



# A THIRSTY LAND

The Quarterly Magazine  
of the  
ALGIERS MISSION BAND

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Home Office : Campfield, Great Barton,  
Bury St. Edmunds,  
Suffolk.

Headquarters : Dar Naama, El Biar,  
Algiers.

No. 77.

SUMMER, 1946.

EDITOR :  
MILLICENT H. ROCHE

**"This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go."**—*Acts* 1. 11.

**"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of . . . our Saviour Jesus Christ."**—*Titus* 2. 13.

*"This hope of Christ's imminent personal return is the strongest possible incentive to Missions. It sounds the note of urgency. Those who are filled with the hope of His coming are also on fire for world-wide evangelism."*—Dr. S. M. ZWEMER.

## Editorial

Writing about a brief visit to the people of a mountain town, during April, one of our workers says, "I told them that the time is short, that the Lord is coming again."

This sure and glorious hope, in a world echoing with uncertainties and forebodings, sends His messengers forward eagerly and urgently.

News from Dar Naama, from Miss Perkin and others, is, of busy days with many coming and going. "On Easter Sunday we had a Service with British soldiers and friends, on Monday we had L. (an Arab woman) with her children, for an Easter service, and in spite of the rain there was a very happy spirit."

Mlle. Butticaz has not been at all well and is hoping to get a permit and passage by air for Switzerland, but meanwhile she and Miss Russell have paid a visit both to Miliiana and to Bou Saada. Though lasting only a few days their visits were joyful times of meeting with numerous friends and God gave them many tokens of His guiding and blessing. A few sentences from Miss Russell's letter will give some impressions from Miliiana. "No sooner had we finished our meal than the two girls invited themselves for a sing-song. Little Buchta was puzzled but intrigued. We sang in French and Arabic, and I read about the children coming to be blessed. Next morning Zohra O. was there before we had had breakfast, almost, with sweet smelling pink roses. She seems wonderfully softened and far more ready for the Message than F." Having Jews very much on her heart, Miss R. tells of visits to some of them, "the first since the Victory." She thanked them for all that their encouragement had meant to Miss Grautoff and herself during the dark days of war. Several copies of the New Testament in Hebrew were bought, and Miss Russell writes, "Pray that the Word may speak to their hearts." Miss Grautoff had painted and sent out new texts in French and Arabic, and these together with an open Bible (in three languages) were once again displayed in a window of the Mission House. Let us pray that many may read the Words of Life, day by day, and may be convinced of their truth. Mademoiselle Butticaz' letters tell of the short visits paid by Miss Russell and herself to Bou Saada and M'sila. The guardian of the house at B.S. having dreamed that they were coming had everything in apple-pie order ready for them! They visited Arab friends, and Mlle. B. writes, "At R's house we were so well received. R. had been at Tlemcen, and had seen Y., a Christian girl reading her Bible and hymn book, and was much impressed. Her visit has greatly helped her, spiritually." But the visit to this town was a sorrowful one, as the famine conditions are so bad. Mlle. B. writes, "I enclose a picture of Bou Saada famine children. These were two of my morning-class 'habituées,' so when this appeared in

a daily paper my heart gave a big sigh! In the town it was famine, illness, nakedness, suffering indescribable. It would be foolish to stay and try to cope with such work (i.e., without any possibility of obtaining supplies—ED.) although it was heart-rending to leave my dear Arab friends in such woe. One day Mr. Nicoud took us in the Mission car to M'sila, the conditions are better there, and we had some very interesting visits. How much we need to pray for workers for all these big towns in such need of the Gospel."

Miss Wood writes from Tlemcen, that Y. (the Arab girl mentioned above) is apprehensive about a proposed marriage—with a Moslem man. She has been kept from this so far, and needs our prayers. Miss Wood may be coming up to Dar Naama during the Summer, and also Miss Nash, for a visit, from Touggourt. Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham are hoping to get to England, but travelling from Algeria is extremely difficult at present.

News from Monsieur and Mme. Lull is deeply interesting, but their hearts are burdened with the need around them, specially that of the Arab women. Mme. Lull writes, "Yesterday as I came back from a medical visit in the evening, I found a woman and her three children sleeping out of doors, and it was very cold. I wonder when we shall have a room where we can shelter such poor unfortunates and help them to something better. We would much like to get to France this summer, specially to try and find fellow workers, and to rouse an interest in these poor Arab people. We will gladly go anywhere for meetings; Mlle. Sallens has invited us to go to the 'Institut Biblique,' and we should like to go to some of the Camps for young people to speak to them of the needs of the work."

