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MISSIONARY LETTERS AND NEWS

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## THE ARABIAN MISSION



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# The Arabian Mission.

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# NEGLECTED ARABIA.

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October—December, 1906.

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A TRIP TO THE PIRATE COAST.

SHARON J. THOMS, M.D.

I recently made a medical tour to the Oman Pirate Coast, and you may be interested in an account of it. A colporter with several hundred scriptures, my compounder and I, with medicine, bandages, dressing, and a few instruments, went by steamer to Linga, a port on the Persian Gulf, where we hoped to find a native boat bound for Sharga, one of the principal ports on the Arabian side of the Gulf. Although we found a boat ready to sail the first night after we landed, yet, with the usual spirit of procrastination and excuses of the natives we were not able to get away until five days later.

Our boat had a cargo of dates, wood, baskets and native passengers. We were regarded as first-class passengers, and given a little deck in the stern for our beds, which were spread out on the deck and piled up in the place allotted to us. In other respects also we were first-class passengers, as the natives got their passage for one rupee and several who had no money went free, even receiving their board with the captain and crew, while we had to pay 20 rupees for the three of us and furnish our own food and water. We had brought an empty kerosene tin, the kind of pail used in Arabia, and had some water boiled and put into the tin for the voyage. Boiled milk, hard boiled eggs, bread, vegetables, fruit, etc., constituted our fare when we were not too seasick to care for anything.

We had very stormy weather, pitched and tossed about most of the time. During the first night the wind changed to the opposite direction from which it was when we started, and, after tossing about all night and imagining that we were nearly half way across, we found ourselves in the morning in exactly the same place from which we started the night before. The next evening we managed to start off again, and made fair progress that night and also the next day, but

the following night it rained heavily. As we had no covering but our bedding, we were soon soaked and pretty uncomfortable before morning. The rain had run into the boxes and we had no change of clothes, but had to let them dry on our bodies the next day.

We landed at Sharga the next afternoon, and the following morning began treating the patients that came to us. By the end of the week we had treated 500 patients, had several operations and sold over 100 portions of the scriptures. The accompanying picture was taken at Sharga, and shows a group of Oman Arabs waiting for treatment, each one greatly interested in the treatment being administered to one of their number.



DR. THOMS TREATING PATIENTS AT SHARGA.

We see great improvement in the conditions of this Coast every time we visit it. The people are more tolerant and cordial, although there is still much to be desired in both directions. The medical work is helping forward the sale of scriptures, and the people are becoming more friendly every way.

When I came home, Ameen remained on the Coast for a fortnight longer, and, although he is very tactful and prudent, he noticed a great difference in the treatment shown him after the doctor had left. Our work in this region, since the first visit of Dr. Zwemer in 1898, has developed a real interest in the Bible. In Sharga, for ex-

ample, we found a school where there were a few copies of the scriptures. When the children found that we had more for sale, they bought over twenty copies in this one school. In one of the distant villages we found a lot of the poorer children with the Proverbs of Solomon sewed into little leather bags, which they wore around their necks to keep off the "evil eye." In another place we found a group of men who were in the habit of coming together more or less regularly to meet and discuss the Gospel among themselves. These and other signs of the growth of the seed that has been sown on this Coast are encouraging and make sure the future.

May we not ask you at home, who are furnishing the means for this work, to take courage also and push it forward by your prayers, claiming with us this terribly wicked pirate Coast and all Arabia for Christ and His Kingdom.

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#### THE PROBLEM OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

[This article, which appeared as an editorial in the *New York Journal of Commerce*, throws much light on the future environment of our mission, and gives intelligent information on the importance of the Persian Gulf in world politics. It should awaken prayer "for kings and all in authority."]

Some surprise has been expressed at the announcement made, apropos of the meeting of the King of England and the German Emperor, that "Germany, at present, is more directly interested in Persia than in any other country." We have, from time to time, endeavored to make it plain to our readers that since the effective arrest of Russian ambitions in Eastern Asia, accomplished by Japan, the international centre of Asiatic politics must be sought in the Persian Gulf. Up to within ten years ago Great Britain was supreme in these waters. British gunboats found no warships there to dispute their authority; the question of naval bases for Russia and France had not arisen, and no European power had laid hands upon the Persian customs. The owners of property upon the rich Delta of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were not troubled by the projects of continental railway promoters; in short, there was no Persian Gulf question of international importance. But in the opening years of the present century all this was changed. While the bulk of the foreign trade of the Gulf, then having a total of some \$45,000,000 annually, was still in British hands, Russians, Germans and Frenchmen began to dispute the position which Great Britain occupied. It was recognized that the shaky structures

of Persian autonomy, Arab independence and Turkish overlordship in the areas where they respectively exist were being undermined and must inevitably collapse. Eager competitors were bidding against each other for the title deeds, and endeavoring to acquire reversionary interests in the property. The Persian, Turkish and Arabian owners of the property concerned occupy a very subordinate position in this dispute. The question is not how the people of the land will look upon the various foreign enterprises with which they are threatened, but merely as to who is to have the privileges of exploitation.

