

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA."

# The N.A.M. News Letter



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A MOSQUE IN MAZAGAN, MOROCCO.

*In most of the native towns and villages of North Africa, the mosque tower dominates the surrounding buildings. From its lofty minaret the MUEZZIN summons his Moslem brethren to prayer. Five times daily the "call" goes forth, and in that cry the pre-eminence of Mohammed is repeatedly affirmed: "I declare that there is no deity apart from Allah! I declare that Mohammed is the Sent One of Allah!" This is the Mohammedan "Witness," which, upon the lips of the dying, is looked upon as a sure passport to Paradise. How these praying fanatics need our earnest intercessions—offered in the Name of our Great High Priest!*

## *Tripoli Mission House twice saved from Fire*

**A**S we take possession again of the commodious Mission House in the very centre of old Tripoli, from which we were expelled ten years ago, our hearts mount in praise to God for its wonderful preservation, despite a few cracks and broken windows through war bombardments.

It first came into the possession of the N.A.M. in 1895, when Mr. and Mrs. Venables continued, till their retirement in 1908, the Medical Mission begun by Mr. Harding in 1889 in much less favourable premises.

Mrs. Venables, with other lady missionaries, also had girls' and women's classes which are still remembered by older Arab women whom my wife has met; but, alas, on our arrival in 1935, Mr. William Reid, who had come to Tripoli forty-three years previously, was then alone to maintain the Gospel banner in Libya, and a fresh start must now be made.

The ground floor of the house is most suitable for the Medical Mission, with spacious Waiting and Consulting Rooms and Pharmacy, while an overflow of patients can gather in the large courtyard, which is sheltered from rain or sun on three sides by the wide verandah surrounding it on the first floor.

Upstairs, there is accommodation for a large family, or a married couple and two single workers, besides a meeting-room of sixteen by twenty-one feet.

Readers will appreciate how we rejoiced last April, when this house, so long associated with the Word of God in the minds of the native population of Tripoli, became Mission property, though full possession depends on the Jewish family which has rented it for the past nine years securing other accommodation. In the meantime, they have vacated the ground floor, and we have begun the overhaul required by ten years of neglect and war strain.

One incident was an R.A.F. incendiary bomb which fell through a window of the meeting-room in 1941, setting it alight. By God's mercy, the local A.R.P. were soon on the spot, and extinguished the fire before the wooden ceiling had caught it. The fused metal of the bomb still remains embedded in the tiled window-sill as a relic of this experience.

Then, early in November 1945, there were anti-Jewish disturbances, when country Arabs suddenly looted Jewish shops and set a number of them on fire. This they did to two shops just underneath the Mission meeting-room. This fire, too, was quickly mastered through the speedy arrival of a Christian Officer in the Intelligence Corps, but the rafters of the shops were charred and gave way six months later,

leaving a big gap in the floor of the room above. Had this occurred when the shop rafters were on fire, the whole house, with its wooden ceilings, would soon have been ablaze.

Besides these repairs, we have been involved in the retiling of a large part of the central court, relaying of choked drains, bracing of walls weakened by bombardments, repairs of doors and windows, replacement of a bath and taps and electric light fittings sold by a previous part-owner after our departure in 1936, and complete redecoration at a time when paint is in short supply.

We would have been involved in a similar outlay in whatever premises we might have secured in war-scarred Tripoli, so that we may well be thankful that the present improvements are in a building so long hallowed by missionary service; and also that they are not for a merely rented building, as was the case in 1935 when the bath and other conveniences were installed, to be removed later by a rapacious landlord whose death during the war prevents our obtaining any compensation.

As the Medical Mission re-opens and strives to satisfy the crowds which have been waiting for it (the modern Hospital being one and a half miles from the old city), there will be problems of supplies which are limited by export quotas, and of staff; but again we raise our Ebenezer, being confident that the Lord Who has helped us hitherto, still has blessing for this physically and spiritually dry and thirsty land.

—FROM DR. J. A. LILEY.

## *Tangier during the Fast of Ramadhan*

It is good to meet old friends again after being away from Tangier!

