

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

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: GENERAL SECRETARY, ERNEST J. LONG

AMERICAN AUXILIARY: HON. SECRETARY, DR. HARVEY FARMER, 2403, BRISTOL AVENUE, TAMPA 6, FLORIDA, U.S.A.

No. 51

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

JAN.-FEB., 1947

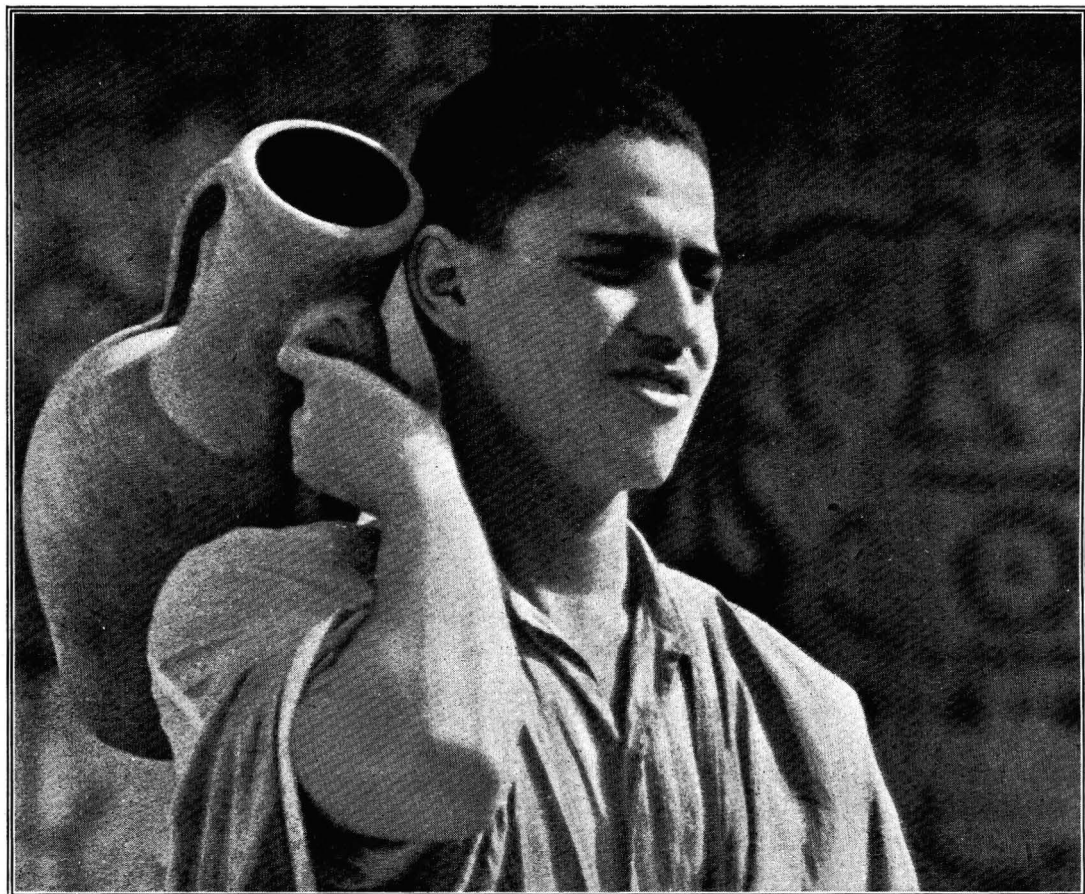


Photo by]

A YOUNG TUNISIAN.

[B.J.L.

What does the future hold for him?

This young man is a native of Kaiouan, "the holy." During the war in Tunisia, the tide of battle surged to the very gates of the city and receded. But although the liberating armies have long since departed, the ancient city has not returned to its pre-war slumberous existence. Wars have their aftermath, political upheavals their world-wide repercussions. New ideas are more potent than new explosives. The ferment of nationalism is leavening the Moslem lands of the Near East. In Calcutta, Bombay, Jerusalem, Haifa and Cairo the danger-signals flare up, one after another. It is the old Ishmael in modern guise—unchanged, implacable, defiant. "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." Only Christ can tame wild men. Pray, then, for the "ambassadors" who have gone, "in Christ's stead," with the Message of Love that alone can reconcile.

