

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA."

The NAM NEWS LETTER

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HON. SECRETARY: OSWALD L. CARNEGIE

AMERICAN AUXILIARY: HON. SECRETARY, DR. HARVEY FARMER, 6109, COLUMBIA AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA, PA., U.S.A.

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EDITED BY E. J. LONG, F.R.S.G.S.

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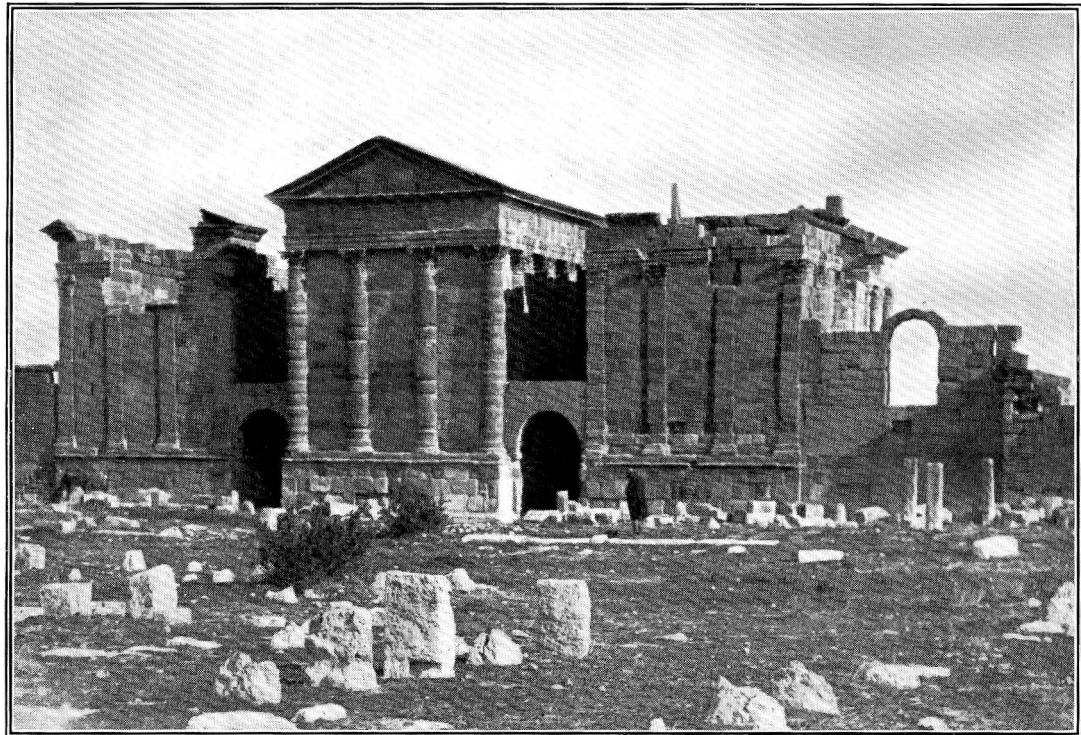


Photo by]

(E.J.L.)

SBEITLA, TUNISIA :
The Three Temples

Some years ago the Editor of the "NEWS LETTER" undertook, in company with Mr. Stanley Miles, an extensive tour of Western Tunisia. The Gospel car was crammed with Bibles, Testaments and Gospels; and the route followed linked up such centres as Kairouan, Pichon, Feriana, Sbeitla, Kasserine, Thala and Tebessa. Places now strewn with land mines were then sown with Scripture Gift Mission literature, and open-air meetings were held in quiet spots now clamorous with the tumult of battle. The age-long tranquillity of The Three Temples, Sbeitla (depicted above), seemed as though it would nevermore be broken. Now, "Tiger" and "Sherman" tanks are thundering past. Thousands among the Lord's children are becoming acquainted with Tunisia to-day through the poignant publicity of war. Let us pray that prayer interest may be captured and maintained on behalf of those engaged in the spiritual conflict yonder against Mohammedanism—a conflict that has been raging for over sixty years.

