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**"The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him,
and He will shew them His Covenant."**—Psalm 25. 14.

Dear Friends of the A.M.B.,

May the glorious fact stated above become more and more real and precious in our experience, as individuals and as a Band, while we move onward into this solemn and wonderful New Year!

Since I last wrote I have received news from Miss Wood, who is bravely carrying on work at Tlemcen now that Mr. and Mrs. Stalley, with their little Elizabeth, have safely returned to England on furlough. Miss Wood writes very cheerfully, and gives news of some women and girls, who, as well as the young men, need prayer that the work of grace may grow and continue

in their hearts. Monsieur and Madame Millon have many opportunities among students, but are finding it very difficult to get books for their depot.

Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham are fully occupied at Blida with Arab and Forces work, and Monsieur and Madame Lull are once more hard at work in the desert Station of Tolga. Mlle Gayral at Mostaganem and Mlle Buticaz at Bou Saada are faithfully working among the Arab women and children in these large towns. Miss Ridley has, by her own wish, been loaned to the British Y.W.C.A. for the duration of the war.

Miss Grautoff and Miss Russell arrived

home, by air at the end of November and we were delighted to welcome them and also the Rev. Harold Stalley, to the meeting of our Home Council on November 30th. Both Miss Grautoff and Mr. Stalley have written up-to-date news of conditions and needs that will help us to pray.

Miss Grautoff writes : " Miss Russell and I had to say a sad farewell to our native friends and others in Miliana, as I was advised by my doctor to get to England, and could not travel alone during my convalescence. Therefore we ask special prayer for our inner circle of women and girls during the months that the Station work will be closed. Blind Y. has her two boys with her, and is being supported by her husband who works elsewhere. Our Pastor (French Protestant) is arranging for a friend, formerly a colporteur, to take care of our house, and we trust that he will keep the Bible window open and have a friendly word with any who call. We feel that God Who overruleth all will shield and bless our little Outstation." Referring to the time spent at Dar Naama while waiting to start for England, Miss Grautoff tells of the helpfulness of the busy canteen presided over by Miss Farmer, and of the joy given by the hard-worked piano and organ, on which a hymn tune is sometimes played simultaneously, a soldier at one and Miss Layte at the other ! The old Arab house is of great interest to the men, and Miss Perkin is a splendid guide. Miss Grautoff writes, " Soon after 7.30 p.m. the canteen closes and hymn books are given round to any who care to stay for short prayers. These have to be in three languages. The English ones are often taken by Christian men, and I have heard some searching messages and testimonies. In French, Edmund Buckenham is one of the valiant helpers. Lastly prayers in Arabic ; Miss Perkin goes into a side room, where the Moslems await their turn. They especially look forward to this, and though often illiterate they try to sing the hymns taught to them verse by verse. There are days when there are sixteen or more attentively listening, the readers accepting tracts to take away. On Sunday afternoons there

is a British prayer meeting, usually presided over by a Christian soldier or Scripture Reader, and though numbers are probably not more than about twelve, yet prayer and messages are very real, coming as they do, from those who have been " up against it " in many countries. We must help our fellow-workers out there in their strenuous life. I think one of the best ways of doing this would be for us to be in prayer with them daily at 7.30 p.m."

Mr. Stalley writes : " Can you imagine the wonder of awaking one morning on board a troopship and finding the porthole framing the sunrise over the green hills on the Firth of Clyde ? The experiences of the past four years in French North Africa come back to one like a dream, some rather like a nightmare, but this was really dream-like in another sense ! In the hours that followed in dealings with Government and Military officials, soft kindly speech and warmhearted goodness seemed to meet us everywhere. It was difficult to grasp that this was reality. We set foot on the quay just in time to see the Glasgow train pulling out ; but what a relief to hear that there would be another in half an hour's time and not in three days' time ! Everybody seemed so well clothed and fed, every house to have a gently smoking chimney telling of warmth within. Well filled shop windows looked most unreal. This sensation was followed by the impulse to walk straight in and buy, but then ' What to buy and what to leave ? ' brought one back to some sense of reality. A multitude of like impressions from incidents and surroundings on every hand almost overwhelmed one during the first few hours. Our wonder would appear child-like to some, no doubt, but, you see, they came upon the background of past experiences so recently left behind, the contrasts were so striking. How favoured of God, is this, our land !

" Events have been varied and strange for all our missionaries since the ominous days of Summer, 1940. Until then things had been fairly promising for wartime conditions. These had only partly restricted our travel and itineration work, and there had been quite a forward movement

amongst young men. At Tlemcen an extra effort had been made with the added help of M. Nicoud in the Spring of that year, when for nearly two weeks, nightly gatherings for men only were held, numbers varying from ten to fifty. While this went on, in spite of opposition, there were one or two who definitely came to the knowledge of the Truth. Other stations were going ahead and touching that vital field of young manhood. Then came the consternation at the collapse of France, the calling of all our British Missionaries to Algiers, the change over of popular opinion towards our country, so that when the decision was made to return and hold on as long as possible at our stations it was to an atmosphere that was becoming charged with hostility. Young men who had been coming so freely were now fearful of being seen approaching us, and but for a small inner circle of faithful friends, both Arabs and Europeans who knew us preferred to remain aloof. As the months went by, the pro-Axis policy of the Government developed and gradually grew more menacing. In the Summer of 1941 an order for all British Missionaries to go to an Internment Camp was issued. In the mercy of God this was soon countermanded and followed by a peremptory one for all Missionaries on holiday to go back to their residences at once and not to move outside the boundaries of the towns in which they lived. This latter regulation was enforced with varying severity in different places. Some police officials were most lenient, whilst others appeared to delight in making it as hard as possible. It appears that only one of our Mission stations was subjected to a search. While six policemen were on guard around the building five others entered and went through everything, including the two wells. One did not realise all the measures taken by the police to keep watch on our movements at the time, but these came to light afterwards when one could look back and smile. What a wonderful experience of God's Peace we had through it all, and right up to the time of the Allied landing in November, 1942, their counsels came to nothing. These happenings however, known more or less to the people whom we touched, very effectively

