

Continuing "NORTH AFRICA"

# The N.A.M. News Letter



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[E. C. Le Grice

## A Tunisian Byway

Tunisia is still disturbingly prominent in the news—which surely means that it should be a priority in our praying. There have been "incidents" in Gabès, from which Mission Station our workers Miss Ada Clack and Miss Jones write: "Our earlier opinion is confirmed: Gabès is definitely a strategic link between eastern and western travel across North Africa. It is the step-over point between Tripoli and Tunis. The constant stream of travellers drawn from every race and creed presents opportunities without number: pilgrims to and from Mecca and Palestine; tourists and diplomats and business men; archaeologists, geologists, soldiers, adventurers, hikers, desert nomads, students, missionaries. We should like to offer hospitality to any wayfarers sent to us—saints or

## How GOD is working in Chauen

I am afraid it is six months since I last wrote,\* but the winter has been rather a busy one. It has been a disappointing time in some ways, bringing with it the disillusionment that is bound to come sooner or later as one begins to realise the true characters of those who have never known Christ. My inexperience has told, and some of whom I wrote hopefully have ceased to take an interest when they understood what was involved. Others in whose sincerity I believed have merely been waiting the opportunity to steal, and have often succeeded. Learning to mistrust is rather a sad experience, and one sees how easily natural love breaks down when tried. The verses which have, perhaps, meant more to me than any others this Spring have been Titus 3; 3 & 4, especially those two words "after that." They seem to me to show us the Lord steadfastly looking on and fully discerning the extent of our malice and hatefulness, and "after that" the undiscouraged, unresentful, uncynical, unembittered, uncalculating kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared. My own reactions to disillusionment make me realise that my greatest prayer-need of all is that there may be in me more of that mind that was in Christ Jesus.

But standing out in contrast to all that has been discouraging there are a few precious individuals who seem to be loving and sincere and growing steadily in understanding. I will tell you a little about some of them so that you can pray for them.

Z— is a middle-aged woman whose life has been hard and sad. She has accepted what she understands of the Gospel message very simply and finds real comfort in it. At the end of the Women's Meeting she sometimes stays behind and says: "Now say it again; my heart needs comfort and I understand better when you talk to me alone." Her work is to carry buckets of water to and fro in the steaming atmosphere of the public baths, and perhaps her favourite verse is Matt. 11; 28. She takes it quite literally to mean that Jesus will help her carry her buckets and keep her from feeling tired. I don't think she yet realises that Christ presents a challenge as well as comfort, so let us pray that she will be shown this, and that I shall be given wisdom in teaching her.

F—, Z—'s daughter, is a sweet, intelligent girl of about twenty-five, who comes and works for me alternate mornings. She is eager to learn and often when her work is finished she will come and sit with the little schoolgirls on the floor and try to learn her letters. Recently I have started seriously to teach her to read, going to her home at night, where she and her mother, her younger brother and little daughter gather around joyfully to read and sing and pray. She has a very simple faith, and I believe is really learning to bring her

temporal needs to God in prayer. Sometimes neighbours drop in and F— likes them to be included too. Little M—, the younger brother of twelve years of age, seems to be going on steadily. He works hard at a loom all day, but he never misses a boys' meeting, and his attention and helpfulness make me feel that his definite childlike confession of conversion was real. But he is growing up fast and needs to take a stand among other boys.

A—, the weaver's boy of seventeen, needs urgent prayer. He seemed to be coming on well, but one night he arrived late, in great distress, and said he had had a dream three nights in succession. He had seen a cross set in an open doorway and the figure of a man with outstretched arms pleading with him to pass through and go on in the way of God. But as he looked, two Moslem priests came out of the shadows to prevent him and threatened to kill him. We sat in the dispensary and read about Stephen and the Crown of Life given to those who were faithful unto death, but apparently Satan won, and he did not return for many weeks. However, in England my parents were praying for him specially, and others prayed, too. One Sunday night, about three weeks ago, I felt very burdened for him and was praying for definite victory, and God must have been answering almost while I was praying because very early on the Monday morning A— arrived. "I dreamed again," he said, "and a man came to me and said I must come back, so I came as soon as I woke." We had a happy time of reading and prayer, and he returned several times, but now I am told his master is preventing him again.

I have about fifteen rather irregular little girls who are supposed to attend school for two-and-a-half hours every morning. They are mostly children too delicate or too ragged to attend the ordinary school. Rather a pathetic little crowd! Pray for 10-year old M—, who lives with some goats and who seems to love and understand the Gospel.