My first outside visit was to a European girl married to a Moor. She poured her troubles into my ear. Ramadhan has begun, so although serving me with tea she dare not partake herself lest the woman in the kitchen should tell her husband, who would beat her, as he so often does for various small provocations.

I have been told, by many unhappy and divorced women among the out-patients in the Hospital, that "the men of to-day are not good at all." They speak of them as they might refer to some commodity on the market that has lost its pre-war standard!

A fire broke out the other day and demolished two little hut homes behind the Hospital. Someone had gone out and shut the door, leaving a lighted charcoal fire. A native man commented: "Just like the Moslems; they have no sense"! That is quite a common remark for them to make about their own people.

Yet Ramadhan is here, and still a large percentage are bound by the fear of breaking it. I heard to-day of a woman, harvesting, who collapsed—overcome by the heat; and yet she refused to drink water, and died. At the same time, we do hear of many who are drinking, and so breaking the Fast. Yet, should a so-called Moslem do this, he will incur less severe condemnation from his fellow-Moslems for yielding to the flesh, than would a native convert for serving the Lord. So it still is hard for the Moorish believers, and they do need our prayer support.

N. BOWKER.

## *Native Christians Wed*

SOME months ago we were delighted to learn from Dr. Farnham St. John that Abderrahman, the young gardener at Hope House, had given testimony to his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now comes the news—a truly happy sequel, surely—of his marriage with Femma, a Moorish Christian girl from Tetuan, whom our sisters, Miss Low and Miss Bradbury, have known for at least ten years, and whose mother and elder sister are already believers. Abderrahman, by the way, is a product of Mr. Elson's Home for native orphan lads, and he has been living on the Mission Compound for the past seven years, during which time he has been a faithful and regular helper in the native Church. To his credit be it said that he remained single because, for some years, there was no Christian girl available for him to marry. Abderrahman might never have known Femma had she not been brought from Tetuan to the Tulloch Memorial Hospital to convalesce after typhoid.

Although Moorish custom does not permit bride and bridegroom to see each other until the actual wedding day, Abderrahman was sufficiently emboldened by all that he learned from hearsay to approach Femma's father, who, once the wedding dowry was paid, made no objection to his daughter espousing a Christian, providing the "religious" ceremony at Tangier was preceded by a Moorish wedding in Tetuan "for the sake of the relatives."

The Tetuan part of the intricate formalities having been carried through, therefore, the bride and her mother in due course arrived at the Marshan Evangelical Church in Hope House grounds, the interior of which was gay with flowers. Above the platform was displayed in bold Arabic script, the text "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," as well as "Praise God" and "Happy Day."

Most regrettably we have not space for the wealth of descriptive detail furnished in the graphic accounts that have reached us from

both Tangier and Tetuan—the bride's dress and veil, the bridegroom's new European suit and white rose, and all the rest of it—but friends will like to know that instead of the ring ceremony, the bride and bridegroom were presented with an Arabic New Testament, which they were exhorted by the Rev. L. J. Bocking (who conducted the service) to read prayerfully every day.

Then followed a wonderful reception—in Mrs. Bocking's schoolroom—at which mint tea, honey cakes and native sweetmeats were served.



A Young Moorish Bride; not Femma

With great tact and wisdom Mr. and Mrs. Bocking invited the young couple to their home for supper, and games with Yvonne. Thus the ice was broken, and the two young people, hitherto strangers to one another, were put at their ease.

The latest news is that Abderrahman and Femma have settled down happily in their new home—two rooms adjoining Mrs. Bocking's schoolroom. Most earnestly do the Tangier and Tetuan Missionaries covet our prayers that these dear young people may grow in grace, and be preserved amidst the many temptations and testings that are bound to await them in a land where the native Christian home is one of the devil's special targets.

## Finance

WHILST, as our readers will know, we seldom refer to financial matters in these Notes, there are times when we feel it right to take our friends into our confidence. During the war years our Heavenly Father never once permitted us, amidst many burdens, to experience a moment's anxiety regarding temporal supplies. To His praise we bear our glad testimony that every need was wonderfully and promptly met.

