

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA"

The N.A.M. News Letter



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AN OASIS VILLAGE

Finance: A Call to Prayer

ON November 1st we were unable to send out the customary monthly allowance to our missionaries supported from General Funds; and today, November 30th, the position as we go to press is substantially unchanged. The month's income has sufficed to pay passage-money and trade accounts, but there is still

nothing in hand towards the December 1st allocations.

During the past year we have added considerably to our commitments through the acceptance of a number of new workers; but there has been no corresponding increase in the average daily income.

Those of our readers who desire to be guided in their giving to the Lord's work may be

interested in a letter that has just reached us—accompanied by a substantial gift :—

“ On all sides we hear of the *desperate* need of money in the Mission Field, and I can well believe it, knowing how short money is today, and how high is the price of commodities. We therefore feel the urge to forego our *family* Christmas Gifts this year, and to send for the missionaries in North Africa the money that would otherwise have gone in presents . . . ”

We at Headquarters were deeply touched to receive such a letter, and the love-gift that must have represented considerable self-denial.

A careful analysis of our income from day-to-day gifts (as distinct from occasional legacies and non-recurring items) reveals that a year of record receipts (1947) has been followed by a year of much-reduced income. That the Lord has a purpose of gracious blessing in thus testing the faith of His missionary children we doubt not ; but we wonder, too, if He has not a message for His stewards, through whom alone, as His channels, He supplies the daily wants of His missionary servants.

The urgent need of reinforcements upon the Field has in large measure been met during the past year or two★—certainly up to the limits of available accommodation in a land where there is a serious dearth of houses. Now it is our earnest expectation that those who have “ prayed out ” the “ labourers ” will, by loving and self-sacrificial giving, supply them with those modest essentials of “ food and raiment ” that are their bare requirements.

Will you, dear friend, kindly join us in a season of special prayer that the supply-problem may be solved, not by a temporary easement of the situation, but by an ample and sustained inflow of daily gifts ?

★IMPORTANT FOOTNOTE

This statement calls for careful interpretation so far as our American and Canadian friends are concerned. Will they very kindly note (1) that by “ urgently needed reinforcements ” we have in mind the bringing of *occupied* stations up to reasonable strength—as Tripoli, for example, by the sending out of Miss J. Wilberforce and Miss E. O. Pierce; and (2) that we are limited by British Treasury restrictions from transmitting more than a certain sum annually for the support of missionary work in North Africa. We have just about reached the limit of our “ quota ”; and even if gifts were

available for the purchase of further Mission houses we should not be permitted to export these capital sums.

Under the providence of GOD we are therefore constrained to look to our friends on the far side of the Atlantic for such enormously increased supplies of men and material aid as can alone assure the effective occupation and evangelisation of North Africa.

Meeting Spiritual Need at the Hospital

It seems extraordinarily difficult to furnish with regularity interesting items suitable for publication. Perhaps this is particularly so when one’s more direct missionary work is somewhat of a routine nature. Day in and day out the Word is preached over at the Hospital—to the out-patients by Dr. St. John and myself in turn, and also in the men’s ward. The ladies have a rota for the women’s ward. Sometimes in the Hospital hall we have as many as seventy to a hundred at a time to preach to, and one endeavours to give them a short Gospel message driving home some definite point.

It needs little imagination to realise that this is not always easy. Firstly, being Moslems, they just do not want the Gospel ; and, secondly, they have come seeking physical help, not spiritual, and most of them are impatient to be attended to. Add to this the crying babies, the noisy small children and some of the women trying to talk to one another behind their veils and heavy “ haiks,” and you will realise that the atmosphere is not exactly ideal. However, some do listen, and nodding heads indicating approval sometimes encourage the preacher to drive his point home still further, although he must beware that he is not being deceived by the nod of somnolence.

It is not often anybody walks out in defiance, but just the other morning a young man did. He was well dressed and probably educated, but obviously he had not come to “ The English Hospital ” to be told that Matthew 7, 21 might possibly have something to do with him personally.

