

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA."

The N.A.M. News Letter

OFFICE OF THE NORTH AFRICA MISSION, 34, BISHAM GARDENS, HIGHGATE, LONDON, N. 6

HON. SECRETARY: OSWALD L. CARNEGIE

AMERICAN AUXILIARY: HON. SECRETARY, DR. HARVEY FARMER, 6109, COLUMBIA AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA, PA., U.S.A.

No. 29

EDITED BY E. J. LONG, F.R.S.G.S.

MAY-JUNE, 1943

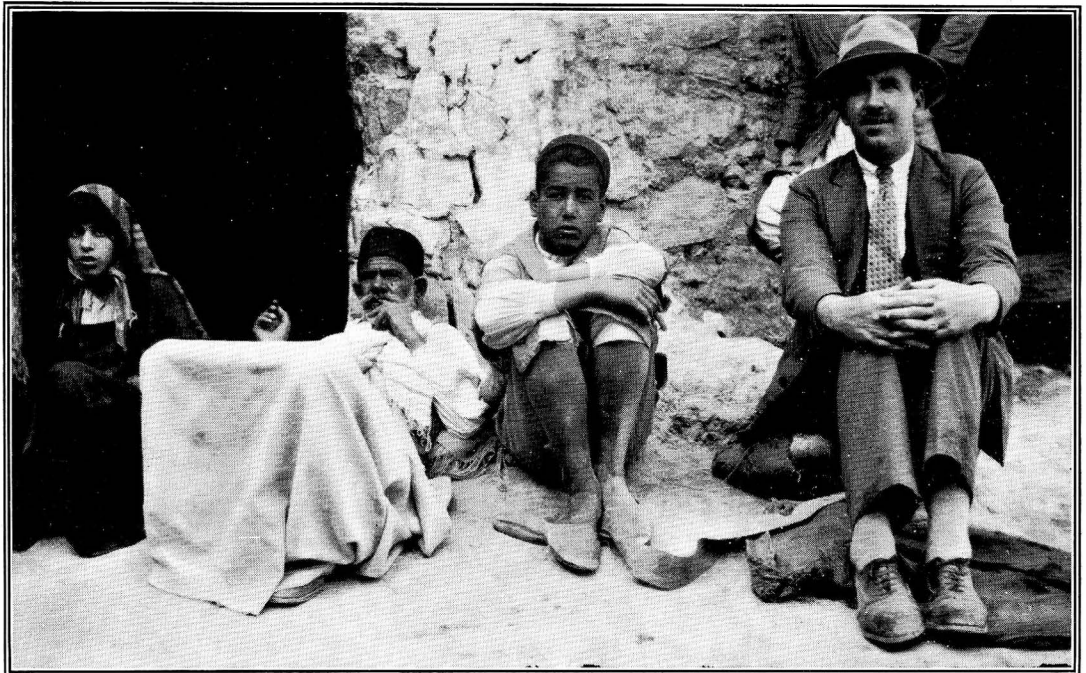


Photo by]

[Mr. J. T. Leadbetter

NEAR THE "MARETH LINE"

This photograph, taken some years ago in the course of a Gospel itineration in Southern Tunisia, shows Mr. Stanley Miles seated in a "troglodyte" dug-out dwelling at Matmata, twenty-five miles south of Gabes. The natives are not Moslems, but members of a Tunisian Jewish family—almost certainly descendants of refugees who eluded the Roman armies that, under Titus, destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

News of Tunisia Missionaries

IN these opening paragraphs we are publishing the first authentic news yet received concerning the welfare of missionaries in enemy-occupied Tunisia. Here is a copy of a message sent by **Mr. R. I. Brown** to his fiancée, Miss E. Little. It is dated April 18:

"This is the first letter I've been able to write since the beginning of November, '42. I hope, however, you have received my card. Do not be at all anxious for me. I am enjoying life! I have the spiritual care of about 3,000 English and Americans; and last Sunday, the first spent here, I had 100 in the church. We have a daily service, and I am starting a Bible school

next Wednesday. It's grand. I am getting fitter and fitter every day. As I left Tunis with only the clothes I had on, my wardrobe is somewhat depleted, but the soldiers (it is a military camp) have been marvellously kind. I have a good Arab and German grammar, and am busy studying or revising these two languages. The weather is perfect here. You will of course tell the Mission of my adventures: taken prisoner November 25th; fortnight in Tunis; fourteen weeks in Naples; then here. The Red Cross have taken up my case, but you do what you can at your end. It is truly marvellous that such a ministry should be given me in such an unexpected way."

We do indeed rejoice that our brother is well and happy, and that the LORD has graciously opened up for him this new and unexpected field of Christian service. He will be much in our prayers, and we may be confident that GOD will greatly use him in saving blessing to many of his fellow prisoners.

It would be premature and even unwarrantable to assume that similar action has been taken by the Axis authorities against **Mr. Stanley Miles**; for news has reached London, via Switzerland, that at the end of January (two months after Mr. Brown's arrest) the staff of the Church Mission to Jews in Tunis was well, and the work being maintained. At the head of this work are the Rev. and Mrs. Dunbar, who are, we imagine, about the same age as Mr. and Mrs. Miles; and while Mr. Dunbar has ministerial status, and resides at the English Church House, it does not necessarily follow that on these grounds alone he would—as compared with Mr. Miles—receive preferential treatment.

