian books, a town crier went about warning people not to purchase or receive Scriptures or medicines, and, finally, when God still kept us in our shop and continued to send customers and patients, we were officially told to leave the island because we made trouble on religious matters. The story in a nutshell was that one or two who knew the penetrative power of the Gospel when they saw we had a foothold plotted mischief; but, in the language of the Koran, "God is the best plotter," and our God, in answer to prayer, and in His own way made the wrath of men to praise Him. After the episode, the sales of Scripture steadily increased, the stumbling-block had become a stepping-stone, and the town crier's denunciation proved only a free advertisement. Of other spirit was the man who came like Nicodemus one night, said he had just finished reading John's Gospel and believed that Jesus was the Son of God; and that woman who came to the shop, with money to buy a copy of the Psalms, and seemed to understand why and what she purchased—thrice wonderful is that story to those who know what it means to be a woman in Bahrain.

I spent hours every day sitting in the little book shop and earlier hours in treating patients who came for relief. There was no dentist in Bahrain. The black-

smiths, sitting in their stalls, would drive small wooden wedges to loosen an ulcerated molar and then use pliers to extract it. I remember sending to Bombay for four dental forceps and a lancet. Believe it or not, after helping scores of pearl divers, I gained the reputation of painless dentistry. On one occasion I was called to a wealthy Arab's home. The patient was his favourite wife, and lest a foreigner see her face I extracted the troublesome tooth through a hole in her veil. I doubtless made many mistakes in diagnosis and treatment, but took comfort in the Dutch proverb: "In the land of the blind, one-eye is King." What I had seen and learned from Dr. Wanless at the Bleecker Street Dispensary proved of real value in those early days, and my fellow workers can bear witness that, once medical missionaries arrived on the scene, I no longer dabbled in the art of healing. I recall, however, with some pride the ulcers healed, the eyes relieved, the fevers mitigated if not cured, and the wonderful gratitude of the people. My family name was hard to pronounce and Samuel is not mentioned in the Koran, so I took the name of *Dhaij Allah*, one of the Arabs who befriended Doughty, and, strange to say, whose son came to our hospital years later. *Dhaij Allah* signifies the guest of God, that is, the stranger within the gate. Some years later, when opposition to our preaching grew stronger, enemies changed the name to *Dhaij Iblis*, guest of the devil! I am quite sure that there are many old Arabs who remember me by both names, for when I last visited Bahrain one of them told me that he now had a new name for Zwemer, Fātih al-Bahrain, the pioneer of progress. "Did you not," he said, "introduce the first slates and pencils, the first primus stove, the first meat grinder and open the first dispensary?"

The upper room above the pearl market was the station residence for two or three years. It had sixteen small windows without panes, a rather leaky roof, and was so close to a small mosque that the muezzin and I exchanged morning greetings after he awoke me from sleep. Two red baize curtains divided the room, which measured about 12 x 12 feet, into three. One was bedroom and study, one dining-room and kitchen, and the section nearest the staircase was the dispensary. As I look back to those earliest experiences they bring memories of long happy evenings when the bazaar was deserted, my door locked and with biscuits and tea I could read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*—trying to forget the vexations of the Arabs.

Friendships begun that first year endured for decades. Hassan Musherif, the pearl merchant, was an example. He never became a Christian, but again and again he proved a friend in need, a defender against slander, a counsellor of wisdom and a man of pure heart and life. When our children were born he gave each of them a beautiful Arabic name. And when Katharina and Ruth died in the same week he was like a brother to us in our sorrow.

On the first of April, 1895, two newly-appointed missionaries of the Church Missionary Society arrived at Basrah. Miss Alice Philips and Miss Amy Elizabeth Wilkes were the pioneer missionaries from Sydney, Australia, appointed to Baghdad. Shortly after, I became engaged to Miss Wilkes, and the following year, May 18, we were married at the British consulate in Baghdad by the Rev. Canon Parfit. For a short time we lived in Basrah and then my wife became the first woman of our mission to work under circumstances and in an environment of untold discomforts and



physical hardships. Naturally strong and self-reliant, she triumphed over everything bravely and hopefully. Our small, uncomfortable, three-room leaky house, without screens and in the midst of the town, became a center of hospitality for Arab women and children. A trained nurse, she cared for the first patients; she opened the first day school for girls, and "roughed it" by tours in an open sailboat to Katif, and along the Oman coast, not to speak of tours all over the islands. Looking back to those early years, what she patiently endured now seems incredible. Two of our children, Raymund Lull and Nellie Elizabeth, were born in Bahrain, and two died there, in one short week. On their graves Mrs. Zwemer recorded: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive riches." Now she knows what it meant. After the forty-one years we had been together, she suddenly fell asleep in New York City, on January 25, 1937.

" Her love was like an island  
 In life's ocean, vast and wide,  
 A peaceful, quiet shelter  
 From the wind and rain and tide.  
 'Twas bound on the north by Hope,  
 By Patience on the west,  
 By tender Counsel on the south  
 And on the east by Rest.  
 Above it, like a beacon light,  
 Shone faith and truth and prayer;  
 And through the changing scenes of life  
 I found a haven there."

What was missionary life like in those days on Robinson Crusoe's island? There was one mail steamer every fortnight, to which we went regularly to buy

supplies of potatoes and canned goods. We had none of the comforts of civilization. My wife wrote:

“ I am busy from morning till night about little bits of things, but they have to be done and I hope will prove, in time, to be of use in forwarding the Kingdom; the little Day School has two sessions each day, slowly and irregularly; a few Moslem girls are coming in, and each morning I have the reading at the Dispensary, sometimes with ten, sometimes with twenty-five women and children. I have a Moslem woman coming for teaching, she came to church for the first time yesterday; she is ambitious and wants to learn to read. Mansoor, the Moslem engineer, is doing well, and my husband is teaching him, and the man appears to be very sincere. The new hospital will be dedicated this week sometime. Yesterday Mr. Van Ess preached and gave us a very good sermon. Dr. Thoms said that it had made a greater impression upon him than any sermon he had heard for years; that is good testimony, is it not? ”

And here is an actual close-up of one ordinary day in our happy lives. The account appeared in our church paper:

“ It was December 7, 1899, a bright, cool day of our mild winter; at this season the weather does not hinder mission work nor melt enthusiasm. We rose at about six o'clock, and while Mrs. Zwemer was dressing the children, I read to her from John's Epistle. Our reading was interrupted by an early caller, a Banian (Hindu) merchant, who came to purchase a map of Bahrain and an atlas he could not find at the book shop the day before. He remained for some time and took other books with him; but as some of them were on Christianity, he politely returned them afterwards. Our breakfast was next in order, and then the household, including our colporteurs, met in the study for morning prayer. We read Psalm 31 by turns and, after brief comments, Jusef

led in prayer. Already a dozen or more patients were at the doorway waiting for the dispensary to open. Jusef was sent with books to the weekly bazaar held on Thursdays at Suk-el-Khamis, a couple of miles distant, and Gibrail began to dress ulcers while I treated fever patients, and put eye water into eyes more or less affected with ophthalmia. One case of dysentery puzzled us, and another case of total blindness received no help. In between bandaging and bottle-washing, Gibrail pressed two men into purchasing Gospels; altogether eighteen people went away happier than they came. While upstairs, Mrs. Zwemer put a baby to sleep and prepared a pudding not to be entrusted to Lydia, our cook; Suleiman, our Muscat boy, did his sweeping and dusting, and Nejmah prepared for the daily ordeal of addition, subtraction, sewing and John's Gospel. Lydia serves tables wholly, but her young daughter thinks she may become a prophetess.

"Before ten o'clock I made a visit to the building which is in process of erection just outside the village, and which the mission leased for eight years as a residence when it became evident that purchase of property was impracticable at Bahrain. From the builders, I hurried to make a promised call on Sheikh Jasim, the judge of the island; talk about the Transvaal war made the visit tedious.