Two outlying villages have been visited this Spring and other invitations to further villages have had to be refused. Market day brings quite a few villagers to the house, and this suggests scope for fresh opportunities. Please pray for all the village contacts and for literature carried back to remote mountain districts where the Gospel has never been preached.

—From Miss Patricia St. John.

## Encouragement at Settatt

We have been greatly encouraged recently in answer to prayer concerning the older girls' class. After the Christmas Treats our numbers fell and those who continued coming were proving very

\*The reference is to a special circular letter.—Ed.

our home on Sunday morning, wanting an interview. That evening he attended a small service in Arabic. We sang, read, and prayed together, and Mr. Bob Brown brought a good Gospel message from John 1. After having talked with Bob several times since Sunday, this precious soul was found by the Saviour. He had been remarkably prepared of the Lord through having met some Christians from Algeria while in Tunis. To-day, in talking with him, I could see the change: he is really joyful. Do pray that he may be kept from temptation and fully established in the Lord. Two other young students are serious enquirers. One of them is afraid of what his family and friends would do if he were to come out for Christ.

In the afternoons we Missionary sisters set off about 3.30 to visit the women in their homes, for Moslem women do not go out very often—some leave the house just once a week: others still less. They are very glad to have visitors, and listen to the Bible stories, songs, and message of Salvation through Christ. There are frequently boys or men about also, and except for some contradictions now and then, they are courteous and listen as well as, or better than, the women. There are always children running around; there are visits from close neighbours; tea or coffee served, which tastes simply awful, and many other interruptions.

Recently we have entered three new homes. The first entrance is the most difficult, for it must come about by invitation. There is no such thing as house to house visitation, for no door is ever opened when you knock until you say who you are. Strangers are not allowed in. One woman has been contacted who still remembers parts of a hymn taught her by missionaries over twenty years ago. This routine visitation is enjoyable, and we love the people, but as yet we see no sign of real interest from any of the women. They like our visits, but our message has so far failed to enter their hearts. Pray for real heart conviction amongst the women.

—From Mr. and Mrs. Don Rickards.

## Witness among British Soldiers in Tripoli

While the first aim of the N.A.M. is the evangelisation of the native inhabitants of North Africa (all strict Mohammedans, except for a small Jewish minority), yet the Europeans who have settled there are not forgotten as also needing the Word of God for their salvation. Among these there has been the growing British community in Tripoli since the triumphal entry of General Montgomery's Eighth Army in January, 1943. Their numbers can be judged from the fact that over 400 children attend the British Army day school in this city. As some of these have Roman Catholic parents, it

is a matter for praise that about 150 are on the register of the English Sunday School, and there are very few short of this number in regular attendance.

The Sunday School is superintended by the English Director of the Labour Office and his wife, while my wife is pianist and teaches the infant class of nearly forty youngsters aged four and five years. The children so love it that I have been told that when a child is unruly at home, the stern parent has only to say "Behave yourself or you won't go to Sunday School" to ensure a prompt return to good behaviour! I wonder how often such a threat would be effective in Britain or America!

Among the soldiers, the Tripoli Christian Fellowship, with three weekly meetings, was begun by godly men early in 1943. The membership was fluctuating, through the ending of war service, when my wife and I returned to Tripoli in 1945, so the then Senior Chaplain advised my appointment as a part-time honorary Army Scripture Reader, to give me recognition for visiting men in barracks and hospital, besides the oversight of the Fellowship meetings.

Hospital visitation has been a fruitful way of spreading the Word of God at a time when men have leisure for reading and meditation, while the need for it is often revealed by appalling ignorance of the Scriptures and the Way of Salvation. Since last November there has been no Free Church Chaplain, so Mr. and Mrs. Pearce have the oversight at the old Mission Hall in the native city, while a few lads and some civilian friends gather for Bible Study at our apartment in the new city on Saturdays.

So that Army recruits may be put in touch with some Christian fellowship as soon as possible, it is most important that their Minister or other Christian friend should send their names, unit and location, as soon as these are known, to the Secretary of the Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association, 35 Catherine Place, London, S.W.1, who would at once forward these details to their local representative.

—From Dr. J. A. Liley.

## The Worldwide Missionary Convention

Friends will be glad to learn that the Rev. Harold W. Fife, our Chairman of Council, has been invited to represent the claims of Moslem North Africa at the great Worldwide Missionary Convention that is to be held, D.V., in Bangor (Northern Ireland) from September 6th to 14th and in Belfast from September 15th to 21st.

