

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA"

The N.A.M. News Letter

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Photo by]

A BEDOUIN WOMAN OF TUNISIA.

[E.J.L.]

It is of interest to note that, among the natives of North Africa, there are three distinct customs with regard to the veiling of the face. In the towns, the Moslem woman veils her face in public; in the country, among the Bedouins, the woman's face is unveiled; whilst, in the Sahara, among the war-like Touaregs, it is the men-folk who wear the face-veil. The Bedouin woman (one of whom is pictured above) is graceful in carriage and picturesque in dress. It is she who fetches the water from the well, digs up the grass to be dried for fuel, and grinds the corn for the daily bread. When the Bedouin encampment "strikes tent," and travels in the long-strung-out caravan, with its camels and donkeys, its flocks and its herds, one notices that it is the man who rides, and the woman who trudges along the dusty highway—often heavily laden. In their itinerating excursions, our missionaries find many opportunities of preaching the Gospel to these folk.

Page one

Gospel Broadcasts from Tangier

SUNDAY, February 23rd, 1947, was a memorable day in N.A.M. history. It marked the inauguration of weekly Gospel Broadcasts in Arabic from the International Radio Station at Tangier, which has an effective radius of some 500 miles.

After the first two broadcasts (when Mr. Bocking was the speaker, and our missionaries reported "quite good reception from Settat, Rabat and Alcazar"), there was some reaction in the local Moslem press; and Mr. Bocking writes: "An article appeared in one of the Arabic newspapers, written in a nasty, intolerant spirit, and ending with a threat to stop the broadcast by force if we continued it. They also made some reference to the Mission Hospital, and to the way we keep the poor sick people there and make them listen to our lying fables. On the other hand, we hear of a certain interest shown, and of different ones listening-in. One young Moor has written for a copy of the Gospel."

Remembering how greatly blessed of GOD were the pre-war broadcasts in French from the Tunis Radio Station (a venture in which Mrs. Stanley Miles and Monsieur Paul Verdier participated), we are sure that friends will be much in prayer that this new avenue of approach to the Moslem heart may long be kept open, and signally used of the Holy Spirit as a channel of saving grace.

Busy Days at Tripoli

"SINCE reopening the Dispensary both the numbers and the needs of the people (mostly Jews) have overwhelmed us, and we have not been open a whole month yet! We have been compelled to limit the numbers each morning, and cut one day out altogether, leaving four mornings out of seven for the people to come. Even so, with our many other calls, we are finding life too full and exhausting, and personally, I cannot keep up at the rate of the past three weeks. . . . (See also Prayer Notes.)

"We feel we have our duty to our fellow-British while they are here, which very happily absorbs our time and strength on Saturday afternoons and three evenings a week, and worshipping with them in the Tripoli Parish Church on Sunday mornings. We also have our duty to the little Italian flock, several of whom seek our aid and advice in their problems."

Mrs. J. A. Liley, Tripoli.

An Eclipse of the Moon— and Spiritual Darkness

"It is hard to realise, as one goes about the streets of this charming little town, with all the marks of civilisation and education, that there should be such superstition and darkness. But we had an illustration recently that proved to us that the people are at heart not so very far removed from their neighbours in Central Africa in their grass huts! It was a Sunday evening when suddenly we heard a noise like jingling bells. We went outside to see what was happening. From all around came the sound made by the women banging their brass pestles against their brass mortars. Then we looked at the sky. There was an almost total eclipse of the moon. The natives were afraid that it was going to fall to the earth, and so were seeking to drive away the evil spirits. This fear of evil spirits is most manifest at times of birth, marriage and death. When visiting houses at such times, there is a darkness which can be felt, and a real opposition to the Gospel. Many queer things are practised, which as yet we do not fully understand. It is considered unlucky to talk about them."

**Mr. and Mrs. Norman Pearce,
Cherchell, Algeria.**

" . . . After Many Days "

"THE other morning a car suddenly pulled up before the Depot. A gentleman came in with a smile and a very happy manner. He asked for two Bibles, one for himself, as he said his present one was a bit worn, and the other he wanted to give to a friend, but it had to be in large print as he was shortsighted. I told him I should have to order the second one; and when he paid for the first, putting it very carefully in his pocket, I said, 'You seem to be in the habit of reading the Word of God.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I do so every day.' I then asked him, 'Since when have you read that Book?' and he replied, 'Oh, I began to be interested in it ever since I stopped one day and bought a New Testament from an English lady* at a Kiosk in Sfax.'

