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### THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

#### NORTH AFRICA AS A MISSION FIELD.

The "North Africa Mission" has extended its operations to all the Berber races and the Arabs, from Morocco to Tripoli; and, indeed, desires to include the European, French, Spanish, Italians, Maltese, as well.

We are here on the fringe of this great African continent, in countries bounded on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, now the great highway of the East. So far from verifying the thoughts of our childhood—of vast sandy plains peopled by blacks—it is here, on the contrary, a lovely, fertile, mountainous country, and our Berbers and Arabs are white, and many with noble, manly traits. However, as to their religion, they are Mohammedans. You, dear brethren of the United States, have long been occupied with these adherents of the false prophet, but here in Algeria we have the immense advantage of proselytizing in a land ruled by equitable laws, and where the acceptance of the religion of Christ does not entail the danger, if not the penalty, of death. We hear from our brother Baldwin of persecution by the authorities of Morocco, and it may be so if the Truth prospers in Tripoli, still barbarous States. We circulate the Arabic Scriptures prepared by the American brethren at Beirut, and we spread them abroad everywhere around us.

Kabylia itself is a most romantic region, enclosed by the range of the Jur-Jura mountains, from which spurs are projected enclosing fertile valleys, richly cultivated, and bounded on the north by the hills of Beni-Djennad, where two American brethren have entered a village, and run up a mud hut and have begun their work, braving all the distressing circumstances connected with their position.

The people have built their villages on the summit of their mountains for protection against the Arabs who invade the country, but they cultivate their slopes in every available spot. Some of the tribes take their flocks in the summer to the higher valleys of the mountains, which, in the winter seasons, are covered with snow, where they find delicious pasturage. Its summit, the Lalla-Kadidja, is 8,000 feet high. Every village has its Djemaa, or Parliament House, where the affairs of the village and the tribe are discussed, and where every man capable of carrying a rifle, or keeping the Ramadan fast, is a member; indeed, the Kabyles have presented what many have aimed at—the purest and most economical republic the world has ever known. It is true, before the French invasion, the tribes were often at loggerheads, owing to their self-assertion and jealousy. Happily, that is all at an end, through the wise and firm rule of the French regime. They are a fine race, with many noble qualities, very susceptible to kindness, and systematically hospitable; the more they are known the more they are loved. Their women are unveiled, and when young, many are extremely handsome, but like all Mohammedan women, are a subjected, if not an enslaved, class.

As far as they know it, they observe the religious prescriptions of the Koran, though it is likely that some tribes do not possess a copy. These extend to circumcision, the response to the call for prayer, fasts and feasts, etc., but they do not observe its prescriptions as to inheritance. They have no written language, and we have only at present the Gospel of John translated into Kabyle in Roman characters, and Mr. Mackintosh has translated the Gospel of Matthew into Riffian in Arabic characters. Happily there are now many French schools throughout Algeria, and an interpreter may generally be found in most villages, and by this means we have been enabled to reach in various places.

We have in most of the towns a peculiar race of Berbers, known by their varied coloured coats, and keeping grocery and other shops—the Mzabs from the Sahara. They are Mohammedan dissenters, and very accessible, receiving our Arabic Testaments very gladly. Our butcher here tells us he reads his Testament to three or four listeners of an evening.

The Arabs are mostly a nomadic race, though many get settled in towns, and are becoming agriculturists. We have seen caravans moving after wheat harvest down into the Sahara to reap their dates. Three hundred villages of French colonists without a single evange-

list city abroad for workers in that tongue. The physical features of the country are extraordinary. We have first, the Tell, a strip of territory varying from fifty to one hundred miles, bounded by the Mediterranean on the north—hilly, mountainous, romantic, very diversified. Next, the High Plateau—vast plains separated by parallel ranges of mountains and subject to alternations of intense cold and great heat, devoid of trees and very little inhabited, though affording in many parts pasturage for cattle. Beyond these lies the Sahara, diversified by vast plains of sand with rocky plateaus. The French have their military stations far down in the south; and again beyond this lies the Soudan.

The Atlas mountains commence at Agader, near the coast, to the south of Mogador, and extend in a northwesterly direction through Morocco and Algeria, and terminating at Cape Bon. In Tunis there are no navigable rivers.

With respect to the languages spoken: In Morocco it is a corrupt form of Arabic, but the Shelluhs and Riffs speak Berber, and, perhaps, comprise two-thirds of the population. In Algeria and Tunis, and we may include Tripoli, also, the Arabic. The range of Berber in Algeria is considerable, taking in the whole country, from Dellys southeast to the borders of Tunis, having its boundary on the east at the River Kebir, but extending to Constantine and the region north of the city. Many districts to the northwest of Algeria contain Berber-speaking people, but they are speedily becoming Arabized. The whole of this district from the river Sapil, which has its embouchure at Boagie right up to Tunis, is unevangelized, except a few sisters at Constantine and Bone.

Here is a sphere of missionary labour for some of your noble young men who are consecrating themselves to foreign mission work. Arabic would be the language most necessary to study, and which might be partially acquired in the United States. It opens the way to millions of Mohammedans. French also would be necessary in Algeria. We have here a most healthful climate, and have spent several summers without inconvenience. The temperature, Fahrenheit, would be about 82 in August and 48 in winter months, December and January. The North Africa Mission has upwards of forty missionaries, including ladies, and there are at least forty more independent, or connected with other societies; but there is room for eighty more, and we want American zeal and push to overcome, with the help of the Spirit of God, the tremendous difficulties of mission work among Mohammedans.—George Pierce in Missionary Review.

#### FRANCE.

The statistics of France for 1888 contain some sad facts respecting family life. Compared with 1887 the decrease in marriages was 212, while there were 6,360 less than in 1886. There were 1,702 more divorces than in 1887, and 1,758 more than in 1886; the total number was 4,708. The decrease in the number of births since 1887 was 16,794. Since 1884 there has been an annual decrease in birth. In 1884 there were 937,758 births; in 1888 the number was 882,637. In illegitimate births there is, however, an increase. In 1881 they were 75 per cent.; in 1888, 85. In the Seine department twenty-five per cent. of the births were illegitimate. The official report states that if it were not for the illegitimate births there would actually be a decrease in the population of France. Miss Grant Brown, who with two other ladies lately made a mission tour in Corsica, reports that wherever they travelled they held daily meetings, which were thronged by people eager to learn the truth. The work met with much opposition from the priest; but the civil authorities were generally friendly, and in several villages the mayors offered the use of rooms. In one village three men volunteered to stand every Sunday in the market-place, and read the Gospel to their countrymen. There is no Protestant church on the island.

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