

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA."

The NAM News Letter



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No. 38

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NOV.-DEC., 1944



Photo by]

YOUNG BELIEVERS OF TANGIER

[E.J.L.

The "Spanish Chapel" in the grounds of Hope House, Tangier (part of the building can be seen in the background of our frontispiece), has sheltered a variety of meetings. Years ago it was the headquarters of the Spanish Gospel work in quite another part of Tangier, but being a corrugated iron structure its later transfer to the present site presented no great difficulty. It is here that the various meetings for native believers have been held—both sexes gathering together at the Lord's Table; and in the above snapshot a little company of musically-minded boys and young men have been "caught" as they were leaving a class conducted by Si Mehdi, seen at the back of the group. In this building, too, gather each Lord's Day the British believers.

Meeting at Livingstone Hall

THROUGH the kindness of Miss Higbid, we are able to furnish the following account of the Meeting held on September 14th at the Livingstone Hall, Westminster, when Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Miles, who were accompanied by their daughter Muriel, gave a graphic account of God's wonderful deliverances during the years of war. On the platform with them were Mr. Edwin Wigg, one of the Mission's former workers, until recently serving the Lord as an Army Scripture Reader in Egypt, and Miss Lincoln, who has recently returned to this country from Tangier. Most friends will recall that Mr. and Mrs. Miles had not been in the Homeland for eight years. Here is Miss Higbid's report:

"Mrs. Miles gave two texts which they had particularly proved during their experiences, viz., 'God is faithful,' and 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' In a brief résumé of the work during the years 1936-1939, she spoke of classes for native girls and boys and women, remarking that the latter were pathetically indifferent or very fanatical, although in the early years the visitation of the homes was encouraging—both Moslem and French. Work among French children and grown-ups was carried on, including Bible Classes for French women.

"A helpful feature of the work during 1938 was a 10-15 minute radio broadcast, which was given alternate weeks by Mrs. Miles and Monsieur Paul Verdier, the latter having been converted through the instrumentality of Miss Tilney, in Djerba. In this broadcast the Gospel was presented simply and clearly, and was heard by French and Italian Protestants and Roman Catholics, Jews, and even Moslems. With the outbreak of war in 1939 Monsieur Verdier was mobilised, and the broadcasting was stopped for the time being.

"Mrs. Miles gave a pathetic picture of the food shortage during the occupation of Tunis by the Germans, but emphasised the gracious provision of God in many outstanding instances, which proved the value of the continuous prayers which had been offered by friends on their behalf.

"Miss Muriel Miles, too, thanked friends for their prayers, and told how she had on one occasion learned of the whereabouts of some of her French friends who were prisoners. They were very pro-British, and had walked for three days and had nothing to eat. Miss Miles told how they were able to throw some oranges and dates over the barbed wire, but their own extreme shortage of necessary food made it impossible to do more. She put in a special plea for prayer on behalf of the prisoners.

"Miss Grace Lincoln (from Tangier) told of a wonderful journey home, and the equally

wonderful way in which a passage had been procured. She spoke of her work during the previous years, both among native girls, and among English and English-speaking children, for whom she had opened a small school, and through which means she was able to give them the Gospel. This school was begun with four pupils, but had now increased to 20, some of whom had given her great joy and encouragement. Miss Lincoln stressed the need for workers.

"Mr. Stanley Miles began by telling of the years before the war, when much of his time was taken up with itinerations among the villages outside Tunis. He told of God's wonderful protection and provision during the occupation, when he was in hiding, and had some thrilling experiences of answer to prayer. He concluded by telling of the joy of 'the Liberation,' when they opened the 'Welcome Canteen' for men of the Forces, and threw open their home to those who cared for the things of God. Many had written letters of appreciation for the help they had received, and some, it is believed, will be offering for service on the Mission Field when circumstances permit.

"A very happy gathering, and one full of praise to God, was concluded by the singing of the Doxology, after which the Chairman—Rev. S. J. Henman—pronounced the Benediction."

Homecall of Former Tunis Missionary

Whilst few of our readers will have any personal knowledge of the late Mrs. J. H. C. Purdon, the following notes will prove most helpful to those who are interested in the practical problems of missionary life, such as early steps in language study, the first message in Arabic, the place of the missionary's home in evangelism, the possibilities of educational and industrial work, an alternative sphere of usefulness should health break down; and so on. Once again Miss H. M. M. Tapp has enlightened and helped us by her shrewd insight into the life and work of a contemporary.

