

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

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: GENERAL SECRETARY, ERNEST J. LONG

AMERICAN AUXILIARY: HON. SECRETARY, DR. HARVEY FARMER, 303, EIGHTH STREET, BRADENTON, FLORIDA, U.S.A.

No. 46

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

MAR-APR., 1946



Photo by]

CHILDREN OF FEDHALA, MOROCCO.

[E.J.L.

A Christian lady was once overheard to say (at the Keswick Convention, of all places!) that she found work among Moslems "terribly depressing." Little can she have known of the sheer delight of living and labouring for Christ among the children of the Moslem world—and there are eighty millions of them! What a wide field of missionary opportunity! Our Missionary Films ("Tunisia: Battle-ground of the 8th Army" and "Morocco: Land of the Setting Sun") furnish graphic and convincing evidence of the winsome charm of native girls and the frolicsome jollity of the boys. These bairns can readily be gathered into classes at the Mission House, taught such choruses and hymns as we love to sing in the Homeland, and instructed unforgettably in the Word of GOD. The children depicted above may well have witnessed the landing of men of the 1st Army at Fedhala when North Africa was invaded.

“Who shall lead me into this strong city?”*

THIS age-long problem of Mohammedanism has been as baffling to governments as to religion; it has a certain attractiveness just because it is so stubborn and mysterious. Neither the Christian faith nor Christian civilization has more than dented the solid unity of Mohammedanism.”

This declaration by Bishop Brent of the Philippine Islands, unpalatable though it be, is still substantially true.

Islam is a Historical Tragedy.—In North Africa there was once a flourishing Christian Church, and such leaders as Augustine and Tertullian and such martyrs as Perpetua and Felicitas have written pages of pure gold in the record of its history. Doctrinal and spiritual decay prepared the way for the onslaught of the Arabian Kaliphs, and at the close of the seventh century the Cross had been virtually eclipsed by the Crescent. No one can visit the museums of Tunis and Algiers, or look upon the symbols of fish and dove and olive branch of the catacombs of Sousse, or wander around the ruins of Carthage, without realising the tragedy of these past thirteen centuries.

Islam is a Political Problem.—Colonial governments in Moslem lands are confronted by a problem that can only be described as baffling. India's problems are common knowledge; and although fundamentally this problem is religious rather than political, it has, nevertheless, a most thorny political issue. Palestine presents a similar problem, and the last decades in North Africa have seen nationalism grow to such formidable proportions as to have its repercussions, not only upon the responsible government concerned, but also in a very marked way on missionary activity.

Islam is a Social Disease.—Even a brief acquaintance with North Africa would reveal the callous neglect of the children, the unhappy bondage of the “shut-in” women, and the widespread illiteracy even among the men. Dirt, disease, defectives and delinquency are prevalent results of the scourge of Islam.

Finally, and fundamentally, Islam is a Religious Problem.—Every missionary who has done any Bible Depot or colportage work, and has had the opportunity of first-hand dealings with Moslems, will be convinced that he is opposed by a system which the Adversary of souls has malignantly raised up in order to overthrow the true Faith.

The Moslem will tell you that the Koran, “a jumble of fact and fancy, laws and legends, prayers and imprecations,” has abrogated the Bible. He will tell you that Mohammed surpasses in honour and glory the Lord Jesus; that it is blasphemy to suggest that Jesus is the Son of God; that He did not die on the Cross. All the precious and fundamental truths of the Christian faith are thus denied by Islam.

How shall we approach this problem? “We have to struggle, not with blood and flesh, but with the angelic rulers, the angelic authorities, the potentates of the dark present, the spirit forces of evil in the heavenly sphere.” We must organise our forces and prepare for a sustained, sacrificial assault by prayer on these “spirit forces.” It is a reproach and a humiliation to know that hitherto there has been retrogression and not progress. Islam cannot for long withstand political developments, social progress and educational enlightenment; but “to whom shall they go?”

* By the Rev. R. I. Brown, Tunisia.

Let us obey the apostolic injunction, “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all manner of prayer and entreaty—be alive to that, attend to it unceasingly, interceding on behalf of all the saints, and on my behalf also, that I may be allowed to speak with open lips in order to expound fully and freely that open secret of the gospel for the sake of which I am in custody as its envoy. Pray that I may have freedom to declare it as I should.”