put the brake on open evangelistic work, so that in some places even women and children were restrained from coming, as well as the men. On the other hand, the work and witness of our non-British colleagues (French and Swiss) went on unhindered though they had their difficulties and problems arising out of circumstances which were affecting the whole population. The difficulties of travel, the growing scarcity of food, clothing, and medicines, with the corresponding high cost of living caused famine conditions to appear in certain regions, with epidemics of typhoid and typhus. These conditions made it difficult to gather classes and meetings, and to get the attention of the suffering people. Bread was severely rationed and most things which we get regularly with our ration cards over here were and are non-existent over there, so that it was impossible for God's servants to come to the relief of their native friends as they would gladly have done. Bibles and Scripture Portions became scarce in all languages and some editions were sold out altogether, so that there was a real famine of the Word.

"Yet despite it all we have much to praise God for. Real blessing has followed the witness of His own people during these trying years, perhaps the sum it will never appear until it is revealed in Glory. There were many individual touches with Truth-hungry men and women, Arab, Jew and French, who saw that Christ's people had something that they had not. There was the triumph of a native baptism on one station in the midst of defiant circumstances, the happy beginning of a native Christian home on another. The fruit of many secret comings of a little handful of enquirers at night will yet be seen.

"The coming of the Allies in November, 1942, naturally brought a welcome change in the situation. One felt 'free' again! This change over however, did not bring a sudden turn round in the attitude of the native toward us, and although there was now a prospect of better economic conditions to come, which he did not understand very clearly, there was now added to the prevailing distress the fact that his country was again at war. The native mind is still

in a ferment. So if work amongst the Moslems did not immediately return to the earlier trend and pace, classes and visiting still go on. But over and above this we and our fellow-workers soon found ourselves abundantly occupied in ministering to the spiritual and other needs of the Allied troops. In El Biar this includes native soldiers as well as British and American. We believe this is all in the Divine Plan, for fellow Christians in the Forces have been allowed to get a Vision of the needs of the Mission Field and have given serious thought and prayer as to their responsibility in the face of them. We trust that we shall yet find some of them back on these old battlefields in the greater and never-ending warfare for Moslem souls. Imagine a gathering of about five hundred American soldiers in a forest region of Algeria listening for threequarters of an hour to a missionary putting before them the Cause of Christ's Kingdom in that land, and the stream of enquiries that came for over another half hour ere the meeting closed, and the whole crowd of them reverently kneeling while their Padre led them in prayer and intercession. On our Stations such men as these have gathered with our countrymen and native Christians around the Lord's Table to celebrate the Lord's Death until He Come. Let us pray that when this conflict is over some of those who had such happy fellowship with us may be led to consecrate their lives to the evangelisation of the darkened people they have moved amongst. If this work is to go on and the vision and promise of pre-war years are to be fulfilled it is imperative that more labourers be sent out. Past years have brought a terrific strain upon missionary personnel everywhere, and our ranks have been thinned. Some Stations have had to be closed temporarily, and on others there is but a single lady worker courageously carrying on. So when hostilities cease and means are free for these workers to come for a well-deserved rest, others must be ready to return, taking new recruits with them to hold the Field for Christ. God is able to do this and He will. Will you not then lend a hand in glad co-operation by prayer, making the need known, and

wherever possible finding openings for our representatives from the Field to come and give first-hand information, share in the fellowship of your Sabbath services and prayer meetings, letting you hear, and see (with lantern slides) something of the work.

"It is only fitting that these words from a newly returned Field representative should end with an expression of warmest thanksgiving to all of you who have so faithfully played your part in constant and loving prayer for us during the fateful days that have passed, and with praise to our Almighty Heavenly Father for His wondrous Love and Care."

Will any who would welcome a visit from Mr. Stalley, please let him or me know as soon as possible? He will be in the South of England in January and will be glad to book meetings—he has a thrilling story to tell. Please pray for openings and uphold God's messenger with your prayers.

Prayer is also asked for F. mentioned in the last News Letter. That she may be kept close to the Lord and may not be hindered by extreme nationalistic ideas. News has come of a native Christian sergeant known to some prayer helpers. He has been caught in the wheel of political circumstances and has been thrown out of work, not by his own fault. His wife is in bad health, and they and their children need our prayers that their faith fail not.

Mr. Neville Russell has once more kindly audited our accounts, and these may be seen at this Office at any time. God our Father has most graciously provided for our needs during this past year of War, and we praise and thank Him.

With warmest wishes for the New Year,

Your fellow worker,

MILLICENT H. ROCHE.

(Hon. Sec.)

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Please note that "Between the Desert and the Sea," I. L. Trotter, is now priced at 5s. Postage 7d. extra.