

# A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

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**"Whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me : and to him that ordereth his conversation right will I shew the salvation of God."**

*Psalm 50, 23: P.B.V.*

Dear friends of the A.M.B.,

A breath of Spring comes in these letters from our fellow workers in Algeria, and your hearts will rejoice as you read. It is not an easy path that they are treading, but the tender mercies of our God spring up like flowers around them, and the Joy of the Lord is their strength.

I quote this time from two letters, one written by Miss Perkin for members of the Band on the Field ; the other sent to us by Mrs. Stalley. They cover between them a great deal of ground, and suggest many subjects for Praise and Prayer.

*From Miss Perkin (Dar Naama).*

"Let us praise our Heavenly Father, Who has led us safely through another year of threatening possibilities, and from the rock of apparently insuperable difficulties, has, up to date, provided for our financial needs.

'He is better to me than all my hopes ;  
He was better than all my fears ;  
He made a road of my broken works ;  
And a rainbow of all my tears.'

"We have had the pleasure of a two-days' visit from Mons. and Mme. Boncal (parents of Mme. Lull), en route for Tolga. They and Mons. Nicoud (who was returning from Switzerland whither he had taken Georges for treatment) had both booked on the L— and finally crossed over under appalling and alarming conditions, quite unper- turbed. Mons. Lull wrote on January 23,

from Tolga, telling of the safe arrival of the Boncals, and that all was well with themselves and their two children. He continued, "There is an epidemic of typhus in the neighbourhood. There were three deaths in this village this week. I have not recommenced my visiting in the Oasis since Christmas ; Mme. Lull wishes to go with me and we were waiting for the arrival of her parents. Meetings for the young and for adults take place every evening, and most interesting groups they are. The little girls come regularly to their classes. M. comes from time to time for a talk, and one feels the working of the Holy Spirit in him."

"At Setif, Miss Farmer and Miss Layte are encouraged in their girls' classes and are rejoiced at getting their old house-girl back. Mrs. Thomson was hoping to begin girls' classes in January, but it was impossible to get the girls to come and sit in a fireless room. (Fuel has been unobtainable in this place). Mr. Thomson was getting good classes of boys, and they listened well to the Message.

We are glad to know that Mlle. Gayral, who was ill, has recovered. She desires prayer for Khira-bent-Moukhtar, and says, "Her husband has once more divorced her, and she has gone to her father. Pray for her in her most trying position." (Kh. took a stand for Christ, but has become entangled in Moslem mysticism). "Pray also for the work in Mostaganem, that hearts may be truly prepared to hear and accept the

word of God, and that I may be enabled to make it known."

Pray for the group of young men at Tlemcen, specially for M. who hopes to be baptised before long.

Mlle. Butticaz writes from Bousaada, that the watchman and his family are helpful. "They were very nice to the poor sick boys who came to the garden; boys who were turned out of the hospital and had nowhere to go at night. The severe cold has diminished the typhus, but there is much suffering. There are chilblains and boils to dress, and the poor babies with open sores on their feet are a pitiful sight. People beg for clothing; nothing but rags, rags, rags! I have food and charbon, indeed all my needs are supplied."

Georges Nicoud is comfortably settled at Leysin (Switzerland) with lads of his own age, suffering in the same way. He has been on his back for nearly two years now, but he writes cheerfully.

Mons. Nicoud has recently visited Blida and Miliana. He found a friendly atmosphere at Blida, good classes and well attended Sunday afternoon meetings. The Buckenhams were making shift for fuel with green wood from the garden.

Mons. Nicoud reported that the two at Miliana were bearing up bravely, with fuel shortage, and brought this word from Miss Grautoff: "Don't trouble over us, we have plenty of work to do, and long for the fine weather when we can again take tramps outside! [Snow probably deep on roads. Ed.] Pray for three Bibles sold, one to a young woman (R.C.) an earnest seeker. For blind Yamina who cannot use her poor swollen hand (tubercular), we fear much suffering lies before her. We have good classes and happy times with the women, but the atmosphere does not change. We are hoping to carry on till the Summer."

Mons. Millon writes from Algiers, "Praise God for numerous new contacts among the students, thanks to our Christian library; also for the return to Algiers of K. whose parents tried to prevent his coming back. Praise also for a religious revival among the young Jewish students. Pray that K. may continue to grow spiritually, in a Christian atmosphere. That we may be able to form a circle for those Moslem

professors and students with whom we have made contact. Pray also that we may find the best means of helping the numbers of students, professors, and teachers, who write to us for books; also ask that God may get glory to Himself through the revival of religion mentioned above. Ask for us that we may be enabled to fight victoriously against indifference and theosophy, both of which are rife among the young people." "It is incredible what theosophy and spiritism are doing among all races.

