

A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

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" Salvation belongeth unto the Lord : Thy blessing is upon Thy people."—*Psalm 3, 8.*

Amidst things that are being shaken God remains, and His promises have lost none of their validity. When our imaginations are tempted to run riot as we picture what suffering or hardship might come to our friends, . . . may the Holy Spirit illuminate that same faculty—of the imagination—that we may have at least the clearness of vision granted to a heathen King, Nebuchadnezzar. Did he not cast three men, bound, into the midst of the burning fiery furnace? How then could a fourth be added to their number, and all four be seen walking unharmed and unbound in the very centre of that fierce heat? The Son of God still walks with every faithful servant of His, looses their bonds, protects them from any real harm, and is able to bring them forth not with the smell of fire upon them, but spreading abroad the fragrance of the knowledge of Him in every place.—BISHOP FRANK HOUGHTON.

Dear Friends of the A.M.B.,

A letter from the Field says : " Another year of sorrows and war is behind us, and yet His love remains, unchangeable, and His mercy to us all, His servants in this Field." Another writes : " We know that God's hand is over all, and that ' The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, ' therefore will we not be afraid." A third letter from Blida says : " We are so thankful to God and to the ' Powers that be ' for permission to carry on in quietness and full liberty of the Spirit. We are indeed thankful for this and the news from fellow-workers, leads us to additional thanksgiving."

There is indeed deep cause for thanksgiving as this letter will show. In the midst of much that must be exceedingly trying, God is refreshing His children with tokens of His saving grace and of blessing in the hearts and lives of those among whom they are working, and this is a joy of joys !

A sorrow which will be shared by many prayer partners, is recorded, in the death of Sir Amar, one of two Tozeur brothers who long ago took a stand for Christ and endured

hardness for His sake. He, alas, became a backslider and took to smoking kif, a drug with terrible effects on body and spirit. Such a tragedy is a grief indeed, but is a challenge to prayer for those who are subjected to fierce temptation of a kind that we in a Christian land have probably never experienced. The younger of these two brothers, Si Ali, freed from his brother's bad influence, seems to be going forward. He needs our prayers that he may be steadfast, and may be used in God's service.

With regard to general conditions, Miss Perkin writes : " I continue in the best of health and so do most of us, though there is a good deal of illness. Typhus is beginning to diminish ; it has taken a heavy toll of the population. We continue to have plenty to eat, but our oil and sugar ration has been reduced by half. We have to be increasingly careful with fuel and we keep to dishes cooked in one pot." Miss Grautoff writes : " Peas and beans with macaroni are our staple food, and are still young and tender." The matter of clothing is an increasing difficulty, and the condition of the poorer

natives in this respect seems desperate. One letter says : " Clothes cannot be replaced now. There is a great deal of robbery, and ' things ' are of more value than money. Poor F. (native helper) has bought footwear with wooden soles for 200 francs, and they wound her feet. Many go barefoot now. I am trying to contrive shoes from some bits of old linen from home-bound magazines. and coarse Alfa grass soles that can be bought now, to lengthen the life of what footwear I have."

Monsieur Nicoud has lately been on a visit to various Stations, as he is free to move about, and can act as messenger from headquarters. When he went down far south to the little out-station at G., to which Miss Grautoff and Miss Russell cannot go now, he found that most of their household plenishings, bedding, etc., had been stolen. He managed to get some compensation but the things taken are unreplaceable now !

Miss Farmer and Miss Layte had a very strenuous time closing their part of the work and giving up their house in Setif. They have been allowed by the Authorities to leave, and to take up residence at Dar Naama. It was felt that this step was advisable, but their Arab friends were very sad at their going. Mr. and Mrs. Thomson will need prayer as they remain alone in the work in Setif for the present.

From Tlemcen Mr. and Mrs. Stalley write very thankfully and joyfully of the baptism of a young Arab at Eastertide. To some this wonderful news will bring to remembrance Miss Butler's intense longing for souls and her fervent prayers through the years, at Tlemcen. She looked forward to just such an answer to prayer as this, in the little Church that her love prepared.

Mr. Stalley writes, " The baptismal service was held on Easter afternoon, and a happy time it was too. One felt the upholding of many prayers, and although right up to Saturday night obstacles unforeseen presented themselves, faith triumphed. It was a great joy and a help to have M. Nicoud with us, as you can imagine that it was not such a simple affair here as it would be at home. It was the first Arab baptism that I have ever attended or officiated at. Only one of the young man's

native friends was there, but there were ten or a dozen other Christian friends with us. So the service was partly in French and partly in Arabic. Before the young man passed through the waters of baptism he gave his open testimony ; this took the form of my questioning him and he answering, which he did clearly and well. He desired to take the Christian name of Andrew. The experience was a blessed one for him, and I believe has brought a real deepening of his spiritual life. You will be interested to know that I had another request for baptism last night from another young man who has certainly shown a deep interest in the Gospel, an interest begun through reading the life of Calvin and the history of the Huguenots of France. He still needs a fair amount of instruction, and, of course, the prayers of you all. Last Sunday the 12th, we had our first Communion Service here in which A. and E. joined with us four missionaries. I think I can say it was a time of real blessing. M. Nicoud's presence and ministry was a blessing to the lads, and his testimony and talks will be remembered by them, especially the last one on Sunday night. As we parted he remarked to them that he hoped to be here for the next baptismal service, and that there would be more than one candidate. The Spirit of God is certainly working and hearts are seeking Christ. We need your prayer support all the more."