Homecall of Miss A. G. Hubbard

THE outstanding item of news from the Field concerns the Homecall of our beloved sister, Miss A. G. Hubbard. At first it was Miss Knight who fell ill—bronchitis and general exhaustion bringing her so low that, for a while, the outcome was in the balance. During this critical period, Miss Hubbard, despite a very troublesome cough and great fatigue, showed the utmost devotion, spending as much time as possible with her companion. Then, quite suddenly, Miss Hubbard collapsed; and it was soon apparent that her Homecall would only be a matter of days. Later communications from Mr. Bocking prepared us for the eventual cablegram, telling that our sister had entered her Lord's Presence at 2 o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, February 13th.

As Miss de la Camp has just written: “When one considers that Miss Hubbard was refused for work in China because of a weak heart, one marvels and gives thanks for God's wondrous grace in fitting and sustaining her for so many years (fifty-four) of faithful service in His vineyard in Morocco.”

Rev. L. J. Bocking of Tangier, who conducted the funeral service there, very kindly sent us notes of his brief message, from which we quote the following:—

“Whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom. viii, 30). These were the words that seemed to be uppermost in dear Miss Hubbard's thoughts during the last few days she was here with us. Not a shadow of doubt or fear marred her confidence and peace. She just rested on the finished work of Christ. That was the source of her strength. There she was perfectly happy to stay her heart and mind. She would have been the last to pretend that she understood all things, but that she was justified in God's holy sight, through Christ, she never for one moment doubted, and, being justified, she was, in blessed anticipation, glorified. Now we think of her rejoicing in the reality of it all. Yes, dear Miss Hubbard is in the Glory Land with Christ, which is far better than anything possibly could be here on earth. We would not wish her back again. She was full of years, she had fought a good fight, she had finished her course, she had kept the faith. I think I speak for all, but particularly perhaps the younger amongst us, when I say that we found in Miss Hubbard something that inspired us. Her strength of character, void of all sentimentality; her whole bearing; her bright eyes; her lovely smile; her quiet humour; her wonderful confidence and childlike trust; her prayers (do you remember them?)—and, with all this, and much else, there was that background of the past that fascinated us; the history of her long missionary career, fifty-five years in this land, her profound understanding of, and her love for, the people, and how some of us coveted her wonderful facility in speaking Arabic!”

Most earnestly do we echo our brother's closing words: “Blessed be God for every remembrance of her, and may He give each of us grace to follow in her footsteps and to live and serve as she did to the praise and glory of His holy Name.”

News from the Field

TUNIS.—In giving a résumé of the work of the past year, **Mr. Frank Ewing** writes: "The work in the Bible Depot is most encouraging, and I have had many opportunities of presenting the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour of mankind to Arabs, Jews, French and Italians. Many copies of God's Word were sold, and portions given away, such as 'GOD HATH SPOKEN,' 'THE WAY OF SALVATION,' 'WORDS OF COMFORT AND CONSOLATION.' I sold in all 230 Bibles, which I believe to be a record for the Depot:—199 French, 13 Italian, 10 Arabic and 8 English. I sold also 279 New Testaments:—169 French, 28 Italian, 38 Arabic, 22 English, 5 Russian, 5 German, 8 Hebrew, 1 Dutch, 1 Latin, 1 Greek and 1 Spanish, making eleven languages altogether. The Word of God has thus gone into many homes where it had never been before. May it also find an entrance into the hearts of those who bought it or who received copies."

Most earnestly do we echo our brother's prayer.

* * *

Miss K. M. E. Gotelee writes:— "We had a very happy though quiet Christmas. A special gift made possible the purchase of a small turkey for dinner. This may seem incredible to you dear folk, but strangely enough, in this land where so many things you consider necessary are lacking, poultry is very plentiful, though very expensive, but the people do not lack money. What they often lack is something to spend their money on. . . . Two lonely Swedish missionaries came to share our Christmas dinner, and enjoyed the Christmas pudding which, although a war-time recipe, tasted quite good, since we do not lack fruit here.

"A great event at Christmas is the children's treat, which always takes place on New Year's Day! The recitations and hymns were very much appreciated, the former covering a great deal of Old Testament prophecy, and showing how our Lord fulfilled them all at His Birth and in His Person. . . . Most of the reciters were Jewish children, and many of them listened with great earnestness to the Gospel messages."

