



A THIRSTY LAND

The Quarterly Magazine
of the
ALGIERS MISSION BAND

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“ We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—2 Cor. 4. 18.

“ Faith that calls the things that are not, as though they were.”

—I.L.T.

Editorial

Beyond the delays, difficulties, and distresses of these days faith sees God's hand moving to accomplish His purposes of blessing. As we lift up our eyes on the Moslem Field of Algeria there is much in the “ things temporal ” to dismay us ; but our Lord bids us look on “ the things not seen,” and these fill our hearts with hope, for they are “ eternal.”

The “ Thirsty Land ” grew, in our last

number to eight pages. This growth is maintained in spite of few contributors, and we hope that in days to come we shall return to our pre-war form. The titles of some of the articles this time have a sorrowful sound, but the sadness is shot through with the gleam of hope in Christ, and the sorrowful occasions gave opportunity to make Him known.

In our winter issue we mentioned an

accident to Miss P. Russell. Prayer has been answered for her, and we rejoice that she is able to go about again, as the article she has written for us shows. We are glad, too, to know that Mme Mahseine (Fifine), who, with her husband and little son, is living at present in an annexe of Dar Naama, is better after serious illness. Please continue in prayer for the spiritual growth of this Christian couple.

Nearly forty years ago (in 1907) a party of Americans on their way to a Conference of the World's Sunday School Association in Rome, landed for some hours in Algiers and visited Miss Trotter and the workers of the A.M.B. at 2, Rue du Croissant. What they saw and heard of the needs of the Moslems so touched their hearts that they formed a Band which undertook the support of two new workers. This pledge was faithfully carried out through their years of service, and was only a part of all the lovingkindness shown, and the interest taken, and aroused in others, by the members of the Algerian Band of America. Mrs. Walker, their devoted secretary and our wonderful friend, who visited us in Algeria on three different occasions, and Mrs. Mary Foster Bryner their active and splendid president, have both passed into the presence of their Lord. Mrs. Bryner passed on last September, at over eighty years of age, after a life devoted to the interests of God's Kingdom. Her letters to us showed to the last, as ever, a vivid and detailed interest in the work of the A.M.B. Our faithful friend, Mrs. F. S. Goodrich still carries on her work as Treasurer, and her unfailing care for us during the war years were a great cheer. To her and to all our American friends we send our love and heartfelt gratitude for their lovingkindness, help, and prayer comradeship throughout the years.

M. H. R.

From Our Mail Bag

From Mr. H. W. Buckenham.

BLIDA.

The busy and blessed season of Christmas and New Year has passed into the eternal records once again; those two adjectives

applied to everything, and we are now breathing the breath of our individual ways again. There were 90 at the Girls' Treat, 105 at the Boys', and 90 at the Women's, which were held on the Thursday and Friday preceding Christmas. The "boys" of the Forces who were to stay with us for varying periods over the season began coming on that Friday night also, and their programme, or rather God's, which evolved, over the days following, was both varied and blessed: there were meetings, parties, services, a "Conference," and finally a Watchnight Service and New Year's Day party.—Many of the Arab women at the women's meeting who were, before, big girls of the Classes, now come as wives and mothers, and are a real adjunct to the musical side of the meetings. Many of the women of old time still come and others are the children and grandchildren of the said women."

From Mme Lull :

TOLGA (RASSOUTA).

We had a blessed time of work during the autumn and winter of 1945. We wondered in what spirit we should find the natives but we had the great joy of being well received by them. They are always very courteous and very nice to us.

There have been good numbers both children and grown-ups at the meetings. We have had many women coming for dispensary help. One morning in December we had 83 women and children; there is always much misery and suffering among them. The food situation is no better yet and the famine is severe.

The little girls in the Class worked courageously to get their frocks finished for Christmas. I was able to get a permit to buy fifty metres of material. The bigger girls (eleven years old) helped the little ones, and twenty-five managed to make a pretty dress of flowered material, which was nice and warm. They were very proud of them, and were so happy on Christmas Day! The next day our 150 boys came and were very well behaved. On the following Thursday evening 132 men were able to hear the Christmas Message with the help of magic lantern pictures. Thank God the sandstorm

which had been blowing so hard for two days, died down on Thursday, and we were able to have a pleasant evening with these men, under the verandah. They happily enjoyed tea and cakes while listening to Christmas records. On the Friday morning we lit the Christmas tree for the fourth time—this was for the mothers and babies. We thank God that so many were able to taste the joy of Christmas. Our European friends also came to the various fêtes.