"On the way back I stopped at the leading Hindu merchant's house to arrange for a lantern talk that night, an old promise to fulfil. When I reached home, the doorway was blocked by a group of gazers, and within was a man lying on a bier, carried there by two *hammals*, and accompanied by his wife, both Persians. He had an ugly ulcer right on the knee and wanted to stay in our house until he was cured. After dressing it, we took him to the mosque next door and found him a comfortable corner there. Would you call him an in-patient? Then it was dinner time, and we sampled the pudding, not to speak of mutton, egg-plant, rice and native bread. Gibrail employed the rest of his morning in rolling bandages and making some very indiffer-

ent quinine pills; but he is developing into a useful dispensary assistant, and is spiritually-minded, with abundance of patience. Jusef returned from his expedition, having sold nothing, but spoken with many and left a few tracts in good hands. During the afternoon, one of our helpers sat in the shop and the other bargained for donkeys to go on a more extensive tour on the morrow. What Elias, the colporteur, did on December seventh is not yet evident for he was and is still absent on the Pirate Coast with Bibles and books.

“After noonday prayers two more patients came. A baby ten days old was brought in its mother’s arms to ‘the Christian lady.’ The tiny creature was suffering from abscesses on its back; soothing, dressing, a flannel garment, and kind words—then the mother of this small bit of humanity, three pounds of misery, went her way. A pearl merchant followed to have his finger dressed. Then Mrs. Zwemer went out on an afternoon excursion, Suleiman carrying a bundle of garments made by the Summer Sewing Guild. Two dozen baby garments each found an occupant, and the cry was for more, from many a hut where the wind was equally cold. She called on some of the better class, and in the house of H—— had a talk with ten women about the Third Commandment, and answered all sorts of questions about our ways of living and our way of worship. At home I had a daily Arabic lesson with Jusef for mutual profit; we were reading the fourth chapter of Ecclesiastes; he asks questions on exegesis, and when I cannot satisfy him I can retaliate by questions on Arabic grammar or unusual roots. I also played the music box, given by an Arab sheikh, for Katharina, and walked the floor with Bessie. Nejma came to learn a hymn, and there was time for some reading. Evening tea, prayers, good-night to the four brown and the two white bairns and then off for the lantern talk. A white sheet in the largest upper room on the island, seventy views and a half-English, half-Arabic explanation to suit the audience—we put the light out and

go home. The day is done. Such is a glimpse of our daily round and common task.”

But the sheer joy of it all comes back as I write this chapter. How gladly would I do it all over again in some unoccupied seaport of western Arabia.

## XI

### ON THE ROAD TO HASSA

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

*"And over the camels also was Obil the Ishmaelite."*—I CHRONICLES 27: 30.

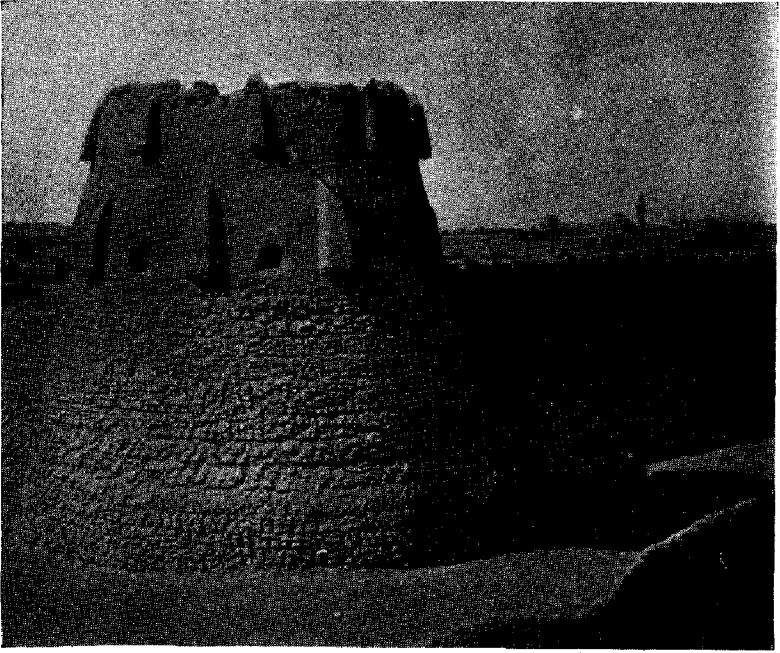
*"The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah. . . . All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar; and I will glorify the house of my glory."*—ISAIAH 60: 6, 7.

ON September 30, 1893, my diary states that Cantine came to Bahrain, that he made an awning over the door of our one-room with teak beams and matting, "and that we sent out a large order of books from Beirut for the Bible Shop." Peter Zwemer was then at Basrah, and during that summer cholera was rampant all over the Gulf and there were thousands of deaths. All of us were anxious to discover some place inland where the heat was less trying and where there might be an opening for future occupation.

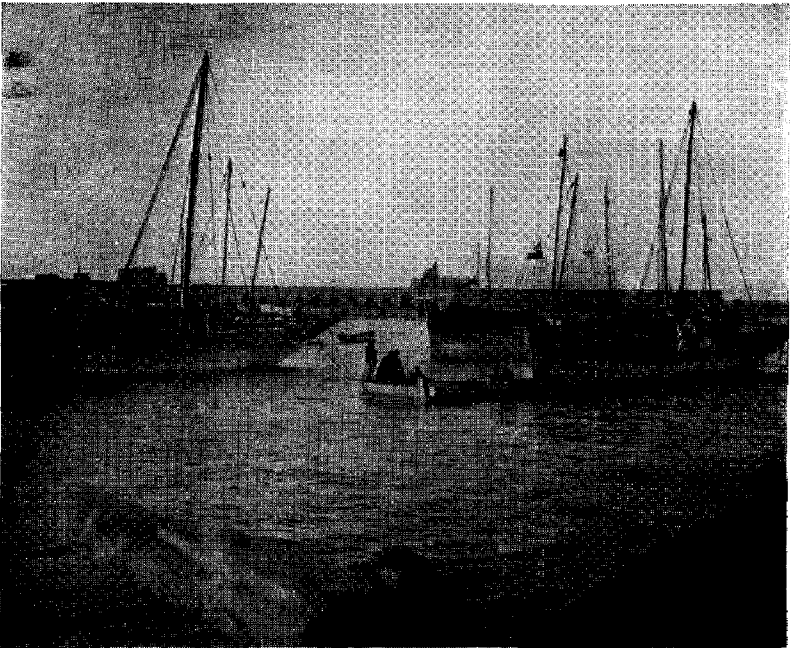
I left Bahrain on October 3, 1892, with two other travellers, Arab merchants, for Hassa. We rode on donkeys to a small village landing place on the extreme south of the island. Here our boat was waiting. After the usual delays in coffee drinkings and pipes of tobacco and *Inshallahs* we finally waded through shallow water for a quarter of a mile, embarked and were off at sunset. A fair wind landed us at Ojeir, on the mainland, the next morning, and I found my way to a custom-house officer to whom I had a friendly letter from a Bahrain merchant. But the letter was of no use. Ojeir,

though it has neither houses nor population, has a harbour, a mud fort, a dwarf flagstaff, and an imposing custom house. The latter, in the Ottoman Empire, is a short name for a large institution. My baggage was so ridiculously small that it escaped examination, though I had to give declaration that it contained no *London Times* or other journals! As for myself, however, they wanted a passport and gave me the alternative of waiting five days until permission had been obtained for my visit to the capital. Providentially I had *three* old passports, none of them exactly intended for the occasion and all but one illegible to them, but which, after long palaver, I succeeded in showing were equal or equivalent to *one* of the kind they demanded. Still I was not allowed to proceed with the caravan inland until I had promised to visit the pasha of Hofhuf immediately on my arrival. A soldier was commissioned to see that I did not fail in the performance.