"Another member of the N.A.M. was called Home on October 5th—Catherine ('Kittie') Purdon, widow of John H. C. Purdon, whom a former Editor of *The Christian* (Mr. R. C. Morgan) once dubbed 'the Hot Gospeller.'

"Mr. and Mrs. Purdon joined the N.A.M. at the beginning of this century. Mr. Purdon had qualified as a solicitor in Dublin, and both he and his wife worked there in a Medical Mission. After spending a year in Barking (where the Mission then had its Headquarters) and taking a course in Arabic under Mr. Marshall, they were posted to Tunis. There they threw themselves heart and soul into language study. Mr. Purdon's specialty was a long list of words, which he learned and studied daily. Mrs. Purdon was not so scientific, but both succeeded to a marked degree in speaking with fluency and

accuracy. 'Sidi Burdon' (there is no 'p' in Arabic) was in fact a famous *arabisant*. His beautifully annotated copy of the Koran enabled him to find any verse at a moment's notice, so confounding any disputant who quoted incorrectly, perhaps with a subtle twist to his own advantage.

"The Purdons' home was always open to all in need of help or sympathy. When an early Moslem convert was turned out of his house by his enraged family, the Purdons gave him hospitality until other arrangements could be made. For some time Miss Hammon and Mrs. Purdon carried on a small school for Arab girls until it was suddenly closed by the French Government, who decreed that all teaching should be under the *Enseignement*. That was a dark day in the Mission annals.

"Dear Kittie Purdon was a splendid visitor. I always counted it a privilege to spend a weekly hour or two in her company, going from house to house. Those were early days, and she always encouraged others to put in their word, however stammering it might be. Young workers generally chose Mrs. Purdon to stand by when they made their first faltering efforts to take a class, confident that she would supply any forgotten phrase, or help out with a needed explanation.

"The Purdons were much exercised with the necessity of giving wise help to enquirers and Moslem converts. There must be no suspicion of aiding those who 'wished to enter the religion' solely to become 'rice Christians.' So Mr. Purdon hired a small building to set up an industrial work, making marmalade (oranges are plentiful in Tunisia), or carpentering articles for sale. There are many disappointments in Moslem work, and in time these 'enquirers' drifted away. Perhaps there was more overt opposition in those days, although there is plenty of secret persecution even now.

"In 1906 Mr. Purdon resigned his connection with the N.A.M. For a year and a half he was Acting British Vice-Consul in Tunis, but he continued his Gospel work among the Moslems, loyally supported by his wife. Later they both joined the American Methodist Episcopal Mission, which had started work in North Africa. In the mid-'twenties failing health obliged Mr. Purdon to leave the country, so he and his wife decided to utilise their knowledge of French by working in the Thonon Mission (France). There they both laboured with joy and success until Mr. Purdon's sudden death during a visit to Switzerland in 1929.

"It was an ideal marriage, and life seemed very dreary to Mrs. Purdon after her great loss; but she continued to work bravely in the Thonon Mission. Latterly age and family claims brought her back to her home town, Dublin. There she lived happily with her sister and nieces, but, as she told a friend, she was 'very lonely': the Home Call would be a joyful one for her. Her

gentle, unselfish character endeared her to all—British, French and Arabs. Surely she will hear the Master say, 'She hath done what she could.' Her life is an inspiration to those who knew her."

Tidings from Sierra Leone

IN a letter that is almost stippled with crushed mosquitoes ("I've killed *dozens* on this letter!", the writer assures us) Miss Rokeby-Robinson gives a vivid account of the Hospital for the British West Africa Forces of which she is Matron.

"As you see," she writes, "I'm in the White Man's Grave, and doing very well on it! I'm told I'm looking better and better all the time. . . . We are in the midst of the rainy season here: for five months one is continually reminded of 'a contentious woman'! One has to put receptacles here and there in one's house to catch the drips. . . . The rain just falls down: we get from 150 to 180 inches of rain in the five months!"

Miss Rokeby-Robinson speaks of "monkeys by the hundred, bush-cats, leopards, elephants . . . and every snake from a python downwards. (Those I hate most.) The bird-life is lovely . . . the flamboyant and other brilliant flowering trees and tree-growths are heavenly. . . . Our Enemy Number One is, of course, Malignant Malaria and Blackwater Fever. My room at the moment is *thick* with mosquitoes . . . I've just been spraying it, and have taken out the table-cloth to shake. It was black with mosquitoes—and now there are almost as many again.

". . . I've had some lovely letters from Tangier—pages of news. It's lovely to hear that nurses in training are making enquiries about work among Moslems. How wonderful if the Church is waking up to its responsibilities in this work. I never lose an opportunity to speak of it.

