

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA"

The N.A.M. News Letter



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Photo by

E. C. LE GRICE, F.R.P.S.

ON THE HIGHWAY TO LIBYA

Most significantly, these young Arab wayfarers on the road to Tripoli are framed in the doorway of a motor-car. In a land of "far distances", where the missionaries are exceedingly few and the population vast and widely-dispersed, we cannot begin to speak of "effective occupation" or "thoroughly efficient evangelisation" until the Christian worker is made completely mobile by the provision of a motor-car to carry him and his Bibles and Gospels over roads and tracks and by-ways that are ill-served—or un-served!—by public transport facilities.

If the missionary, for lack of such a vehicle, is confined to his station, and unable to attempt an itinerant evangelism, it means that fully eighty per cent of

Finance : a still Serious Situation

Our first word must be one of warm gratitude to the friends who have responded so graciously and generously in helping to ease the serious situation outlined in our "Finance" paragraphs appearing in the January-February "News Letter". Many of the letters accompanying the love-gifts expressed true concern and contained heartening assurances of prayerful remembrance. It was clear to us that a large number of the contributions were made possible only by considerable self-denial.

Even so, the income during January fell far short of our needs, so that we were able to send out *only one-half of the normal monthly allowance* for our missionaries' domestic expenses for the whole of February. The general situation, therefore, is only slightly eased, and we are as dependent as ever upon the kindly support that, in the final analysis, is the product of a true work of grace in the hearts of the Lord's children.

Missionary Economics

The Moslem world is a spiritual desert. Nothing would have impelled Philip the Evangelist to turn his back upon the glow and gladness of that successful campaign in Samaria and to go down "to Gaza which is desert" except the irresistible urge of the Holy Spirit. So to-day, none goes down into the desert of Islam, whether to preach or to pray, but such as is "led of the Spirit".

Out in North Africa we have a gallant little company of widely-scattered missionaries who, devoted to their Lord and loyal to their vocation, are "enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ" with faith and fortitude. We doubt not that many in the Homeland are exhibiting a corresponding fidelity upon the Hill of Intercession, well aware that any slackening in the prayer-battle will have immediate and widespread repercussions in the desert-plain below. But the most spiritual of Christians realise that missionaries are not an exalted race of beings, living on air, but ordinary men and women, needing food and clothing like other mortals, and transported to and from their Mission Field at considerable cost.

It obviously needed the tithes of ten loyal Israelites to support one Levite: even so, a missionary force in North Africa seventy-strong can only be adequately maintained through the self-sacrificial giving of quite a large number of sympathetic believers in the Homeland. Apparently, through one cause or another, that number has become too few so far as the N.A.M. is concerned.

Can You Open this Door ?

Here at Mission Headquarters, with our finger upon the pulse of things, we are understandably more alert than most to the ebb and flow of vital missionary forces. To vary the figure, we are like those that can scan the dials in a power house,

and who know that unless immediate economies are effected or auxiliary supplies at once available, they may have to "shed the load"—which must mean that thousands will be denied Light and Power.

To-day the N.A.M. has far too few "partners". During January we did not hear from even one in ten of our "News Letter" readers: and for three years, at least, we have received, so far as we can discover, no communication whatever from fully half of the friends who have been regular recipients of these bi-monthly dispatches of news items.

If interest is flagging because of any failure on the part of Headquarters, we are eager to seek to revive heart-concern through such means as can be devised.

Now, *this is where you can help*, dear friend! In a month or two's time we shall have in the Homeland a number of missionaries who will do their utmost to revive or create interest by addressing meetings if only you will open the door of your church or chapel or mission hall and say "Come in!"

Of course, you may feel that the matter does not rest in your hands—that you have no authority to give this hearty welcome. Why not make it a matter of special prayer and then approach your Minister or Missionary Secretary?

Please let us know at Headquarters what opening you can arrange and just what dates (between May 1st and October 31st) are available to choose from and we will send a missionary straight from the Field with a message from the Lord. For Sunday ministry we expect that Mr. R. Stanley Miles, of Tunis and the Rev. Robert Brown, of Nabeul, will be available.

A Day of Prayer

In large measure, of course, these days of hardship are a concomitant of the "perilous times" through which we are passing. Whilst Britain as a whole is involved in an economic situation of unparalleled gravity, the Church itself is experiencing one of the greatest crises in its history. Organisation and action are alike unavailing in the absence of *prayer*.

So whilst we stress our need of such practical aid as sympathetic friends may be led to contribute, we affirm without hesitation that our *supreme* need is of Spirit-filled intercessors who know how to lay hold upon GOD in prayer.