A caravan left Ojeir nearly every week because this was the depot of wares for the interior. The Jebel Shammar country was probably supplied overland from Basrah and Baghdad, but the whole southern Nejd received piece goods, coffee, rice, sugar and Birmingham wares by way of Bahrain and Ojeir. The whole plain in and about the custom house was piled with bales and boxes and the air filled with the noise of loading seven hundred camels. I struck a bargain with Salih, a Nejdee, to travel in his party and before noon prayers we were off. The country for many hours was bare desert, here and there a picturesque ridge of sand, and in one place a vein of greenish limestone. When night came we all stretched a blanket on the clean sand and slept in the open air; those who had neglected their waterskins on starting now satisfied thirst by



THE WALLS OF HOFHUF (See Chapter XI)



THE HARBOUR OF OJEIR—GATEWAY TO AL HASA



scooping a well with their hands three or four feet deep, where they found a supply of water. During the day the sun was hot and the breeze died away; but at night, under the sparkling stars and with a north wind, it seemed, by contrast, bitterly cold. On the second day, at noon, we sighted the palm forests that surround Hofhuf and give it, Palgrave says, "the general aspect of a white and yellow onyx chased in an emerald rim." As we did not reach the "emerald rim" until afternoon, I concluded to remain at Jifr, one of the many suburb villages. Here Salih had friends, and a delicious dinner of bread, butter, milk and dates, all fresh, was one of many tokens of hospitality. At sunset we went on to the next village, Menazeleh, a distance of about three miles through gardens and rushing streams of tepid water. Here in the evening *majlis* of Abdullah bin Saeed I sold some Scriptures, treated sick, and talked on this world and that to come until a late hour. Early the next morning we again rode through gardens and date orchards half visible in the morning mist. At seven o'clock the mosques and walls of Hofhuf appeared right before us, as the sun lifted the veil; it was a beautiful sight. I paid off Salih and went directly to the pasha in the *kut*, or government quarters. There was no trouble to speak of, and with great politeness (perhaps not without a purpose) a room was given me in the *kut*. Here I was "at home" to many callers, Turks and Arabs, who came only to talk but often went away with a portion of Scripture or other purchase. During my short stay all the books and Scriptures I brought were sold, even my own Testament—a rebuke to lack of faith in not taking along more. Daily I was allowed to go about the bazaar freely, even visiting the interior of the large mosque. One evening I took dinner

with the Arab sheikh of Rifa'a, an official under the Ottoman Government, who gave me much intelligent information about the caravan routes inland.

I studied Palgrave's old plan of the city, and it seemed fairly accurate. The bazaars were, however, more extensive and some of the walls dismantled. The two quarters of the town still bear the names of Rifa'a and Na'athel, and I heard that Aboo Isa's house, where Palgrave read Nabtee poetry, is yet standing. Even the *Tawilat-al-Hassa*, "the Hassa long bit," was current. That strange, two-tailed copper bar was worth half an anna and disputed its birthright in the market with rupees and Indian paper and Maria Theresa dollars and Turkish coppers. But how changed the bazaar itself would appear to the ghost of some Carmathian warrior of the ninth century who first handled a "long bit" ! Even the Wahhabis have disappeared, and tobacco, silk, music and wine are no longer deadly sins. Of these Moslem puritans many have left for Riadh and the few that remain stroke their long, white beards in horror at Turkish effendis in infidel breeches smoking cigarettes, while they sigh for the golden days of the Arabian reformer.

There is a military hospital at Hofhuf, with a surgeon and a doctor, but nothing is done for the Arab population. This summer cholera raged here as well as on the coast and at Bahrain, and, just before the time I arrived, smallpox was epidemic and carried off many children.

The four days I spent in the city were soon over and I planned to return northward by way of Kateef, if there should be a caravan, rather than wait several days for the date caravan to return to Ojeir. The opportunity offered, although I was not allowed to go until after

signing a paper, which, because of the unsafety of the road, disclaimed all responsibility on the part of the government should I lose life, limb or luggage. A copy of this document was in my possession, but the only foe I met in the desert was—fever. On Tuesday noon our small party set out, not going through the large town of Mobarrez as I had hoped, but turning east and reaching Kilabiya at two o'clock. We passed fountains and streams and fields of rice and swamps—everything so unlike Arabia of the school geography. In four hours, however, we were again in the midst of desert, where the sun proved too hot for me, and I took a fever which did not leave me until I returned to Bahrain. The road continued desert all the way to Kateef. On Wednesday we rode all night under the stars (because of a false alarm of robbers) until nine o'clock next morning. Then we rested at a place called, with bitter irony, Um al Hammam; there are no *baths*, no trees, no grass, only a shallow pit of dirtied water and small shrubbery of dates. Here we spent a hot day. On Friday morning we came to the borders of Kateef—palm groves, wells, and ancient aqueducts, with curious towers and air-holes at intervals. Through gardens and around by the large square fort we came to the sea. At the custom house, again, I found rest and refreshment.

A boat from Kateef brought me to Menameh and the mission quarters on Sunday, October 15. Such a hurried tour of twelve days is not worth much for results, although two score of books and Scriptures were sold; but it is one of the necessary first steps in a new field. Doubtless we made many mistakes in those early years, but our policy of diffusion, rather than of concentration, had two great advantages. By occupying three centers when there were only three missionaries

in the field—centers hundreds of miles apart, and weeks by steamer—each of us could try it and report to each other the value of methods and of approach. Moreover, by avoiding a concentration of effort we probably were considered “feeble folk” by those who might wish to hinder the work, and did not awaken the alarm of Islam’s leaders.

To travel inland as explorers and missionaries do today would have been impossible and absurd. On my first and second journeys to Sana’a and on this trip to Hassa I carried all my belongings in two camel saddlebags—a few tins of provisions, some books, a blanket, a small pocket compass and a case of medicines. H. St. John Philby writes of his last journey in 1937:

“So, with the King’s blessings and good-will, I set forth on the first stage of my journey from ‘Ashaira on May 21, with three motor cars and seven or eight companions. With me I had a theodolite, not of the most modern pattern, for astronomical observations, and a long and medium wave wireless set with which I could get Greenwich time and the daily news and, occasionally, more frivolous entertainment from Jerusalem and Cairo.”

Today is not like yesterday in Arabia, neither for the missionaries nor the colporteurs. I remember how Elias Bakkus of Mardin suffered hardship going alone to Hassa five years later and how we crossed the Oman peninsula in 1900 by way of the Pirate Coast, one hundred and fifty miles on camels. He was the best colporteur we had in those days and his cheerful, loving companionship lives in my memory. All our helpers in those days were Armenian exiles in whose blood was the spirit of martyrs. Here is a page from his “book of Acts” in Hassa:

“ Kewaja Davod, chief of the custom house, bought an entire New Testament. One friendly Turk also told me of your visit some years ago and the books he then received. He wants dictionaries, English and Arabic, and his children are anxious to learn English. Praise God, I was five days at this work in perfect freedom, but on the sixth day I was arrested by the police and taken to the pasha. Said he, whence come you? Said I, from Basrah by way of Bahrain. What is your business? To sell Christian books. Did you not know there are no Christians here, but that everyone is a Moslem or a Jew? Yes, I knew it, but the Gospel is good for everybody. They then asked me where I kept the ‘forbidden books.’ I told them I had sold some, and the rest were at the shop of a Jew, who had harboured them for me. They sent for the Jew fellow and clapped him into prison with me also. Afterwards the Jew was let out on paying a fine of fifteen *mejidihs*. I was taken the next day to be cross-examined, and they were also anxious to see my passport. This was all right, except that I did not like them to know my birthplace, for fear I should be sent back to Mardin. So I showed them the passport, but covered up that one word with my thumb. They said, your passport is correct, but you may not sell books. Tell us, did you come to make the Moslems Christians? And many more questions they asked to trap me, and all my answers were taken down to be sent on to Basrah.”

Then he was sent back to the coast under guard of soldiers who treated him roughly.

## XII

### THE BUILDING OF A HOUSE AND A HOSPITAL

JAMES CANTINE—S. M. ZWEMER

*"The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease."*

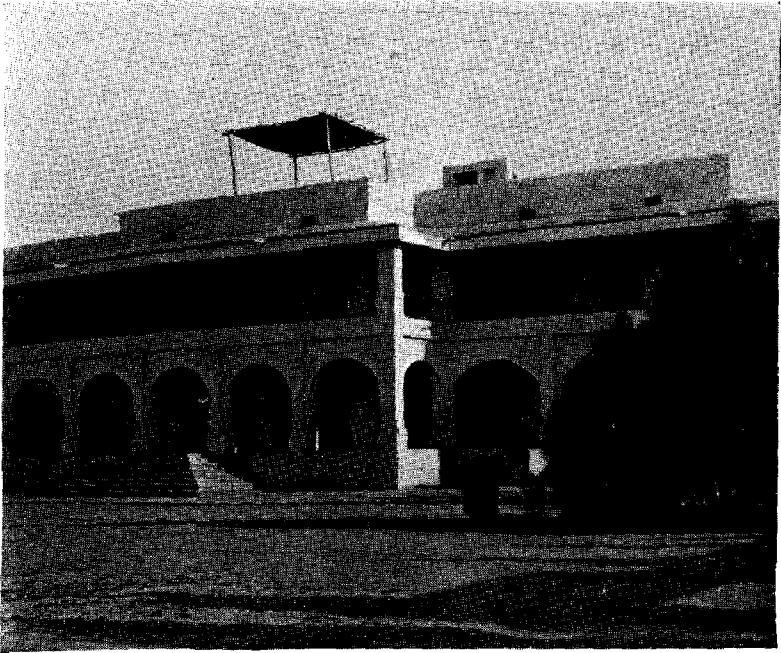
—NEHEMIAH 4: 10, 11.