M. Lull is still well received in the village of El Amri. The men come in good numbers to listen to the Gospel, and we believe that God is doing a work in hearts. This month there are less men coming however. The month of January is always marked by strong opposition but God is all powerful, and He can work in spite of all, in the innermost places of men's hearts. The girls and the women continue to come as before in good numbers.

From M. Lull :

Our friends the B's, of Tolga, have offered to help us to buy the medicaments needed for our sick people. It was a grave problem for us, both for our budget and because of the great difficulties in procuring what we needed. We praise God for this problem solved.

From Miss Nash :

TOUGGOURT.

We had a good time on Christmas Eve, whole families turned up to the fête, men, women and children, for the negro is not so particular as the Arab about his women folk being seen by men. We gave them a lantern service followed by tea and cakes (these latter made with a small provision of flour we had put by for our Christmas pudding, but which we rejoiced to have used in this way, as we beheld all those gleaming white teeth plunged contentedly into the cakes). We were also able to give them sweets which I procured at Setif in the summer. They were real sugar sticks, but the heat of the journey back here melted them into one solid lump! However, we were able to break it up into pieces, and although not so presentable, the flavour was the same. Then there were oranges, and

last but not least, incense to suck! which latter the women would do almost anything to procure. Fortunately I had some things over from former years, so was able to give gifts to all the children. A very happy negro crowd left us at ten p.m.

How the Moslem Priest Died

For many years our neighbour, a Moslem priest, though very fanatical used to come for Christmas or other "fêtes." He was always eager to hear or to read the Gospel when there were opportune times; but he observed very religiously his Moslem prayers, and five times a day climbed on to his terrace roof to repeat with great fervour the "Fatiha."

Before Christmas his little wife died in the hospital, leaving him with three small girls. Life became increasingly difficult for him; his sister came to help, but she wanted good food and all sort of expensive nourishment, so he was sorely tried.

One evening as he was sitting against our garden wall I asked how he felt.

"Oh, I am very ill. Would you come if I called you?" he asked.

"Certainly," I said.

Next morning, at about eight o'clock, his niece came to tell me he was asking for me at once; so I left the house and ran across. While I was tending him, he turned suddenly, and said,

"Will you come back? I know *you* only have 'the light.'"

I advised the family to call the doctor. Two of them came, but both their care and mine were of no avail.

I went twice again and I saw that the end was near. He held my arm and kept on saying, "Give me light."

He calmed down and closed his eyes. His two elder children came to kiss him; then throwing out his arms, he gave a last cry, "The light. The light!"

Three marabouts shouted to him at once to say the Chahedda (witness to God and Mohammed). They took his hand to lift his finger; but the spirit had gone. All was peace in his suffering face.

Thus died the Marabout. Had he seen

Jesus the Light of the world? Who can say?

Others like him are longing to know *where* and *who* is the light.

Do pray for the many who grope in darkness.

A. BUTTICAZ.

“Precious Seed”

It was my mother's first birthday in Heaven. For this reason, I was particularly anxious to pass on to my Moslem sisters something of the sure and certain hope of the Christian faith. It seemed fitting that this testimony should be borne in an Arab cemetery.

First a visit to the book room was necessary. Only portions from the Word of God appeared to be adequate to the situation. It was difficult to know in advance whether tracts in French or Arabic would be in greater demand. Our experience proved that there was an equal demand for both languages. The Scripture Gift Mission supplied us with “The Way of Salvation,” and “Words of Comfort and Consolation,” in French, and the “Good Samaritan” and the “Good Shepherd” in Arabic. From our A.M.B. literature we selected accounts of the Fall, the Flood, the Death, Resurrection and Coming Again of our Lord, in both languages. Mme Nicoud had promised to accompany me, but was finally prevented, at the last moment. Mademoiselle Butticz stepped into the breach, however, and we divided the scriptures between us.

On Friday, the day on which Moslem women visit the cemeteries, the morning dawned bright and clear—the cloudless blue sky lent an air of enchantment to the sparkling water of the Bay of Algiers, seen through the trees from the heights above. There was no chance of a seat in the crowded bus and we were glad to alight at the prison and make our way, slowly towards the cemetery, through an impromptu market which was taking place on both sides of the road. Youths, holding bars of soap and other rationed articles were mingling

with the crowds in their effort to obtain a good price for their wares. A man sampled a sweet from a tray held up by a boy and then prepared to pass on. It was an anxious moment for the boy but his client paid up in the end. Mademoiselle Butticz spied the Moslem book vendor and gave him a green leaflet, in Arabic, about our Lord's return. The native pottery and raffia work looked very attractive in the bright sunshine and we had to remind ourselves that we were not tourists, but out upon the King's Business.