Monsieur Lull's letter tells of colportage work. He mentions the very greatly increased cost of travelling, and that he did as much as possible on his bicycle. He says, "I have just ended my trip in the Oued Rhir, it took eleven days. I stayed six days at Touggourt and went out in various directions into the country round on my bicycle. I went as far as Blidet Omar to the south, and all the

villages towards Djama. I spent two and a half days at Djama ; the first night I had to sleep in the Station waiting-room, there is never any room at the Hotel. The second night I had a lodging with some Europeans. I cycled in all over 166 miles, visited twenty-six villages, and sold 240 Gospels and booklets. Two violent sand storms hindered me a good deal. Nevertheless the trip was abundantly worth while, and I had many opportunities of reading the Gospel to Arabs and Jews and of talking with them. All went well at Tolga during my absence. Mme. Lull has many sick people to tend. This morning we had a good meeting for twenty women and their children who had come for treatment. I am ending the meetings at El-Amri this week with a lantern meeting. Another village has asked me to take the lantern there before we leave."

The two stories that follow give an insight into the life of Moslem boys in Algeria, and incidentally show the difficulties and joys of those who seek to sow the good seed in their hearts.

M. H. R.

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## Kemal

or

### The Boy who was Born on Christmas Day

He was called Kemal after Mustapha Kemal Attaturk, who was then president of the Turkish Republic. When I first knew him he was a very attractive small boy, with a fat little body and large round face. His eyes, too, were large and full of fun.

In those early days Kemal's parents lived outside the town of Miliana in rather a tumbledown house surrounded by vegetable gardens and fruit trees. His mother, who had been to an American boarding school in her youth, could read and write and was a baptised Christian, but his father, who had always played truant, could do neither and had remained a Moslem (or follower of the false prophet, Mohammed).

As Kemal was actually born on Christmas Day, he soon learnt from his mother the story of what happened on the very first Christmas Day, when the Saviour of the World was born in Bethlehem. Besides, he and his mother and small sister, Atticka, always went into the town on the morning of December 25th to celebrate the occasion at the house of the Christian missionaries.

At that time I used to hold a weekly meeting every Friday afternoon, for boys and girls who were too small to come into town alone. Kemal and his sister belonged to this and learnt many hymns and choruses, along with the other children. The classroom was hired in one of these country houses, like Kemal's own home, but it had an outside door, through which we could all come and go, without upsetting the inmates of the house. One hot, summer afternoon, as I arrived to take the class, I remember discovering Kemal, in his birthday suit, lying full length in the mountain stream which flowed beside the pathway. However, by the time I had unlocked the classroom, arranged the benches, and hung up the picture for the lesson, there he was in the front row, as usual, somewhat out of breath, his shirt pulled on inside out and the water drops still clinging to his face and neck.

Later on, the family moved into town and the two children came regularly to the Mission house on Sundays and Thursdays. By this time Kemal was going regularly to day school as well. He began to get cheeky and difficult and it seemed better that he should leave the infants' class and come in the afternoon with the bigger boys. This plan worked well and he read and sang from the French hymn-books with the best of them.

It must be remembered that Kemal's father was not a Christian, although he had heard a great deal about the Gospel, and often came to help keep order at the boys class. Little by little Kemal began to lose his innocent, happy look and to use the bad words he had picked up in the street from the other boys. He still came to class, but chiefly in order to make the rest laugh by making nonsense of the words of a hymn.

At last his influence upon the smaller boys was so bad that it was decided not to admit him, nor any of his gang of boisterous friends. Sometimes I would see him, after school hours or during the holidays, selling small packets of salted almonds at a street corner. Once I even stopped to buy some, as an encouragement. Imagine my horror when I found that the paper they were wrapped in proved to be pages torn from the Old Testament ! Owing to the war-time scarcity of paper, he must have used his mother's French Bible in order to wrap up his wares.

Then came a sad day when Kemal's mother fell very ill with typhus and the doctor said that her husband must be fetched, at once, from the sunbaked plain, where he had gone to work. I hurried to the Boys' School with an urgent letter for the boy to take to his father.