Whilst it is idle to speculate, we are at the same time anxious to let the friends of Mr. and Mrs. Miles and Muriel know that there is considerable likelihood that the members of the family are still together.

Some have discussed the possibility of the Miles family having gone to live with native friends in the seclusion of the Arab town of Tunis, where it is unlikely that any house-to-house search would be made for them; but against this must be set the fact that no rationed foods would be available save to those who made—as in this country—personal application to the authorities.

So that we must, after all, possess our souls in patience, and trust utterly in the loving care of our Heavenly Father.

News from an Unexpected Quarter

THE following news item appeared on April 21st in the *Sunderland Echo*. It was cabled by Reuter's special correspondent in Tunisia, and relates to **Paul Ferree**, a former N.A.M. missionary:

"In a plain little house, built largely with his own hands on a North Tunisian mountainside, Paul Ferree, 30-year-old missionary, is planning to continue his life's work among the Arabs from the point where the war interrupted it.

"He is now building a 'boarding-school,' where young Arab boys will receive instruction. Soon he will mount his bicycle and ride off again to live among the Arabs in their mountain villages, and tell them the Christian way of life.

"He arrived in Tunis in 1938, but when the Axis took virtual control in North Africa his work had to stop. He withdrew to the mountains with his wife and three children, and they lived in a hut while he built a home.

"Paul did not know about the Allied landings until ten days afterwards, when he heard bombs. American troops were in the village, and joyfully Paul went to meet them.

"Now American and British soldiers visit the family, bringing them food and other gifts. A brigadier-general has sent them two goats, so that there shall be milk for the children."

In the providence of GOD, our brother and his family owed everything to their geographical location at the time of the landings. Those farther east of the "invasion line" fell into Axis hands. It is good to know that at least one aggressive young missionary in Tunisia is free to "continue his life's work" in the land of his adoption.

Saving the Bridge at Sousse

BUT by far the most dramatic news comes from Sousse; and, once again, through an unexpected channel. Perhaps—particularly as this is a *News Letter*—I may for once lay aside the Editorial aloofness and write in the first person:

Some years ago, when I was a missionary at Sousse, there came to my Sunday School class three little children named Joubert. Their father was employed on the railway; and when he had a little villa built on the top of the

embankment, quite close to the most important bridge in Sousse, I was invited to the "house-warming."

In the presence of a large company of Roman Catholic relations and friends, I sought in prayer God's blessing upon the house and all who came beneath its roof.

Under what remarkable circumstances that house would one day be delivered from destruction none, at that time, would ever have dreamed.

A week or two ago I was travelling by train from Liverpool to Sunderland, when some boldly-printed words in a fellow-passenger's newspaper caught my eye: "Sousse Railmen Greet Allies." I borrowed the newspaper, and read, with breathless interest, how my old friend Emile Joubert had prevented the dynamiting by the retreating Nazis of the great Sousse bridge. Unfortunately there is space here only for the concluding paragraphs:

"Joubert lives close to the bridge, and he saw the Germans prepare a charge of dynamite, which they dug into a bank beneath the bridge. He communicated this information to a young petty officer of the French Navy, a close friend of the family, and between them they worked out a plan to frustrate the enemy.

"The Germans laid the charge one afternoon, and soon after black-out the naval officer crept down the bank and crawled in the direction of the dynamite. Joubert stood guard while his friend searched for and found the fuse, following it until he came to the detonator, which he removed at great risk to himself and to Joubert, who was standing close enough to have been badly injured, if not killed, by an explosion.

"The following morning, as the Germans were hastily evacuating the town, the last man, according to plan, touched off the switch. Nothing happened. He had no time to investigate, as he already had to run to get to his truck; and the last glimpse Joubert and his friend had, from a window in Joubert's house, was of the Germans furiously shaking their fists in the direction of the French people they were leaving in such a hurry.

"The two Frenchmen have been officially thanked by the British military authorities for their work, which is considered to have been of extreme importance. Destruction of the bridge would have meant much delay."

And so, the dear old bridge that we knew so well, and the Jouberts' house, have been saved. Through Monsieur Joubert's courage? Undoubtedly: but beyond the human instrument we discern, and glorify—as will our old Sousse friends—the prayer-answering GOD Who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, or think"—or dream!

News from the Field

ONE of the most gratifying pieces of news from the Field is that which announces the safe arrival in Tangier of **Mr. and Mrs. Bocking** and **Yvonne**. A full account of their adventures, difficulties, frustrations and set-backs since leaving Cherchell (whence they were compulsorily removed by the Vichy authorities over six months ago) would require a complete issue of the **News Letter** all to itself; but it would be a well-deserved monument to our brother's fortitude, initiative and perseverance. Seeking permission to remove to Tangier involved seven or more "hitch-hiking" journeys from Miliana to Algiers, and countless formalities.