* * *

Miss E. Brookes, newly arrived in Tunis from America, writes: "It already seems natural to be back and to rub shoulders with Arabs, clean and dirty, as well as other nationalities. I am happily surprised to see that little by little things lacking for so long are beginning to reappear—but at what a price! The prices are almost, if not altogether, prohibitive to most, even higher than American prices. . . . Although I had 1,000 lbs. of luggage there were no Customs dues to pay. Truly, the French were more than kind. . . . Miss Tapp is due to arrive by train this evening, and together we may be able to start something 'looking unto Jesus' for guidance and help. . . . Mabel (Miss M. Jones) met me at the boat, and she looks fine; indeed, all seem well here and at Nabeul."

Algeria

AZAZGA.—In the course of an intensely detailed and interesting report, **Mr. S. Arthur** writes:—"The girls' class at Ighil Bouzall deserves a long chapter to itself. In spite of opposition, 'peaceful picketing' (our Kabyles are becoming up-to-date!), stones on the roof, etc., we have been able to continue the meetings twice a week (as compared with three

times a week in pre-war days). It has been suggested that things would be more difficult without the attraction of clothing. That may be true, but not entirely so, for we have been able to continue the classes when there was very little to offer them." Our lady readers will be interested to learn of pullovers made from a fleece of wool. The entire task of washing, combing, spinning and knitting is all done by hand.

In his closing paragraph Mr. Arthur writes:—"Prayer must follow such efforts, for the task is still unfinished when men and women and also the children we mention remain only friendly, but still Moslem. It is not for this that we are here, although such a state of affairs may be a stage towards the great transition—Light for darkness, Life for death."

* * *

CHERCHELL.—**Mrs. Margaret Pearce**, in a graphic and colourful circular letter, tells of her first contacts with natives at Tangier—from which point of disembarkation she and her husband had to make their way overland to their distant destination. She writes:—"The crossing was a really delightful one, and we landed in brilliant sunshine, to find Mr. Bocking waiting for us. The welcome we received at Hope House was almost overwhelming, and there we had a real rest, and I was able to commence Arabic studies and get an insight into the work of the Hospital and in the district around. There I saw my first Arab, smelt the first native smells, and tasted the first native food. My first impressions were comparisons—the outer beauty of Tangier, its white-walled houses and wonderful flowers, the blue sea and sky, compared with the ugliness and filth of the native quarters. Then there were the innocent, happy faces of the little children, compared with the sinful, cynical faces of the old women and men."

* * *

DJEMÂA SAHRIDJ.—With commendable industry and devotion **Mr. A. G. Willson** of Djemâa Sahridj, our oldest station, appears to have spent the better part of New Year's Day in compiling an admirable report upon the previous year's work. He says—among so much else that is most interesting—"There has been no difficulty in getting attendances at night: we only needed to ring the bell, and young men and boys soon filled the Hall. They hear the Word of God, learn Gospel Hymns, and I am happy to say the testimony is bearing fruit." Mr. Willson cites as an instance a young man of nineteen years of age, who wrote to him from Algiers, "I am in agony of soul, and unable to sleep at night, and am tormented by day." Our brother was able not only to write to him, but to put him into touch with a missionary who had the joy of leading him to Christ. Mr. Willson concludes:—"The young man has since been here on a short holiday, and we feel sure has been genuinely converted."

* * *

TANGIER.—**Miss M. M. Glen** is carrying on very gallantly with her girls, about sixteen in number, whose classroom is a garage, whose original condition left much to be desired. There was no window, only shutters. When they were closed the interior was dark: when they were open, the draught and cold made the place most comfortless. Now a window has been substituted. One wonders how many Sunday School teachers in this favoured homeland would be willing to carry on their classes amid such cheerless surroundings. We have nothing but admiration for Miss Glen's dauntless spirit.

