

A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

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God is Love. 1 John 4.8.

God's Grace is sufficient. 2 Cor. 3.9.

All things work together for good to them that love God.

Rom. 8.28

The Word of our God shall stand for ever. Isa. 40.8.

The Lord is at Hand. Phil. 4.5.

Faith is rooted in God's great facts.

Walking along a wooded path in the mountains of Switzerland I saw an interesting tree. On a steep slope was a tall pine tree with a huge boulder lodged right underneath it, lifting the main trunk several feet from the ground. The tree was fairly sitting on top of the rock, yet it shot straight upward fifty feet. How could such a position be maintained? The secret was not hidden from our view. The roots of the tree had spread themselves over that rock and had gone down, deep, deep into the earth around, so that even the boulder lodged at its very heart could not overturn or overwhelm it.

What a lesson it spoke! Afflictions, adversities, sufferings, sorrows, temptations, trials, doubts, disappointments roll in upon us. How can we go on in peace, patience and victory with such things in our life? Are they not enough to overwhelm us? No, not if faith spreads itself out over them and sends its roots down into the rich soil of God's eternal facts.

Think of the boulders that rolled in upon the life of the Apostle Paul: stripes, stonings, shipwreck, perils and persecutions of all kinds. But his faith spread itself over all these testings and trials and rooted itself in the eternal facts of God's love, grace and power, thus enabling him to grow up to magnificent spiritual stature. What the glorified Christ did for Paul He stands ready to do for you and me.

—RUTH PAXON (from *Rivers of Living Water*).

Dear Friends of the A.M.B.,

God's great facts are not affected by circumstances, time or place, and are as real and vital to our fellow workers on the Field as to us at Home. Faith finds in them its only sure ground of confidence in these days of stress.

Letters from Algeria come at rather long and irregular intervals and much has to remain untold, but the news gives rise to thankfulness and we quote from various letters.

Miss Perkin writes: "From Monsieur Lull comes the following, 'Pray for those who come almost daily to read God's Word—specially for a student of the Zaouia, in whom the Holy Spirit seems to be working.' Monsieur Lull also quotes a young man from the Aures mountains who said to him, 'Before I came to you I did not love the Lord Jesus, but now, I love Him.' A group from a Batna Zaouia, visited by Monsieur Lull in the summer, were now paying him a return visit at Tolga. Monsieur Lull hoped to journey to Oued Souf (a large desert town, in the far south, which was very dear to Miss Trotter's heart), during February."

Monsieur Nicoud had been to Relizane on mission business, and had seen Yamina, the mother of the Christian girl, Fatima, who died there. She told Monsieur Nicoud that she was "walking in the same way" as her daughter, i.e. in the way of Christ.

Mlle Butticz is not, after all, leaving Bou Saada. Many have asked that she should stay, and God has provided for this. She is hoping to have a Swiss friend with her for a time. Mademoiselle is very encouraged with her class of little girls, and asks prayer for the patients, Arab and French, whom she visits at the hospital.

Miss Grautoff and Miss Russell were unable to go south in January, as they had expected, but they hoped to go, for a *shorter visit than usual, in March. The blind Christian woman (Y.), in Miliana is brave, but needs prayer. Her husband (H.), is restless and loses his work. He needs prayer that he may become a more

disciplined Christian, and read his Bible. Miss G. also asks prayer "That those who read the Bible in my window may be helped, and also those to whom we lend books and tracts."

Miss Farmer and Miss Layte went back to Setif after the New Year committees in Algiers, to find that burglars had stolen provisions, blankets, and footwear. It is a particularly trying time for such a thing to happen! Their girl, "Serira," is still with them, and joins them in morning prayers. The work goes quietly on. Both Mrs. Thomson and her baby girl had not been at all well, and were having treatment in Algiers, Mr. Thomson carrying on his work meanwhile.