In the Men’s Ward recently, particularly in view of two or three “ long-timers,” I went methodically through Mark’s Gospel, and just at present am continuing the story as it were with some of the more outstanding incidents from The Acts. It is not often we have good readers in the ward, and generally speaking one has to be extraordinarily simple.

I think the Sunday afternoon Moorish meeting is always an encouraging item on our week's programme. There is generally a congregation of some 30 to 40 men and women, although perhaps only half-a-dozen or so are professing Christians. At present there are four of us taking turns conducting this service—Dr. St. John, Mr. Campbell, Si M—— and myself. Si M—— is the only Moor we have here at present whom we feel suitable and able to share in such ministry.

We understand the Conference is to be held again this year at Marrakesh and there are some here who are hoping to go. We might well pray for prepared messages for prepared hearts.

(From the Rev. L. J. Boeking.)

The Spanish Work at Tangier

The Spanish work continues to give us much cause for praise. The people are steadily keen, and very regular in their attendance at the meetings—especially the prayer meeting, which even the young folk attend very well. About thirty of us gather together each Wednesday.

For the young people a special gathering has been arranged for Thursday evenings. They did *start* on their own, but found they had not enough experience to make much progress; so my husband and Don Samuel give them Bible Study, and they are encouraged to give short Bible Talks themselves on alternate weeks. Sometimes they have a time of hymn singing. Just now they are learning something special for Christmas.

Five of them are converted, and these take charge when they go out tract-distributing. On All Souls Day they gave away about five hundred portions on the road to the cemetery. There are sixteen to eighteen in the group, and they hope to add to their number as time goes on. They realise how hard it is to win others—especially the young, for whom there are so many counter-attractions nowadays.

(From Mrs. D. Padilla, Tangier.)

Resuming the Task in Arzila

The builders are just about to start work on the schoolroom at the back in the garden, which room we hope may get finished before the really heavy rains in the late Autumn. We shall be glad to transfer our girls' class to that department in due course, as class-days are rather a scramble in the limited space of the sitting-room. If you know anything at all about Moors and Mooresses you will know that they take up ample space when they sit. Their offspring are no exception to the rule and it is often

a puzzle as to where the next one can be squeezed in.

During the first half of the time spent with us, the children get to work knitting. This is becoming a real craze with the modern Moslem young lady, as it is far removed in character from their own Moslem art; although the most beautiful "Fair Isle" patterns that one ever saw were in a kind of legging worn by the mountain women and worked in soft shades of various tinted wools. These women wear leggings or gaiters to protect their legs from the thistles and thorns in their long journeys on foot to and from the villages, and also for warmth. To return to the class, the children are quite interested in the knitting, most of them having reached the stage of knitting a pullover for herself.

Then the change-over to the Gospel message comes along. As one speaks it is often borne in upon us that they may listen to all that is being said, but their query is "What is the Gospel according to you?" Yes, our lives are read more than our words, and they learn more by what we do than by what we teach. It is true that the things written about our Lord were "all that He began *to do* and *to teach*." In those records the "doing" had the pre-eminence. How we long to do the things He did! Yet did He not promise His disciples that they should do greater works?

(From the Misses D. Richardson and E. Prideaux.)

News from our Oldest Station

Mr. Willson, of Djemâa Sahridj, writes about a young man who died recently from galloping consumption, like so many of the Kabyles. He says about him: "He used to be regular in his attendance at the meetings until he went to work in Algiers. I had a very good report of him from there, but after a certain time things went wrong; he lost his job and, I am afraid, got in with bad companions, fell ill and came home to die. He sent for me when he felt the end was near. We had a talk and prayed together, and he joined as well as he was able in the singing of his favourite hymns.

I called the next day, but it was too late, he had lost consciousness and died soon after. His Moslem relations buried him, but I am convinced he died trusting in Jesus. At the same house his cousin confessed himself a Christian.

