

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA"

# The N.A.M. News Letter



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## Street Scene in "Self-Governed" Libya

The Central Square in the "Italian Town", Tripoli, where all the main roads converge.

Libya's 679,358 square miles are largely desert and thinly populated. Of its roughly one million inhabitants about 800,000 are Moslems, and, until the recent "exodus", there were some 30,000 Jews. That part of Libya called Cyrenaica, and adjoining Egypt, was probably the first part of Africa ever to be evangelised. The western area, lying towards Tunisia, is known as Tripolitania. To the south is the Sahara-fringed "Fezzan" region. In January last Libya entered upon its new era of self-government ; and friends will be glad to know that those in authority look with favour upon the N.A.M.'s "Tripoli Medical Mission", and are willing that the medical missionary staff should be further reinforced.

## Disturbances in Tunisia

One of our chief preoccupations in mid-January was the welfare of our missionaries in Tunisia. The first news that reached us came from Kairouan "the Holy"; and the Rev. Bob Brown's letter, written on January 24th, well reveals the splendid spirit of our workers there: ". . . . We are still 'confined to barracks,' and have been for the past week . . . . On Friday afternoon we opened the Bureau Evangélique, and thus for the first time for nearly twenty years Islam was really challenged in Kairouan. We could not have chosen a better day, for, just as we opened, everything else closed up because of the riots. Our shop was mobbed, and when, as a measure of prudence, we closed the door, stones rained against it; so we cautiously opened it again, and the stoning stopped.

"Next day, when Don Rickards was holding the fort alone, Scriptures were taken, torn up, and burned. In the afternoon I had the joy of preaching to a shopful of fanatics. We sold in two days about thirty Gospels and a hundred portions. One young student has been regularly to the house, and has sat up till two thirty in the morning reading the Gospel. In a word, we have suddenly become known all over the town . . . About fourteen shops have been sacked . . . This afternoon Ethel (Mrs. Brown) and Jenny (Miss Wilberforce) decided to venture out of doors, but were caught in an 'incident,' and were only able to regain the house after some delay . . . ."

It is not without significance that the month of January, which saw Libya's return to self-government, also witnessed the destructive violence of Cairo and the rioting in Tunisia, as the extremists among Libya's Eastern and Western neighbours, in a surge of lawlessness, gave evidence of their hostile purpose. We live in a day of grim happenings and fast-deteriorating international situations. So far as the evangelisation of North Africa is concerned our duty is clear: nothing less than intense, focused prayer and redoubled effort will match the need of the hour.

### "Our Dear Aisha"

"A corn of wheat . . . . abideth by itself alone." (John xii, 24, R.V.). Her "*aleness*" began about twenty years ago when her mother, Miriam, a bright, baptised believer, was called to the Lord. "*Aleness*" marked her own Homecall from her room on December 30th, found just "gone", to the consternation of those neighbours who lived in her little house. How she loved her friends of the old days, among

whom she named, on that last occasion that she was in our home (Christmas evening), Miss Reid, Mrs. Webb and Miss Venables. Of these, Miss Reid's so well-remembered father was the last to leave Tripoli. The new arrivals on the station, my husband and myself, quickly grew to love Aisha and know her worth. But we were expelled in 1936, and then followed for Aisha nine years of "*aleness*" so far as Christian fellowship was concerned. Oh, the mutual joy of our reunion at the end of 1945!

Aisha was extraordinary among her own people in that she never married, yet lived a morally-blameless life. And what a full, unselfish life it was! She was a veritable "Dorcas" with her needle and sewing machine, whether for busy missionaries or for a neighbour's children. She visited the sick in hospital, often herself taking them and bringing them home. She was a clever midwife, an art learned from her mother and her English friends.

But was she true "wheat"? She was never baptised, and, so far as is known, did not break the yearly Fast, though unconcerned with the Feasts. Let her speak for herself. "When nearly everybody was evacuated from Tripoli," (in 1940) "because of bombardment by sea and by air, I chose to stay behind, even *alone*, in my own home. I knew God would take care of me, and He did." "Oh, yes, the Lord Jesus did die, and rose from the dead, and went up again to Heaven"—thus she quietly and modestly contradicted a male Moslem member of her household.