*"They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and food and drink and oil."—EZRA 3: 7.*

*"Prepare thy work without, and make it ready for thee in the field; and afterwards build thy house."—PROVERBS 24: 27.*

MANY a pioneer mission has failed to follow the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs which tells us "to prepare thy work without and make it fit for thyself in the field and afterwards build thy house." We were spared the folly of building too early or in the wrong location by the extreme difficulty at all of our stations to obtain land by purchase or lease. The Arabs of the Gulf were suspicious, for political and religious reasons, of all foreigners, especially of those who apparently were desirous of permanent residence. And yet native houses at that time were utterly unsanitary and unsuited either for residence or medical work without costly improvements.

There are few exceptions to the rule that by their *homes* any class of people are known. Do they own them? Then their location may be supposed to be a permanent one. Are they well adapted for their work? Then the wisdom and foresight of the designers may be assumed. Are they sanitary and comfortable?



THE MISSION HOUSE AT BAHRAIN, BUILT AFTER THE HOSPITAL



GENERAL WARD, MASON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, 1903

Then we may look for contented, vigorous occupants and workers.

This is clearly recognizable on the mission field. There may be localities where it is not easy to own property, and others where a temporary sacrifice has to be made to meet some vital need of the work; but in general the houses of the missionaries are not a bad indication of how they and the Boards are meeting their opportunities.

When we went to Arabia, the only parting advice we remember having received from an honoured missionary—one of many years' experience in the Orient—was: "Whatever work you do, and wherever you have to do it, be sure that your *dwelling houses* are as comfortable as you can make them and as healthfully situated." Perhaps we have not always been able to follow his advice, but it has constantly been in our minds, and one of our earliest hopes was the raising of a building fund which might be drawn upon as opportunity offered. This hope was partially realized in '97 and '98 through the efforts of Zwemer (then home on furlough), and the result on the field was shown in Muscat, in the first dwelling owned by our mission in Arabia. That we were so long in making full use of this fund was because the conditions were new and complicated, and we wished to have a good experimental knowledge of them before committing them and our successors to permanent locations.

Our experience with houses in Muscat has been a varied one. When I first reached Muscat (in 1891) I occupied rooms over a native storehouse—the same from which Bishop French was carried to his grave a month or two before. When Peter Zwemer came down to occupy this station later on, he hired a native house,



one of the best in Muscat, only to be compelled to move out to make room for a French consul. Again he hired a house and made a few necessary repairs, but before the year was up the roof fell in—fortunately while he was away. I do not remember how many changes eventually were made before the last, which took him outside the walls and to a new location. The missionaries' quarters were above, comprising one room enclosed and one adjoining. Below was the kitchen and servants' room, while the eighteen freed-slave boys took what was left. There was no veranda for protection against the sun, and, in general, the accommodations were only such as would satisfy its native owner. This property, after much consultation and questioning, we bought, and then we gradually built up beside it such rooms as were required from time to time. In 1901, the old main part was found in such poor repair that it was decided to pull it down and rebuild on a new and better plan. The supervision of this rebuilding took a good share of the time and thought of the resident missionary during two years. The result was three good-sized rooms, with a veranda on the sunny sides. Below was a chapel, a reception room for native visitors, and a central chamber, to make a refuge during the hot, dry winds.

It would seem impossible that such a small building should have required two years for its erection. But operations were carried on only when the missionary was at hand to direct, and whenever other claims, such as mission meetings, touring, vacations, etc., took precedence, then the work had to stop, as it was found that the native workmen could not be depended on, not even for one day. When other buildings of foreign design have been put up in Muscat an architect and

contractor have been obtained from India, but this was entirely beyond *our means*. However, having seen nearly every stone put in its place, we knew just what we had and were assured beyond doubt of the permanence of our work. The native material and workmanship which, for reasons of economy, we had to adopt are not easy to use, and much care had to be exercised lest our house should have the same fate as that of a neighbour—parts of his falling down several times while it was being put up. The foundations and walls of the lower story were about three feet thick. They were made of hard, brittle rock broken off the neighbouring mountainside, laid up in a mortar composed of *mud*, with a little sprinkling of lime. The strength of a wall was, of course, only in its thickness, and it had to be reinforced after it was built by carefully digging out the mud from around the surface stones and pointing it with cement. The upper story had to be of a very light, pliable sandstone, brought on boats from a point a few miles up the coast. This stone would disintegrate very soon if exposed to the air, and had to be completely covered with a cement or plaster. The lime for all our work, excepting the inside finish, which was brought from India, was burnt in a very crude and imperfect way about two miles distant. Earth was obtained from ruined houses in the neighbourhood, and sand from the dry bed of a stream which flows only a few days each year. Our woodwork came from all directions, doors and windows being bought in India; beams and rafters coming from the coast of Africa, and the posts for the veranda from Baghdad. A half dozen iron beams, which excited the admiration and wonder of the natives from the interior, were, I presume, from England.

Our workmen also were a nondescript lot, composed

of Arabs, Persians, Balooches and Negroes. The head mason we gave about thirty cents a day, and wages graduated from that down to four and five cents. The workmen were a faithful lot, and while we were constantly annoyed by their stupidity, yet they were always ready to try to do what they were told, and identified themselves with the fortunes of the home in a most happy manner—defending its design and workmanship against all comers, quarrelling with rival bands, and always on hand to remind one of an approaching feast day, when they expected to *eat* your health around a lean goat or other such delicacy as the market and your generosity afforded. They also insisted that the blood of a sacrifice (of course an edible one) must be shed in the foundation trenches before work was begun, and there were various other occasions, such as the setting of door frames and stairways, when they claimed special backsheesh.

One of the pleasant things in connection with our building was the gift from the Sultan of a bit of land to make our garden larger, it having been greatly encroached upon by the new house. It was unexpected and very unusual, for he was noted as being very averse to foreigners obtaining any further hold on his country. When all was done, we had at last a good, comfortable home at Muscat.

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At Bahrain the greatest difficulty was experienced, not only in renting a room or a mission house, but in securing a plot of land. When, through the great generosity of Dr. Alfred DeWitt Mason and his brother in Brooklyn, New York, six thousand dollars was sent to build a memorial hospital, our troubles began.

I recall visit after visit to Sheikh 'Isa, the ruler of the islands, to plead for a piece of land on the outskirts of Menameh. There were objections and secret and open opposition to all our efforts. Finally, I thought their greed had overcome all scruples and hearing of a fine site about eight hundred yards northwest of our present location, I signed the bill of sale and paid nearly one-half the price. My elation was short-lived. Our good friend Hassan Musherif came to me late that night in disguise and bade me beware of their deceit. "Take back your document," he said, "and get back your money. They have played a trick. The land is the site of an old ruined mosque. Once you start building, they will declare the property *waqf* and stop your work." So I did as I was advised, without betraying him, and early on a Sunday morning went back with my bag of rupees sadder and wiser.

We had to wait (while Tobiah and Sanbalat rejoiced at our discomfiture) for nearly a month. Then there came a vision to an ancient retainer of Sheikh 'Isa, who said he had seen Nebi Isa, the prophet Jesus, who told him to sell a parcel of land to the missionary. Whether the dream was real or imaginary, the result was that negotiations were reopened and on August 16, 1901, the ruler himself sold us the land for four thousand rupees. It was to be measured in Arab cubits—"the length of the forearm of the ruling chief." As this was *over* eighteen inches, I remember that we chose the standard cubit and received praise for not grasping the extra inch. Marking posts were set up in the presence of witnesses, and the mission became property-conscious from that day. The bill of sale, however, included several *caveats*. There was to be no consular residence on the land, and the buildings were not to

overlook Moslem harems without proper roof, walls, etc. The Rev. James E. Moerdyk and Cantine drew the plans for a substantial two-story building surrounded on three sides by wide twelve-foot verandas. All the stone was brought from the shores of the island, masses of coral rock pried out with crowbars. We paid four and a half rupees per boatload. One kind of limestone was burned in a kiln on the premises and gave us plaster. The masons were from Bushire, the carpenters made doors and windows out of teakwood from Bombay, but the hinges, paint, varnish, locks and the large iron letters which spelled MASON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL came from London.