Numbers are increasing. I repeat what I have said several times before; the surprise is, not that there are so few Christian natives, but that,

when taking everything into consideration, there are so many."

Tunis: A Contrast in Faces

My first impression after returning from a wintry summer in England was how lovely it was to be in a land of sunshine again, with its marvellous blue skies and lovely sunsets. Since then I have been contrasting the beauties of nature in this land with its people. As I look on the faces of the people in the streets, I am struck more than ever by the large number who have really bad, wicked faces. One can see evil-living written all over them, and we know that for the most part their religion allows it. Then, too, the number of wretched, miserable-looking folk, dirty, ill-clothed and squalid. What a picture of need! Most of all, spiritual need!

Coming into our little meeting at Bethesda on a Sunday morning, I noticed the difference between them and the seething masses around. What a difference the Saviour has made in their lives. Their bright, clean faces, showing happy spirits and clean lives, are indeed a witness to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. As soon as the children saw me arrive they came round the gate to greet me and to ask whether I had brought any dollies from England, and when I said "Yes!" they fairly shrieked with delight and wanted to hug me round the neck! "For whom?" they shouted. "For the good children who come regularly to Sunday School and behave nicely there," replied I. At which they all danced for joy, as though they had no doubt they would figure amongst the good and receive the due reward of such righteousness!

However, on the Sunday they turned up and, I was told, behaved considerably better than they have been doing during my absence; so perhaps the little admonition is bearing some fruit. One particularly bad boy remembered all the Scripture passages they learned last year. He looked very surprised when I told him he would never be able to say he never knew the Word, for he has so much of it in his head, but I'm afraid not much in his heart. Still, one never knows. I cast a look backwards and remember that I myself at school was top in Scripture knowledge and bottom in conduct! So we hope on. Love hopeth all things!

(From Miss K. M. E. Gotelee, Tunis.)

Preparing the Way of the Lord

Our dear friend and brother K— has, not very far from here, a large orchard situated by

the side of a *wad* or river. It is not, however, full of water but — Oh, familiar tragedy! — parched and dry for month after month, and, of latter times, year after year. When, however, it does rain in the early Autumn, the water gushes down this *wad* and hurls itself into the sea.

K— therefore conceived the idea of erecting a dam to divert some of this water into his orchard. His workmen hurriedly constructed a primitive affair of mud and branches. They had hardly finished when to their great joy down came the rain, and a swiftly-flowing stream flooded the garden. The dam, however, was swept away. So they went to work again and dug a deeper canal and built a stronger dam. Then one day when they were at work in the garden and the sun was shining and the sky was cloudless, 'in an hour that they thought not' the garden was suddenly flooded with water. How? Because it had rained fully fifteen miles away and the water had swept along the parched river bed and once more had watered the garden.

This is a parable of our work. We are 'preparing the way of the Lord.' Translation, classes, itinerating, personal testimony—all is preparing the way. Pray for us then that we may see to it that our dams are strong, the canals deep, and that when the flood-tide of blessing does come we may be "on the job" and ready.

(From Mr. R. I. Brown, Nabeul, Tunisia.)

Stop Press News Item

In returning the final proof to the Printer today (December 11) we are so happy to be able to tell you of the Lord's signal intervention. From a friend who has never before been in a position to help so generously, we have received a substantial gift which has made possible the sending out of full allowances to our missionaries for November and December.

The very same day (a few hours earlier) two other friends had written, sending a very large cheque. It represented a sum of money they had put aside for a visit to North Africa, but which they now felt led to forego.

Our hearts are deeply stirred by such self-denial, and we are profoundly grateful that the Lord has given us such grand friends. Yet we sigh a little wistfully as we realise that such exceptional sacrifice would not be necessary if the Christian Church, as a whole, gave with more liberal heart to the Lord's work among Moslems—and "other sheep"—in needy North Africa.