Great Britain has differed in one essential particular of her policy from her competitors; she has supported the *status quo*. Even on the Arabian coast, where her influence is strongest, she has left autonomy to the local sheik or sultan whom she found in possession. The only limitations she has imposed have been to prohibit slave trading and piracy, and to insist upon certain facilities being given to her traders.

In cases where it was not already too late, she added the condition that relations with foreign countries must be conducted only through herself. This latter arrangement is in force along the greater portion of the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, including Mussendom, Dabai, Bahrein and Koweit. It is this latter point that has acquired special importance from the fact of its selection for the terminus of the Anatolian railway—a German enterprise organized in 1899, which, starting from the present rail head at Konia, is to traverse Asia Minor to Bagdad, and is eventually to join the Persian Gulf at Kozima at the north point of the harbor of Koweit, which is said to be ample enough to float all the fleets of Great Britain. Kozima would be ten days from Berlin and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  days from Constantinople by the railway; it is four days' steaming from Bombay. The total length of the line from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf would be about 1,750 miles, and the bearing of the scheme on British interests may be inferred from the fact thus expressed by a British critic: "India will never be successfully attacked unless by sea, and when the Bagdad railway reaches El Koweit, the doubling of the German fleet will be complete. The new power at the gate of India will be not only the first military power of the world at ten days' running from Berlin, but the second naval at four days' steaming from Bombay.

On the other hand, the projected German railway across Asia Minor will pass through one of the oldest and richest countries in the world, whose development will remain hopelessly arrested in the hands



SHEIK MOBARREK OF KOWEIT.

of the Turk, but which under German influence could hardly fail to be startlingly rapid. The chief promoter of the Anatolian railway scheme put forward several years ago this argument in its support: "What Turkey has already sold to the world in breadstuffs is as nothing compared with what she can produce when her enormous agricultural resources have been developed. Of all agricultural States, Turkey is perhaps the only one which may be able some day to compete successfully with America in England and on the Continent of Europe in this respect.

Especially is this the case in the production of cotton, and Germany's absolute dependence upon America and Russia for petroleum would be materially lessened if the oil and bitumen fields of Mesopotamia were rationally exploited." It may be assumed, as another authority has put the case, that these lands of Asia Minor, the cradle of mankind, of civilization, of faiths and empires, will not always be left desolate. Larger than France, Germany and Austria-Hungary together, they have a population of less than twenty millions. They will assuredly be the heritage of the Teuton or the Slav. But there is this difference, that while the Russian Empire within itself has colonizing space for innumerable millions, the German sees no other place upon the globe, where his race can shape out a true colonial future upon a race basis. The fact that the Turks are said to have chosen Bagdad to be the capital of what will remain of their dominions when their ultimately inevitable ejection from Europe takes place is not likely to be much of a factor in the discussions of the great powers relating to the future of Asia Minor. But Turkey has by no means ceased to be a negligible quantity in the arrangement of the territorial ambitions of the great Eastern powers, and it will be perceived that no question which King Edward and the Emperor William were likely to discuss in the course of their interview at Friedrichshof bristled with greater difficulties than that which touches the construction of the German railway across Asia Minor and the fixing of a terminus for it on the Persian Gulf.

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## HAPPENINGS AT NACHL.

REV. JAMES CANTINE.

It is known to readers of our paper that from time to time our journeys inland from Muscat have taken us to Nachl, and that this town has been chosen for our first outstation in the Oman field. At

the time of our visit there last spring, everything seemed so favorable that we hired a Bible shop and made enquiries about the purchase of a dwelling house. Shortly afterwards we were rejoiced to hear that the money for this purpose had been raised at home. So far there had been no obstacles in our way, but we soon found that the enemy was not unmindful of our plans and hopes. One or two men at Nachl were stirred up to misrepresent our purpose to the Sultan, and to oppose any attempt on our part to get a permanent foothold there. One was a wealthy and powerful neighbor, who himself wanted the property we talked of buying, and the other was the K̄athi, who doubtless thought that his position as religious teacher and judge required an active opposition to the Christians.