Page one

Our New Prayer Circle Notes

THE introduction of "The N.A.M. Prayer Circle Notes" as an inset of "THE N.A.M. NEWS LETTER" requires a few words of explanation.

The first Prayer Circle Notes were issued some years ago, when Mr. E. H. Devin was Deputation Secretary; and their compilation and publication were later continued by the Assistant Secretary, Mr. I. E. Bowles.

During the War years, when correspondence with missionaries in North Africa was either difficult or impossible, and news therefore scanty, the Prayer Notes were issued bi-monthly, and at length quarterly. Many readers doubtless felt that some of the news-items were, in consequence, out of date when they reached them—that the urgency of a particular need, the pressure of a certain situation, had passed.

There is a still more important consideration. Hitherto there have been many readers of the NEWS LETTER who never received the Prayer Notes, as well as a considerable number of praying friends who never received the NEWS LETTER. It seems to us that the opening of the New Year would be a timely occasion for merging the two lists of names and addresses into one big N.A.M. "Family Register," thus assuring that henceforth all our friends receive both publications.

By dispatching the Prayer Circle Notes as an inset to the NEWS LETTER we shall save thousands of envelopes—and stamps—annually, as well as easing the pressure of work at Headquarters at a time when we are considerably under-staffed.

May we express the earnest desire that every one of our readers will become an active prayer partner? These are days both of stern challenge and exceptional difficulty, when nothing short of "all prayer" (Eph. 6, 18) will assure the success of our conflict with the cruel and subtle Adversary who holds the millions of the Moslem world in relentless thrall.

Homecall of Mr. Victor Swanson

WE learn with the greatest regret of the Homecall of one of our former missionaries, Mr. Victor Swanson. Those of our readers who have seen the Missionary Film "Morocco: Land of the Setting Sun," will know that some of its most striking scenes depict a visit to a Moroccan Market, where Mr. Swanson and his young colleague, Mr. Roy Smith, conducted a remarkable open-air meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. Swanson joined the ranks of the N.A.M. in October, 1932; but for many years previously our friends had laboured in Morocco as members of the Kansas Gospel Missionary Union. During the early years of his missionary life, Mr. Swanson lived with

natives, and dressed as a native, gaining such an intimate knowledge of the Moor and such a mastery of his language as may well have made him the envy of every other missionary.

Mr. Swanson has left behind him in Morocco an imperishable memorial of his industry, patience and genius—the Moroccan New Testament in the colloquial (Mogrebi) dialect, the six hundred and one pages of which were originally written in his own exquisite Arabic script, and sent to the British and Foreign Bible Society for photographic reproduction and the preparation of printing blocks.

We honour our beloved brother's memory, and would express to Mrs. Swanson, and those other dear ones upon whom lies most heavily the burden of bereavement, our loving sympathy.

The Old Order Changeth

IN Moslem lands there are customs which have remained unchanged through the centuries, but even so female hearts everywhere aspire to new fashions and here in Tetuan we have witnessed several changes in these past years.

The old white haik in which the women swathed themselves has almost disappeared. The modern Moorish woman minces down the street in a **jellab** (a hooded cloak) and her face is hidden by large sun glasses over her eyes, and the mouth and nose covered with a thin veiling. She has European shoes, gloves, and a handbag.

If the family are comfortably well off, Mrs. Fatma can usually entertain herself by phoning up her friends—one is quite behind the times without a "teelyfon" or radio. One room in the house may be furnished European style (or the Moorish interpretation of it) and many of the folks boast of the number of injections they have had for various complaints. Some of them have travelled by air to Spain, and a few young brides, with their modern-minded husbands, have spent a holiday in a hotel in Tangier or Ceuta, and dressed in European garb while there.

Numerous houses have been built outside the old town walls. No longer is it popular in the homes of the wealthy for the married brothers to share the old palatial house—with the resulting quarrels and jealousies. Each one wants his own abode. The poor have still to be content with renting one room in a house, and share the kitchen with the neighbours.