No-one at the school had seen Kemal that day. He was playing truant—just as his father had done before him. By dinner-time, however, he had turned up at the Mission house, was given money for his bus fare and the letter and told to hurry. Later it was discovered that he had made no attempt to obey and only continued his noisy games in the street, while his mother rapidly grew worse. When she had become quite delirious with the fever, both her children sickened as well and then a relative stepped in, took them all off to the local hospital. Here they received regular treatment for many weeks and in answer to prayer, were all restored to health though not to their former strength, immediately. Kemal, especially, seemed very weak in the legs for a long time. He no longer played the young hooligan about the streets, since he was not able to keep pace with the rest. He must be about 16 years of age now and will soon have to decide what he must do to gain a livelihood.

Will you pray that he may receive the Lord Jesus into his heart and life? He will then make the best possible monitor for the boys' class, for all the others will see that he is in earnest.

P. M. R.

(The latest news of Kemal is, "K. is very tall and thin and a great deal nicer than formerly."—ED.)

## The Story of Hopeful

Now let me tell you of another boy. Call him Raji (pronounce the "a" as in "ah," and the "i" as "ee") that is not his real name, but it will do for this story. It means "Hopeful." Well, Raji as a small boy found his way to one of our Mission stations where two ladies were living and took his place in the Thursday and Sunday classes for boys and girls. He was not very regular I am afraid, especially on Sundays. He was far more often there on Thursdays because then there would be games in the garden, there was a swing and a see-saw which was great fun, and if it was wet, well there was a place under cover where they could play football, with a real football.

Years afterwards, when I asked him what he remembered most of those days, and the classes he attended, he smiled. Yes, what he recalled best was the football! He did not appear to remember a single lesson, although he did know that they were about "Sidna Aissa"—our Lord Jesus. When he was a little older his father sent him to a Koranic school where he had to spend many hours of the day, and he had no time for the Mission classes.

One day Raji saw a man in the street with a leather bag slung from his shoulder and a bundle of books in his hand. He was speaking to people as they went by and some of his playmates stopped to listen. This stranger was not a foreigner, he looked just like one of themselves, dressed like many of his fellow-countrymen, and spoke their language perfectly. When he heard the price of the books he was selling, he thought how cheap they were. The stranger asked the boys if they would like to buy one for themselves. Quite a number were able to produce the necessary halfpenny and secured a copy. Raji was one of them. They trooped off with their purchases and were met on the way by one of their own Koranic School teachers. He immediately wanted to know what books they had bought and they had to show him. He murmured something like "Kuffer" and appeared annoyed. Enquiring where the seller of books was to be found he gave them more halfpennies, and some of his friends

produced still more, and told the boys to go off and buy as many as they could. The teacher followed them, and when they had bought up as many as their money would allow from the man, he called them all to him and made the boys tear the books up and fling them into a heap in front of the seller. He then set them on fire with a lighted match. He was now very angry. When he thought he had burned every copy that the boys had got, he forbade them ever to look at such books again. But there was at least one book that was not burned, however. Raji, when he saw what was happening, had quietly hidden his away in his clothing.

It was some time before he dared look at it, and then only when no-one was near. He found it very interesting, and he became less afraid as he went on reading. He even took it to school hidden underneath his shirt. One day he was even bolder, and he took it out and read it on his way to school. He was early to school that day, or else the teacher was late, and he actually looked at it in the classroom and said to his companion "Listen to this story," and a little cluster of heads were soon close together all around him, listening. They were so intent on the story that they did not hear the approaching footsteps of the master till it was too late. The boys scuttled away to their places, and Raji was left vainly trying to hide his treasure from the sharp eyes of the teacher.

"What is that book you are reading?" he snapped.

Sadly, Raji handed it to the master. With a scowl the man looked at its cover, and then tore it to pieces. Ordering two of the older boys to lay hold of Raji he began to beat him with his cane until he howled again for mercy. Furious still, the teacher ordered the monitors to bind Raji with a rope. He was then fixed to the end of the well rope and lowered down a little-used well in the courtyard, and there was left for some hours.

Raji's father heard of it and was furiously angry with the school-master, but he got no redress. The teacher told his side of the story, and this made the father angry with his son as well. Both agreed that this

punishment ought to knock all the stuff the boy had read right out of his head. But what was this terrible book? you are asking me. Why should it fascinate Raji, and yet make his grown-ups so terribly angry? Well, it was just the "Gospel according to St. Luke," the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Did this bad treatment make him forget all that he had read? A few years went by, and when Raji left his school he could repeat the whole of the Koran by heart. He went out to work, and one day he noticed that a stranger was now living at the Mission house where he used to attend as a small boy, and young men of his own age were going to see him each night. He slipped in with them. What was that they were reading together? The stranger had handed round books for each one to follow as he read. He glanced at the cover. Yes, it was the Gospel according to St. Luke.

