



NEWS SHEET
REPLACING PRO TEM.

A THIRSTY LAND

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of the
ALGIERS MISSION BAND

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"Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."—II COR. 6. 10.

"Setteth in pain the jewel of His joy."

The jewels of His joy shine out in the letters received from our front line during these last months. But their shining is set against a dark background of pain and want.

We give tidings of almost all our workers and their stations, by name, in this News Sheet. **At Headquarters** (Dar Naama, El Biar, Algiers), **Miss Perkin, Miss Farmer, and Monsieur and Mme Nicoud** live and work. Miss Perkin writes, "Even those with money, often cannot get fuel, which is only obtainable at intervals. People die in the streets here and no doubt in other places, specially in the mountains where there is deep snow." Arab friends from Algiers and from the country often call in at Dar Naama, while

the work among the Forces still continues. The Canteen provides refreshment and friendship for those who come, and in addition various meetings are held, and some men come for a week at a time, as paying guests. In a letter from two of these, written to Miss Perkin and Miss Farmer, we read, "We cannot leave you without letting you know something of what these days have meant to us both. From the moment of our arrival we have felt at home in the truest sense. Long ago Miss Trotter said, "As to the name for the new house, we feel that we have got the right one—Dar Naama—'The House of Grace.'" Nearly forty years later we have proved that the choice was justified. Here we have

rejoiced in the joyful fellowship which is made perfect by the presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So we return to duty rested in body and mind, ready again to face the world for the Master because our sense of His power to save and keep us has been strengthened in the fellowship of this house."

Christmas was a time of cheer for some in the Forces who, far away from home and loved ones, found friendship and gladness at our Headquarters. In a letter from a N.A.M. worker (Miss M. Ross) we get a glimpse of this. "We were very glad to be invited to Dar Naama, for the Christmas festivities, where we found many friends, new and old. Some of them, like ourselves, stayed for two nights and we had a very jolly time. The friends had spared no pains in preparing, and Fifine excelled herself in cooking, for about twenty of us. Some, who had not been Christians very long were amazed at the laughter and fun, and felt that they had never before realized the real spirit of Christmas.

"The best part of all, I think, was the large meeting on Boxing Day afternoon when after tea, we all—60 or 70—gathered in the Prayer Court to listen to the message God gave to Mr. Speare for us. It was very appropriate, as the subject was 'Peace'—something we are all longing for.

"Several took part in this service in prayer and reading, and the roof rang when we ended up with 'The sands of time are sinking.' A collection was taken up for Mr. Speare's work among the Spaniards, and votes of thanks were proposed for the hospitality and to those who had helped. After a sandwich supper no one seemed tired when carols were suggested and as one by one the guests had to go those of us who were left played games round the fire and ended up with prayer and praise."

Those praying for Fifine, and for her husband now on the Western Front, will be glad to know that she receives news from him fairly regularly. Their baby son, Paul, is growing well, and is said to be "a bright little fellow."

From **Blida** our oldest Out Station, **Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham** send good news

of Arab friends and also of those in the Forces. They are rejoicing that Edmund (their younger son) is joyfully witnessing for Christ and taking the Service sometimes when on leave (from Algiers), at the French Protestant Church.

Mr. Buckenham writes of Christmas doings. "Our fêtes for the Arab children and women were protected by a strong sense of His presence and we cannot but feel that a good many did want to keep them 'to HIM.' There were a hundred children and fifty women.

"Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day were devoted to the troops, and all were great occasions—another Christmas away from home and loved ones being thus uplifted. Their carol singing was followed by our Sunday Service which, of course, was a Christmas one and could not but be intensely real. We had several boys staying over the season with us, sleeping in various rooms and in the Hall. On Christmas night 73 sat down (in the Hall) to a repast prepared by Mrs. B. several days in advance, and this was followed by a long evening of festivities such as mark most family gatherings at home. We closed with some carols, Daily Light, and a few prayers. Edmund was with us, and we had Kenneth in our hearts—away, we think, in Burma.

"While there is much in these changeable days that makes the wearing of the 'whole armour of God' an absolute necessity, and one wonders what the future will hold, the passage time can be, and in some measure is being, redeemed."

Miliana, a mountain Station where snow has been deep, comes next in order, and there, French friends are doing all they can to fill the place of the missionaries till **Miss P. Russell's** return. One of these friends wrote that she visited blind Y. at Christmas time and sang hymns with her and read her a beautiful passage which touched and comforted her.

Mlle Buttica, who works alone at **Bou Saada**, has been grieved by the suffering of the people. She wrote that she had been outside the town, "To see some poor people who came from the

mountains because there was nothing to eat, up there and they were dying fast of smallpox and famine. Poor things, they are living (or dying) in small holes in the sand dunes, and how they survive the nights (which are bitterly cold) I can't understand, as they have no coverings, no proper clothing! It is so sad, and the worst part of it is that there is nothing to give them—even dates are bought with coupons. I still have a little stock to give to the Arab children who come, to have a swing, and some teaching, too. Sometimes I have very good classes, though some of the little bodies are very badly clothed, alas!"

From **Tlemcen**, the Station furthest westward, where **Mr. and Mrs. Stalley** were working, **Miss Wood** has sent them news of Christmas. She writes, "Now I think I have already said we have snow here, and you will know I was not very glad to see it. But I believe some may be, as the quantity of snow will make up for the lack of rain this season. Anyhow, I am glad it did not come before Christmas. I had three days of gatherings of Arab women and children—Sat., Sun. and Mon.—and quite a nice number came. It was not so easy to entertain them, indeed by Sunday evening I had used up all my sugar, but happily a sugar ration was given out on Monday, so I was able to give them all well-sugared coffee. Since then I have received a lovely box of many kinds of sweets from kind Miss Work (an American nurse).

