

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA."

# The N.A.M. News Letter



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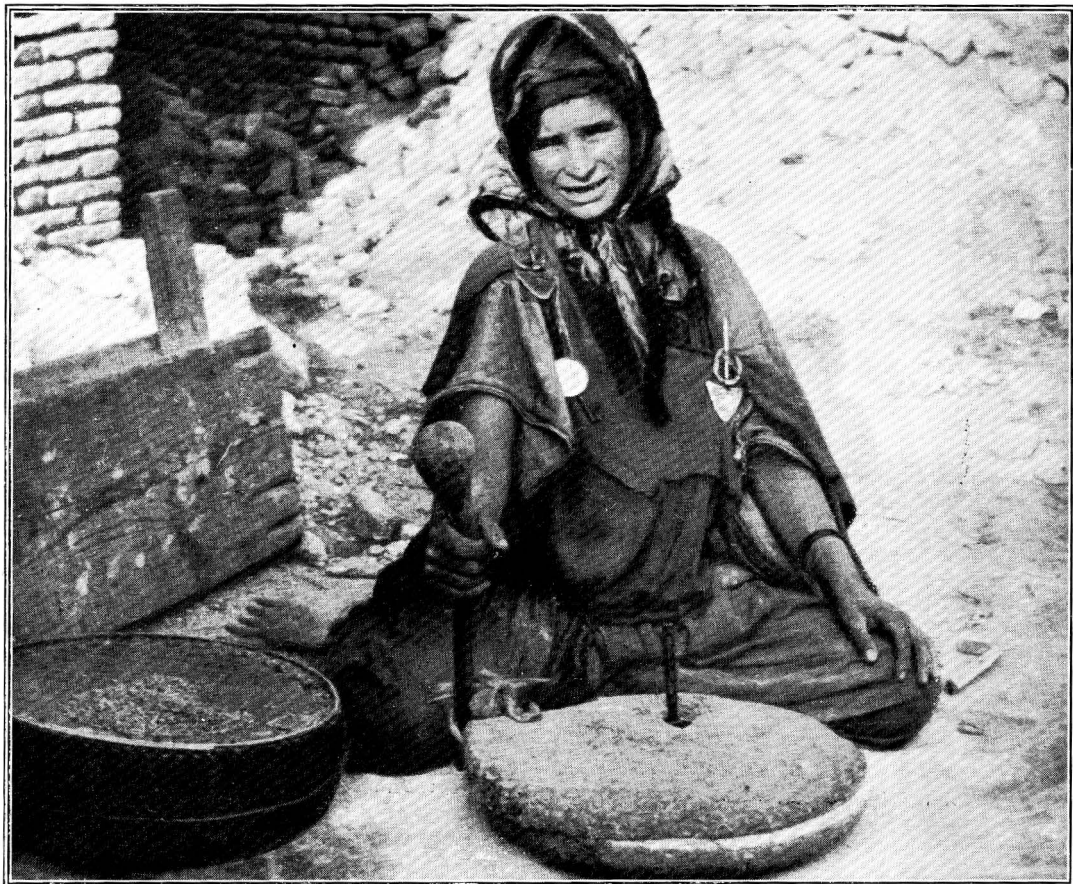


Photo by]

" GRINDING AT THE MILL "

[Miss Ada Clack

*There is hardly a Bible scene that could not be illustrated photographically from everyday life in North Africa. This excellent snapshot was taken by our Nabeul missionary, Miss Ada Clack, when she was living in Kairouan, the " holy " city of Tunisia. " Grinding at the mill " is the morning task of every Bedouin woman. Our Lord's words make it certain that, from this humble sisterhood of the hand-mill, some shall be called away one day to meet the Saviour they love !*

## 1946: *The Turning Tide*

AS we pen these opening words at the threshold of the New Year, our hearts are full of gratitude to our Heavenly Father for His loving provision and tender care throughout the year that has just ended.

Whilst this transitional period following the cessation of hostilities has problems and difficulties of its own, the main burden that still weighed heavily upon our hearts as 1945 opened has, in the Lord's great mercy, been lifted; and we may be confident that heavenly grace and wisdom will enable us as a Mission to grapple successfully with the new tasks that await us.