But just now, in His loving wisdom, He is allowing our faith to be tested. The past year has been one of exceptional expenditure. Necessarily so, for a record number of our workers have been travelling to and from the Field—some to resume their missionary labours after an enforced sojourn in the Homeland; others coming home on furlough in urgent need of thorough rest and renewal. The heavy cost of passages, and other expenses of an exceptional character, have completely emptied our exchequer.

We welcome, therefore, your prayerful remembrance of our needs at this time—particularly that we may glorify our faithful GOD by a child-like trustfulness during days of testing.

## News from the Field Tangier, Morocco.

IN a circular received earlier in the year Mrs. **L. J. Bocking** wrote:—"Tangier being such a cosmopolitan place, languages are a great asset, English, French, Spanish and Arabic being almost essential, so I felt English would be an attraction to those who were really desirous of educating their girls. Two upstairs rooms have been devoted to school use, one as a play-room and the other more as a classroom with tables and chairs and a beading round the room to hang pictures. We had the tables and chairs made by a Spaniard after the style of those in an English school. The children were thrilled with the school furniture, and one little girl cried because she could not take her chair home with her. The class-room looks very bright and cheerful with an array of pictures, including the nursery rhymes as they learn them.

School was opened on January 4th with five children, and we now number twenty-five. They come with great regularity, which makes it possible to do something really worth while with them. In the mornings we begin with Scripture. At first one or two seemed to resent listening to the message and joining in the hymns, but now all that seems to have gone and interest is aroused. So far, I have been concentrating on English, teaching it chiefly through song and picture. Nursery rhymes, ditties and jingles are very popular with the children. Some "Child Education" pictures which were given me have been exceedingly useful in teaching vocabulary and phrases.

The children are between the ages of three and eleven. The over six-years-old children do hand-work (sewing, knitting, lace work, raffia and embroidery.) They are all fond of colouring with crayons, or drawing on blackboards with chalks.

The under six-years play with the toys we collected in England, and it is encouraging to see the care they are taking with everything. Neither has there been any sign so far of thieving in the school, which is rather unusual amongst Arab children! Drill and games are their favourite lessons, and it is interesting to note the progress they make in "playing the game." Quite a number of the children come from good Moorish homes. Six of them are from two Christian families on the compound. I am sure you would agree that all these children are as lovable and interesting as those at home. Perhaps some of you may be able to come out one day and see them for yourselves!"

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To the above the **Rev. L. J. Bocking** adds:—"As you see, my wife has taken the lion's share of the letter, but no doubt this is quite as it should be. My side of the work is very varied. It ranges from such things as making crutches for a poor crippled woman to the more delicate matter of establishing a Church! We are now known as "The Marshan Evangelical Church," the "Marshan" being just the local name for the particular part of Tangier in which we live. The Church is composed of three congregations—English, Spanish and Moorish, each having their separate gatherings because of the difference of language. We meet occasionally all together for united prayer and communion. Our present Church building is old and mostly constructed of wood. We hope the time will soon come when we can rebuild, but at present materials are at exorbitant prices.

Most days I am in the Hospital reading and preaching to the patients. One makes interesting contacts, and there is little outward opposition to the Gospel message.

As no doubt you know, we are now enjoying an international regime here in Tangier. It is an interesting experiment, to say the least of it, and, as far as one is able to judge, most folk greatly prefer it to being under Spanish control. As British subjects we enjoy certain privileges which would not be possible elsewhere."

## Nabeul, Tunisia.

FROM **Miss A. Clack** and **Miss M. Jones** comes the following:—"We have been having some good times with our girls on Fridays in a series of stories on the Life of Joseph. The girls love it. 'Oum-el-Khir' had to go into the country the other Friday to pick mulberries, and therefore could not get to the Class for the work, but came hurrying in late with a huge load of berries, and all bathed in perspiration. She hustled off her haik, and took her place on the mat, asking in a stage whisper, 'Has she told the story yet?' Happily, young Rathia was able to whisper back, 'She's just about to begin.' It is most unusual for them to come for the Bible half of the Class if they miss the earlier work-session.

"This same girl has an awful drunkard for a father, and so often she gets a beating for no reason. The father forbade her to come to the Class again, and threatened her; so she said, very pathetically, 'Never mind the work, so long as I can hear the Bible stories.'

"We do covet these girls for the Lord Jesus."