We are glad to learn that Mrs. Bocking—who is far from well—and Yvonne "stood the journey well" (to Tangier), and that all the luggage got through safely. Yvonne has made a start at the local French school.

We are deeply thankful to GOD that the much-needed help Mr. Warren has so long desired is at length available.

The American landings in Morocco have certainly brought romance into the life of **Miss Emily Grant**, one of our American workers who is stationed at Casablanca. She announces her engagement to an earnest Christian soldier, a fellow-countryman, and adds: "If it please the LORD to spare our lives, we hope to be married at home, and after furlough come back to serve Him here in Casablanca. There is such a field of service here."

We earnestly pray that the LORD will graciously "order the steps" of these devoted young people, and fulfil in them all the good pleasure of His will.

Mr. Chas. Marsh, of Lafayette, announces the birth of a little daughter—Ruth Pearl—on March 5th. "She is very bonny, and is going on nicely." **Mrs. Marsh** is progressing favourably under the able care of Miss Dudgeon, a missionary from a neighbouring station. In his ministry among native and French folk Mr. Marsh has much strenuous cycling to do in

hilly country—some excursions totalling 100 miles on the double journey.

Mrs. Ross, writing from Algiers, reports interesting contacts with some of our soldiers. Whilst there is no great improvement yet in the food situation, our sister says: "GOD has a way of providing for his own. . . . We have all our needs met."

Mr. Shorey, also at Algiers, tells of the re-opening of his work in visiting the native cafés, and of encouragement.

Mr. Willson, of Djemaa Sahridj, writes of the great grief occasioned by the sudden death of Yahia, eldest son of Belkassem, a leading native believer. Yahia ("John") was a devoted son, and a keen Christian, so that he will be greatly missed.

Miss Dew, of Rabat, is doing a splendid work among the American soldiers at her station, and has started a Bible study class for those that know the LORD. Nurses, too, are coming to the Mission House.

Mrs. Simpson, of Guercif, had a very trying experience owing to one of the native Christians being under suspicion, and having been imprisoned for 20 days. GOD graciously undertook for this lad and all who were concerned, and it has fallen out rather to the glory of GOD and the blessing of those involved.

Remembering what was written last month concerning "Ahmed, the prisoner of Jesus Christ," this is surely a further call to prayer on behalf of our native brethren, whose position is becoming increasingly difficult.

Miss Hubbard makes an eloquent plea for a keen young man to work among the native lads of Tangier—"wild and untouchable so far as a word from a woman goes." In 50 years of missionary service our sister says she has never encountered such hooliganism. Growing lawlessness among young people, an alarming feature of the days in which we live, is increasingly apparent in North Africa. There is only one antidote—an aggressive yet winsome Gospel testimony.

We are thankful to learn that **Miss Chapman**, who was recently so ill, has been able to resume her girls' classes.

Miss Bowring writes concerning young men of her Italian meetings now interned in a camp in the district. They are bearing a splendid witness among their fellow internees. Miss Bowring's intervention on their behalf may help them in obtaining leave from time to time.

Mr. P. Padilla carries on valiantly at Tangier, and his report is a remarkable testimony to the power and grace of GOD. In spite of many difficulties the work continues, and prospers.

Our hearts go out in deep sympathy to **Mrs. Jack Barkey** (née Joan Short) and her husband, whose wee daughter has succumbed to meningitis. The LORD graciously comfort their hearts in these sad days.

Resignation of Mr. S. S. McCurry

WE greatly regret to announce that, owing to advancing years and declining health, our beloved friend Mr. S. S. McCurry has felt obliged to relinquish his honorary position as Secretary of the Wimbledon Auxiliary of the North Africa Mission.

Such a record as his must be well-nigh unique, for it was as far back as January, 1884, that the Auxiliary (formerly known as the **Dublin** Auxiliary) was started. In 1885, as a result of the visit to Dublin of the late Edward H. Glenny, two members of the Irish Church Missions, Miss Mellett and Miss Bonham, offered for the work in Morocco, and were accepted. The Dublin Auxiliary made itself responsible for their support, and the LORD greatly honoured and prospered this Irish Branch of the N.A.M.

Mr. McCurry tells us that during the past well-nigh 60 years over £10,000 has been sent in through the Dublin and Wimbledon Auxiliaries; and he earnestly trusts that this fact, when widely known, may result in other friends being encouraged to start similar Auxiliaries.

We join with the Mission Council in expressing to Mr. McCurry our warmest appreciation of his devoted services, and echo their wish "that he may be long spared to assist in work for the furtherance of the Gospel," both in this land, and overseas.

N.A.M. Annual Meetings

THESE will be held, GOD willing, in the Court Room, Caxton Hall, S.W. 1, on **May 27th**, at 3.30 and 5.30 p.m. The closing address will be given in the afternoon by **Rev. J. Chalmers-Lyon**, and in the evening by **Rev. G. H. Lunn, M.A.**

"Slavanka" Conference

THE Annual Prayer Conference of the Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems will be held (D.V.) at "Slavanka" again this year. The date of this week-end Convention is **June 4th to 8th**. Full particulars obtainable from the Hon. Sec., Mr. W. Cecil Collinson, 106, Highbury New Park, LONDON, N.5.