The Council members of the North Africa Mission are therefore earnestly desirous that friends of the Lord's work in North Africa should set apart SATURDAY, MARCH 25TH, as a DAY OF PRAYER for that hard Moslem field and all who labour there. Readers of the News Letter will find ample material for "guided intercession" if they peruse the Prayer Circle Notes and gather together the topics and spheres of missionary witness outlined in the Daily Prayer Calendar. If

at the place of worship you attend there should happen to be a Saturday evening Prayer Meeting, perhaps you could graciously prevail with the Leader to make intercession for North Africa a special feature!

At our "N.A.M.—A.M.B. Rally", arranged some time ago for March 25th, we shall be devoting the Morning Session to waiting upon GOD. (See announcement on Page Four.)

N.A.M. Representation in America, Canada and Sweden

During the early months of 1950 our missionary brother, the REV. ROBERT BROWN, of Nabeul, Tunisia, is engaged in an extensive programme of deputation work in the U.S.A. and Canada. The first news that has reached us (from our N.A.M. American Council Secretary, Mr. Ed. A. Steele) is extremely gratifying:—

"Our brother has been on the go almost continuously since arriving, with at least two engagements every day. By the time he has completed his first week he will have spoken to almost 3,000 people, and in addition several thousands more will have been reached through his two radio broadcasts. Altogether it has been a very propitious beginning, for which we give our precious Lord all the praise and glory".

On his first Lord's Day in America Mr. Brown occupied the pulpit of Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse with such acceptance that he has been warmly invited to return. The latest letter to reach us from Philadelphia tells of the American Council's earnest recommendation that Mr. Brown should visit the States again in 1951, God willing, thus assuring that the effective representation of North Africa's spiritual needs, so eloquently voiced by Mr. Fife a year ago, and now echoed by Mr. Brown, would be most helpfully continued.

In Sweden, our sister MRS. ALMA STRAUTINS (née Kraulis) has embarked upon an even more difficult task. In a country where she is a stranger, and where no preliminary programme-building has been possible, she and her husband are making a gallant endeavour, with God's blessing, to create heart-concern for the Lord's work in North Africa—a field little known in Sweden.

For both of these ventures—in the U.S.A. and Sweden—we crave our readers' prayers. Deputation ministry under such conditions makes immense demands upon spirit, nervous system and body.

In Moorish Casablanca

The past weeks have been very noisy, with the excited children banging on their "Tareja", and singing their songs, preceding the "Aishoura", or Feasts of Charity, when the faithful Moslems must give a tenth of their year's earnings, to be divided

among the poor. It is celebrated upon the tenth day of the new Moslem year. It is similar to the French New Year, when they have all kinds of children's toys, horns, balloons, Tarejas, (which are rather like pottery vases, but the base is skin instead of pottery—the skin heated over the fire to make it really resonant).

The evening before the feast they build bonfires in the streets, and run through the flames one after the other as the crowd shouts and beats its drums. It is deafening everywhere, and goes on all night. Those who are not allowed out in the streets to play, light the fires on their roofs, and the echo and vibrations literally make the house shake! It is the women's and children's feast, when the children take their famous bone from the sheep killed the month before, and bury it in the cemetery on the feast day.

The excitement outside has its reaction on the ones who are in school. They get the giggles when the younger children are gathered outside our door singing and drumming for days. One evening at 9.30 a neighbour called out of the window for them to move on, they were "breaking her ear drums, and she couldn't sleep!"

The pilgrims have returned from Mecca, and there have been big celebrations for these men, who now have gained the title of "Haj", and the people must pay them homage. They now have many privileges they did not know before, as people step aside and give them priority everywhere they go. They want to keep in good standing with them. Their women folk will try to make social calls at the home, etc. It is just as hard for the folk here to "keep up with the Jones's" as it is at home! (From Miss Emily Grant, Casablanca.)

The Girls of Algiers

Let me introduce you to our home . . . From the front of the house we have a wonderful view of the port and the city with the main mosque. However, it is not the call for prayer from it that awakens me in the morning, but the bell announcing time for mass at the Catholic Church opposite.

Many visitors tap at the door during the day, Europeans and natives. All are welcome, providing we have room for them, but if they come on Sunday afternoon while we have Sunday School, we have not much space for them, unless they join the children. I wish you could see them all; they are so lovable, even though they are scamps at times. You should just hear them sing—not always in tune, but when you have Arabs and Kabyles mixed, what can you expect, especially when Rania who loves to sing at the top of her voice is quite out of tune and little Kader sings all on one note? At lesson time they really do listen well while the story is being told—sometimes with Flannelgraph aids. Then they repeat texts in French and Arabic.