We were not quite sure what part of the town was the best to live in, so we did not bring the question of buying to an issue then, but when later on we went for a summer's vacation to India, I asked our colporteur, Ibrahim, to try and take his family there for the hot weather. This he did in June, and deserves much credit for his willingness to attempt, with wife and five children, the three days' trying journey on donkeys, and the uncertainty of a prolonged stay among strangers.

While in India I was rejoiced to hear that he had been cordially received and that he had every opportunity for work. Then there came word that one of the sheiks of the place, an influential friend of ours, had been killed, and that Ibrahim had been assaulted, and he and his family were in danger of their lives. This news caused us to cut short our visit in India and to hurry back to Muscat.

In the meantime the Sultan had prevailed upon the English Consul to unite with him in asking Ibrahim to return to Muscat. It was only on Ibrahim's arrival at Muscat, shortly after ours, that we learned that these stories of his danger were all a fabrication, and that he had done all that could have been expected of him to avoid the necessity of returning, but, in my absence, had not felt justified in opposing the united wish of the Sultan and Consul. If I had been here in person I undoubtedly would have been able to prevent his recall. This shows how, even with the best of helpers, it is necessary to have a missionary on hand to meet emergencies. I expect that we ourselves will soon be going again to Nachl and trust that we will be able to overcome this temporary reverse.

Ibrahim's report of his work is so interesting that I am tempted to give large extracts:

"We arrived at Nachl on the sixteenth of June, and met the people of the town with all joy and gladness, and the first day there visited us more than a hundred people, and the next day, about eighty men and one hundred and twenty-six women, without counting children. \* \* \* When I went to open the bible shop I heard that there had gone out a command from the Kathi that no one should buy not a single book from me, and I sat for an hour and no one asked me about the books; and when, at length, a boy came to ask me for a book, one of the mullahs came and forbade him, saying: 'Do not buy of the Christian books, for they are unclean, and the books of unbelievers, and it is not lawful for one of the people of Mohammed to buy of them!' And I went and gently took him by the hand and led him to the shop and said: 'Oh, my friend, why do you speak with men in front of my shop with these words? and how do you call books come down from God unclean?' He replied: 'Our teachers have forbidden our reading them!' I said: 'Have you studied them or looked into them?' and when he said 'No,' I continued, 'If your teachers would tell you that the bread of the bazaar was poison would you object to having some one try it for you?' He said, 'No.' Then I said, 'Now let us see where is this poison that your teachers talk about.' And I took the book of Exodus and read to him the Ten Commandments and explained them. And he said, 'This book is very good, and I want it.' Then I got out Solomon's Proverbs and read to him the twenty-third chapter to the end.

And the shop was full of men and also the street in front of the shop, listening to our words, and among them was a certain man sitting with his face to the ground, but saying not a word. And then I turned to Genesis and read how God spoke about creating 'man in *our* image,' and asked him if he would explain why God used the plural, and I said it was the same in their Koran, and I gave him the chapter and passage, and I told him that one of our arguments for the Trinity is because of this use. And then I gave him other illustrations. At last he bought all three books, and when the people saw that the mullah had bought, he who had warned them away from the shop, they came themselves and I sold immediately fourteen books.

"And when I got up to go home, the certain man who had been sitting with his face to the ground, came and said, 'Your words have pleased me very much and the words of these books, and I would love to come every day and talk about them.' And he used to come every

evening, and there would be between us question and answer and numbers of the people would gather to listen. \* \* \* And there would gather at my house daily about fifty men and more women to talk and to buy books, and our sales amounted to two hundred and forty-five books."

After telling how, while he was in this "state of joy," word came for him to return to Muscat, and how he was unable to resist, he closes with the prayer in which we all join. "We hope from the Lord that He will cause to grow the seed that we have sown, and care for it through the Holy Spirit; and open the way a second time to the entrance of His word into that city."

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## A PRAYER CYCLE FOR ARABIA.

REV. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D.