CASABLANCA.—More and more of our workers are returning to the Field, and the following lines, dated January 3rd, from Casablanca, have reached us from **Miss Emily Grant** of America:—“I arrived here on Christmas Eve—much later than I had hoped to return, but it was a long wait for the French visa. I had such a wonderful return trip by plane. There were only twenty actual flying hours, but we had three nights on route—two at Newfoundland, because of a hurricane ahead at the Azores. Then we had to turn back, but next day we went through, and the last lap to Casablanca was very interesting, as we followed the coast from Mazagan north to Casablanca. It seemed so natural to be back—just as though I had never been away. It rejoices one’s heart to hear how prayer from this place has surrounded me.”

* * *

FEZ.—In our previous “NEWS-LETTER” we were writing of the re-occupation of Tripoli and Cherrhell. We are now happy to tell of the return to Fez of the **Misses E. Harman** and **E. Higbid**. Not long before their arrival they had news of the death of **Si M’Fuddell**, the native guardian of the house of Mr. and Mrs. Cooper: they were shocked to discover that their entry into Fez coincided with the funeral of the guardian of **Miss Denison’s** house—**Si Hamed**. Both these poor men had died of typhus, so that quite clearly our prayers will be wisely focused upon the health of our two sisters at this time. May the Lord grant them special grace as, after a lapse of years, they resume the old task in a greatly changed environment.

* * *

RABAT.—From Rabat we have received several letters from the **Misses I. Dew** and **G. Sharpe**. Both are hoping to leave for furlough in April, **Miss Dew** being hopeful of spending some months in America—responding to invitations that have come to her from a number of Christian young men who served with the 1st Army in Morocco. The letters of both of our sisters give evidence of those alternations of joyful encouragement and heartache that are the ingredients of Missionary Work the world over. They will be most grateful for our prayers during the months of summer absence.

* * *

TRIPOLI.—From Tripoli our Field Superintendent has received from **Mrs. J. A. Liley** a long and detailed letter, in which are summarised first of all in parallel columns “Blessings” and “Difficulties.” These are followed most helpfully by “Notes on the Blessings” and “Notes on the Difficulties.” Among the blessings are “meeting old friends—Arab, Jewish, Maltese and Italian. Fellowship with a little group of believers in the Forces, resulting in prayerful interest and some gifts for our work. A deep sense of being where God wants us, that is, here in Tripoli.” “Difficulties” are wholly domestic. The native house is tiny, and the kitchen sinkless and stoveless—the “Windowlite” lets in plenty of light, but fails completely to exclude the babel of native noises. In wet weather pools of water collect in the courtyard, and have to be negotiated in passing from room to room. There is no space to entertain more than two guests at a time, and the house, even during this cold season, is infested with ants and bugs and some cockroaches. But **Mrs. Liley**, with characteristic faith and good humour, underlines the “Balance in hand”:—“All the grace of God. Your help by prayer.” I am sure we shall not fail our good friends during these early months of their reoccupation of this strategic centre.

A True Work of Grace

It has been said—though it is a rash generalisation from which we would dissociate ourselves—that “a Frenchman will give his life for a good cause, but not a franc.” Certain it is that a loving impulse to give to the very limit was one of the most striking characteristics of those early believers of Acts 2, who sold all that they had and made lavish distribution to those who were in need.

We have recently seen this generous spirit wonderfully manifested in the loving gesture of a native convert of Nabeul, Tunisia. Having sold his harvest, he brought to the Mission House as a love-gift a sum equivalent to £25—part of which sum was to be sent to the widow of a former missionary, whilst the remainder was to be deposited with our Mission for the furtherance of the Gospel in North Africa.

One doubts very much whether in the history of the N.A.M. there has been a similar instance of such liberal-heartedness on the part of a Moslem convert. We bring the matter to our readers’ attention, not only that they may rejoice with us in such an evident work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a native believer, but that they may render thanks to God, too, for this abiding fruit from the devoted ministry of our former Nabeul missionary, the late **Cyril W. Morriss**.

Wanted

A FRIEND of the North Africa Mission is very eager to obtain copies of two volumes of poems by Mr. S. S. McCurry—the one entitled “IN KESWICK VALE,” and the other “THE BALLADS OF BALLYTUMULTY.” Should any of our readers have either or both of these available, we would be very grateful to hear from them.

Dates for your Diary

- (1) **Our Annual Meetings : May 23, at 3.30 and 6 p.m. Livingstone Hall.**
- (2) **“Slavanka” Convention, Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems : June 15 to 20.**