Two local Moslems have qualified as doctors in Spain. Though at first they were called in to see only men or young children, and the women in the household hid in another room, now there are those who are willing to allow them to see and prescribe for their wives. It is a slow process, but the prejudice is breaking down.

As for maternity work, none of the better class women think of having the old native midwife. They realise she is ignorant, often dirty, and quite incapable of handling an abnormal situation. This is our opportunity of getting into touch with many who would not otherwise be reached with the Gospel. One is asked to visit them, and book for their confinement. When the time comes, and they look so young (often in their early 'teens), so frightened and in pain, one thinks of them, not so much as proud Moslems with a great barrier between, but as women needing our love and help, sinners for whom the Lord Jesus died.

They have many superstitions and customs at these times—a Koran hung above the bed, a charm hidden in their clothing, water to drink brought from the mosques, and often much chanting and calling upon the saints by the numerous female relatives and friends gathered for the occasion. There is fear too that someone with a grudge against them may have written a curse which will bring disaster. Remember us in your prayers as we seek to tell them of the One Who has all power in heaven and earth, and Who loves them, and gave Himself for them.

We are looking forward to Miss Carty joining us at the end of the year, and hope to start a baby welfare clinic. It will be a new venture here, and it remains to be seen if the women will be willing to come. They never carry their own babies in the street, so the servant girl will have to come as well, and they may be afraid of meeting anyone in our house with whom they are not on speaking terms, for human hearts have not changed! They cling to their own religious beliefs, and much prayer is needed that the Name of the Lord Jesus may be magnified in this land where the Prophet has so long usurped the supreme place.

E. Low, Tetuan.

New Beginnings in Fez

FROM the Misses E Higbid and E. Harman comes the following account of the re-opening of a witness among the Spaniards of Fez—a task that is greatly complicated by the lack of convenient transport or suitable accommodation:—

Now that the summer heat is a thing of the past, and we have recommenced our Bible Readings in the Ville Nouvelle ("New Town") we also hope to reach more people through visiting than has yet been possible. We cannot report much progress so far, as, apart from things which occupy us here in the native town, so much time and strength is taken up in our efforts to get not merely to the Ville Nouvelle, but to the other side of it, where most of the Spaniards reside.

Buses are reinstated, though not as in pre-war days; they do not run direct, are very dirty and overcrowded, and what with the walk from the house (inside the town) to the bus (outside the gate), then changing buses, we spend as much time getting to our destination as if we walked (from the gate near the house) the whole way on the outside road. The latter is quite a pleasant walk at this time of the year, and we often walk in, but are too tired to walk back; moreover, often it is dark by the time we arrive at the city gate, and as the electric light sometimes completely fades out, we need to take our torches with us, or the walk home from the bus is reminiscent of black-out nights in England, though fortunately minus the terrors which attended the latter.

We are so grateful to our Spanish friends for opening their home to us for the weekly Bible Reading (on Wednesday afternoons), but we long to have some place of our own where it is possible for interested ones to gather. Our numbers necessarily remain limited at present, as when visiting, one cannot give a general invitation to a private house as one would if the gathering could be a public meeting.

Nevertheless, houses here seem as impossible to get as they are in the homeland. Application for such in the V.N. must be made to the Municipal Authorities, and the latter will not accept names of any applicants who are not connected with military or government service. Humanly speaking, so long as these have priority (which, after all, is only just) there does not seem any chance for us, nor do we feel that at present, in view of the friends whom we know personally are waiting for houses or rooms, it would help our cause if we should get one first. Of this there is little likelihood, but our prayer now is that GOD will show us His plan and His will, and if we are to stay on the edge of the native town, that perhaps He will give us something near the gate where the bus starts, so that friends could come more regularly to us. That would not be at all the same as living amongst the people in the V.N. but it would at least simplify matters for them.

We shall value prayerful remembrance that GOD will open up to us His way, and that whatever it is, He will give us strength and ability to follow it; and that wisdom may be given in our contacts and conversations with new friends, both in the New Town and the Old, that He may be glorified in us, and that souls may come to a knowledge of salvation through the Word which we proclaim.