The Arabian Mission since the day of its organization has had many warm friends in England. By prayer and gifts they have shown their interest and their sympathy. One of these friends, Miss Annie Van Sommer, is intensely interested in all Mohammedan lands, and has prepared prayer cycles for all the lands of the Levant. Her prayer cycle for Arabia, with fifteen topics for daily prayer, is here reprinted. A revised and corrected edition will be issued early in the year 1907, and should have a wide circulation. One has only to read this list of topics to see how greatly Arabia is yet neglected, and how much we need to ask in faith for the land we love. May we not urge upon you to *use* this cycle of prayer, as many of us do, in your daily devotions? "Ask and ye shall receive. . . . Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

### PRAYER CYCLE FOR ARABIA.

*First and Sixteenth Days.*—For this vast unknown land, that Arabia may be evangelized in this generation, and that the Lord may lay it upon the hearts of many more of His children.

For the Rulers, those in the Turkish Dominion, and the native Chiefs of the Interior, that they may be reached with the Gospel.

*Second and Seventeenth Days.*—For the Province of Hejaz, with the cities of Medina and Mecca, and the Port of Jidda on the East. No Mission work has yet been attempted in this Province—that the door may be opened.

*Third and Eighteenth Days.*—For the Province of Asir on the

South-West coast. No Mission work is, as yet, permitted in this province—that the door may be opened.

*Fourth and Nineteenth Days.*—For the Province of Yemen, with the Port of Hodeidah on the West. No Mission work is, as yet, permitted in this province—that the door may be opened. Specially pray that on all the West coast an entrance may be given for printed papers and books, specially for God's Word. That the written word may reach the people, while as yet no human voice is allowed to speak.

*Fifth and Twentieth Days.*—For the British Protectorate of Aden, and its hinterland in the South; the United Free Church of Scotland Mission, Dr. Young, Dr. and Mrs. Morrison. The Danish Mission, Rev. and Mrs. Oluf Hoyer. For all the Military and Civil authorities in the Protectorate, and for the whole influence of the British rule, that a standard for Christ may be raised and kept upheld.

*Sixth and Twenty-First Days.*—For the Province of Hadramaut and the Southern coast, where no Mission is as yet established. For Makallah.

*Seventh and Twenty-Second Days.*—For the Province of Oman in the South-East, and the city of Muscat. The Arabian Mission [America] the Rev. James Cantine and Mrs. Cantine.

*Eighth and Twenty-Third Days.*—The Island of Bahrein in the Persian Gulf. The Hospital. The Rev. S. M. and Mrs. Zwemer. Rev. James E. Moerdyk, Dr. and Mrs. S. J. Thoms, Dr. Bennett, Miss Lutton, Mrs. Vogel.

*Ninth and Twenty-Fourth Days.*—The Province of Hassa in Eastern Arabia, and for Busrah. Rev. F. J. Barny and Mrs. Barny. Rev. J. Van Ess, Dr. and Mrs. Worrall, Miss Scardefield. Arabian Mission.

*Tenth and Twenty-Fifth Days.*—For the great central province of Nejd, where there is as yet no Mission Station, but itinerating journeys are undertaken from the coast. Pray for the free and wide circulation of the Gospel and other books.

*Eleventh and Twenty-Sixth Days.*—For Turkish-Arabia on the North-East and the city of Bagdad. The Church Missionary Society, Dr. P. W. Brigstocke.

Rev. E. Lavey, Miss Ryan, Miss E. E. Martin, Miss E. A. Lavey at Mosul, Dr. and Mrs. Griffiths.

*Twelfth and Twenty-Seventh Days.*—For all the women of Arabia, that this generation may not pass away in ignorance of a Saviour, but that God will send forth American and English women to care for them.

*Thirteenth and Twenty-Eighth Days.*—For the children of Arabia, that those missionaries who have lost their little ones for Christ's sake, and for the whole of this land, may see hundreds of Arabian children brought to Him.

*Fourteenth and Twenty-Ninth Days.*—That the Holy Spirit may work in this whole dark land, strengthening the little band of faithful workers, and giving them an abundant harvest of souls.

*Fifteenth and Thirtieth Days.*—That more home helpers may be raised up for Arabia, more intercession, more givers, more missionaries. That we may claim this land by faith, resting on the words of the Lord, "As for Ishmael I have heard thee." "Behold, I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitful."

"All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee" "All they from Sheba shall come."

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*Copies of this Prayer Cycle for Arabia may be obtained, price 1d., or 5 Millimes, from Mr. A. T. Upson, Supt., Nile Mission Press, Boula, Cairo, Egypt.*

*And from Mr. J. L. Oliver, Secretary, 16 Southfield Road, Tunbridge Wells, England.*

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JOHN GULIAN LANSING, D.D.