"The question simply is: Why is it, that with such frequent evidence of the Good Seed bearing fruit, we have not a strong witnessing church in North Africa?"

Mr. R. Stanley Miles, Tunis.

[*The "English lady" was Mrs. F. M. Webb, who left Sfax fully thirteen years ago!—Ed.]



MR. AND MRS. F. EWING AND FAMILY.

This happy snapshot of Mr. and Mrs. Ewing and their four daughters was taken in July of last year. Little Josephine, who was recently called Home, is seen standing immediately in front of her Mother. Will you remember Mr. and Mrs. Ewing in your prayers, as, in the near future, they bid farewell to their elder girl, Evelyn, and return with the two youngest children to Algeria?

In Southern Morocco

"WHEN I wrote to you three months ago, I had just arrived, and everything seemed very different from the Hospital routine in Tangier. Now I feel part of the family and thoroughly at home on this compound. Seven families live here, some work on the place, some go to neighbouring farms. We are fifteen miles out of Marrakesh in the country, and one or two French farmers are our nearest European neighbours. Villages of little mud houses, surrounded by cactus hedges, are scattered over the plain, from which people come to the dispensary and children to the school . . .

"These country folk live very simply, ploughing and sowing, grinding their own corn, baking their own bread, the women gathering sticks and brambles for their cooking, the children shepherding the cows and sheep and goats. Bricks for building their little houses are made from the earth mixed with straw, shaped and baked in the sun just as in Moses' days. We are so often reminded of Bible times in the daily scenes we see about us, and I could write pages like this, but I wanted you to picture the kind of people who need your prayers. Hearts are desperately wicked, superstition abounds, and the Moslem creed holds no hope for the hungry soul.

"They come to the dispensary from as far away as the mountains, and they hear the Gospel, often many times, as they return for treatment week by week. As of old, the Good News falls on to various types of ground—some hard, some good; but the Lord is calling out from amongst them, and there are a number of Christians in these villages. If only there was religious freedom, instead of persecution, when Christ is confessed!

**Miss Dorcas Henman, Gueliz,
Marrakesh, Morocco.**

Unusual Days

YESTERDAY, January 24th, was one of my unusual days! I had planned to visit the market at A.H., a regular and a usual happening with me, but, somehow, things did not work out according to plan! Owing to the fact that I still have only two tyres for the Mission car, and the more troublesome fact that the list of names on the super-priority list seems to be so long that those who are simply on the priority list never get a look in, I again had to rely on getting a lift on some lorry going up to the forest for timber. I was taken to a certain junction about five miles from the market, and left in the middle of nowhere—not a house to be seen.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, first of all along a short stretch of the main road going East, then down, down, down, jumping from stone to stone, from boulder to boulder, crossing roaring torrents also from boulder to boulder, with the chance of a slip into some boiling pot-hole, right away to the market which is situated at the bottom of a deep ravine. Above the market place is a tremendous block of discoloured stone, from which rushes very hot sulphurous water—a great remedy for the many skin diseases of this land, and, between ourselves, of great use in providing the only hot bath many of our people take in the course of a year. I often said that my ex-house boy, Said, in spite of all the superficial washings we did manage to impose on him, always came back from his "annual" several shades of brown lighter than when he left on this important pilgrimage! I was not surprised to hear from one of my fellow-marketers, to whom I mentioned that the authorities had a plan for building an up-to-date bathing establishment, where a charge for admission would be made, that God would certainly stop the flow of water if any man touched or improved on His work.

Round and round and round the market I tramped, and supplied books (mostly Scriptures) to readers, some of whom had to be persuaded to buy, others that they were free to leave the books in my bag for the next man, and some small boys that big books were for grown-ups or for good readers (to avoid waste, etc.). Odd men were to be found, even, whose thought in buying a well-bound book was to have a cheap note-case! They are disposed of by doubling the price of the book, with a 50 per cent. reduction if they can read. It is evident that our methods are not "orthodox," but neither are the people we have to deal with!!