What a wonderful thing it was to hear somebody else reading this same book and talking about the One of whom it was written. He did not miss many nights after that, and a few months later he came alone, and said to his new friend, "I want you to tell me how I can become a Christian like you?" It was not long before Raji was on his knees giving his heart to Christ. He rose, and went out, his life transformed.

Life has been very stormy for him since, but there was no mistaking the change that had come into his life through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is going through very severe testing to-day. Please pray for him

H. W. S.

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## Christian Literature Crusade

There is one aspect of the World Mission Field that is fast disappearing to-day—illiteracy. French North Africa offers no exception. The once unconsciously "thirsty land" is now becoming consciously so. Widespread and free education has created a demand for reading matter far in excess of all present resources put together. This intellectual awakening is a challenge to

Islam itself. Unprogressive, and unchallenged for centuries, it now finds itself in conflict with other ideas for the allegiance and loyalty of its peoples. Materialism, atheism, communism and nationalism are all out to capture the minds of the masses through the printed page, and much that is sheer moral filth is being offered to the thirsty mind of the young through the existing trade channels.

In comparison with this mind-warping, soul-drugging stream the contribution of the Christian Church is a mere trickle. The Bible Societies have done great work in bringing the unadulterated Word of God within the reach of many. The Nile Mission Press in co-operation with the A.M.B. strove to increase the output of pure Christian literature in French and Arabic during the period between the two great wars, but still the picture remains true. While the whole Bible may be read in French and Classical Arabic these are foreign tongues to a vast number of people, and only a part of the New Testament and none of the Old is available in their vernacular. Miss Trotter and her colleagues have produced and published in Algiers over sixty booklets, tracts, parable stories, leaflets, etc.; many of these are specially suited to youthful readers. They give the Gospel Message very clearly, and could be and need to be multiplied a hundred times.

With past experience as a guide and the urgency of the need and opportunity as a spur we desire to lay before you something of the vision for the future, a Christian Literature Crusade. This is not just a plan for A.M.B. only, it is the concern of all God's Servants on the Field, and we desire to see a very definite co-ordination of effort along this line and toward this end. It will cover a wide field of activity in all of which the unity of the Spirit would be made manifest.

We would need to recognise that one or two missionaries set apart to undertake the collection and production of the needed material would be doing far more effectual work than could be done by ordinary evangelism without the aid of literature. We want the business man and woman mentioned elsewhere in this number to plan

and supervise distribution. In time past our colporteurs have gone forth with loaded packs on their backs, or a car load of books and Bibles for the longer trails. We must have them back on the road again. But behind them there needs to be the central clearing depot with those at work seeking out all available supplies, producing when necessary, and not only providing for stations and colporteurs but pushing their wares through trade channels. Such a centre with sales and reading room needs to be established at Algiers. Every helper in it would be a missionary.

Every station must have its depot and reading room. Those colportage cars which did such valiant work in years gone by and of which the war has deprived us, must be replaced to carry their precious loads to every village and market place in the country.

The printed Message whether sold or given can enter places inaccessible to the Missionary, it will stay long after he would have passed on. Its silent witness cannot be argued with, or drowned in a wordy battle. The first-fruits that we have seen among Moslem people have in most cases had their beginnings in a page read in secret. We have a harvest yet to reap from the sowing of the past years, but new generations are arising with vaster possibilities for a still greater ingathering. Let us seize the opportunity and make it a Crusade worthy of the name, and of HIM Whose Day is coming.

Please take this before the Lord in prayer, strengthen our hands at the Throne of Grace, asking Him at the same time if He has a further part for you in His Plan.

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## Home Secretary's Notes

It is a joy to be able to speak of answered prayer. One looks back through the last two issues of *A Thirsty Land* to read again the "Prayer Call" that was sent out, telling you of the vision that is ours for the coming days, and setting a target for our petitions. God has given us the consciousness that this challenge has not gone unheeded, but rather that the prayer tide

has been rising. So let us keep these matters steadfastly before us, and as we look at the answers be encouraged to go on, knowing that the tide must reach the flood of God's Full Blessing.

I felt it a privilege as well as a joy to make contact with friends of the Mission in Ireland once again, particularly in Faith Mission circles. It is an older generation of prayer-partners who have been our staunch supporters for many years past, and they rejoiced with us that it was possible, at the Easter Convention at Bangor, to strengthen the links and enlist a younger generation of "helpers together by prayer."

