

OMAN.

AN independent State in South-eastern Arabia extending along a coast line—S. E. and S. W.—of almost 1,000 miles from the Gulf of Ormuz and inland to the deserts. Area, 82,000 square miles; population, 1,500,000. The capital, Muscat (40,000 inhabitants), was occupied by the Portuguese till the seventeenth century. After various vicissitudes it was taken in the eighteenth century by Ahmed bin Sa'eed, of Yemenite origin, who was elected Imam in 1741. His family have since ruled. The present Sultan is Seyyid Feysal bin Turki, second son of the late Seyyid Turki bin Sa'eed bin Sultan, who succeeded his father June 4, 1888, and has now been formally recognised by the British Government. In the beginning of the present century the power of the Imam of Oman extended over a large area of Arabia, the islands in the Persian Gulf, a strip on the Persian coast, and a long strip of the African coast south of Cape Guardafui, including Socotra and Zanzibar. On the death of Sultan Sa'eed in 1854 Zanzibar was detached from Oman and placed under the rule of the second son, and subsequent troubles curtailed the area of the state in Asia. The closest relations have for years existed between the Government of India and Oman, and a British Consul or Political Agent resides at Muscat. The authority of the Sultan does not extend far beyond Muscat. Negotiations for the leasing of a coaling station near Muscat to the French, carried on in February, 1899, have, it is understood, come to an end, the lease being withheld.

The revenue of the Sultan amounts to about 225,000 dollars.

The exports in 1897-98 were valued at 1,834,500 dollars; chiefly dates, 867,500 dollars; cotton fabrics, 250,000 dollars; fruit, 65,000 dollars; pearls, 35,000 dollars; mother-o'-pearl, 25,000 dollars; salt, 22,800 dollars; fish, 96,000 dollars. The imports were valued at 3,537,500 dollars; chiefly rice, 1,000,000 dollars; coffee, 80,000 dollars; sugar, 70,000 dollars; piece goods, 282,000 dollars; twist and yarn, 165,000 dollars; silk and silk goods, 75,000 dollars; cereals, wheat, and other grain, 275,000 dollars; oils of all kinds, 100,000 dollars; ghee, 81,500 dollars; arms and ammunition, 1,000,000 dollars.

The imports from United Kingdom were valued at 900,000 dollars; India, 2,226,500 dollars; France, 100,000 dollars; America, 27,000 dollars; Asiatic Turkey, 69,000 dollars; Persia, 145,000 dollars; other countries, 70,000 dollars.

The number of vessels entered and cleared the port of Muscat in 1897-98, including the native craft, was 402 of 192,100 tons, of which 133 of 162,700 tons were British.

British Consul.—Major C. G. F. Fagan.

Administrative Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency. Calcutta. Annual.