Up, and up, and up, back to the spot where I expected to find a lorry returning from the forest to Azazza. The one I had counted on did not arrive. Matters were serious, for, in addition to about four hours of rough tracks already to my credit, I was faced with at least four more hours of tramping back to my base. With a fellow-traveller for Azazza I set off towards home and supper. We found a lorry after about two

miles of walking, and imagined our case was good. Alas, after less than a mile of running, the lorry broke down completely, and we were, in duty bound, obliged to push it until it was on a downward slope. A further couple of miles, and we came to a final stop—the lorry's destination. It again became a case of tramp, tramp, tramp until the tempo became crawl, crawl, crawl (not Daniel's crawl!). My new-found friend declared his knees would refuse to move again if he stopped, and he groaned considerably during the last miles. Training counts every time!

Enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ is a painful discipline, but it is a joy the next day, even if not immediately.

Mr. S. Arthur, Azazga, Algeria.

Fez—Ancient and Modern

(Part I)

THE City of Fez has also been most aptly named "Ancient and Mysterious"; but perhaps under the heading of "Ancient and Modern" one might be able to give a small idea of the contrasts that exist here today.

Ancient it certainly is. It was built in the ninth century, but the city as it is today dates from the thirteenth century. Its strong ramparts show signs of great age, as do the one hundred gates that lead into the city. In the Medina itself no wheeled traffic is allowed. Do not imagine that this leaves everything that is to be desired for the pedestrian. "**Balek!**" ("look out!") coming from the lips of donkey or mule drivers, is the most well-used word in the streets of Fez. Donkeys always seem to have the priority. If you do not move of your own free will, the donkey will move you; for neither he nor his driver will consider you in the least.

The little native shops are, for the most part, the same as they have been down the centuries. You may still see the potter sitting at his wheel, the pots drying in the sun ere they are baked in the kiln. The Street of the Metal Workers is still the noisiest part of the town, with its continual din as hammers are plied upon brass and copper and silver. The women spin their wool and cotton with the old-fashioned "distaff," and the weavers ply the heavy old looms at which their ancestors wrought.

In contrast to all this, we have the electric flour mill, where the folk take their seven or eight pounds of wheat to be ground; the up-to-date electrical shop, with its stoves and irons and all necessary lighting apparatus; the new shops with glass windows, so that the goods are no longer exposed to the atmosphere, and all that it contains! These are not yet the general rule, but their number is increasing.

(To be continued)

Miss Grace Lincoln, Fez, Morocco.

News in Brief*

FRIENDS will be grieved to learn that two of our missionaries, **Miss E. Low**, of Tetuan, and **Miss G. Sharpe**, of Rabat, have suffered bereavement in the loss of their Mothers.

Mr. Charles Cook, of Menaa, has been very ill indeed, cerebral trouble arising from a war injury having involved a double trepanning operation. Our brother suffered excruciating pain during many sleepless days and nights. There was a resulting paralysis of the right arm and leg; and just as Mr. Cook was regaining the use of his limbs, he had to return to bed with an attack of malaria. This has been a time of severe strain for **Mrs. Cook**, too, and we know that our friends will be very grateful for your remembrance in prayer.

Miss G. W. Theakston has been summoned home through the serious illness of her Father. **Miss I. Dew** is back in this country to undergo an operation. **Miss W. Drury** has returned to Tangier after convalescing in the Homeland. **Miss M. Hutchinson's** knee trouble has responded to treatment, and she is proceeding to Paris for six months to study French.

Dr. F. St. John, after two years of valiant service at the Tulloch Memorial Hospital, is home for a brief "break"—working harder than ever at a special professional course. We have a very warm appreciation of all that our brother has meant to the missionary cause at Tangier during the absence—on extended furlough—of **Dr. G. W. F. Anderson**.

Miss Elsie Fraser deserves a special decoration for her gallant devotion to the deputation side of things during a winter of record severity. When treacherous or snowbound roads deprived her of the use of her car, she made every endeavour to fulfil her engagements by availing herself of other means of transport; and this involved considerable strain, we know, for the film-projector is a heavy item of luggage. We deeply value our sister's eloquent advocacy of North Africa's spiritual need, and are gratified—though not surprised—at the many and encouraging reports that reach us concerning her ministry.

Mrs. A. Ross and Miss M. Ross have returned to Algiers, and will be grateful for our prayers as they take up afresh their witness to Christ in that great city. Our friends of the Algiers Mission Band have kindly placed a room or two at their disposal at Dar Naama, El Biar.

* Compiled March 31st.