We give thanks to our faithful God that not only have a number of our tired workers been enabled to come home for much-needed rest and refreshment, but the way has re-opened for others to return to their former spheres of service. Although we cannot but be painfully aware that our missionary brethren upon the field are pitifully few in number at the moment, we rejoice in the knowledge that within recent weeks two old N.A.M. stations have been re-occupied for Christ.

Dr. J. A. Liley, who returned to Tripoli as an R.A.M.C. captain in November, is now demobilised, and has succeeded in renting a native house which, though limited in accommodation, is at least a strategic centre from which he and Mrs. Liley, who has just rejoined her husband, will be able to resume the missionary labours that were abruptly terminated by their expulsion from Libya in 1936.

Almost simultaneously, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Pearce, travelling out from England, and Miss Evelyn Collins, journeying west from Tunis, have met; and their re-occupation of the Mission House at Cherchell assures the resumption, after wartime interruption, of a testimony that dates back many years and has been signally blessed of God.

One of our gravest preoccupations during 1945 was the physical welfare of our workers on the field. Quite a number of foodstuffs still available to us in this favoured homeland in reasonable quantity have for long enough either been unobtainable in North Africa or procurable only through the "black market" at exorbitant prices. From time to time we have furnished details in these pages, culled from our missionaries' letters, that cannot but have appalled those who truly appreciated the true state of affairs. Whilst the high prices soared higher still, the purchasing power of English money (maintained at 200 francs to the £) grew less and less, until the time came when an unskilled native workman, such as a garage hand or a night-watchman, was earning more than twice as much as our missionaries were receiving; and this, in spite of the fact that we were sending out greatly increased allocations.

Friends will readily understand, therefore, how thankful we were during the Christmas period to learn that the franc had been de-valued to 480 to

the £. This means that even though we are now reverting in terms of pounds sterling per month to a slightly lower figure than the highest of recent months, our missionaries will be receiving practically double the number of francs. We trust that this will not only raise their standard of everyday living above the mere subsistence level, but that it will enable them to make such personal and domestic replacements as have not for some time been feasible, but that may be possible now that certain commodities are slowly reappearing in the shops.

For those of our readers who are not interested in technical details, but can readily appreciate a practical example, may we say that Mr. Miles's niece tells him that the *controlled* price for soling and heeling a pair of shoes in Tunis is now 600 francs. At the old rate of exchange that meant £3, whereas now it becomes a mere (!) 25s.

So then, with Tripoli and Cherchell re-occupied, with further workers returning, and with the financial position upon the field suddenly eased, we may confidently and thankfully say that, with the dawn of the new year, the tide is turning. Our faithful God has intervened again, and we lift our hearts to Him in thankful praise.

## *Our Old Headquarters* *Re-occupied*

WHEN the last "NEWS-LETTER" was being compiled our daily duties at Headquarters were being carried out within the narrow confines of the "Sweeties" shop. The new year finds us back once more at "The Marsh Memorial House," 34, Bisham Gardens, where the ampler accommodation and improved facilities are greatly appreciated.

It is true that the Secretary has for some weeks been exiled from his office, owing to the fact that some local rats insisted upon establishing themselves under his floorboards. He, as an ex-missionary, might have tolerated this, but the unpleasantness arising from the decease of one of the rodent fraternity afforded him no alternative but to re-establish himself elsewhere, until such time as the builders have tackled the situation and made the foundations reasonably rat-proof.

## *The late Si Beddai*

FOR several years now the name of Si Beddai, our native helper at Tunis, has appeared on the cover of our Prayer Circle notes, but tidings of the Homecall of this beloved brother reached us a short while ago. Miss H. M. M. Tapp, who is at present in England, but who will soon be on her way back to Tunis, has an unrivalled knowledge of our late friend, extending over many years; and she has kindly furnished the following paragraphs, which incorporate extracts from Mr. Frank Ewing's letter that first apprised us of the sad news:—

Our dear friend, Sidi Mohammed el Beddai, was called Home on Saturday, December 1st, to meet the Master he has served so faithfully for nearly fifty years—a long spell in Arab life. There is no doubt the privations of the Nazi occupation hastened his end.