"But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Let us pray, believe, and look for, this "much fruit" here in Tripoli! Then it will not have been sung in vain at her graveside: "When the body dies, and, earth in earth, all that is mortal lies" . . . . "Jesus Triumphant!"

—From Mrs. J. A. Liley

## The First Six Months in Gabes

We have been on our new station just six months, so you will be looking for news about things here. Well, the Lord has been answering prayer about homes opening to us, and we surely are glad. The womenfolk and children ran like scared rabbits at first whenever we spoke to them. This made us feel bad. We were used to a whole townful of friendly people who trusted us! But, bit by bit, we have noticed a change, and now receive really cordial salaams in many directions. The Moslem clerks at the Post Office, the sentries on duty in front of the Commandant's house, nearly all of our neighbours, especially the children, our grocers and other

shopkeepers, exchange greetings daily and pause for a chat quite often.

We have a welcome whenever we call at the home of T ——, our former waiter where we ate on arriving here. There are always several neighbours present, as well as the family of about ten, and they like to have the hymns read to them and hear a Bible story. Our tunes are so strange to them that they usually go off into convulsions whenever we lead off! So we *read* the hymns until we can break them into singing in a major instead of the minor key. We really enjoy our visits to S ——'s home, where they listen, their black faces intent on the words. Ada has always longed to evangelise coloured folk, so now she has her wish, as this is a negro family. An old man at the Post Office is reading the Gospels in Arabic. He will get Luke now, with the request that he read the Christmas story. This is his third Gospel and he says they make good reading, which is all he *will* say, but he always asks for more. Pray for him, please. We are giving Daily Reading calendars to several French families, some of whom are Catholics and some Protestants who have yet to really know Christ as Saviour. There are other contacts we have made, too numerous to mention, so praise the Lord for real encouragement! We didn't know how to begin here, but He is showing us day by day. We are happy about the way things are opening up, but we need suitable quarters where we can have classes for those swarms of children of our neighbours—once they realise we are here to help them. A place on the ground floor, with a garage (which could be used for classes and the car) and with a garden, is what is badly needed. Will you please pray about our finding such a place at a reasonable rent?

—From the Misses Mabel Jones and  
Ada Clack, Gabes, Tunisia.

## Among European Children in Tunis

I wish you could have peeped into my dining room, which is also my Sunday School Class room, yesterday afternoon, and seen the crowd of about a dozen children, aged 8-10 years, grouped around the table listening eagerly to the story of Zacchaeus. "An open heart," I said: "Zacchaeus came down and received Him. Will you say, 'Come into my heart, Lord Jesus'?" Then an open home. What happiness Jesus brought that little man that day!" Here I was interrupted by three of the children. One said: "Yes, and I opened my heart to the Lord Jesus at the Camp last summer." Another said: "I gave *my* heart to Jesus when I was ill, just before Christmas. I asked Him to heal me and

He did." The third, a Jewish child, said: "And I, too, have let Jesus come into my heart and He has made me happy."

Their shining eyes and happy faces, the love-light in their countenances, attested the truth of their statements. It was a happy moment for me. "Bless the Lord, oh my soul!" Such experiences make financial difficulties fade into the background. What do those things matter beside the joy of leading souls to Christ?

At another children's class which I hold in one of the homes I had been teaching Isaiah 53, verse 6—"All we like sheep have gone astray . . . and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." To the question "Who is that 'Him'?" I got the right answer at once—"The Lord Jesus." But when I asked "*Where* did God lay all our iniquity on Jesus?" there was silence. Then one said "In Heaven"; another said "At Jerusalem"; but the naughty boy of the class said "On the Cross." I don't know whether his own constant need of pardon had sharpened his intelligence. I rather think the Holy Spirit has begun to work in his heart. But, praise God, he knows the fount where sins are washed away, and the joy it gives the teacher no tongue can tell.

—From Miss K. M. E. Gotelee.

## How the work grows at Ouezzane

The people come regularly for medicines each morning. They gave me a real welcome back, asking why I had been so long away. I have had some shelves and benches made, and these give the Dispensary a much less primitive look and certainly make the work more convenient for me. It was encouraging the other morning when, beginning work, I asked who would like to hear God's Word first. One woman replied: "Oh! we come early on purpose to hear." Another morning, on the other hand, two young girls sitting together were heard to remark: "Oh! it's just all lies." None the less, I can truthfully say that there are many whose hearts are speaking through their eyes as they listen to the message of God's love in our Saviour Jesus Christ, and, seeing the longing, one remembers the promise, "The hungry shall be satisfied." Please remember to pray every morning at 9 a.m. for the listeners and the speaker in this far-off corner.

