

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA."

# The N.A.M. News Letter



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Photo by]

TIN TOWN, CASABLANCA

[O. L. Carnegie

Lying upon the outskirts of Casablanca, yet as separate from the great seaport as though it were a leper colony, is the conglomeration of wretched dwellings known as "Tin Town." Each house consists of a crazy wooden framework upon which are fastened, as a covering, pieces of sheet-metal varying from sizable remnants of corrugated iron down to old tins beaten out flat. Cold in winter, well-nigh incandescent beneath the fierce midsummer sun, these flimsy structures shelter some thousands of the most pitiable natives in North Africa. It is among these that Miss Winifred Ross has, for years, been carrying on a splendid work.

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## A Sure Return\*

By Mr. R. STANLEY MILES, Tunis.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."—Psalm 126, 6.

IT was away back in September of 1940 that my fellow-worker and I were chatting upon the roof of our house after lunch one day. The summer had been an eventful one; and, acting upon consular advice, we had for a time vacated our station. But now the way had opened up for our return, and we could not but feel that the Lord had some special purpose in view for us. For our part, we were eager to seize the fleeting opportunities of this solemn hour.

There was still a fair quantity of Scriptures in our Bible Depot, and we were convinced that the message of the Gospel would be far better lodged in the homes around us than lying on our shelves. Taking stock of this literature, and having also in mind the need of maintaining our regular witness in Tunis, we judged that we had about six months' work ahead of us to get the books distributed.

As we now look back, we give thanks for answered prayer; for the present month (March, 1941) shows the stocks almost exhausted, whilst our accounts show sales in town and country totalling about 3,200 francs.

It was a lovely day in September when we set out on our bicycles. In the first house at which we called a Bible was sold for 65 francs, and we looked upon it as the seal of the Lord's favour upon the whole venture. We decided, Mr. Brown and I, to keep together, but to work on opposite sides of the street.

My next call was at a house tucked away in a most untidy garden. The reason for the untidiness was not far to seek, for I came upon a very unkempt old woman who sat chewing tobacco. She had a most alarming squint. "Well, young man, what do you want here?" was her greeting. I took my seat on a stool and read, from Luke 13, the story of the crooked woman, whilst the audience of one, I regret to say, spat tobacco juice vehemently from time to time.

Finishing the story I said: "And now, Madame, what about you?" The reply came: "Young man, give me those four books; here's your money; and, *pour l'amour de Dieu*, go away and don't come bothering me again!"

\* It so happens that, at a time when news from the Field is otherwise scanty, this excellent Report has reached us from Mr. R. S. Miles, of Tunis. We feel, therefore, that the moment is opportune for reproducing this cheering record of Gospel enterprise in its entirety.—Ed.

As we continued our excursion, it became more and more clear that we were not only called upon to sell the Scriptures and distribute tracts, but very often to "give an answer to any man that asked a reason of the hope that was in us."

Our first month's visits revealed a readiness to enquire about eternal things such as we had never before experienced. I am sure that if so many families were not obliged to count every franc in these hard times we should have sold twice as much. In one village my fellow-worker sold in every home, and I ran him close in another village where every home save two bought something.

In the course of our travels I came into touch with all sorts of people; and I realize the impossibility of describing here all the ideas and opinions expressed regarding GOD, life in general, and the hereafter.

In some of the districts visited there have been villas, the homes of military men, where I have not been able to sell a single Scripture. These places are hard ground; but, if sales are low, interesting conversations have abounded. The reception has not been unkind: rather the reverse. When I speak of my four and a half years spent in France during the last war, these "*militaires*" and I get "pally" at once; but many are just spiritually dead and utterly indifferent.

Exceptions are, of course, encountered everywhere. I well remember going to one villa, set well back from the road. As I entered the gate I paused, for from the house came the most appalling din. As I advanced the clamour grew more distinct; and I rang the bell with some feeling of apprehension.