Moerdyk had charge of accounts, no small task, and both of us superintended every detail of the building process. The staircases and the roof were major problems, after we had solved that of foundations. As in Muscat, blood sacrifice had to be made at the four corners of the foundations "to insure against accident" and, of course, to give a barbecue to the builders. It was a long and weary task during the heat of late summer. During the winter, cholera broke out again, and there was more delay. Often at sunset more men would come for their stipend for carrying stone than we had hired at dawn. With sixty or more workmen (of whom over one-half were called Mohammed) the only remedy was to use an indelible date stamp on their forearms. Even so, we had disputes. All work ceased at noon and afternoon prayer time for about fifteen minutes. One considerable item in expenses was fresh drinking water for the workmen. It came in large goatskins on camels from a distant well; and at one time our watchman tried to make profit by stealing for his own household supply and substituting sea water!

Dr. Sharon J. Thoms, then in charge of medical work, described our mutual difficulties thus:

“ One’s patience is tried nearly every day by oriental procrastination and untruthfulness, and one thinks often of Kipling’s words:

The end of the fight  
Is a tombstone white,  
With the name of the late deceased.  
And the epitaph drear—  
A fool lies here  
Who tried to hustle the east.

“ The masons and the other workmen need constant oversight. If one leaves them alone they do more talking and smoking than work. And not only that but they do poor work and build in some way contrary to instructions, and all that has been done during your absence must be broken down, which means a waste of time and material. So, you see, there is a considerable difference between the way we have to build in this country and the way you would build at home, where a contractor would build exactly according to your plans and finish at the time promised.”

While building was in process, we dug for water and found it at some depth, but the well was brackish. Then we received an American windmill from the church at Waupun, Wisconsin. It arrived in pieces, accompanied by a catalogue and two monkey-wrenches! Then trouble began again. The tower was put together, the wooden tank put in place and everything prepared for hoisting. A gang of men with ropes was on the flat roof of the hospital. Others manned guy ropes. A crowd of several hundred stood agape to watch the performance. As master of ceremonies, I gave the signal and the steel structure rose to an angle of fifty degrees and then buckled and fell to the ground, all

twisted. I confess I cried over it. But we had an old friend, Engineer Corbett, on the S. S. *Assyria*, and that boat came into harbour the next day. He laughed at our mistake in putting too much strain on the tower, brought sailors and a portable forge on shore, straightened the angle irons, and then helped hoist the windmill. It worked. Water was provided for the whole building, and that first windmill introduced the Arabs to a contrivance which they eagerly adopted. Now there are many windmills on the islands. One other cardinal blunder I must confess. When we put in the plumbing and screwed together, *as tightly as possible*, the long pipes to bring water for the operating room washbasins and for the women's ward, no one suggested the use of white lead. The first time water was turned on, there were scores of leaks, and we had to do the whole job over. I resolved never to joke about plumbers again.

On March 19, 1902, the cornerstone of the new hospital was laid. A copy of the program before me, written in Moerdyk's beautiful script, says that J. A. Gaskin, Esq., H. M. Assistant Political Resident, presided. (This was the man who discovered bitumen near Jebel Dokhan March 21, of that year, and started the search for oil.) There were addresses in Arabic and in English, Dr. Thoms laid the cornerstone, and a new hymn written by one of the mission was sung, prophetic of the great development of medical work in later years:

" Accept this building, gracious Lord,  
 No temple though it be;  
 We raise it for our suffering poor  
 And so, good Lord, for Thee.

“ Accept the gift of love, and give  
To all who here may dwell  
The will to witness, power to work,  
Or bear their sorrows well.

“ Oh Jesus, wise, compassionate,  
Guide Thou the surgeon’s knife;  
Heal Thou the sick, touch Thou the blind,  
And give the dying Life.

“ And hasten, Lord, that perfect day,  
When pain and death shall cease,  
And Thy just rule shall fill the earth  
With health and light and peace.”



## XIII

### THE GOLDEN MILESTONE

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

*"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses; from the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates. All the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your border."*—JOSHUA 1: 3, 4.

*"Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest."*—JOSHUA 1: 7.

ONE of the most vivid recollections of the early years of our mission is of the hours we spent in prayer together, first in the seminary dormitory, then on the slopes of the Lebanons, climbing to Suk-al-Gharb, and afterwards at Aden and Basrah and Bahrain. Cantine nearly always turned to one portion of Scripture which became our *magna charta*—the first chapter of Joshua. It seemed to us in those days wonderfully appropriate, and God has fulfilled some of its promises to those who followed after. We always coveted the whole of the promised land and our eyes were beyond its coasts.

The penetration and discovery of Arabia by intrepid explorers and travellers is a story of fascinating romance. D. S. Hogarth in 1904 and R. H. Kiernan in his book, *The Unveiling of Arabia* (1937), have shown how, step by step, the great peninsula yielded its secrets to those who braved every danger and had only two qualities in common—curiosity and courage. Ludovica di Varthema was the adventurer who, in 1503, first entered Mecca as a Moslem pilgrim and wrote a

description of the forbidden city. Joseph Pitts, an Exeter sailor boy, was taken prisoner by Algerian pirates, forcibly made a Moslem, and his earliest account of the holy cities is fascinating. The Danish expedition in 1761 was made famous by the only survivor, Niebuhr, who gave the world the first description of Yemen. Then followed Ali Bey, Burckhardt, Burton, Wellsted in Oman, Von Wrede and the Bents in Hadramaut; Sadlier crossed the Peninsula in 1819 and Wallin explored north central Arabia. Palgrave wrote the most sensational book (next to Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*) in 1865. Then followed a score of travellers, with Doughty as prince among them all: Lady Ann Blunt, Nolde, Pelly, Huber, Guarmani, Shakespear, Gertrude Bell, Leachman, Raunkier, Carruthers, Eldon Rutter, Bury, Lawrence, Philby, Bertram Thomas, Van der Meulen, Freya Stark and others.

No one can read the story of any of these brave men and women without admiration. And yet it was love of adventure or devotion to geographical science or political aims that were the motive of their endurance and the goal of their ambition. There was no David Livingstone among them, and yet the geographical feat of their intrepid adventure should mark the beginning of new missionary enterprise. Some of them, alas, denied their Christian faith to gain entrance; others, like Doughty, suffered contempt and hardship because they were not ashamed of the Name; some laid down their lives in the attempt to enter forbidden territory, and even their graves are forgotten.

Doughty's experiences were typical. "Our train of camels drew slowly by them; but when the smooth Mecca merchant heard that the stranger riding with

the camel man was a Nasrany (Christian), he cried: 'Akhs! A Nasrany in these parts,' and, with the horrid inurbanity of their jealous religion, he added, 'Allah curse his father,' and stared on me with a face worthy of the Koran."—All these laboured and we have entered into their labours. Our medical missionaries, Doctors Dame, Harrison, Mylrea, Storm and Thoms have also penetrated the interior. We face a new day and new opportunities and facilities.

From 1889 unto the present year, no less than eighty missionaries went to Arabia under our mission for longer or shorter terms of service. Seven hospitals have become centers for ever-widening influence, so that in one year 237,000 received physicians' care. Hundreds of Arab children have gone out from our schools and have built what they learned of Christian teaching into the life of their people. Tens of thousands of copies of the Scriptures have been distributed and thousands of religious books to leaven the thought-life of the Arabs. During the last few years more converts have been baptized than in all the mission's previous history. There is a steady increase in attendance at all services of worship and a marked decrease of fanaticism everywhere.

Visible and direct results may be small, as in nearly every Moslem land, but the invisible is real to the eye of faith. And the indirect results of the mission started fifty years ago in faith are astonishing. The Danish Church Mission in Yemen, the United Mission in Iraq, the Friends of Arabia Mission, and the work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance on the borders of Arabia—all trace their origin to our mission. The Arabian Mission has also rendered large service through Dr. Paul W. Harrison and Dr. Harold I. Storm

to the Student Volunteer Movement. Seven mission study text-books for the Church at home were written by missionaries in Arabia. The first and second general conferences on missions among Moslems held at Cairo in 1906, and in Lucknow in 1911, were due to initiative from Arabia. These conferences, in turn, resulted in the Cairo Study Center, the Henry Martyn School in India, the Fellowship of Faith for Moslems (London), the American Christian Literature Society for Moslems (New York), and the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip, an association for the support of Moslem converts and mutual help (India). The literary output of the missionaries includes the books of Dr. Paul W. Harrison, two Arabic grammars by Dr. John Van Ess, *The Moslem World* (quarterly) 1911-1938, and a score of books and tracts for Moslems by the Nile Mission Press. These by-products of the Arabian Mission doubtless also have their value. It was God who began and continued to use the weak things.