Cherchell: A Year of Progress

It is little more than a twelvemonth ago that Mr. and Mrs. Norman Pearce, with Miss Evelyn Collins as their fellow-worker, took up residence at

the Mission House at Cherchell. We have just received an encouraging report that summarises the first year's progress. Here it is :—

" We are writing this about one year after our arrival in North Africa. As we look back we are full of thankfulness to GOD for all His blessing and enabling. We praise Him for the speedy de-requisitioning of the whole house, for permits granted for material for repairs, for help in language study, for the great improvement in food conditions and for Zohra's coming to live among us to help us in so many ways.

" The children's classes continue to give us encouragement. Even though we may be discouraged one week because of the naughtiness of the boys, yet it is amazing how they remember the story the week after, down to the smallest details. We have been offered the use of a piece of land on which they can play games and when we can get a football we hope to give them the opportunity of letting off steam ! We are also seeking to teach them to read and write in their own language. We need infinite patience and wisdom in dealing with these Moslem youths.

" A daughter of one of the Christian women is also learning to read and write in Arabic and has a thirst for knowledge which we pray may be directed into right channels. We have begun to read the Gospels together. From a child she has known the Holy Scriptures, but we long that as she reads for herself she may be made wise unto salvation.

" Contacts with the Arab men are not easy to make but the Lord is opening doors even here. Weekly visits are paid to an invalid who appreciates the Scriptures being read to him and can read a little himself. We had a long discussion recently with a Koranic schoolmaster. He certainly had the Koran in his head and we long that the true Word might be hid in his heart. Though we are not allowed to do medical work here we are seeking to help the husband of one of the women who comes to the meetings, with simple treatment for bronchitis and rheumatism. The gratitude of such folk is quite touching and we trust it may lead them to realise the Love of the One who came to heal sin-sick souls."

A Tunisian Outpost Re-visited

Miss E. Brookes, accompanied by Miss G. E. Petter, has paid a visit to her old station of Gafsa, in Southern Tunisia. She received a warm welcome and found that neither the Message nor the messenger had been forgotten. In a bus one day, two or three boys began singing a chorus to show they had not forgotten it. Many of the girls who formerly attended the classes are now married and have left home.

The search for a house was not successful. The only possibility seems to be in the military quarter, but others have prior claims upon the available accommodation. The best thing would be the house formerly occupied, and the lady living in it at present is willing to vacate it as soon as she finds something else.

However, another and almost equally pressing need is a fellow-worker. It would not be wise for Miss Brookes to return to Gafsa alone.

Meanwhile, and until the cloud lifts, Miss Brookes will continue to live at " Bethesda " and carry on her visitation in the native quarter of Tunis.

A Sense of Things Sacred

THE other day my husband asked the carpenter to saw off an inch or two from each end of some wooden benches which we use for the Italian meeting on Sunday afternoon. Just that much less in length gives an easier gangway to get in and out.

Our Jewish friend, who lives upstairs, carefully gathered up the tiny blocks of wood and offered to dispose of them for us—which needed explanation. He explained that, as they had come from seats put to sacred use (for the accommodation of worshippers) they must not be thrown away and thus lost sight of, nor used as fuel for cooking purposes : they must be disposed of by fire unused for any other purpose !

It rather reminded us that the Moslem never carries his Koran lower than his heart, and never leaves it lying about in a lowly place in his home : it is hung high up on the wall, where no harm can reach it.

" Let . . . more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster."

From Edith L. Liley, Tripoli.

* * *

AN URGENT REQUEST

If the envelope in which you receive this copy of the NEWS LETTER is incorrectly addressed in any way ; if there is any inaccuracy in the spelling of surname or address, or if your initials are omitted, will you kindly send us a post-card ? We are most anxious that our new Addressograph stencils should be as flawless as your kind co-operation can make them !

One final request. Will those friends who normally receive a package of NEWS LETTERS kindly send us a post-card stating their up-to-date requirements ?