Had the visit been restricted to the days of the Convention alone, it would have been eminently worth-while, but there followed a busy eight days of visits to Prayer Union and other meetings, and everywhere I was almost overwhelmed with the warmth of true Irish hospitality and kindness, and encouraged by the keen prayerful spirit and interest shown in God's Work abroad.

Every step of the way seemed to bear the impress of "The Hand that guideth," right from the moment of applying for a sailing ticket, and seeking a new passport. The latter came through exactly one hour before the boat-train pulled out of Euston. On the return journey, to that same station fifteen days later, memories crowded in of old links re-strengthened, new ones forged, offers of co-operation in the work, and in the case of at least one young life, a clear call heard, and accepted, for North Africa.

May we now commend to your prayers two young lives, the one referred to above, a man, and another living in London, a woman, who feel that God has called them to be co-workers together with us in the A.M.B. They are both seeking entrance now into some Missionary Training College, for the needed preparation for the tasks they believe will be theirs. Continue to pray on that God will give the burden of the "Land of the Vanished Church" to some, whose training complete, now await His guidance as to their next step.

Conditions in the Land are still very serious and trying. Famine and scarcity prevail, communications and transport are

extremely difficult. The consequent strain on the health and strength of missionaries calls for constant upholding by prayer. Although the way is not yet clear, we still trust that some of them will be able to return to this country for rest and recuperation early in the summer. We look beyond the summer months to the time of year, when in pre-war days our Missionaries would be scattering once again to their posts, after days of spiritual refreshment at the yearly Rally, and we may be tempted to wonder how many of those stations will be filled this year, or rather, how many will not be filled, and possibly to say, "Lord, how long?" The situation in this respect is serious and the fact that every other missionary society faces it as well, makes it no easier to contemplate for those whose hearts God has burdened with the Work. The answer comes from the beginnings of the Book: "Is anything too hard for the Lord? at the *'time appointed'* I will return unto thee." God had asked His two servants to trust Him for the humanly impossible. He had given them a vision and promise of the future for which there was no visible support or precedent. Abraham believed, Sarah laughed, but finally "judged Him faithful who had promised." "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude." Our ultimate vision is the Resurrection of the Church of Christ in the land where Anti-christian forces laid her low twelve centuries ago. The land where once Augustine, a son of Algeria, stood and prayed, "Lord, give what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt"; where Tertullian on trial for his faith could say with assurance to his judges: "We (Christians) grow up in greater numbers as often as we are cut down by you. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. We are of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you, cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, companies, palace, castle, senate, forum, we leave you only your temples." It was the Church in North Africa that gave to Western Christendom the first translation of the Word of God in a European tongue, the "vetus Itala," known to have been used as

early as the fifth century at Canterbury and Lindisfarne in our own country.

The Gospel that we preach is "The Good News of the Resurrection," and throughout the Bible there rings and echoes this promise, not only with regard to Israel, but also the Church and the Earth, "At the time appointed I will return." With every God-given vision, there will be a God-given Promise, bringing assurance, and strengthening faith. Can anybody doubt that we are praying along the line of God's Will, and toward's final accomplishment, when we ask Him "to thrust out labourers into this Harvest Field"? If we are found looking at HIM alone I am sure we would be adding just two little words to our prayer target for A.M.B.—"At least—twenty new workers, Lord, within the next three years." "According to your faith be it unto you."

H. W. STALLEY.

## Coming Events

There is to be a GREAT MISSIONARY DEMONSTRATION at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on September 24th next, arranged by the Interdenominational Missionary Fellowship, of which the A.M.B. is a member. The different Fields covered by the Fellowship will be set forth by selected speakers, while all member-societies will be represented. There will also be an interesting display showing needs of the Work, and methods used. Further details will be issued later in the Christian Press.

The A.M.B. ANNUAL MEETING in London will take place, D.V., on October 15th. Information will be published as soon as possible.

DEPUTATION WORK. The Secretary hopes to revisit Scotland after the middle of October. If you desire to help us, and can arrange for him to speak at some meeting in your Church or neighbourhood, please let him know, or communicate with our representative in Glasgow, Mrs. R. Wilson, 21 Danes Drive, Glasgow 4.

A further visit to Ireland is also being prayerfully considered, for later in the year, while we shall be glad to hear from you at any time regarding meetings in England and Wales.

*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.

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.