Life in Tunis under the Germans

COMMUNICATION with our missionary brethren and sisters in Tunis is hardly likely to be restored until the overthrow of the Axis forces makes possible the Allied occupation of the capital of the Regency. Meanwhile, we must possess our souls in prayerful patience.

From a Moroccan source, however (a French newspaper called *Le Petit Marocain*), the following details are available :

"The black-out is, of course, complete. From 3 p.m. till 6 a.m. all street traffic is forbidden. Allied bombers have made it impossible for the enemy to use the aerodromes of El Aouina and La Goulette. The city of Tunis itself has scarcely been touched. One bomb fell in the Place aux Moutons, and another in the Rue de Provence [remote from N.A.M. property—ED.], but neither caused serious damage.

"The problem of food supplies is difficult, bread being notably scarce. During a ten-day period there was no electricity, owing to the power station having been damaged during the Allied bombardment ; and the gas supply was similarly interrupted.

"The Germans have founded a new daily paper called the *Tunis Journal*. Its worthlessness as a channel of authentic news may be gauged from the fact that one of its numbers, a few days ago, announced in enormous headlines : 'Capture of Tabarka by the Germans.'

"The particularly odious attitude of the Italians has been confirmed. The Germans marched some Allied prisoners through the streets to encourage the morale of the population. They were insulted and struck by Italian civilians. On the other hand, discord between Italians and Germans is frequent. It seems that the Germans complain of the arrogance of their partners.

"As for the civil population, French and native, it just goes on quietly with its work, absolutely certain of final victory."

That last sentence is tremendously reassuring.

The damage to the power station is to be regretted in that it not only cuts off from our friends their main source of illumination, but particularly in that it deprives them of authentic wireless news.

A vast volume of prayer is arising on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Miles and Muriel, Miss Kraulis and Mr. Brown ; and we are confident that, when the smoke of battle has

passed and peace is restored, they will have wonderful stories to tell of the faithfulness of their Heavenly Father and the sufficiency of His grace.

Ahmed, the prisoner of Jesus Christ

Not for many years have we read so touching a story of Christian fortitude as that which has just reached us from Morocco. One of our converts from Mohammedanism, named Ahmed, was cast into a native prison well over a year ago. He was recently visited by another believer named Abd-er-Rahman, who brought back the following report :

Poor Ahmed had just recovered from typhus, of which there had been an epidemic in the vermin-infested prison. (It is tragic that the authorities concerned should inoculate extensively against typhus, and then allow their prisons to remain in an indescribable state of filth. All that the doctors who visit the prisons can do is to treat the legs of the prisoners with an ointment that prevents(?) the typhus-carrying lice from crawling up.)

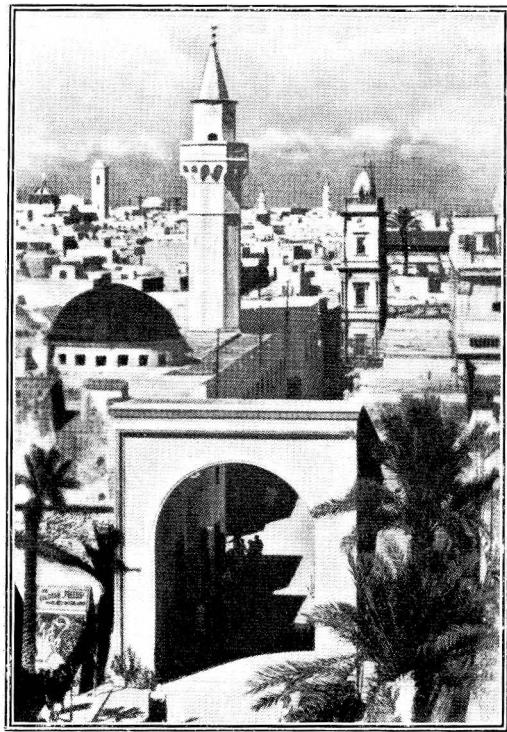
When Ramadhan, the Fast Month, came round, poor Ahmed asked himself what he should do. There were nine other men in the miserable cell where he was, and they told him that if he ate during Ramadhan they would either poison him or kill him in some other way.