Mr. Frank Ewing writes that when he arrived in November, 1944, he found our friend very feeble, but managing still to come to the Bible Depôt twice a week, "where he was enabled to present the Gospel message to the Arabs." Later he was in hospital for some time, but although able to return home for a while, he became gradually weaker; so that on the 20th November he was again admitted to the French Municipal Hospital. There he witnessed a good confession, for although very low, he was happy in the Lord. His wife, who was with him when he died, said that he kept repeating, "Glory to God, Glory to God."

Since he had some years ago acquired French citizenship, it was possible to arrange Christian burial for our brother. This, in its way, was quite epochal, for many baptized Christians have been buried in Moslem graves. Mr. Ewing conducted a short service at the Hospital, after which friends and relatives set out for the cemetery, which lies outside the city; and here Mr. Ewing read some passages of Scripture, offered prayer, and gave a short word on "Death and Life". It was a quiet, reverent little service. Beddai's only son, two of his five daughters with their fiancés, some members of the American Episcopal Mission, and our N.A.M. workers were present at the graveside.

Like other converts from Islam, Si Beddai had a hard road to travel. He was quite a young man when he first came to the missionaries for teaching; and only shortly afterwards, rushing into Mr. Liley's house one evening, he begged for pen and paper, as he wished to make a declaration of his decision to follow Christ. He did so, but the missionaries were a bit doubtful as to whether he was acting under some excitement. Beddai was then living in his father's house, but when his wife's family heard of his adherence to the Christian faith, they took her away. She died shortly after. His father ignored the matter for some time, but since Beddai persevered, the father's position as a Reader in the mosque forced him to take action, and he turned his son out of the home.

Beddai made many efforts to find work; but much of it, such as marble-cutting or dyeing, came very hard on a young man who had been brought up in a comfortable Arab home. Finally he was appointed keeper of the Bible Depôt at a merely nominal salary. He certainly did not incur the charge of having become a "rice Christian"!

Beddai was a great Bible student, his treasured Arabic Bible being interleaved with many notes and quotations. His grief was great when some hooligans broke into the Depôt one night, wrecked the place, and maliciously destroyed his precious Book. Naturally a very timid man,

he was given grace to stand at the door of the Bible Depôt and invite passing Arabs to enter and hear the message. Some complied, but others cursed him as an infidel and spat at him.

Beddai's later marriage was a happy one. His wife, Arabia, is a simple soul, ready to listen to the Gospel; whilst his large family—one son and five girls—has been brought up in the Faith. May they follow in their father's steps!

So passes on a true evangelist and a helper of many. He will be greatly missed.

## Our New Deputation Helper

THE opening year has brought us a valuable new helper in the person of Miss Elsie H. Fraser, of Tunbridge Wells, who has very graciously volunteered to strengthen our hands in the deputation department.

Miss Fraser's interest in North Africa goes back well-nigh thirty years; and although her earlier expectations of missionary service did not



MISS ELSIE H. FRASER

materialise, her travels in Morocco not only gave her a first-hand understanding of the spiritual need of the Moslems there, but yielded a series of valuable photographs which, as lantern slides, were later used to excellent advantage in free-lance deputation work.

Some years before the war Miss Fraser had expressed to the Editor her hope that one day the Lord might open up the way for her to offer her services for more regular help in connection with the home end of the N.A.M.'s activities; and now that the war clouds have passed and her banking career has been relinquished, the Mission Council has had the pleasure of welcoming her most cordially into our ranks.

It is hoped that we may be able to acquire a light car for our sister, so that she may be able to transport and utilise the various missionary

films and sets of lantern slides. We believe that the photograph that accompanies this paragraph gives such an impression of our genial and gifted friend as will encourage those to whom she has hitherto been a stranger to welcome her visit to their Church or Mission. At all events, we are confident that our readers will be happy to join us in prayer that God's richest blessing may from the beginning rest upon Miss Fraser's earnest endeavours to bring to God's people in the homeland a new vision of our unfinished task, and such a realisation of the urgent need as shall, under God's blessing, lead to many young lives being dedicated to full-time service for Him in needy North Africa.

