

The N.A.M. News Letter

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Photo by]

“SFINGES”

[Mr. E. J. Long

“SFINGES” rhymes with “hinges” : so much for the pronunciation of the word. And what is a sfinge? Well, in Tunisia it is a “fateera,” “sfinge” being the Moroccan and Algerian name for this delectable native fritter. How is it made and cooked? First of all, flour is mixed with water until the mixture is of a consistency mid-way betwixt dough and

batter ; and then it is kneaded and punched for an unconscionable time to produce aeration without the assistance of yeast or leaven.

Meanwhile, a fire of dried palm-fronds is kindled beneath a shallow copper pan containing olive oil ; and behind this utensil the genial purveyor of sfinges takes up his station, cross-legged, in true Oriental fashion.

Note: “Sfinge” and “Sponge” are possibly of similar derivation. We speak of “sponge-cake,” and the sfinge has a sponge-like texture.

Page one

The speed and dexterity with which the sfinges are evolved baffles description. A piece of dough batter is nipped off from the parent mass, whirled around with deft fingers, and dropped—perfectly ring-shaped—into the seething oil, where it cooks rapidly to a golden brown. Washed down with copious draughts of Moroccan mint tea (less strong than its Tunisian counterpart!) hot sfinges are a delicious repast.

But why *ring-shaped*? Well, in a country where there is a dearth of paper in which to parcel up the purchase, it is very convenient to be able to carry away a dozen or so sfinges strunged up on a length of fibrous esparto grass!

impressed by it that he speaks of it as a "resurrection of the Berber Church." Of the Conference held at Meknes, in Morocco, we may give some fuller detail.

The Meknes Conference

THE gathering of native Christians in this Moroccan centre is not a new institution. It has been held annually for some years now, being convened by the Gospel Missionary Union, but with representatives of other societies taking part. On the recent occasion one of our lady workers, Miss Lilian Evans, was amongst those present, and she forwarded to headquarters an account of the impressions which the gatherings left upon



Photo by]

NEITHER CAMOUFLAGE NOR WAR-PAINT!

[Mr. E. J. Long

In the scene depicted above, the extraordinary patterned effect is due to the fact that the street is covered over with a lattice-work of bamboo, the shadow of which is cast upon the roadway below. The white robes of the natives, striding amidst the shadows, present to the onlooker a bewildering and ever-changing pattern of bars and stripes and checks, which nothing short of a ciné film could possibly reproduce effectively.

Conferences for Native Christians

During the present year two Conferences for native Christians (formerly Moslems) were held in Algeria and Morocco respectively, and were of a peculiarly encouraging character. As an account of the former will appear in the October-December issue of "North Africa" from the pen of Mr. Th. Hocart, we do not propose to refer to it now, further than to say that it was an Easter gathering, held at the Mission-station of M. and Mme. Rolland, Tizi-Ouzou, and that Mr. Hocart was so

her mind. She tells us that the theme for general consideration was the Holy Spirit in His regenerating, renewing, and filling power; and that as these subjects were dealt with there was an ever-deepening sense of the divine presence. There was at first a certain excitement, natural when a number of native Christians, normally separated from each other, and living in spiritual isolation, find themselves part of a large company housed under one roof, but this soon gave place to a spirit of serious waiting upon God in prayer and attention to the teaching of His Word. Nor was this spiritual atmosphere felt at the meetings

only; at meal times and in more social intercourse the fellowship of these Moroccan brethren and sisters in Christ was real and sacred.

An Increasing Attendance

WE learn, too, that the numbers attending the Meknes Conference have so steadily increased that at that which was recently held the capacity of the Mission House was taxed to its utmost. "It was especially good" Miss Evans writes "to see such a number of young men present, for these are our hope for the future, while the sight of so many Moroccan women rejoicing in 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' was profoundly encouraging. Who can understand what it means to missionaries, who, after years of seemingly fruitless toil, now see these souls rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free?"

The Testimony of Native Christians

THE Saturday evening Testimony Meeting appears to be the great feature of these gatherings. At first the testimonies are somewhat faltering and shyly given, but by degrees there comes a more assured and certain note: "We know . . . we are persuaded." Some tell of their conversion, and of their subsequent experiences: others bear witness to a new joy in the Lord as they learn from the exposition of Scripture, at the meetings, given in the power of the Holy Spirit, that they can be conquerors over sin, as they yield themselves fully to the Lord Jesus. One of the men in particular had been almost ready to give up his Christian profession, but related how that he had received a new vision of the "Captain of his Salvation" through whom he could receive strength and victory for the future.