Some of these men were undergoing a life sentence, and were quite indifferent as to the personal consequences of their act. One of them was in gaol for having hacked off his wife's nose, and he swore that he would do the same to Ahmed while he was asleep if he dared to break the fast.

Ahmed was therefore much in prayer that God would both protect him and show him how he ought to act.

The first day of Ramadhan he managed to eat his bread unperceived. The next day a prisoner was seen smoking (which also breaks the fast), and he was taken before the Kaid in charge of the prison, who ordered him to be beaten and put into a cell to endure solitary confinement for the remaining 26 days of the fast. The Kaid then made proclamation that if any other prisoner broke the fast he would be similarly punished.

So after further prayer, Ahmed asked to be taken before the Kaid, to whom he declared : "I am not a Moslem, but a



TRIPOLI

See paragraph "Tripoli: A Challenge."

Messihi [a follower of Christ], and so I cannot keep the fast." The Kaid ordered that the prison records be searched; and it was, in fact, established that Ahmed was in prison solely because he had denied the religion of Islam.

The outcome was remarkable almost beyond belief. That Kaid was cruel, but just. He sent Ahmed back to his room, and made this further proclamation: "This man is a Nasrani [a Nazarene, a follower of Jesus], and so does not fast. If any man does him violence I will requite him for his deed."

Ahmed was even asked if he desired a change of quarters; but the very men who had formerly persecuted him now begged him to remain (for he had often helped them, in his kind-hearted way), and he was suffered to eat his bread day by day before them. None did him harm.

Ahmed told Abd-er-Rahman that men came into that prison strong and stout, but that in a few weeks they were like famished dogs, their very sides falling in. No clothing is provided, so that if a man's sentence is a long one, and he has no friends, he is slowly reduced to nakedness.

And so Ahmed, "the prisoner of Jesus Christ," asks for your prayers; and does not the Apostle bid us "remember them that are in bonds"?

Very wisely, our missionary friends ask us to pray that when Ahmed is at length released "he may not find prosperity harder to bear than adversity."

How we need to remember our beloved workers, too, as they rejoice and weep over their spiritual children. What grace and wisdom they need!

Tripoli: A Challenge

"IN 1934, when the Mission staff at Tripoli was reduced to the minimum of an elderly veteran, the Fascist régime declared that the work must cease altogether unless a fully qualified medical man came to take charge.

"The doctor was forthcoming, and after a short period of the study of Italian proceeded with his wife to Tripoli. But the Evil One would not be so easily thwarted, and by a combination of forces, political and religious, achieved his end with the expulsion of these last two missionaries from Libya in December, 1936, by Governor Balbo. Under the same political régime British missionaries were expelled soon afterwards from the newly-occupied territory of Abyssinia. But a big triumph for the Gospel has been witnessed in that land—the return of the missionaries and the free distribution of the Word of God with the full consent and favour of the reinstated Emperor!

"What hath GOD wrought for that country of which it is prophesied: 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto GOD'!"

"And now, what is GOD's will for Libya? It cannot be that it remain a closed land to the Gospel, which has not yet there been preached to every creature. GOD's attitude towards the powers of darkness is summed up for us in the words: 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision' (Ps. ii, 4). His people, as they follow Him, take up the same attitude of holy defiance: 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn' (2 Kings xix, 21). Far from capitulating to the enemy, therefore, shall we not rather declare: 'We will rejoice in Thy salvation, and in the Name of our GOD we will set up our banners' (Ps. xx, 3).