BY PROF. J. PRESTON SEARLE, D.D.

The Rev. John Gulian Lansing, D.D., died September 3d at Denver, Colorado, after an illness which had confined him in a hospital for more than a year, and which had rooted itself in his system perhaps many years earlier. "Cerebral disintegration," as the physicians called it, is in itself suggestive enough, and its dreadful suggestiveness was accentuated in his case for all who watched helplessly its bewildering and relentless conquest of the once devoted friend, the brilliant professor, the singularly gifted and forceful preacher.

He was the son of the Rev. Dr. Gulian Lansing, who, though of Dutch descent, spent his life in the foreign missionary work of the United Presbyterian Church. He was born November 27, 1851, in Damascus, in "the street which is called Straight." His father was almost immediately transferred to the new mission in Egypt, and for two score or more years was a revered leader in the great successes this mission achieved. Cairo was thus the son's real boyhood home and

he loved it as such with an oriental fervor. Deprived, at ten years of age, of his mother's care through her death, he was brought to this country, and in course of time, entered Monmouth College, where he took the first two years of the college course. The other years were taken at Union, from whence he graduated in 1875. He married Mary M., daughter of Harmon Consaul of Schenectady, a woman of rarest character and capacity, in the largest sense, his helpmeet, who died in 1897. With her he spent a year in Egypt in study, and returning was admitted, in view of his proficiency in the languages, to the senior class of the seminary with which he was later to be identified as professor. He was ordained at Mohawk, N. Y., in 1877. After a two years' pastorate there and one of five years in West Troy, he was, in 1884, elected by General Synod to the newly created Gardner A. Sage professorship of Old Testament Languages and Exegesis in the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. On account of ill health he was absent on leave for the entire year, 1890-91, and after another extended leave of absence in 1898, he felt compelled to resign his chair. He sought health for himself and for his children in Colorado, but two of the three who were with him there passed away before him, and the third, the loving and winsome Leilah, was taken only three days after his own death. During his Denver life he was also called upon to mourn the sudden cutting off of another child, a student in Union College and a young man of much promise. Two other children died in infancy and two survive, as does a widow by a second marriage.

While Dr. Lansing's comparatively short life was thus repeatedly saddened by distressing affliction, and even its most active days clouded by repeated and cumulating sickness, he yet accomplished much for the seminary in which he served, made for himself a wide reputation as a pulpit orator, and founded the mission to Arabia.

As to his seminary work, he was an enthusiastic and a laborious student. He was splendidly equipped for his special department. He achieved remarkable success in connection with the exegetical notes by which he captivated and inspired class after class. He rests from his labors and his works do follow him, in the pulpits of a hundred grateful students to whom it was given him to disclose the beauty and the power of the Old Testament scripture. In his preaching, on the basis of a profound knowledge of the Bible he loved, he employed antithetic statement with a ceaseless skill amounting to genius, and illumined his thought with an inexhaustible and rich imagery, colored and

saturated with the atmosphere of the East, while his rich voice and innate dramatic power, both carefully and highly cultivated, enabled him to give abidingly impressive utterance to the thrilling message which possessed him. He rests from his labors and his works do follow him in a thousand lives, quickened and comforted through him.

Baffled and disappointed by insuperable barriers in his intense longing to go himself with the Gospel to the millions under the spell of the false prophet, he yearned increasingly to do something in some way for their evangelization, and at last out of the profound yearning was conceived the idea of sending some of his own students to engage in the difficult task. That he was already breaking in strength he was more than secretly conscious. That our own Board and Church were at the time in no position permitting effective aid he feared, and soon found that this fear was well grounded. The one fact was a summons to haste. The other was a challenge to his faith. And so, undaunted and alone, save for the guidance of the Great Missionary, his Master, he sought and found just the right men to be the pioneers and leaders in the enterprise. Alone, save for the same guidance along lines then new but now widely followed, he sought the financial resources the undertaking required, and when this aid began flowing in in a volume which has never left the Arabian mission in debt for a single day, he alone thought out the plan of organization and chose the men who directed the affairs of the mission, until it was finally enrolled among the missions of the Reformed Church in America and had secured a lasting hold upon the Church's heart. That the "land, long since neglected" has ceased to be a reproach to long too timid Christendom is due under God to the man, who, after his own desperate struggle with death had already begun, struggled more mightily for her. He rests from his labors, and his works do follow him in distant Arabia. Who can discern the limits, in measure or in time, of the wonderful, the wonderful procession?

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