Fifty years ago, when the Arabian Mission was still a dream, and the death of Keith Falconer at Aden seemed to seal the fate of that Scotch Mission, it may have been difficult to formulate the claims of the "Neglected Peninsula." It is easier today. The golden milestone of our Mission is not only a place to pause and look backward and upward in thanksgiving to God, but it is a challenge to look ahead and to move forward. We may well ask, as we face Arabia today—a *new* Arabia—what are some of the considerations on the basis of which we can make an appeal for *new* sacrificial interest?

Among the claims of Arabia there is, first of all, *the historic claim*. We all know that there are great areas in the Near East which, once Christian, are now Mo-

hammedan. The instinct of the Crusaders was right, although their method was wrong. To claim North Africa, Syria, Persia, Palestine, *Arabia* and Central Asia for Christ is to re-claim. Within the past fifty years evidence has been accumulating that early Christianity in Arabia was very extensive. Tor Andrae in his *Life of Mohammed* proves that Nestorian missionaries influenced west Arabia, and that, doubtless, Mohammed himself was in touch with such witnesses. In northwest Arabia we still have Arab tribes that show an influence of early Christianity, and on the island of Sokotra, as well as elsewhere, there is archæological evidence of the Christian Church. We must win Arabia back to Christ for the honour of His Name and for the sake of the martyrs of Nejran, who are mentioned in the Koran.

There is also the call of the closed door. All of Arabia is not yet accessible. We know this land was for many centuries a barrier for the messengers of the Gospel. Christianity would have gone overland to central and eastern Asia centuries earlier but for this wall of Islam. The fanaticism of the people closed the peninsula for many centuries. Gates of brass and bars of iron kept out all but the bravest of explorers, and yet the penetration of Arabia is now an accomplished fact. Where our mission has not yet been in to preach Christ there is the call today. The unoccupied cities of central and western Arabia and the great province of Hadramaut surely have a claim today. Medical missionaries have the key to open every closed door in Arabia. Will they be forthcoming?

There is the claim of womanhood and childhood. No religion has dealt more harshly and unjustly with them. The Mohammedan conception of women has

degraded woman as she has been degraded by no other religion of the world, and the Mohammedan doctrine of divorce has, of course, poisoned the life of children. The great majority of humanity is made up of women and children, and upon these Islam has borne down with heaviest depression. Our women missionaries have seen something of the extent of this need, and have felt the burden of these suffering women and children, but so far we have only reached a small percentage of the population, and the call is louder than ever for women missionaries to bring love and joy and peace into Arabian society—by bringing Christ.

There is also the claim of kinship in the realm of theistic faith. Arabia is the cradle of the greatest of the non-Christian religions. Islam has much in common with Judaism and Christianity. One has only to compare the idolatry of India with the elevating and clean belief of the Arabs to be convinced that in the case of Arabia we deal with those who already have, and understand, much of our message. They hold with us that Jesus Christ was a sinless prophet. We have that great point in common with them. Many will admit that alone of all their prophets, Mohammed not excepted, Christ was the sinless one. They accept Christian Scriptures as sacred books, but they believe that what we call Christian Scriptures are corrupted. Historic criticism fights on our side in this matter. All this antagonism will yet die away.

Again we have the claim of utter divergence in faith and ethics. The Mohammedan needs the Gospel as much as anyone. Islam is not a Christian heresy, nor indeed a non-Christian religion. It is anti-Christian in its Christology and ethics and history and life. Although the Koran often speaks of Jesus and contains

much that is true, it is wholly inadequate to meet the intellectual, social or spiritual needs of the Arabs.

Lastly, we now face entirely different conditions in Arabia from those that existed fifty years ago. Everything has changed in Bahrain, as I knew it, except the natural scenery and the climate. Even these have been modified by western civilization and architecture. The camel has given way to the motor car; the palm tree is dwarfed by the wireless station; the radio set and cinema are taking the place of the *majlis* and coffee shop. The Rev. F. J. Barny, our fellow soldier in many a fight, retired from the field this year, after forty years of service, and puts it all very vividly:

“The time does not seem long—it never did seem long. There is a grandeur about God’s work, it abides. It sounded fine when a manager of a business concern said, ‘we are thinking in terms of fifty years.’ But we think in terms of eternity. It has always been my hope that I might see Christ’s Church established in east Arabia. The hope has not been realized, but this hope deferred does not make the heart sick, for I know the time for that will come. But God’s work also goes forward, it is His will that it shall. The time calls for fresh ideas, fresh energies. At my first Annual Meeting there were four of us, and then we talked about the things that we have been doing since. Not everything was outlined clearly, but we had medical work and evangelistic work, and there was the Freed Slave School. The following years added more detail, and so we have been carrying on. It seems to me that we have come to the end of a period. Everything has changed these latter years, except our methods. My hope for the mission is that with the year of jubilee, and even now, new visions, new methods, and a new outlook may be given to bring the message of the love of God in Christ Jesus to hitherto unresponsive hearts.”

The celebration of our fiftieth anniversary as a mission will have small significance if we look backward only and think of our golden milestone as a goal or resting place. Our colleagues on the field would justly take umbrage if that were all. They know even better than do we, or any of the explorers and travellers, (especially since the recent survey of Dr. Storm) that the greater part of Arabia is still neglected and unoccupied.

Those for whom we look and pray to begin work in Hadramaut, on the western Coast and in the great interior provinces, must be men and women with the real pioneer spirit—who will give their utmost for the Highest. His name is the Lord of hosts. His arm is never shortened; He is never discomfited by any disaster, nor discouraged by any delay. And He is not yet satisfied in Arabia.

So this book of remembrance closes with an appeal for prevailing prayer and for God-chosen recruits. One of our little band wrote in 1902:

“Our King can do without any of us, and He will devise means whereby His kingdom shall be extended, in spite of the apathy of His people at home. But woe to that soldier of the Cross who hangs back and is unwilling to serve when the King’s call for volunteers for the front comes to his ears! We dare to think it a noble thing when a man or woman leaves home comforts and worldly prospects to follow the King on foreign service. Should we not rather think it a deadly disgrace that the King should have to call twice for men to fill posts of difficulty and danger or of loneliness and drudgery in the outposts of His empire.”

What we felt then, and earlier in 1890 we feel now. Arabia is a most fascinating field. Its ancient history,