"Who will rally round the banner of believing prayer for this desert outpost?

Who is ready to follow when the Captain leads the way? This is being written as our Forces—espousing the cause of religious freedom—are advancing within a few miles of Tripoli! What a challenge to the Christian Church to see that, at the end of hostilities in Libya, she secures by prayer the purpose of the warfare—freedom to preach the Gospel in that land!

"Who covets the honour of securing representatives again from Libya at the Second Coming of Him Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed?"*

*Extracted from "DESERT DEFEAT AND DEFiance," an excellent little folder by Mrs. Edith L. Liley, obtainable (free) from the North Africa Mission, 34, Bisham Gardens, London, N.6.

News from the Field

Mr. and Mrs. Bocking are planning to go to Tangier so that Mr. Bocking may be able to relieve Mr. Warren of some of the work that he finds very exacting in view of the uncertain state of his health.

Mrs. Ross says **Margaret** was expecting 50 children for Christmas Day. They have made contacts with British soldiers and sailors. Conditions have evidently improved, for Mrs. Ross adds: "We have also something other than jam to eat on our bread."

We have heard that **Mrs. Simpson** was able to pay a visit of several days to Oujda, but the journey of 50 miles took eight hours! One night was spent in the dining-room of an hotel, and another on a camp stool in the station. She has had some English-speaking visitors who have shared her tea.

As intimated in our opening paragraph, we are without news of **our Tunis workers**, but Mr. Warren is making inquiries through the Swedish Consular service. No method of transmitting funds to these missionaries has yet been devised. We are sure that our readers will make this problem a special matter for prayer.

Miss Rokeby Robinson has been in a poor state of health for several weeks, and prayer on her behalf would be valued.

We are thankful to learn that **Miss Chapman** is making a good recovery, and trust that she is by this time quite well again.

As we go to press a cablegram reaches us from Mr. Warren giving the glad news that **Miss Ethel Brookes**, our worker at Gafsa, Tunisia, has safely reached Constantine, Algeria. Earlier news had told of the splendid

work Miss Brookes was doing among British and American soldiers at Gafsa.

Miss Reed reports that she and the workers at Casablanca are safe and well. With **Miss Buxton** she had recently visited American soldiers in hospital at Settat. In Rabat (not far away) bread and flour are plentiful, and relatively cheap.

Mr. Bocking writes to Mr. Warren: "The hospital folk here at Miliana have been very kind, and 'Monsieur le Pasteur anglais' has now become quite a familiar and well-received 'personnage.' Apart from some interesting chats with the boys [American soldier patients], we have had ward services on Sundays, and on Christmas Day. We have reason to believe that some have been helped. They all seem very grateful, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have been able to do a little something up here in a quite unexpected way while waiting for our marching orders."

Mr. Marsh writes: "Things have been going on very much as usual in our district, for we are off the beaten track. There is quite a lot of activity overhead, though. We have re-started our men's and women's meetings. Public opinion fluctuates, but has not quite reached 'Set Fair.' The natives from Kabylia are asking when I am going back to their villages, but it will not be possible to reach them until petrol becomes available once more."

Miss Elsie Tilney is suffering from under-nourishment. She sent a cheerful card of birthday greeting to her brother, but concluded: "The doctor here said I needed extra nutrition. Do not wish to deprive others, but can well do with it!" The British Red Cross is being approached on the subject. Prayer for our sister and fellow-internees will be greatly appreciated.

"Slavanka" Conference

The Annual Prayer Conference of the Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems will be held (D.V.) at "Slavanka" again this year. The date of this week-end Convention is **June 4th to 8th**. Full particulars obtainable from the Hon. Sec., W. Cecil Collinson, 106, Highbury New Park, LONDON, N.5.

N.A.M. Spring Meetings

These will be held, God willing, in the Court Room, Caxton Hall, S.W. 1, on **May 27th**, at 3.30 and 5.30 p.m.