The door flew open like a shot from a gun; and there, glaring at me, was a retired general—red-faced, peppery, formidable. A quick glance beyond the *général* at once revealed that the female section of the household had been upsetting him: hence the furious row. It really was amusing to see four or five female heads peeping around various doors, the faces expressing relief at this temporary lull in the hostilities.

Seeing the dear man facing me in such an attitude, I offered a quick prayer, and addressed myself to my rather disconcerting quarry. The moment he gathered I was a missionary his attitude changed. He had read the Bible, he said, when out in Indo-China; and he chatted for a good while about some of the Gospel stories. Then he bought a New Testament, and thanked me for calling, adding that he hoped I would

pass that way again. He then called the ladies out on to the veranda and introduced them *en bloc*. I left amidst a perfect chorus of thanks, especially from the ladies, who no doubt looked upon me as a heaven-sent deliverer.

That same morning I rang another bell, and a lady opened the door saying: "Why, it must be Monsieur Miles!" I did not know her, but she is one who has sent me a regular contribution every year for the Bible Society. She said she guessed it was I the moment she saw me coming up the garden path.

Another thing I have discovered during these past months is that GOD has been blessing seed sown in past years. This morning I was with an Arab family, and the wife used to attend Miss Tapp's class. I felt all the time that she was not only well acquainted with the Gospel, but that she had personal faith in Christ Himself.

The other week I was up against an Arab who was proving himself a tough nut to crack. He went over on his fingers the names of all the missionaries he had known: ". . . And there was *bou-lehia* ('father of a beard') Liley, and Short, and Cooksey, and Purdon, and Lochhead"; then, with such a cunning look, he added, "And I beat the whole lot of them!"

So I asked him: "Did you ever meet a fellow named Miles?" He considered for a moment. Then: "No, I never met *Sidi Miles*; who is he?" "Well," said I, "I'm the man: see if you can beat me!"

We had a really fine talk together, and although he was so firmly rooted in his Moslem ideas, yet he knew and remembered much that he had heard from that long list of poor "defeated ones"!

I could tell of case after case among those who have heard the Truth. Perhaps the most startling was that of a man in a café who, whilst I was speaking to a group of men, cried out: "Ah, that's what I used to hear at Madame Liley's meetings!" He was absolutely broken down. It was just the old story of wife, family and business that had kept him from being a bright witness.

A similar case was a lady who had professed faith in Christ as far back as 1922. She was pleased to see me, and gave me 50 francs to help some needy person. Her husband was a terror, but she never missed reading her Bible every day.

In one village I was well received, but

was counselled by several to keep clear of a certain house wherein lived a lady of most violent temper. I asked: "What sort of a messenger should I be if I passed her by?" When she came to the door, and I began to explain who I was and what I had come for, she said never a word. I read Matthew XI, 28, and said I had proved it to be true, and that she could do likewise. Without saying a word, she took the four Gospels: but I saw tears in her eyes. She came with me to all her neighbours' houses, and recommended them to buy. A group gathered in one of the gardens, and I had a lovely time telling of the power of Christ to save, and keep, and bless.

This kind of work is especially interesting in that one never knows what the next case will be. Now and again there is a real welcome; as, for instance, when I met a Jew who had learnt much from the Rev. Howard Burrough, former British Chaplain and worker among the Jews at Tunis. He asked me to read parts of the Old Testament, and to compare them with passages in the New. On another occasion, in the house of a Rabbi, I was asked to read Psalm 22, and Isaiah 35 and 53. He was struck with the fact that David clearly mentioned crucifixion, though that mode of execution was unknown in his day.

Such talks are well worth while, and doubly so when one is invited to read the Word at the bedside of the sick. I have had that privilege fairly often during the past six months. The little booklet of the Scripture Gift Mission entitled "Words of Comfort and Consolation" has been left in many a home, and the promise has been given to read the page of Scripture for each day of the month. On more than one occasion a bedridden person has asked me to read the 14th of John, and to give some word of cheer as to the future.