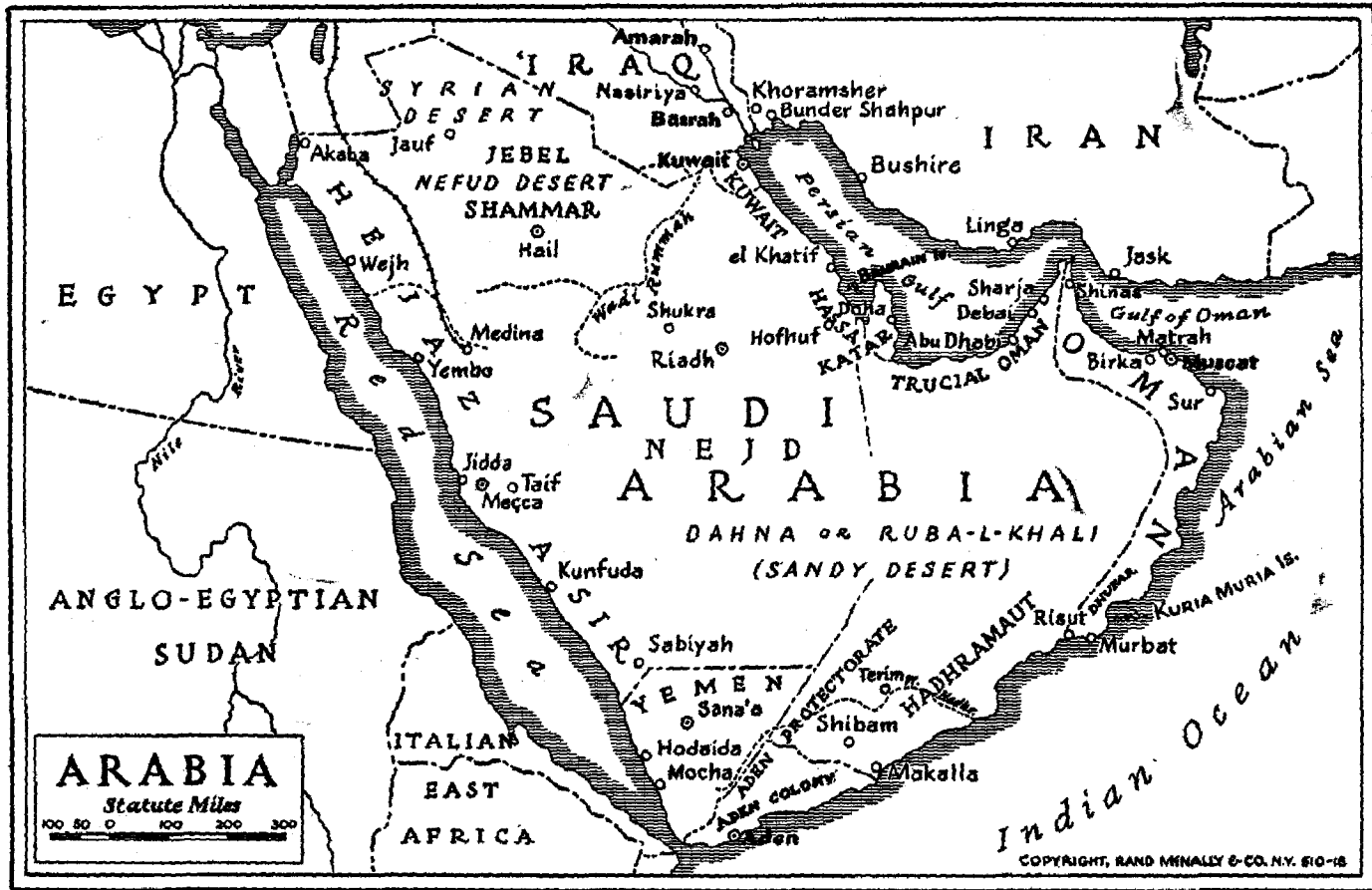


its Bible promises, its marvellous recent economic development, the friendliness of its rulers,—all strengthen our faith that there is a great future for Arabia. Therefore we pray,

“ Take this book in Thy wounded Hand,  
Jesus, Lord of Calvary.  
Let it go forth at Thy command,  
Use it as it pleaseth Thee.

“ Dust of earth, but Thy dust, Lord,  
Blade of grass in Thy Hand a sword,  
Nothing, nothing, unless it be  
Purged and quickened, O Lord, by Thee.”





## APPENDIX

### THE ORIGIN AND PLAN OF THE ARABIAN MISSION

By

PROFESSOR JOHN G. LANSING, D. D.

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[The following article appeared in *The Christian Intelligencer* August 28, 1889, and supplements the account given in chapters I and II. It is, in fact, the earliest and only authentic statement of the founding of the mission and its original purpose. Therefore, it is worthy of preservation.]

The Arabian Mission was organized August 1, 1889. With the principal steps leading to the organization of this mission, and with the principal facts relative to this mission, the readers of *The Christian Intelligencer* are, for the most part, acquainted.

It will suffice to say that the movement began about a year ago with three students in our Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, viz., Messrs. James Cantine, Philip T. Phelps and S. M. Zwemer. For the sake of mutual help these individuals became associated with the writer; and these four constituted then, as still, the original members of this mission. And yet not these four alone, for it is with grateful acknowledgment that we must regard, practically, as members the many strong friends who, almost from the outset, have so greatly encouraged this missionary enterprise by their varied and invaluable help.

In general, the Divine responsibility resting on the brethren named was this: To go as pioneer missionaries to some Arabic-speaking country, and there, while working for all, to work especially in behalf of Muslims and slaves.

Especially, that is, not exclusively but equally, in behalf of Muslims, inasmuch as Muslims have heretofore been so signally neglected; and slaves, in accordance with the demands and encouragements of the case.

But over against this Divine responsibility there appeared a great human difficulty, which difficulty has since become still greater by the increased indebtedness of the Board. The difficulty was just this: On the one hand, the non-existence of such a mission under the charge of our Church Board; and on the other hand, the apparent financial inability of the Board to organize and carry on this mission in addition to the work the Church and Board were so nobly carrying forward in other parts of the foreign field, and with which, by the very nature of the case, those who would go to another part of the same field must necessarily be in strong sympathy. In view, then, of the responsibility on the one hand, and the difficulty on the other, the brethren named held meetings, prayerfully discussed the whole matter, and finally agreed upon a plan of action; a plan not indeed as satisfactory as could be desired, but as satisfactory as could be devised under the circumstances. Briefly, this plan embraced the following principal items: The official organization of this mission by the Board; the field of work to be Arabia or the Upper Nile, without as yet determining the precise locality; the raising, by a new plan, of \$6,000 a year, for the term of five years, to carry on the work of this mission, after which term it was hoped the Board would be in such a financial condition as to carry on the mission according to its regular methods; the raising of this money upon a syndicate plan, and by those themselves who were going out as missionaries, together with the writer; the securing of this amount as an addition to and in no wise a decreasing of the regular contributions to the Board for its support of the other missions; the earnest desire of the individuals named in offering this plan to remain in connection with, and have this a mission of our own Church.

The whole matter, including the plan, was laid before the

Executive Committee of the Board, then before the Board, then before the General Synod, then again before the Board, the matter being referred back to them, with authority, by General Synod. The discussion of the whole matter during all this time and throughout these various stages has brought out three things very prominently. First, the Divine responsibility resting on the brethren named to do the work indicated, and their earnest desire to do it in connection with and as a mission of our own Church. Second, the earnest desire of the Church and the Board to organize the mission and do the work indicated as another mission of our Church. Third, the action of the Board declining to organize this mission and work, owing to its financial extremities; an action which since then has been variously confirmed, so that there exists no probability of such an organization of this mission at any time in the near future. Two other things, however, must also be said in this connection. The writer and the individuals named are deeply grateful to General Synod for its hearty reception and advocacy of the proposed mission. And, on the other hand, they not only have no word of complaint to utter in regard to the action of the Board, but are grateful to the Board for the careful consideration they have given the matter and deeply sympathize with them in the sorrow which they and all must feel in connection with the adverse action taken.

But this does not discharge the responsibility. A responsibility Divinely imposed is not discharged by any admission of existing human difficulty. God's calls and opportunities are never met by cataloguing over against them man's deficiencies and extremities. Nineveh and Corinth will never be brought to repentance and righteousness by fleeing to Tarshish or remaining in Athens. When God calls, man must obey, not object. And also, when God calls to some specific work, then He must have some way by which that work can be done. Thoughtfully, prayerfully considering this, there has been adopted, for the doing of this work, the following:

## PLAN

We, the undersigned, believing ourselves to be Divinely called upon to engage in pioneer mission work in some Arabic-speaking country, and especially in behalf of Muslims and slaves, do at the outset recognize the following facts:

1st. The great need of and encouragement for this work at the present time.

2nd. The fact that hitherto comparatively little has been done distinctively in the channels indicated.

3rd. The non-existence of such a mission under the charge of American Church Boards generally.

4th. The financial inability of most of these Church Boards to organize such a mission and send individuals to such fields, in addition to the work they have already assumed.

Therefore, in order that the object desired may be realized, we agree to the following plan, which is hereby adopted:

1st. This missionary movement shall be known as The Arabian Mission.

2nd. The field, so far as at present it is possible to be determined, shall be Arabia and the adjacent coast of Africa.

3rd. Selected by and associated with the undersigned shall be a Committee of Advice, composed of four contributors, to assist in advancing the interests of this mission.

4th. In view of the fact that this mission is of necessity undenominational in its personnel and working, contributions are solicited from any and all to whom this may come, without reference to denominational adherence.

5th. The amount required to carry on the work of this mission will be the sum necessary to meet the equipment and working expenses of individuals approved of and sent to engage in the work of this mission. No debt shall be incurred, and no salaries be paid to other than missionaries.