"The Women Also"

OF the twenty who took part in the testimony meetings eight were women, and their testimonies, we are told, were given with a holy boldness, accompanied by "a meek and quiet spirit"—an ornament of great price, as the Apostle Peter tells us—

JOHN 3,16:

لِأَنَّهُ هَكَذَا أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ الْعَالَمَ
عَتَّى بَطَلَ إِلَيْهِ الرَّجِيحُ لِكَيْ
لَا يَهْلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ
بَلْ تَكُونُ لَهُ الْحَيَاةُ الْآبَدِيَّةَ

I TIM. 1, 15:

صَادِقَةٌ هِيَ الْكَلِمَةُ وَمَسْتَحَقَّةٌ كَلَّ
فَبُولِئِ الْمَسِيحِ جَاءَ إِلَى الْعَالَمِ
لِيُخَلِّصَ الْخَطِيئَةَ الْخَبِيرَةَ وَأَوْلَهُمْ أَنَا

THE LANGUAGE WHICH MOST OF OUR MISSIONARIES MUST LEARN

Does it look easy?

The above is a good specimen of neat Arabic script, and is the kind of writing employed in the preparation of colloquial Gospels in North Africa: for although Arabic can be printed from metal type, the product lacks character and preciousness when compared with the reproduced manuscript that preserves the individuality of the writer.

Not only are the elements of the Arabic alphabet quite diverse from our own letters, but many of them have three distinct forms: initial, medial and terminal, according as they are found at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a word. The beginner in Arabic has not only to memorise these many characters, but he has to accustom himself to writing them, in word form, from right to left. After years of practice the missionary acquires a style—as in English handwriting—that is peculiarly his own.

as they told what the Lord had done for them. It is to be regretted that space does not permit of their testimonies being given in detail, "for each" Miss Evans tells us "was an inspiration." The whole conference was a time of uplift, both to workers and converts, and will live long in their memories. "But," Miss Evans continues, "we are looking to the Lord to do much more than this. We have heard 'a sound

of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.' The Lord is working in this needy land of Morocco. We believe that His command to us at this time is 'Bestir thyself, for the Lord is gone out before thee'—and it is a challenge to us to pray as we have never done before."

ZABOUR 23.

Ameksa lali.

- 1 ZABOUR n'Daoud.
Rebbi ð-ameksa inou, our iyi-itskhouçou ara.
- 2 Idjadja-yi ađ-stháfouf ðeg iğoudalen irârân,
Itsaoui-yi fer ouaman iersen.
- 3 Isedjehed tharouikhth iou,
Itsaoui-yi ðeg iberðan l'lhaq ref dema g'isem is.
- 4 Oula mer elkouf g'ifzer tili elmouth,
Our tsaggouađer ara lliif imi thtsilidh yid i ;
D'-aâkouaz ik tiisaouth iyi-itcebbiren.
- 5 Thtseheggidh tabla ezzath i laqbal g'eádaouen iou.
Thðehenedh aqerrouie iou s'ezzith, inefel lkas iou.
- 6 S'thidets lkher ð-errakma ađ-tseddoun yid i oussan aok tou-
ðerth iou.
Ađ-ezðerer ðeg oukham r'Rebbi daim.

THE PSALM THAT WE KNOW BEST

Although the missionary to Kabyles has no need to master the intricacies of the Arabic alphabet, it will be seen at a glance that, in pronunciation at all events, the Kabyle tongue is no whit easier than the Arabic! The above extract is from the Psalms, translated (with the greater part of the Old Testament) by Monsieur E. Cuendet.

Barbary Dialects

THE present sphere of the North Africa Mission comprises the countries Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia; and the 16,000,000 Moslems of these "Barbary States" do not speak a common tongue. Whilst cultured Mohammedans throughout North Africa could, with equal facility, read the Bible in literary Arabic, the colloquial dialects of the various countries (the vernacular of home and market-place) differ considerably from the literary, and are sometimes widely divergent the one from the other. In order, therefore, that the Word of God might be grafted upon the hearts of these native peoples, it has been necessary to make translations into the following dialects: Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan colloquial; Kabyle (spoken by the Berbers of the

Algerian "highlands"); Chaouia (another Algerian dialect); and Shilha Berberi (spoken in parts of Morocco).

Notable Translators

OUR veteran worker Monsieur E. Cuendet (now retired) completed a monumental task in his splendid translation of the New Testament, and the bulk of the Old, into Kabyle. Mr. V. Swanson, of Casablanca, not only translated the New Testament into the Moroccan (Mogrebi) colloquial, but himself wrote out every word in admirable Arabic script; so that the present New Testament is a 600-page facsimile of Mr. Swanson's labours. Our brother Mr. Evan Short — for whom we would bespeak our

readers' prayers—is now in Algiers, engaged in the task of supplementing, if not completing, the translation work left unfinished through the homecall of Mr. Theobald, of the Algiers Mission Band. Others, too, have wrought at this translation work; and not only have they enriched their fellow-workers' Scriptural armoury—they have compiled a veritable treasury of hymns and choruses that are sung to-day with delight by thousands of children, and native Christians, throughout Barbary.

Preliminary Notice

Our Annual Farewell Meetings will be held (D.V.) on Tuesday, October 4th, at Caxton Hall, Westminster, at 3.30 and 6.45 p.m. *Speakers:* Missionaries and Revs. COLIN KERR, M.A., and GEOFFREY R. KING.

PRAYER FOR FUNDS IS EARNESTLY DESIRED