We have cheering news of Ali ben Salah from the Rollands. He is helpful in working in the garden, etc., and in the meetings that he attends faithfully." S. P.

In other letters Miss Perkin tells of how Miss Nash had been able to help the Salvation Army in their round up of starving destitute people, for meals of hot soup. Their joy was great! Miss P. also writes of Bible lessons which she is giving to Fifi, a Blida waif of long ago, now a capable helper in the house. "I am giving her Bible lessons, running through the books, on certain subjects. She is very intelligent, and is thrilled at study on these lines."

*From Mrs. Stalley (Tlemcen).*

"How I wish you could have been with us last Sunday week (December 21) when we had Elizabeth's 'presentation' service. It was a simple and beautiful little ceremony conducted by the French Pastor. We followed, with just a few modifications, the service of the French Protestant Church, but with Scripture readings and hymns of our own choosing. Twenty-three friends were with us, including four of the Arab young men, and we felt truly rich in having so many to share our joy, although our own families could not be there. Although it was December we were fortunate in being able to get a lovely lot of flowers and both the church and the big class-room, which we temporarily converted into a pleasant drawing room, looked very pretty. One friend who was not able to come sent a lovely bunch of roses.

"Elizabeth looked sweet in a very pretty little pink frock, with a white woolly coat over it. She sat on my lap during the service and shared my hymnbook! Every now and then she kept looking up into my

face with a beaming smile as much as to say, 'Aren't we having a lovely time?' Everything interested her—the music, the Pastor in his robes, and all the visitors, at whom she smiled in turn. It was a lovely little service. The Pastor's message was short and appropriate. He made reference to our absent parents, and referring to what was said of John the Baptist, 'What manner of child shall this be?' he expressed the hope that it might be true of Elizabeth that she should be a 'servant of the Lord,' which hope we echoed in promising to seek to bring her up for Him.

"After the service we went up to the class-room for tea—a war-time tea, of course, but it was wonderful how we managed to get together quite a nice collection of scones and simple buns made with sweet date flour. I actually managed to make a cherry cake. It had four cherries in it—left overs from last year—but still it was quite good! One of our friends thoughtfully gave me a present of sugar for the tea, which was indeed a generous gift. Two of the young Christian Arabs helped in handing round the tea, and did it very well. So altogether we had a very happy afternoon, and may God fully answer the prayers that were around little Elizabeth that day!

"Christmas was also a very happy time. We had the young men's party on Christmas night and there were nine present.

"First came the Christmas service down in the Church and there was such a beautiful spirit of worship and quiet listening. It was really remarkable. Then they had their supper, which took some time, finishing off with mint tea, oranges, sweets and a game. After the fun was over, to our surprise they begged to be allowed to sing some more hymns, so of course we gladly consented and we sang till 11 p.m. until we had hardly any voice left!

"We had practically the same group for a Watch Night Service on Wednesday. This was something new for us here, but it was a very happy time and a lovely way of beginning the New Year. I feel sure the memory of those solemn moments will also come back to these young fellows in days to come. Do pray for them.

"On the Tuesday previous we had a

meeting for the women. First Miss Wood gave them the Christmas message, then I explained to them the meaning of our Sunday service for Elizabeth, and how as of old the mothers brought their little ones to the Saviour to be blessed, so Christian parents to-day can still do the same, and not only bring them to Him, but seek to live before them so as to bring them up in His way. At the end Miss Wood offered a special prayer committing to His love each of the babies present as well as our little Freeha. (This is Elizabeth's Arabic name)."

J. C. S.

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And as we read, we commit to God's love each one of His dear servants. May they be kept safely sheltered from all evil, and be used day by day to make Christ known to the Moslems around them!

Yours in His Service,

MILLICENT H. ROCHE.

P.S.—Since the above was written, we have received another letter from Miss Perkin, from which I quote, "It is decided to give up the girls' and women's work at Setif. Nothing can be done on account of typhus. Miss Farmer and Miss Layte have asked for permission to come and live here, and I think that under the circumstances it will be granted. We have faced giving up some of our rents for some time, and if they get leave to come it would not be worth while paying the rent in view of a return in the uncertain future."

Typhus which follows, inevitably, on the heels of hunger and destitution is evidently prevalent in various places. Let us unite in prayer that the missionaries may be kept from illness and that the plague may be stayed. Also that many may hear God's voice during these solemn days.

Because of various enquiries, I would once more like to emphasize the fact that it is quite impossible to send sums of money to individual workers. Up to the present we have been able to send a sum for the maintenance of our British workers, monthly, with a Government permit. All have shared alike in this money which is sent to Mr. Buckenham, our Treasurer. We thank God for His provision and enabling.

M. H. R.