"Nothing is being done for the thousands of Mohammedans in Sierra Leone. . . . There are many Syrian shop-keepers here, and I talk Arabic to them—much to their surprise. How I wish I had some Arabic Gospels with me! They speak an Arabic very similar to the Moghrebi (Moroccan), but with a different pronunciation. . . . But we understand each other.

". . . Now I must close before I'm eaten to death by these mosquitoes."

We are sure that our readers will remember our sister in prayer, that her health may be maintained, and that she may bear a fruitful witness to the Lord Jesus.

Spanish Work in Tangier

MUCH too often we have condensed into a few brief sentences the admirable reports sent to us from time to time by Signor P. Padilla, of

Tangier. Here is a much fuller record of the type of work our faithful brother is doing :

" Summer is now over, and we have begun our usual activities again. During the hot months the Sunday School has been suspended, but all our other regular meetings have gone on as usual. Both the Sunday and mid-week gatherings have been well attended. Some falling off we have had because people have gone to other towns.

" One young woman, evacuated from Gibraltar, got to know the Gospel among us, and for about two years has been very faithful in her attendance. She confessed her faith in the Lord Jesus as her personal Saviour, and is now back again at her home in Gibraltar ; and the very regular news that we receive assures us that she continues faithful to her Lord.

" In September I had the opportunity of paying a visit of three days to Tetuan, where I had a very good time visiting believers and others. We had a meeting in the house of one of the believers, and it was a time of real blessing, the message being listened to with much attention and interest. Some gave testimonies of how great things God had done for them in these years of trial and testing. At the close we had a chain of prayer. Tracts were given, and we found some who desired to read the Scriptures.

" Each Thursday some of them meet for prayer and Bible Reading. Two Christian families gave me hospitality—one for meals, the other for sleeping. Correspondence is kept up with those who have left us. Visits are being constantly made, and tracts distributed.

" Special prayer is earnestly requested for the believers in Tetuan, and for the young woman who has returned to Gibraltar (mentioned above)."

We feel that these paragraphs will bring the splendid work of Mr. Padilla more worthily before our readers, and assure for him that place in our prayers that he so truly deserves.

News in Brief

Mr. Stanley Miles has just concluded a strenuous first period of deputation work in Northern Ireland and the West of England. He has been greatly encouraged, though after the unwonted strain we are sure that a period of rest will be a wise investment.

We are very sorry to report that the Council of the N.A.M. have had most regretfully to decline **Miss McRobbie's** offer of service in North Africa owing to unfavourable reports about the probable effects of the climate on her health. We know that this must be a great disappointment to our sister, and we pray that she may be clearly guided to the work GOD has for her to do.

We welcome to our ranks **Miss Theakston**, who was accepted at the last Council Meeting for service in the Hospital at Tangier during the absence on furlough of one of the other nurses.

Writing on July 9th **Mr. Brown** says : " Two missionaries were repatriated on the last list, and we are hoping that our turn will soon be here." We are sure that friends continue to remember our brother in prayer, as well as **Miss Tilney**, from whom we are hoping soon to receive good news, seeing that Vittel has now been liberated.

In offering our hearty congratulations to **Miss Craggs** of Tangier on the attainment of her 80th birthday, we express also the earnest hope that both she and her sister, **Mrs. Simpson**, will soon be granted passages for their return to this country.

We rejoice to learn that **Miss Ethel Brookes** of Gafsa arrived safely in U.S.A. on October 30th.

" Keswick Convention in Print."

It being impossible during the war years to hold the Keswick Convention in its historic setting in the Lake District, a temporary home was found in London, and reports of the gatherings held in 1942 and 1943, entitled " Keswick in London," carried the message of the Convention far and wide.

Arrangements were made for a further such war-time " Keswick " in 1944, but it had to be cancelled owing to the flying-bomb attacks on London. In order not to disappoint the wide circle of Christian people looking to Keswick for a timely message for such momentous days as these, however, the speakers who were to have taken part wrote out their addresses, for publication first in *The Life of Faith*, and now reprinted in book form, under the title " THE KESWICK CONVENTION IN PRINT, 1944." This is the second volume so entitled : the first was in 1941, when also it was not possible to hold meetings. That book has been deeply appreciated, especially on the mission field ; and we are confident that its companion volume will have an equally warm welcome. It contains stirring and challenging messages by well-known Keswick speakers, including a Bible Reading by the Bishop of Worcester.

This is a splendid volume to enclose in every parcel sent this Christmas to young men and women serving in the Forces.