On Sunday at tea-time you would find several young Kabyle girls, all of whom were trained in missionary orphanages and are now earning their own living. A native spoke of them as being *déclassées* (outcaste), because they are Christians and are therefore cut off from their own people. Yet, being natives, they are not accepted in European society. Sad, is it not? But they are our sisters in Christ—girls who in this city, with all its wickedness, are still standing for Christ. They are lonely, needing fellowship and a home, so are glad to gather with us. Please pray for them!

Quite a different group of girls gathers around me in a native house on a Tuesday afternoon. These are "shut-in" girls awaiting marriage. They asked me to teach them dressmaking and embroidery. They were children in Margaret's (Miss Ross's) class when she lived amongst them, so they know the Bible and choruses. One girl shows a real hunger for the Word of God and just drinks in every word. They are a great help to me also with my Arabic.

But we only touch the fringe of the need. There is no-one living or working in the native town. A friend wrote to me concerning Moslem work, and I quote from her letter these words: "O Lord, make us to weep with them and shed real tears in prayer for them". If you could see the need you too would weep with them in prayer.

(From Miss M. Hutchinson.)

From Tripoli

When I last wrote, Miss Wilberforce and I were enjoying that lovely holiday which the Lord provided for us in Malta. Much has happened since then. Dr. and Mrs. Liley have returned; the dispensary work has recommenced after the summer vacation, and a great number of Arabs have come for treatment and heard the Gospel. We are noticing how many more Arabs come these days. It used to be the Jews who predominated, but now it is certainly the Arabs who are more numerous, probably because of the overwhelming exodus of Jews back to Palestine. Approximately five hundred every fortnight have been embarking of late, amongst them our very immediate neighbours—or really I should say friends, because we did reckon them amongst our friends, and their going has left quite a gap. We really miss them, especially "Bil Khany" who kept a little green-grocer's shop next door to us and who has known the missionaries at "65" for at least a period of thirty years, off and on. And now he has gone—still, as far as we know, without Christ; still a Jew, without a Messiah. Will you follow him, as we do, with your prayers? (From Miss Olwen Pierce.)

Our Spring Rally and Day of Prayer

Those who have a warm place in their hearts both for the North Africa Mission and the Algiers Mission Band will rejoice to know that these sister societies are expressing their affinity, and identity of aim, in a new way—that of co-operation in deputation meetings and rallies of a special type.

Quite recently the REV. HAROLD W. FIFE has become a Council Member of the "A.M.B.", and, not merely as a reciprocal gesture, but with a true appreciation of his experience and worth, the "N.A.M." has welcomed the REV. HAROLD W. STALLEY (Secretary of the A.M.B.) to its Council chamber. When it is remembered that Mr. Fife is now in charge of the Church formerly occupied by Mr. Stalley's late father, it will be readily understood that the joint deputation work in which the two "Rev. Harold W's" have shared has been both happy and profitable.

The N.A.M. and the A.M.B. have now organised a SPRING RALLY, when friends in the London Area will be able to SEE and HEAR news of THE WHOLE FIELD OF NORTH AFRICA from Casablanca to Tripoli. The DATE for your diary is SATURDAY, MARCH 25TH. THE PLACE is THE MARY SUMNER HALL, Tufton Street, S.W.1.—quite close to Westminster Abbey.

There will be a MORNING GATHERING FOR INTERCESSION at 11; an AFTERNOON SESSION from 3.30 to 4.45, when the Chair will be taken by MR. W. CECIL COLLINSON, with the REV. T. J. P. WARREN AND MR. ERNEST J. LONG as speakers. Following the TEA INTERVAL (4.45 to 5.45), MISSIONARY FILMS will be exhibited (with running commentaries) from 6 to 6.45. At the EVENING MEETING (7 to 7.45) the speakers will be the REV. H. W. STALLEY and the REV. H. W. FIFE.

SPECIAL NOTE. In view of the gravity of the hour—mirrored in the earlier paragraphs of this News Letter—but bearing in mind, too, the supreme opportunities and demands of the work in North Africa, we are inviting all Missionaries on the Field and all friends in the Homeland to join with us in special intercession on March 25th. In your private devotions, and at such meetings as you may attend or convene on that day, will you very kindly endeavour to assure that the whole of the Lord's work in North Africa comes in for special remembrance? Thank you so much!