

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA."

# The N.A.M. News Letter

OFFICE OF THE NORTH AFRICA MISSION, 34, BISHAM GARDENS, HIGHGATE, LONDON, N. 6  
HON. SECRETARY: OSWALD L. CARNEGIE

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No. 35

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

MAY-JUNE, 1944



Photo by]

IN SUNNY FEZ

[E.J.L.

*Those for whom this picture has any sort of appeal will probably be attracted for quite different reasons. For some, interest will centre in the charming little Moorish children, particularly the bare-footed toddler; for others, the pictorial appeal will be found in the sun-dappled figures and roadway, an effect that could probably be seen only in Morocco, where this overhead lattice of bamboo is much in vogue. But, for the missionary-hearted, the most impressive feature—though it may first need to be pointed out—is the almost complete absence of women in this photograph. In a British street-scene they would preponderate; but North Africa is a land of "shut-in" women. How they need our prayers!*

## Homecall of Miss Marion B. Grissell

ONE of the earliest of our Tunisia missionaries, Miss Marion Grissell, was taken on Easter Day to be with her Lord. She had reached the advanced age of 96.

We are indebted to Miss H. M. M. Tapp, who was for years Miss Grissell's colleague in Tunis, for the extraordinarily interesting account of early missionary activities that we print below. Although a little long for our NEWS-LETTER, we just hadn't the heart to condense it!—

One of the veteran pioneers of the Tunisian Evangelistic Front, Miss Grissell went out to Tunis in 1888. Before leaving England she had done varied work: talks to road-mending navvies in the dinner-hour (simple enough in leisurely Victorian London!), the escorting to Canada of a party of children from Miss Annie Macpherson's Homes—a really self-denying piece of work, for she was a wretched sailor and dreaded the sea at all times.

But Marion Grissell had a longing to carry the Gospel to other lands, so she joined the North Africa Mission in its early days, and was sent to Tunis. When she arrived, the canal through the Salt Lake had not yet been constructed: the missionaries disembarked at La Goulette. There was a railway (built, strangely enough, by an engineer relative of Miss Grissell) which pursued a roundabout course, doubling back at La Goulette to the small town of La Marsa, and then heading for Tunis by the eastern side of the Lake.

Tunis was unsophisticated in those days, the French occupation dating back only seven years. The new missionary's first duty was language study. Teachers were hard to find, and those who offered themselves had only rudimentary qualifications. Miss Grissell had turned forty—rather late to begin the strenuous study of Arabic; but she succeeded, chiefly through her own exertions. The only textbooks for the colloquial Arabic were Algerian, which differs from the Tunisian dialect—very confusing to a novice.

Contacts were made with Arab women, and since Miss Grissell had the great asset of a genial, friendly manner, a ready entrance

was speedily won into many native homes. If, "despairing of no man," she were sometimes too ready to welcome any spark of interest in the Truth, it was surely better so: no discouragement daunted her for long.

Two converts from Islam owed very much to her fostering care: "Little Owaysha," who came for long visits to the Halfaune Home, where she received daily Bible teaching; and Si Beddai, for long employed as N.A.M. Bible Depot keeper, and still working thus with Mr. Miles. Miss Grissell would spend many mornings reading with Si Beddai, translating helpful extracts from *The Christian* and *The Life of Faith*. The readings would be interrupted by casual visitors, who dropped in, some to inquire, others to purchase books. All of them needed elementary instruction, and this was gladly and graciously given.

"Little Owaysha" was called Home in the autumn of 1939, but she had witnessed a good confession. Si Beddai is still with us, a beacon to his countrymen.

Marion Grissell was very keen on itineration. She felt the urge to reach out to some of the dark villages that surround Tunis. In the early years of this century I accompanied her on three such tours. Our first (to Tebessa and Ain Beida, just across the Algerian frontier) was rather unfortunate. The Anglo-French tension was acute at the time, aftermath of Fashoda and the Boer War. We did have one large meeting in the courtyard of the small house we had hired at Ain Beida, but Miss Grissell's exposition was punctuated by howls from a Jewish mob outside: "*Vivent les Boers! a bas les Anglais!*" Finally, escorted by the crowd, we retired to the hotel in fairly good order. On the threshold the French landlady faced the mob and dispersed them with a few terse phrases. The next morning we were summoned to the Commissaire's Bureau, and requested to leave the town forthwith.

Our two visits to Gafsa, in Southern Tunisia, have happier memories. Here the Arabs listened gladly, and we had no trouble with the authorities.

After many years of service with the N.A.M., Miss Grissell became associated with the American Mission, principally because she was asked to take charge of the Bible Depot, which the American friends had taken over. In 1916 she retired, for family

reasons; but she always had a love for Tunis and the work there. On her ninetieth birthday she sent a message to my Arab women's class: "Tell them, 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the House of the Lord for ever.'" Most of the women know Psalm xxiii by heart, so that the message was keenly appreciated. Old age is respected in Arab circles, although few attain to European longevity.

Marion Grissell was always interested in world affairs, and was a diligent reader of newspapers; but Missions, especially those labouring among Moslems, always held chief place in her affections. She bore the burden of years bravely, and although she suffered latterly from loss of memory, yet, to the very last, there were moments when her natural love of independence and action were strikingly apparent.

Miss Grissell was called into the Presence of the King on Easter Day. The long course is run. But there are Arab homes in Tunis that for years to come will remember, with affection and gratitude, "Lilla Miriam."