The Tuesday class continues. The gathering in of the olive harvest has prevented some from coming recently, but again we remind ourselves that the promise is the same for the ones and twos. Then Friday afternoons are set aside for one or two girls who come for reading and knitting—the beginning, I trust, of a bigger work

when more help is forthcoming. We have a gospel picture and talk between the reading and knitting. One of the girls we were teaching to read has now married and is living out in a country district. I hope to visit her soon.

H—, who has been helping in the house this past eight months, has had to leave to go home and look after her brother's family. We were very sorry to lose her, especially as she seemed to be really liking and understanding the Word at prayers each morning. She is coming on Tuesdays, she says, so pray on for her that she may believe unto Salvation.

—From *Miss Dorcas M. Henman.*

## The Gospel Dispensary at Settat

I am very happy to be on the Field again and to be at Settat. I still continue to study, this time colloquial Arabic. I am longing for the day when I shall be able to speak fluently and to help in the work which Miss Buxton and Miss Reed have carried on so faithfully throughout the years. Generally, more than two hundred women are touched each week with the Gospel message through the Dispensary; some are very bigoted and do not like to listen, but there is no medicine until they do first listen. On the other hand, there are encouragements, and we want you to pray with us that the Lord will bring along those whom He can bless and who will be ready to receive His Salvation.

Each Friday (the French School's holiday) the small children have their sewing and meeting in the morning and the big girls have theirs in the afternoon. I wish you could peep in at one of these meetings. The children have been taught numerous portions of the Word of God, which they repeat by heart. This has greatly impressed me. The good Seed is within their hearts and we pray that it may bring conviction of sin and lead them to faith in Christ, the only Saviour. The older girls specially need prayer; it is evident that they know the way, but require courage to take their stand on the Lord's side. Let us not minimise the cost entailed in this, but the Lord can give grace and is able to strengthen with all might, according to His glorious power, those who trust Him. Let us pray that these girls may be touched by the Spirit of God and put their trust in Christ. We would like you to remember in prayer the personal contacts, too—some very interesting ones—and also the visiting.

—From *Miss Mary A. Huntington*

## Among North Africans in France

Continuing my visits to the mining and industrial districts of France, where at least

300,000 North Africans are now working, I crossed the Mediterranean three times in each direction, spending several weeks each time in visiting native quarters or canteens, churches or individuals interested in our evangelistic effort, or in café-to-café colportage.

Results are not yet ready for tabulation. It can be said, however, that there are churches and halls where the leaders have had a vision of what must be done; there are others who have been glad to have an initiation into some of the methods of approach and contact to be used in work amongst North Africans; others, again, are still hesitant and not yet ready.

Christian natives of North Africa were also visited. On the whole, they do not seem to have fitted into church life as it is lived in France. They seem to be more attracted by the Salvation Army, with its lively layout and its lack of liturgy! There is a job to be done here by some ex-North African with a gift for leadership.

Battles have been waged in more quarters than one—a wine glass flung at one's head was a clear intimation that the preaching was reaching some tender spot, and a meeting with industrial leaders which lasted until 1 a.m. was an indication that the preacher was as stubborn as his audience!

A worth-while job, in my judgment, but a job not yet finished!

Amongst our plans can be placed the production of a tri-lingual Gospel newspaper (French, Kabyle, Arabic) and the preparation of records containing the Life of Christ set to verse and chanted, in Arabic, in the orthodox native fashion. We await clearer indications as to details, and, perhaps, a fuller provision financially for the capital layout.

—From *Mr. S. Arthur*

## Grateful Acknowledgment

Mrs. P. Padilla, of Hope House, Tangier, desires to thank most gratefully the unknown friend at Worthing who sent "a lovely parcel of toys and wee garments" for distribution among the children attending the Spanish meetings.

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**The Council of the N.A.M. greatly regrets that the present financial stringency does not permit of the setting aside of funds for missionaries' furlough passages this year. It is the Council's hope and prayer, however, that the situation will improve; and your fellowship in intercession is welcomed with this in view.**