The work is not without its elements of humour. One dear old fiery gentleman, his head crowned with a gay skull-cap, was breaking up coal in his garden. When he heard why I had come, he brandished aloft his hammer, and said: "If you are the Pope, there is nothing doing; but if you are a true Calvinist, then I'm the man to argue the point with you." I was naturally a bit startled, but we soon settled down to a pleasant conversation, at the end of which he bought a twenty-franc Bible, which sent me on my way rejoicing.

## Miss Elsie Tilney

NEWS has been received through the British Red Cross Society to the effect that Miss Tilney has been transferred from the Camp at Besançon to Vittel, Vosges, "where the surroundings are far more pleasant." Letters may now be sent to Miss Tilney. They should not exceed two sides of a sheet of notepaper, and can be posted in the ordinary way—without a stamp, or by air mail with a 5d. stamp and an air mail label. Sender's name and address must be written on the back of the envelope; and, on the front, in the left hand corner—

Prisoners of War Post,  
Service des Prisonniers de Guerre,  
and the following address :  
Miss Elsie TILNEY,  
British Interned Civilian,  
Vittel par Epinal,  
Vosges, FRANCE.

If you desire to send parcels to Miss Tilney, will you get in touch with the Prisoners of War Department, St. James's Palace, S.W.1, who will give you full particulars.

We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for this considerable amelioration of our sister's position.

## News from the Field

News items that have been received at Headquarters through the intermediary of Mr. Warren during the past month or two have been of a very general or purely domestic character, and are therefore not being quoted so fully as usual. But that conditions are not uniform throughout the Field is made clear from the two following extracts, in which the local diffidence or friendliness is clearly mirrored :—

From **Mr. Chas. Marsh, Lafayette** :—  
"As a result of opposition the bigger children have been kept from the Thursday class, but twelve young children still come. The French meeting has been brought to a close. People say: 'As you are English we cannot come, although we would like to.' My wife has visited some ladies in their homes since, and even this has been reported to the authorities. You see what an effect this has on the work. People do not want to appear friendly when it means losing their work. But up to the present the native work has not been interfered with."

On the other hand, **Mr. Bocking, of Cherchell**, writes as follows: "In Cher-

chell we carry on more or less normally, though we cannot move about to other places, as you know. Our native boys' class has increased in numbers recently, and the girls' classes are also well and regularly attended. Our Sunday evening French meeting keeps going, and, although it is not attended quite so well as formerly, we believe it is not without blessing and help. . . . My wife gets into quite a number of houses, and is well received on the whole. . . . I don't think anybody has shown a really unfriendly attitude towards us."

## Tulloch Memorial Hospital

WRITING from Tangier, Dr. Anderson says: "We are happy to record that the past year in Tangier has been free from acts of war, although we have experienced some of the unavoidable effects of living in the war zone. Conditions have been unsettled, there has been a steep rise in the price of commodities, and there has been great delay and sometimes difficulty in getting necessaries from home.

". . . We have been glad to help some Gibraltar refugees by giving them the help of our hospital services. A Gibraltar baby was born in hospital the other day. . . . Needless to say, without the loyal and invaluable assistance of our trained staff it would be impossible to maintain the standard of the work here.

"Of the Evangelistic side of the work much might be written. It is the story of steady witness, and of preaching of the Gospel to large companies gathered in the out-patient hall as well as to smaller groups in the wards; of some individual heart-to-heart talks, and of public confessions by a few patients before their countrymen in the wards.

"Miss Craggs's faithful ministry in the Women's Ward has met with response in the lives of some patients, while Si Mohamed's talks have awakened evident interest. Miss Bowker is taking her part in the evangelistic work among the Arabs, both in the hospital and in their homes. . . .

"We do not know what the future holds in store for the work here. We would value your earnest prayers on our behalf, and for the native Christians. Will you pray that the Lord's servants here may be very sensitive to His guiding Hand in every emergency which may face them in the coming days?"