In a letter from Tlemcen Mrs. Stalley mentions the Rally days in the Autumn. She says, "It was a most blessed and helpful season of fellowship with fellow members of the A.M.B., and with fellow missionaries of other Societies who were in Algiers at the time and able to join with us in the three days' Meetings. A memory remaining with me is of how wonderfully God led the speakers—all unknown to each other, so that message followed message in a God-given sequence, which was remarkable—each one dove-tailing into the other in a progressive revelation of God's will for us as His workers. There was real heart-searching. There was a new challenge to faith in view of present world-conditions and I think we all felt we could better face returning to our appointed spheres of service as God should open the doors, after meeting our Lord afresh in that quiet time. And, as you know, the doors did open, and we were all able to go back. Now we can look back over another term of work just finished, and praise God again for His faithfulness. Our every need has been met, and we have had opportunities of service and contacts with souls everyday. I might say without exception.

Mrs. Stalley writes too of a Christmas full of God's joy and blessing, especially for those "who truly love the Lord here in Tlemcen." She also says, "We

have now re-started the evening service down in the Church. The young fellows do appreciate that place, and it certainly is good to cultivate a spirit of quiet reverence in worship. The Church 'atmosphere' helps this. It also makes the Sunday service a little different from the more informal meetings of the week evenings. You may be glad to hear that the one we called 'the Dictionary' has come back to us after a long absence. We felt that this was a very definite answer to prayer. During his many wanderings he had visited some relatives in Morocco and there had been in touch with other missionaries whom we know. It may be God used these touches in bringing him back here again. He confesses himself a Christian at heart, but frankly says he dare not, yet, make open confession before his people. The other young man who just a year ago confessed his faith in Christ, has gone steadily on and for this we thank God. Pray that he may go on as he has begun. God has taught him much, and he is an apt disciple, who finds real joy in the treasures of the Word of God. A young Kabyle Christian has recently come to live here and has joined our little group, to their mutual joy. There are others who came regularly last year, who have not come back this term, and for these we still pray that God may overcome all the hindrances that keep them away and bring them back—with others in His own good time.

We had a very happy gathering of women the day after Christmas and now as soon as weather permits Miss Wood and I hope to visit those who were not able to be present. Just now it is bitterly cold and snow is trying to fall. It has been a great joy and a tremendous help having Miss Wood alongside during the past term, and we do thank God for allowing us to have her here. With two of us in the house we have been able to give much more time to the daily visitors, especially the girls."

Mr. Buckenham writes from Blida : "It is interesting to hear of another *Thirsty Land* (Winter Number) ready for issue. If not too vague for the next number, would you mention abounding cause for

thanksgiving for sustained interest here?"

Monsieur Millon asks : "For thanksgiving for fresh contacts made with students. For prayer for an Arab student who is near the Kingdom, and also for the students whom we meet at the University or the library, that we may be able to put before them salvation through Christ. Pray also for all those to whom we have given or sold Bibles or Scripture portions, and for two refugees whom hard suffering has brought back to God. These two being imprisoned and separated were miraculously released and reunited, after the wife in despair had cried to God. This led them to seek a Bible. The husband writes, 'This precious Book which we have been without for so long is worth more than food, clothes or money. This Book gives joy, and if one has joy what is it to live in poverty?'"

It has been a very severe winter in Algeria, and the need among the poor is great. Fuel has been difficult to obtain.

We thank God for a renewed permit to send out a certain sum, monthly, and for His gracious provision for this. I would again remind our friends that we cannot send out any private gifts or sums for any particular work or workers—all share in all.

May I mention a personal matter? I have come during March to stay for some time with my younger sister in Norfolk. She has had a very serious accident and wants me to be with her just now. May I ask your prayers for God's healing touch on her? You will, I know, understand and forgive if answers to letters are delayed a little longer than usual?

I close with some words quoted by Miss Perkin in one of her Field letters : "Do not pray for easy lives, pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of the life that has come to you by the grace of God."

Yours very sincerely,

MILLICENT H. ROCHE.

↳ Later.—This visit was not possible.