"Andrew was all alone for Christmas as his wife had gone to her home to see her grandmother, supposed to be dying—so he came to supper with me on Christmas Eve, but he does not look very well, and his eyes bother him a bit because he has no glasses. He had been to the oculist at Oran who ordered him new ones, but it seems a slow business to get them, and his pay is not any too much for the expenses of a wife and family. I thought the best Xmas present I could give would be some help to get new glasses."

Mr. Stalley has also had a letter from this man, a baptized Christian, in which he says, "I thank you for your letter, and rejoiced over the word in it, and now, oh,

my brother, I still think I shall see you again in a happy hour. My brother, I want to tell you that a daughter was born to me on November 29th and that I found for her the name of Farida (Beloved). In any case, I am glad about her, but my brother, I pray the Lord that this little girl and her mother come to walk in the way of Christ. Rom. 8. 1-34."

From **Tolga** in the desert, to the eastward, comes news from **Monsieur Lull**, who is living and working there and around, with **Mme Lull**, and their little children. M. Lull wrote before Christmas, "Since the arrival of Mme Lull the Mission activities have been resumed. Unfortunately there are very few remedies for the sick, and these are so numerous. The little girls have begun coming again to their class.

"We have been very encouraged in the work with the lads and adults. We have two meetings every night, one with the lads before supper, and the other with the men after supper. At this last we have two groups of nomads, one being from Bou Saada. These men are here for the date harvest. We have had rather disorderly meetings with the lads, but those with the men are always calm and good. They end up each evening with a time of conversation on the subject, which is invariably salvation or sanctification. Since my return I have found youths and men very disposed to hear the Word of God, and a good number of them are really anxious to ask, what are the sacrifices they would have to make if they became Christians. Last Sunday, two men who had had the tract 'The man drowned in sand,' came and asked me to explain the meaning of the story, which they had not quite grasped. They seemed deeply stirred by reading the tract, and sincere. I had a very blessed time with them.

"I have again rented the Hall at El Amri and have been there twice. At the first meeting there were ten men, and at the end they accepted ten Gospels. At the second meeting there were twenty. I have also begun visiting the oasis villages, and I sold ten Gospels at the first. The date harvest, which is poor, is in full swing."

Later, "We had as many at our Christmas gatherings as in past years. On the Sunday evening we had 104 men. I gave them a lantern talk on the birth of the Lord. Christmas day was the fête of the little girls—60—with three European families. On Tuesday morning there were thirty women and in the afternoon came 130 Arab boys with ten Europeans. In spite of the war we were able to distribute something to each. Bread and a tangerine to each child and woman, and a piece of cake made by Mme Lull, and a cup of tea, to each man. All passed in a good spirit. Recently there has been wind and a terrible sand storm, with cold more intense than they have ever known it here. Firing already dear, has gone up in price, and to-day I bought potatoes at 2s. 4d. a pound."

Miss Nash wrote from **Tougourt** that little Arab girls had already been to see her and she had had other Arab visitors for whom she was getting some Arabic booklets and tracts.

Miss Ridley is still working with the Y.W.C.A. **Mlle Gayral** continues at **Mostaganem**, and **Monsieur and Mme Millon** are occupied with their work among students in **Algiers**.

HOME NOTES

Dear Friends,

May I begin with a personal note of praise to God for restoration to health and strength once again, after some weeks of sickness, and of thanks to all of you who, when you knew of it, joined in prayer for healing and help to be given. It was just as the last issue of "A Thirsty Land" was being prepared for mailing that pneumonia laid me low. It is good to look back and see how God made provision for the carrying on of the work. Missionary-hearted local friends saw to it that you received your copies of *Thirsty Land* after only a short delay, while Miss Phyllis Russell, still

waiting to return to Algeria, volunteered to come and handle the secretarial work. We were very thankful that she was able to spend a month with us until a certain amount of strength was regained. During that time the Lord had been working on her behalf, and it may be that ere you read this she will be back on the Field.

"Back on the Field." That phrase raises the future again before us, and those whose hearts are in the one and whose eyes are on the other are sometimes tempted to look upon the Field-future as a mountain country of problems and difficulties. Our special Prayer-letter of February last outlined the contour of that "mountain." But mountains have a special relationship to prayer and faith in our Lord's discipline. Matthew xxi. 21, tells us that the former may be removed by the latter, and the Christian usually wishes his mountain right out of the way. The O.T. however gives us a delightful contrast to this view of the subject. Caleb said "Give me this mountain!" With its giants, and its cities great and fenced, the very things that had caused his brethren to tremble and fear forty-five years previously, he asked for it as an inheritance, and he got it, for "he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." Joshua xiv. Dr. Campbell Morgan in discussing Caleb's prayer, sums up fittingly thus: "In the history of Caleb three things are illustrated concerning faith. Faith sees and dares in the day of overwhelming difficulty. Faith waits patiently through delays caused by failure in others. Faith acts with courage in the day of opportunity." May like faith be our's!

I have mentioned a Prayer Letter. This is not something new, but a revival of a closer link that existed in pre-war days. If there are new friends who would like to have this extra bond of fellowship with us, which will bring fuel for prayer between "Thirsty Land" issues, I would be glad if you would write and tell me so.

Yours in the Master's Service,

HAROLD W. STALLEY

(Secretary).