At length the stream of women turned in at the main gate of the cemetery and we with them. Mademoiselle Butticz went ahead down the steep pathway, bordered by Moslem graves and then stopped and was quickly surrounded by an enquiring group of women. I glanced over my shoulder at the oncoming tide, wondering how to begin.

“Wouldn't you like something for your little boy to read?” I said to a woman, carrying a baby in her arms.

“What, this one?” said she, in amazement.

“No, not that one, but you have other children, surely?” I hazarded, looking at her tired, patient face. She admitted that she had and then, on all hands, was heard the request for something to read. This was a moment worth living for. They thronged around with eager, outstretched hands and a look of hungry bewilderment on many of their faces, which was indescribably pathetic. In a very short time our stock of nearly a hundred scriptures was exhausted.

“Come again and bring us more,” the women said, especially those who had failed to obtain anything.

“We will meet here again, if still living,” was their final word.

P. M. RUSSELL.

“O God, by Thy pure Spirit,
Convict of sin and need,
Reveal to them the falseness
Of him whose name they plead,
From Islam's bondage free them
To seek Thine only Son,
Through Whose atonement only
Access to Thee is won.”

F.A.B.

Ruins

I wondered how I should head this article, but was not long in finding a title : " Ruins ! " Yes, ruins in the desert, ruins of two kinds.

First of all I will tell you about the less serious :

Yesterday was a dull day with thick black clouds overhead, such a day as one expects to have in the North at this time of year, but not down here in the South where we have brilliant sunshine, spring, summer, autumn and winter. Away in the negro village above us women were weeping and lifting supplicating hands to heaven. The little girls who came as usual to the sewing class forgot for a time their sadness, until suddenly one of them who was seated near the door cried out in a frightened voice, " It is raining ! " Why all this fear ?

About ten days ago, a thing unknown here happened : a steady rain fell for twenty-four hours, and the following night the inhabitants of that village were buried alive under the ruins of their houses which, being built of clay and stone collapsed when they became thoroughly soaked. Many of the people will find it quite impossible to repair their houses, and as for building others, this probably in most cases will be quite beyond their means. Most of their belongings have been smashed up and are still under mud and stone, whilst the owners are in hospital badly wounded. Those who have escaped injury have been taken in by their more fortunate neighbours and are huddled together in the entrances of their houses, some of which are so badly damaged that it is a miracle that they are still standing.

The thing which struck me most as I visited the different victims of this catastrophe was the quiet resignation of men and women alike. Lifting their eyes to heaven they say, " Rebbi " (God), but not a word of complaint is uttered, though they look the picture of despair. They are grateful for our interest as we try to comfort them, and one longs to be able to help them in a more practical way.

But bad as those ruins are there are worse ones, i.e., the ruins of lives.

When we first visited Touggourt a few

years ago the people were most religious, immediately obeying the call of the Muezzin to prayer ; if travelling, the car would stop and they all got out and fell on their faces in the sand in the prescribed fashion. If in the market, or street, or in their homes the same thing took place when the Muezzin's melodious voice was heard floating over the pure desert air, calling all the faithful to worship Allah. These people who formerly filled the mosques every Friday (the Moslem holy day) and carried out most faithfully all the rites of their religion, have now had the very foundation of their lives shattered through drink. There is no longer any restraint, for they have broken one of the strictest laws of Islam which forbids the drinking of wine. Like Adam and Eve of old, they have listened to the tempter, they have tasted and now they are lost, for Islam provides no way of escape from the iron grip of sin.

Now, when the Muezzin calls to prayer in the solemn evening hour, one can see drunken men trying to steady each other on their way to the mosque where they often vomit their wine on the doorstep. Others are completely deaf to the call, and so little by little drift away from customs which have held them for centuries. Often instead of finding themselves in the Mosque at nightfall they are to be found within the prison walls, having been picked up by the police drunk, or as aggressors as a result of drink.