### *Workers Now in Retirement*

It is always a matter of deep regret when, through circumstances either of advancing years or ill-health, workers who have rendered yeoman service during many years tell us that the time has come for their names to be transferred to the "retired list".

Into this category have entered recently four of our missionary warriors: Miss I. C. de la Camp, Mrs. E. A. Simpson, Miss E. Fearnley and Miss D. Ward.

In writing to us recently **Miss de la Camp** reminded us that fifty years have passed since she was first accepted as a missionary candidate in the days when the Mission Headquarters were at Barking; and whilst there is no space here even to summarise the missionary activities of the past half-century, we deem it fitting to place on record our thankful appreciation of Miss de la Camp's invaluable services as a language tutor. Many a young missionary fledgling was greatly helped by our sister's special gift in this department.

**Mrs. Simpson** had been hoping very much to resume her missionary work at Guercif, but a further visit to the ear specialist revealed trouble of a nature that would be seriously aggravated by a return to Morocco. Our sister, whose life-habit it has been to seek the guidance of God for each step of the journey, feels assured that the Lord is now closing the door to direct participation in evangelistic work on the field; but we have reminded both her and dear Miss de la Camp that whilst we regretfully accede to their requests that their names should be placed on the retired list, we are confident that the Lord Himself makes no such distinctions; but that in the warfare in which there is no discharge, saints who are ripe in years and experience may yet determine, by their fidelity upon the Hill of Intercession, the course of the battle surging in the plain below. We much prefer the title "Unretired Prayer Warrior".

Owing to continued ill-health **Miss D. Ward** of Algeria is similarly convinced that the time has come for her to retire, whilst **Miss Elsie Fearnley**, who is receiving much encouragement in her professional duties (she is an instructor of deaf and dumb children), feels that she, too, for whom indifferent health was the initial cause for

her homecoming, should envisage a future in the homeland rather than a fresh start in Algeria.

All four of these dear friends we commend lovingly to the Lord for His rich blessing and gracious provision in the coming days.

### *News from the Field*

MENTION has already been made of the arrival upon the field of **Dr. Liley** and **Mr. and Mrs. Norman Pearce**. We are happy to report that since the last "NEWS-LETTER" was issued **Miss E. Low** has been able to rejoin her colleague, **Miss E. Bradbury**, at Tetuan, whilst **Miss G. Carty** and **Miss W. Drury** have been able to return to Tangier. **Miss E. Grant** (U.S.A.) has just obtained her French passport visa, and may be leaving for Casablanca at any moment now. The **Misses E. Higbid** and **E. Harman** may also be embarking at any time for Morocco, whither their eyes have been longingly turned for many months past. They are anxious to take up their residence in Fez once more, where it is hoped that the **Misses D. Richardson** and **G. Lincoln** will be able to join them. **Miss F. Gladwyn** was unable at the last moment to take advantage of the passage available for her owing to a feverish indisposition following an anti-typhoid injection, but we trust that she, too, will soon be able to proceed to Tangier.

**Miss L. G. Rokeby-Robinson**, whose overseas wartime duties as matron of a British hospital have given her an intimate knowledge of a part of Africa far removed from Tangier (her former sphere of service), has recently returned to the homeland, but is likely to re-embark for a further period of duty—this time in the Far East. We trust that she may be greatly blessed of God wherever He may lead her.

### *A Special Need*

OUR new Deputation helper, Miss Elsie H. Fraser, of whom we have written in an earlier paragraph, will be using at her evening meetings the four missionary films, and—on occasion—selections of lantern slides. The transport of the heavy apparatus and equipment involved, together with the carriage of Mission literature, makes it imperative that our friend should be provided with a light car. For many reasons—not least among them being our desire that Miss Fraser should be assured of a reasonably trouble-free road experience!—we feel that the car should be a new one; and should any of our readers be led to have a share, however small, in the provision of such an indispensable adjunct to a very important branch of the Mission's work, we would be most happy and thankful to receive whatever the Lord may enable them to send for this special purpose.

### *Congratulations*

We are sure our friends will join us in praise to GOD and in congratulations to our missionary veteran, **Miss F. Marston**, upon the completion, in November last, of 50 years of faithful and devoted service in North Africa.