H. M. M. TAPP.

### *Medical and Dispensary Work*

THE Council have been giving most careful thought to this side of the Mission's activities, and have recently accepted **Dr. Farnham A. R. St. John** and **Nurse Madge Hutchinson** for service at the Tulloch Memorial Hospital, Tangier.

Dr. St. John, who is in fellowship with the "Brethren," is at present House Physician at the London Hospital, but will be free to leave for Tangier early in August.

Nurse Hutchinson is a State Certified Midwife, and has had two years' training at Mount Hermon Bible College. She is a member of Bethesda Free Church, Sunderland, and has been most warmly recommended by its Pastor—the worthy Editor of THE NEWS-LETTER.

We welcome these additions to our ranks, and would enlist for them an interest in your prayers.

We are somewhat concerned about the maintenance of the Dispensary work carried on by **Miss Denison** at Fez. Our good friend has completed 50 years of devoted labour for our Lord, but now failing sight limits

her effective service. We have no one available with the requisite qualifications to take over this work.

The deeply lamented death of **Miss Winifred Ross** of Casablanca created a gap which, so far, it has not been possible to fill. "Tin Town" is without its Lady Dispenser, and the mothers and children are in large measure uncared for physically and spiritually because no one is equipped to meet the need.

Perhaps someone with the necessary training who reads these lines may feel there is a work which GOD would have them do in one or other of these places.

O. L. C.

### *Safe Arrivals at Tunis*

MISS G. E. PETTER and Miss A. Clack, who left London on March 27, have arrived safely at Tunis. An airmail letter from Algiers stated: "We have had a marvellous journey, the Lord doing for us exceeding abundantly. . . . He Who has helped us hitherto will help us all the journey through."

The very same day that this airmail letter reached Headquarters, a cablegram was received from Tunis which read as follows: "Misses Petter Clack arrived. We hope arrive May Meeting. Stanley Miles."

This is the most cheering tabloid of news we have received for many a month, for it means that, GOD willing, our dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Miles, with Muriel, will soon be setting foot on British soil for the first time since the autumn of 1936. They must be in great need of refreshment and change, and are assured of a rousing welcome.

### *The New Travel Ban*

FRIENDS will know of the Exit Ban that has been imposed on travel from Britain after April 27. This means, of course, that until the ban is lifted there is no likelihood of passages being granted for the other workers (four in number) due to return to Tunis. Whether we interpret this as a further trial of faith or a call to prayer, we remember that, without violence, our wonder-working GOD is able to make "iron gates" open "of their own accord" (Gk. "automatically"): so that happy surprises may yet await our Tunis-bound friends.

## News from the Field

**Mr. A. G. Willson** writes from Djemâa Sahridj: "We had such a hearty meeting at El Klâa last week. It was very cold, so Bousaad lit the fire and made the little Chapel as comfortable as he could; and it was soon full. I wrote a Kabyle hymn on the black-board, since we have no paper for hymn-sheets. . . . The forms were occupied to their fullest capacity, mostly by boys. We could not have received more or the door would not have opened, as it opens inwards. It was a splendid meeting, Bousaad also taking part. Just before closing we had earnest prayer, first for Yousef's healing (he is suffering from a stroke), then for all present, and finally for the village."

Mr. Willson expresses eagerness in his letter that we, too, should remember Yousef in prayer. He is a native believer with a not too promising history, but his healing *through prayer alone* would mean much to the testimony at El Klâa.

**Mr. S. Arthur** of Azazga writes of "the tremendous possibilities of colportage at the present time." The demand for the Scriptures exceeds anything known in the past. There seems to be a genuine hunger in many parts of North Africa for the Word of GOD, and we shall be wise to remember this in our prayer gatherings as well as in private intercession.

Mr. Arthur mentions the large number of former N.A.M. Stations now without workers, and hopes that some who have become acquainted with the country and its spiritual needs whilst on war service may be called of God to return there for Gospel witness in the coming days.

We share the concern felt by all our workers at Tangier over the illness, from typhoid, of little **Yvonne Boeking**. She was at one time running dangerously high temperatures, but in a later letter (April 13) **Mr. Boeking** says: "The fever is gradually coming down, and even touches normal during the morning; but still it goes fairly high during the afternoon. Yvonne is naturally very weak, but when once again she can be properly nourished, we feel sure she will speedily pick up." We earnestly trust that the next news will be completely reassuring.

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### STOP PRESS.

Friends will be glad to know that Mrs. Webb, who has undergone an operation in the London Homeopathic Hospital, is progressing satisfactorily, but may not be released from the Hospital before the end of May.

Mr. R. I. Brown (interned in Germany) says that he is taking the intermediate B.A. examination in July, and asks prayer that he may be successful.

Mr. Warren reports that M. Hocart and Commander Salway have both "entered into rest."—Details later.

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## THE N.A.M. ANNUAL MEETINGS

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will be held (D.V.) at

**LIVINGSTONE HALL, Broadway, Westminster, S.W. 1**

(near St. James's Park Station)

on **THURSDAY, MAY 25th, 1944, at 3.30 and 5.30 p.m.**

(PRECEDED BY A PRAYER MEETING AT 3 P.M.)

*Afternoon.* Chairman: REV. E. J. POOLE-CONNOR.

Speaker: REV. F. JOHN SCROGGIE.

*Evening.* Chairman: REV. E. J. LONG.

Speaker: REV. W. STUART HARRIS.

(Brief messages from Dr. Farnham St. John and Nurse Madge Hutchinson.)

It is hoped that Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Miles will arrive from Tunis in time to take part at both meetings.

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TEA WILL BE PROVIDED AT 4.45 P.M.