But worst of all, this life-wrecking disease spreads to their wives and children. Not content to drink outside the home, they take the largest receptacle they can find, no matter of what sort, and get it filled with wine which they take back to the house, with the result that whole families succumb to the temptation, as the following incident illustrates :

A man whom we know was much surprised and annoyed at the absence of one of his workmen, who had been missing from his job for several days. He went to the man's house and found husband, wife and all the children dead drunk, with a large can beside them in which still remained several pints of wine. When the negro was at last sober he was told by his

master that if such a thing were to happen again he would be dismissed : but neither threats nor persuasion are of any avail in such cases. One, and only One has the power to break Satan's chains.

Our prison which was usually empty is now always full to overflowing of these poor human wrecks. One day I was able to speak to a group of them. They listened so earnestly and with such longing in their faces. Another day I was speaking to a demobilized soldier in the market, whom we have known for some years and who, alas, now is more often drunk than sober. I told him how sad we were to note the great change which has taken place in the inhabitants of this place, including himself. Before long a large crowd had gathered. Some of the men looked at me suspiciously, but others listened awed, and several nodded their heads wistfully saying, "You are right, we have changed." Then came my chance for telling them that it was not what they used to be that we wished they could now become, but something much better, and that strong as the grip of drink is, there is One strong enough to break even those fetters.

And so although we are very sad as we behold this state of things, we feel that the very fact of the powerlessness of Islam to save them from this scourge may create in them the desire to know the efficacious remedy which we possess.

"When I cry unto Thee then shall mine enemies turn back"—Ps. 56. 9.

Help us by your prayers to bring them to this point of crying out to the One who can save.

I. K. NASH.

Home Secretary's Notes

DEPUTATION. After a long interval it has been possible to arrange for one of our Field Members now home on furlough to undertake a series of deputations meetings. Since the middle of February Miss A. M. FARMER has been actively engaged in parts of Scotland and England. A very profitable three weeks spent was in the North, and we are most grateful to our Glasgow represen-

tative, Mrs. R. Wilson, for the splendid support she has given us in this work. Our main objective in deputation is to present our vision of the need, and challenge of the hour, in order to call forth more prayer, and more labourers, for the Harvest Field of North Africa.

The home secretary hopes, D.V., to be present at the Bangor Convention at Easter, when he is being given an opportunity of representing our Field at the Missionary gathering. It will be a great joy to him to make the personal acquaintance of many Irish friends who have been faithful prayer partners for years past. He hopes it will be possible to speak at different centres before and after the Convention period.

Scottish friends who will be attending the Perth Convention of the Faith Mission are asked to look out for the A.M.B. representative there also, as again at that gathering, we hope to have the Mission represented.

We would like all friends to study the section at the end of the notes entitled "How you can help," and then ask God if there is not something you can do, a more active part that you can play for His Kingdom in North Africa in the momentous days ahead. We shall be glad to hear from anyone who can arrange for one of our missionaries to speak at a local gathering however small.

PERSONALIA.

Miss A. McILROY. We are very sorry to hear that Miss McIlroy, whose health has been failing for some time past, is now very poorly indeed. This much-loved worker gave thirty years of her life to the work in North Africa, and retired from active service there in the early part of 1940. The prayers of all her many friends are desired on her behalf.

Miss I. SHEACH is another who being unable to return to the Field for health reasons, at the outbreak of war, has continued in active fellowship with us by prayer. Her heart has always been in Algeria. Recently she suffered from a stroke, but prayer has been answered and she has been restored to a measure of health and strength.

Miss M. D. GRAUTOFF who was invalided home at the end of 1943 after a very serious operation, now writes joyfully that her doctor gives her a clean bill of health, and even permits her to contemplate paying a visit to the sunshine of Algeria after Summer is over. Let us give thanks for her wonderful recovery.

Miss K. LAYTE. We would like here to recall with thankfulness the seven and a half years of faithful service given to the Field by Miss Kathleen Layte. She went out at the end of 1936 to give much needed secretarial help at our Dar Naama H.Q. Later she assisted Miss Farmer at Setif, until her station had to be closed down. After the liberation of the country in 1942 she took a very active part in organising and running the canteen work at Dar Naama amongst Allied and Native troops. Since the Summer of 1944 Miss Layte has been back in England, and now her future missionary service seems to be set in the great metropolis, for at the end of December last she was united in marriage to a London City Missionary, Mr. Jack Tomkins. May every joy be their's in this new sphere of labour.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH FOR MOSLEMS is arranging its annual prayer conference at "Slavanka," Bournemouth, this year between the dates June 15 and 20. It promises to be a very representative one, more widely so than for some years past. We hope that our Mission will be represented by Mr. and Mrs. H. W. BUCKENHAM to whose return for rest and furlough we are looking forward early this summer.