6th. The funds necessary for carrying on the work of

## DR. LANSING'S ACCOUNT

this mission shall be raised on a Syndicate Plan, according to which yearly subscriptions shall be solicited in amounts of from \$5 to \$200, the subscribers of like amounts to constitute a syndicate with such organization as shall be desirable.

7th. The funds necessary for carrying on the work of the mission shall be solicited and secured according to the following subscription form:

- 1st. The amount subscribed shall be so much per year.
- 2nd. The amount thus subscribed shall be paid quarterly, in advance.
- 3rd. The year shall begin October 1, 1889.
- 4th. It is desired that the amount subscribed *shall not interfere with the individual's regular denominational contributions to Foreign Missions.*
- 5th. Subscribers sign with the understanding that they shall be at liberty to change or cancel their subscriptions at any time, if Providence so indicates.
- 6th. In accordance with the above I agree to contribute the sum of.....dollars a year for the work of the Arabian Mission.

Signed,.....

8th. Of the undersigned the first party shall be treasurer and have general oversight of the interests of the mission at home, and as such shall render an annual statement, while the missionaries in the field shall have the direction of those interests abroad.

9th. Missionaries shall associate themselves in the work with the mission already established in that field to which mission and its Board the brethren sent are most cordially commended.

10th. It is understood that this plan is, with the consent of contributors, subject to such change as may be necessary or advisable for the advancement of the desired object.

A few words of explanation may be necessary as to some things in this plan. First in the plan itself the name The

Arabian Mission is in harmony with what is stated in the preamble immediately preceding, and which shall be spoken of a little later in connection with a criticism that has been made a few times as to one of the chief objects of the plan. It is thought best to leave the precise locality of the field indeterminate. The workings of Providence may change that field in the future. At present it is hoped that the work of this mission may be carried on in connection with the Keith-Falconer Mission in southwestern Arabia. This seems to be the best plan so long as the mission is not to be separately and denominationally organized and conducted, and so long as it is to do pioneer work among the peoples mentioned. The responsibilities involved in this movement should not be left to one person. Questions will arise that cannot or should not be settled by one or two persons unaided. Therefore, for reasons of satisfaction and assistance, the selection of a Committee of Advice consisting of four, and representing the contributors. In view of the action of the Board this plan is presented and this mission is started as undenominational. This seems to be the better method, not only in accordance with the judgment of those offering the plan, but of those, of higher authority, with whom they have consulted. Hence contributions will be solicited and received without reference to the denominational adherence of any of the parties, and yet with all respect to the denominations to which each belongs, as the great organizations in carrying on the work of the one Master. Inasmuch as this is not, at least for the present, to be an absolutely separate mission starting in an entirely unoccupied field, but is to coöperate with others, it follows that many of the expenses incident to the former will be eliminated, and that the great bulk of the contributions will go directly to the support of the missionaries sent and actually doing the work. A few other expenses there will be, for example, and especially, the temporary support and the education of needy native pupils and liberated slaves. To support a specific work like the example just mentioned will



afford an opportunity for a number to associate themselves together in a syndicate of their own, and without regard to the individual amount subscribed. In general, and for the sake of what the future of the work may be, the effort will be made to make the total amount of the subscriptions reach, if possible, a certain practicable point at the outset. But at the same time those offering the plan desire here to say and to emphasize it, that they do not wish contributions that lessen the amount contributed by the individual to the Foreign Missions of his own Church and Board.

The adoption of the Syndicate Plan in securing subscriptions has been generally approved by those consulted and many others whose opinions are highly valued. According to this plan, those subscribing a like amount constitute a syndicate. One of the members has charge of it. He is requested to do all he can to keep it full and flourishing. He countersigns and sends printed blanks signed by the treasurer and notifying the subscriber of his quarter's amount due a few days before the time. In the same manner he receives and countersigns checks before delivering them to the treasurer, and receipts after they have been signed by the treasurer. The treasurer is to make a full printed statement of receipts and expenditures at the close of every fiscal year, a copy of which is to be mailed to each subscriber. It is mutually understood that the subscription form is not legally binding. In stating the amount he desires to give and in signing the form, the whole matter, both in the present and as to the future, is left entirely with the individual's conscience and the measure of his blessings at the Lord's hands.

The writer is convinced that very large liberty should be given to missionaries in the field as to the conduct of the missions to which they belong, hence the closing statement in 8th of the plan. 9th has been previously explained. From its nature it may be wise to make considerable changes as to the mission in the future, and it may be necessary to make only minor ones. At any rate, sub-

scribers should have a voice. Hence the last article of the plan.

It remains to notice a chief object of the mission, and a criticism that at two or three times has been made against it. This mission, doing pioneer missionary work in an Arabic-speaking country, is to do work *especially in behalf of Muslims and slaves*. By this it is meant not *exclusively*, but *equally* in behalf of Muslims and slaves, as in behalf of others; inasmuch as Muslims especially have been conspicuously and for the most part causelessly neglected. It will be generally admitted that the case is urgent and the times ripe for concert of action with others in regard to the African slaves.

But Muslims? The criticism is to the effect that work in behalf of Muslims is almost if not quite a hopeless task; that Muslims on becoming converts to Christianity are forcibly entered into a horrible military system, or killed outright; and much more of the same kind. That something like this may be true in some few places the writer does not now question, but in the main the criticism belongs to a number of years back, and those who make it are far behind the data of these missionary times.

In short, the criticism is thoroughly unscriptural in character, and in the main untrue in fact. And for this statement there is ample proof in recent missionary reports. A few of the proofs, coming from different parts of the Muslim world, may be cited. In Sumatra, where Mohammedanism is very strong, it is a remarkable fact that almost half the converts are from that faith. At Bungabondar eighteen Muslims were baptized at the last reported administration of that sacrament. Reports from Persia describe a rapid movement toward religious liberty to Muslims as taking place in Teheran, the capital, and other portions. At a recent Sabbath service in Teheran, and at the Sabbath school following, the hearers were chiefly Muslims. In another Persian city a convert from Islam made public confession of Christ, was appointed missionary agent, married

the daughter of the native pastor—and all the opposition came from what quarter? The missionary report says, none whatever from the Muslims, but all from the native Christian community (Armenians). From Mogador, Morocco, the word is that a remarkable work of grace is in progress among Muslims there. And tidings received from different places in the interior of Morocco tell of many turning from Islam to Christianity. According to the report of the Java Medical Mission the number of Muslims was more than four times as many as all other religious sects combined, as to those who received not only hospital treatment, but who also received heartily, and evening after evening, religious instruction. A weekly debating association held in the Mission House in Cairo, Egypt, to discuss scientific and religious subjects, is largely attended and heartily engaged in, not only by native Christians, Orthodox and Protestants, but by a number of the strictest Ulema of the great Muslim University of the Azhar. The writer is personally acquainted with several in Egypt who have suffered persecution for turning to the faith of the Gospel, but the severest case was not that of the convert from Islam, but from the native Christian religion (Coptic). The Keith-Falconer Mission of the Free Church of Scotland was established in southwestern Arabia some three years ago. It was established to do work especially in behalf of Muslims, as also afterwards slaves. The success of the mission has been wonderful, indeed startling. There is much that is intensely inspiring and grandly encouraging in the brief history of that mission, and that magnificent pioneer missionary, Keith-Falconer. But this will suffice for a present reply to the criticism. If the smallness of the number of converts from Islam to Christianity be pointed to, the writer would reply that that argues not so much the unapproachability of Muslims as the indifference and inactivity of Christians. In short, and on the one hand, the doctrine of fatalism commonly accredited to Islam is not one-half so fatalistic in its spirit and operation as that which for thirteen centuries

has been practically held by the Christian Church as to the hope of bringing the hosts of Islam into the following of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the writer firmly believes, and not without Scripture authority, that the greatest marvels of missionary work ever witnessed are yet to be witnessed on Arabian territory and in the ranks of Islam.

Two remarks in conclusion: This article is not written at all as an appeal for funds, or a defense of the position therein stated as taken. It is intended simply as a statement of some of the principal facts relative to a mission we believe to be God-ordered and will be God-blessed.

And once more: This mission has been started amid much anxious thought, consultation and prayer. We wish it to continue so. We would have syndicates not only paying but also praying—praying for a larger and more glorious answer to the prayer of the Patriarch Abraham, “ Oh that Ishmael might live before thee! ”