Your earnest remembrance in prayer is greatly coveted.

difficult indeed. Then one Friday about twelve new big girls—all able to read—came to the class. They found it very strange at first to close their eyes for the opening prayer, and some were inclined to giggle when not engaged in reading. But they have settled down very well and simply love reading in turn a portion of a Gospel. They are also learning some Scripture by heart and beginning to enter into the Bible repetition, which has a big part in the class work.

There have been some interesting cases in the Dispensary recently. On Easter Monday, one woman, looking worn and bearing the marks of a hard life, kept on asking Miss Buxton questions as she was talking. She wanted to know the name of the One who could forgive sins. Do pray that she and others like her may find Christ. The Dispensary is a most vital means of bringing hundreds of women under the sound of the Gospel. Please pray that those who are seeking the Truth may come with prepared hearts and that they may be given the courage to receive Him, whom to know is Life Eternal.

We continue to visit the women in their homes and are always made very welcome. Opportunities are afforded from time to time for telling Bible stories. We would value prayer for these close contacts, and in particular for one girl, aged about sixteen, in the last stages of T.B. and who has been to the classes. She may be saved; of that we are not sure, but she is certainly not helped by her very bigoted family. A slow, perhaps painful death awaits her. Pray with us that her dark pathway may be lighted by a revelation of Christ Himself and the consequent assurance of sins forgiven that only He can give.

—From Miss Mary Huntington.

## Ramadan in Casablanca

Ramadan started last night. At 9.45 p.m. guns from all over the native town announced the beginning of the Fast. Children shouted, women trilled the joy-cry in their usual fashion, and Satan from his place of spiritual wickedness in high places bound the hearts of some who belong to the Saviour with fear and dread. How can they break the Fast? How can they break it openly? I don't see how, they say. They are surrounded by a fanatical power and custom that only a power from on high can break. Fear grips them, and I plead with you to seek the Holy Spirit's power to pray the prayer of faith that shall release them.

On Sunday midday I usually go downstairs and eat with the two women who work for me. I was expecting to do so to-day, but instead of that, one of them brought the meal up to my flat. It was left over from the day before and she heated it up on my stove. "Nobody has seen me bring it up,"

she said. "They are so crafty. They are coming to see if we are lighting a fire. We are known to break the Fast and the people reproach us. We don't tell anyone who is not a Christian and will understand." Poor child! I let her talk and we ate our meal together sitting on the floor. I was disappointed; in the old days she lit her fire and the neighbours saw: now she told me they take it in turns to eat in the inner room while one watches. I do not sit in judgment upon them. I feel my task is so to love them and listen to what He would have me say to them from His Word that they may be strengthened to follow Him as He leads them. Pray with me that they may be enabled by the Holy Spirit to testify to others of their faith in the Lord Jesus.

—From Miss Grace Sharpe.

## A Bible Shop in the Holy City of Kairouan

We are praising the Lord for guiding us to open a Bible bookshop at the beginning of January. This has been a good step forward. Every day some thirty to forty souls enter our doors, sometimes gathering in groups of fifteen to twenty to hear the Gospel. If only you might spend a day there with us, listening-in to all the conversations, you would be thoroughly convinced that only the Holy Spirit can convict a heart of sin. From their earliest days in a Koranic school until they die with the Koran on their chests, Moslems employ the name of God and His attributes every day in hundreds of expressions. So we, His ambassadors, find ourselves presenting the message of grace to those whose roots are imbedded in the devilish doctrine that Mohammed is the prophet of God.

But the Lord is working. Many students from the largest mosque of the city have come to hear of "this religion." Not a few have received gospels and read them through. We find that they are most struck when we give our own personal testimony of what Christ has done for us, and by the fact that now we are serving a *living* Saviour.

Most days are normal ones, but with any large riot or manifestation in another part of Tunisia, Kairouan goes on a city-wide strike without any warning. The first strike of this present situation lasted for fourteen days. The Lord, of course, provided in a variety of ways, but the strikes are trying. At such times, soldiers are everywhere and often the European population is kept from entering the old Arab city. In the recent shorter strikes our work has not been hindered. In fact, with men walking the street and not working, the Bible shop and our home have been crowded with twenty-five or more men and young fellows for discussions several times during the day. One young man, a singer on the radio at Tunis, came to