REINFORCEMENTS.

In our last issue of "A Thirsty Land" we appealed to all our readers to make the need of more labourers a very definite matter for prayer. It was stated that we shall need twenty new workers to restaff the vacant and half-manned mission centres. We would bring this before you once again and ask you that you make this a "prayer target." There is nothing impossible with God. Before we call He begins to answer.

After those words were written, but before they were posted to you, on the last day of the old year, 1945, the first set of application papers was in our hands. The applicant is now an accepted candidate, and we would ask your prayers for Mr. Frank Baggott of Purdsey, Yorks, as he prepares to take the next step. Since then we have heard of others who would be co-workers, and we trust that our Home Council will be considering other application papers when they next meet. Let our faith rise to see twenty accepted candidates going forth to take their place on the Field during the next three years.

The Call is urgent.

I would like to tell you here, that before a candidate is accepted, he or she has to pass through Bible School Training. It is also necessary that they acquire a certain knowledge of French. The next step after acceptance, is a period of special study in France, at a Missionary Student Centre in Paris. This is a very essential and important step on the way to the Mission Field of French North Africa.

This student centre of the Paris Missionary Fellowship had to be closed down in 1940 for obvious reasons. We would like your prayers for its reopening. The Rev. T. Warren, who inaugurated its work is returning shortly D.V. to take up the threads once more and plan for its future.

Further to our need for reinforcements we would ask you to pray with us that God will raise up a Christian couple of some experience, preferably with a knowledge of the French language, who could take over the duties of host and hostess at Field Headquarters thus relieving senior missionaries for other tasks. There is a great opening for spiritual service here with opportunities for evangelistic work as well.

Another need that God may be calling someone to meet is that of an assistant for secretarial duties at Field H.Q. Again this would relieve a fully trained missionary for his or her own particular tasks. Such friends would need to have a very definite call to these posts and would be welcome in the missionary fellowship of A.M.B.

The primary calling of a missionary is to evangelism. All abilities must be bent in

that direction for it is the Evangel alone that is the power of God unto Salvation. But that does not mean that the ability to preach is the only one we look for. Evangelism in that narrower sense is not enough. To build a house one needs a score of different craftsmen. The rebuilding of the Church in North Africa calls for varied talents. We need the linguist, the qualified translator, the writer, the artist, the artisan and the business man and woman, while knowledge and experience of teaching, infant welfare and the care of the sick, would find plenty of scope on every station; let every talent first be laid at the Master's Feet. We are looking for reinforcements; we shall find them at the "Throne of Grace." Join us there, and "Pray YE the Lord of the Harvest to thrust forth labourers into His Harvest."

H. W. STALLEY.

Suggestions for those who would be "Fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God" in North Africa.

HOW YOU MAY HELP

By becoming a Prayer Partner. Intercession on behalf of the work and the workers is greatly needed and deeply valued.

The occasional Prayer Letter giving the special requests and news from the Field will gladly be sent on application to the Secretary at Home.

By forming or joining an A.M.B. Prayer Group in your district, or by bringing A.M.B. needs before Prayer Groups already formed.

By passing on this magazine to another Christian friend.

By arranging meetings in drawing room, hall, or church, thus giving an opportunity of spreading a knowledge of the work.

By undertaking to be a Local Representative for your district.

By purchasing A.M.B. publications, which include Miss Trotter's unique and helpful writings. (List to be found in this issue.)

By supporting the work in a material sense in any way that God may direct, such as by taking an A.M.B. missionary box. Sums left to the Band by will, would help the work of the future.

By facing God's call "Who will go for us?" in view of the need of the Moslems for Christ.

A.M.B. PUBLICATIONS

- "The Master of the Impossible." 3s. 6d.
Sayings, for the most part in parable, from the letters and journals of Lilius Trotter, of Algiers. Arranged by Constance E. Padwick.
- "Lilius Trotter of Algiers." 6d.
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Books by Lilius Trotter.

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"Faith's Highway." A. E. Theobald. 1d.
"The Hiding of His Power." A. E. Theobald. 1d.
"Algiers Mission Band." A short review of the development of the Mission. 2d.

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