A newly baptised convert from Islam always seems to be a special target for the attacks of the Evil One, body, soul, and spirit, and Mrs. Stalley says : of " Andrew," " I know you will go on praying very much for him that he may be kept true and steadfast. We had a nice little gathering of women on Easter Tuesday and gave them a couscous (Arab dish of a kind of semolina, with vegetables, meat, and soup containing red pepper, or with milk and sugar). As there was a little left we told the mothers when they went home to send along their little girls to finish it up. (They are those who come to the class.) Presently they all came flying along like a flock of little sparrows, and soon they had completely cleaned out the dish ! By common consent the last spoonful went to the littlest one !

Please pray for A. (a Christian girl) who was engaged to be married, but from all reports the man seems to be a worthless fellow and the father wants to break it off. But the mother, foolish woman, for some reason or other wants to carry on with the arrangements and get her daughter married. We realise that prayer can alter all things and we do trust A. will be freed from this unsuitable alliance and be able to marry a Christian man. Two of the young men want Christian wives, but it is such a delicate matter to touch. However, God can cause all things to be so overruled that His best is worked out for each one of them. This matter is one for very definite prayer." Miss Wood visits the Arab women and girls in their homes daily. She has a welcome everywhere and there will surely be a harvest from this faithful sowing. All are well and little Elizabeth, who is just a year old, is growing fast.

Mlle. Buticaz, who by her own desire is staying on in Bou Saada, at any rate till the summer, is brave and goes steadily on. She writes: "Another year of activity in Bou Saada, with all the difficulties, has left me very tired, but still happy in His work which is going on."

Miss Nash writing of her classes among the children says: "I have some very encouraging times with the medium aged children, those of about eight to ten or eleven years, several of whom gave their hearts to the Lord a few Sundays ago. On the whole one finds a great readiness to listen to the Gospel message. One of Monsieur Rolland's old boys who is now a tall young man, has been enrolled in the ranks of the Salvation Army, and looks imposing in his uniform; he is a Kabyle. They have now several native men in the Salvation Army here."

From Miliiana Miss Grautoff writes of a young woman, who years ago lived with Miss Farmer at Delys for some time. "She is now a widow with two children to support, and hopes to be able to build herself a tiny gourbi on ground belonging to her sister and family. Prayer is needed for her, and also for the aged widow (about ninety and nearly blind) of the 'Hadj' of long ago. She is embittered, and yet comes

with others. Do pray that even at this eleventh hour she may find peace and that the dear old man's prayers, of years ago, may be answered. Yamina has her arm out of plaster—she has been wilful about it, and is often unhappy because the husband drinks. Her two little boys are very intelligent but it is difficult for a blind woman to keep them as she should. We had a happy Easter. Our terrace garden is a joy and rose arbour in full bloom. So far we have no plans for July, but we still hope we may be able to go to Dar Naama and meet the friends there. It is a year now since we met, but our lives are happy and busy ones, though restricted."

At the last minute before going to press an account came to hand from M. Lull of an itineration, lasting about ten days, which he has lately done in the South. M. Lull took his bicycle with him, doing the very long distances by train. He found doors and hearts open and was greatly encouraged. He sold 680 gospels and books, visited 32 villages as well as several towns, and cycled nearly 300 miles. I shall hope to give a fuller account of this itineration in our next News Sheet.

We are not having an Annual Meeting, as all our workers are on the Field, and cannot get home. All news that I receive, however, I share with you in these News Letters. It is a great joy and privilege to hear from many, both at home and overseas, of the great interest and care they have for the work in Algeria. I know that the many subjects for praise and prayer interwoven in this Letter will be a renewed challenge and encouragement to faith.

With regard to finances; thank God we have been able to send a regular monthly sum up to the present—God's provision for all our workers.

Yours very sincerely,
MILLICENT H. ROCHE.
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Grateful thanks for an anonymous gift (money order) of 10s. from U.S.A.
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"I. Lilius Trotter," by Blanche Pigott, now costs 3s. 6d. and postage (7d.). It may be had from this Office (Douera, Glenwood Road, West Moors Dorset), after August 1st.