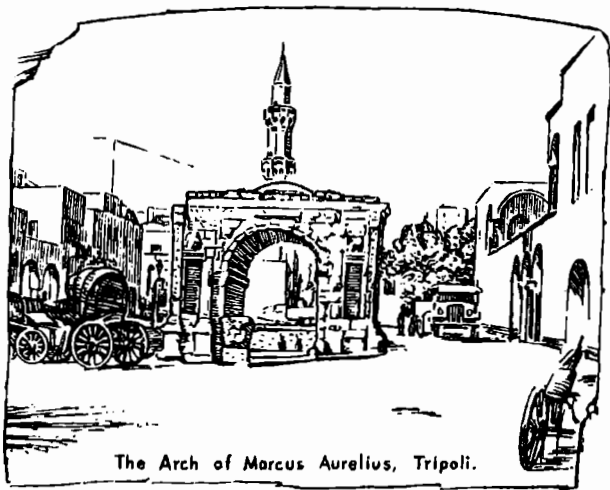


*"Keshkoosha"*  
or  
*The Story of the Froth*



The Arch of Marcus Aurelius, Tripoli.

by  
*Margaret A. Pearce*

The scene is the dispensary of the North Africa Mission in Tripoli, on a busy morning. The woman pulls her covering around her, hiding her medicine in its voluminous folds, and asks, for at least the third time, when she is to take it. Finally she covers her face until just one eye is left to guide her through the jostling crowds.

Then as an after-thought she comes back and almost whispers, 'When are you coming beside us?' This means that a hitherto unvisited house is opening its door to us and we seek to make the most of the opportunity thus afforded.

'Where do you live?' we ask. A bewildering series of directions follows - nothing so simple as the name of the street and number of the house. The poor woman cannot read, so why should she bother with such things as names and numbers? We seize upon such outstanding landmarks as the ice-factory, a well-known mosque, a fountain, and finally a blue door. We still look somewhat befogged, and despairing at our stupidity and ignorance, she promises to send a child to fetch us. The child duly arrives - an hour or so before we expected her - and armed with flannelgraph and pictures we sally forth.

## INVITATION TO TEA

Passing through a maze of narrow streets we reach the blue door which opens by an unseen hand on the inside, and soon we are in the courtyard surrounded by our friend of the morning and all her neighbours. We are ushered into a room and the cry goes up for a chair. We assure our hostess that we prefer to sit on a mattress on the floor. We note with relief that the charcoal fire is already burning and the teapot boiling thereon. Do not assume from this that we are longing for a drink of Tripoli tea, defying as it does, all the rules of tea-infusing and hygiene! But having entered our friend's home it would be the height of rudeness to refuse to drink her tea. This process, however, takes anything from 1½ to 2 hours, and can take even longer if the fire has not previously been kindled.

We answer all the usual questions, 'Are you married?' 'Have you any children?' 'Where do you come from?' etc. Meanwhile the little enamel teapot boils merrily, more tea-leaves having been added to the remains of yesterday's brew! The fire is fanned by a daughter of the house.

A little wooden table about 4 inches high is in front of her, with tea glasses about the size of a medicine glass. There are seldom more than six of these no matter how large the party, for after the honoured guests have drunk, the glasses can be refilled and passed (unwashed) to the others!

There is a tin of sugar, a spoon, an extra teapot or other receptacle and a sponge for wiping the table. By her side is an aluminium bowl full of water in which the glasses are washed after each 'course'. There are three 'courses' - the strong, bitter glass course, the weaker and sweeter mint course, and the peanut or almond course.

### *INTRODUCING THE MESSAGE*

Yes, the nuts are actually drunk with the tea in the glasses! The idea of three glasses is to give plenty of time for conversation, but when our object is not just to gossip but to present Christ, the problem arises - when shall we produce our pictures and introduce our message? If at the beginning the whole tea making ritual may be held up while the women gather round to look, if while the tea is being prepared the distractions are many, and if at the end we may risk losing our audience.

So if we get the opening we need, we begin almost as soon as we have arrived, and then if we are asked for more, we proceed until our stock of pictures is exhausted.

The first glass is prepared by pouring the tea from the pot (which is held high above the table) into another pot. If the tea has been well boiled, this should produce a froth. This froth is then transferred to the tea glasses, and the more expert the tea-maker the more froth there is! The strong,

bitter liquid is then added and the froth, or keshkoosha as we call it, floats on top, sometimes half-filling the glass.

### *THE LESSON OF THE FROTH*

This froth has often been a lesson to me. After all it is only show, just like the soap bubbles we blew when we were young and which afterwards disappeared into space. The Moslem religion is like that - all froth and show - but underneath nothing but bitter hardness of heart. Their speech is so polite and gracious, the name of Allah so often on their lips, but underneath nothing but dregs. 'This people honoureth Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me,' might well have been written of moslems.

Let us beware, young Christians, that we are not likewise 'all froth'. See that young person lustily singing in the missionary meeting:

'Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my ALL'.

See him or her in the emotion of the moment, at the end of a moving address, promising to give him or herself to God for His service - to pray, to give, to GO in order that His Kingdom may be extended. Then see that one many years later, settling down to a life in an office, workshop, hospital or school, engaging in Christian service perhaps in his or her spare time, but not fully satisfied. Why? Because God's

challenge was not fully responded to, the enthusiasm was only froth, and when the winds of difficulty blew it died away, and life will never be the same again for the one who heard God's call and rejected it.

And so we drink our tea and tell our story - the story of the Saviour Who came and died for these poor ignorant women, even as He died for you and me?

### *ARE THERE RESULTS?*

'Do the people respond?' you ask. Did you respond the very first time you ever heard the message preached? I wonder! These women who listened to-day may have heard the Gospel many years ago, but it is more likely that they have never heard it before, and when will they hear it again? Not for some long time if all the unvisited homes in Tripoli are to get their turn, and what about the unreached villages and towns of Libya in its entirety? Find it on your map. See how vast it is and then consider that at the moment there are only two women to undertake this work of visiting. Ask the Lord what He would have you to do to meet this challenge.

*Margaret A. Pearce.*

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## INFORMATION

The writer of this booklet, Margaret Pearce, together with her husband, Norman, are missionaries of the North Africa Mission in Tripoli, Libya.

Their nearest fellow missionary station to the west is at GABES - 400 miles. To the east, Egypt - 1,000 miles.

Libya, comprising Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, from whence came Simon who carried the Lord's cross, and the Fezzan, has a population of some million Moslems. There are FOUR protestant missionaries to that number!

The Dispensary is held 3 mornings a week when an average of 70 patients are dealt with daily. Each patient, as well as any friends who come with them hear a Gospel message which means that at least 250 people are being reached in this way every week.

Classes are held twice a week for girls and there are similar opportunities waiting amongst the boys when the necessary worker can be found.

Margaret and Norman would be very pleased to hear from any reader of this booklet. Their address is - Mr. and Mrs. N.T.Pearce, 65 Suk el Harrara, Tripoli, Libya, N.Africa.

A News-Letter is issued about every three months giving up-to-date information and subjects for prayer.

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may be obtained from:-

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*All proceeds go to a special fund  
for providing a vehicle to enable  
Margaret and Norman to go to the  
hitherto unreached districts around  
Tripoli. .*