



NEWS SHEET
REPLACING PRO TEM.

A THIRSTY LAND

The Quarterly Magazine
of the
ALGIERS MISSION BAND

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"This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith."—1 John 5, 4.

Dear Friends of the A.M.B.,

You have, I am sure, been following, as I have, the events in North Africa with intense interest. I will not comment on the general news except to remind ourselves of the great need for prayer. Prayer for a speedy Allied victory, that God's overruling hand may direct decisions and events for blessing, and may protect and strengthen His own in these hazardous war days.

Letters have come at fairly long intervals and take some weeks in coming, but the news is good. When the Allied troops arrived so unexpectedly in Algeria they went to some places where the only British "home" was one of our Mission Stations. These, of course, at once opened their doors, to the men who found themselves in

a strange land and who most gratefully availed themselves of the hospitality offered by their fellow-countrymen. As one letter says: "The poor fellows do so need a 'home,' and we gladly welcome all who can come. The devil's agents are busy and always first on the field."

The native work in some Stations has been inevitably curtailed *pro tem.*, owing to existing conditions and also because of the need for helping our troops. It is a matter for thanksgiving and prayer that opportunities have offered, beyond all telling, of ministering to the bodies and souls of men and the appreciation and gratitude of all ranks has been heartfelt. The contacts made will surely mean great things for some and may create new caring for work among the Moslems, in days to come.

As we know, our missionaries had been very short of food and the necessaries of life during many months. They have never complained, and one wrote, "It takes my breath away sometimes, the way God supplies our every need. We are scarcely aware of a lack, when someone appears at the door with that very thing, and not always for sale, either!"

Now, thank God, good friends have supplied many things. Red Cross parcels, given to some (canteen helpers) have been a great help already. Things are still most difficult to get and prices are very high. But conditions have begun to improve and will get steadily better as the promised supplies from America arrive in greater quantities. After such a time of attrition, it takes time to adjust things. "Bread is much improved, no sawdust in it now, and there is much more of it. Milk is being distributed gratis to all children." This will make a deep impression on the native people, and "Members of the Allied forces are making themselves greatly liked, they are so nice with the children," and often give food to the hungry ones.

Dar Naama is used as a Y.M.C.A. Canteen, the large, beautiful Central Court being well adapted for this. There are willing helpers and no expense is, of course, involved for the A.M.B. Great numbers of men are received daily, with friendship and kindness. Meetings which may be attended, Prayers held every evening, and conversations, give opportunities of definite spiritual work.

I will quote sentences, from various letters from Miss Perkin, which will give a good idea of what is going on and will suggest prayer needs. "Units we have got to know go off to other Camps or up the line, which is very sad, and fresh lots come swarming in to our Canteen. We have had to extend the area and occupy all the ground floor and get extra helpers. . . . Such a rush of blues and khakis, we could hardly cope with them!" "The men are interested in our rations and think we are poorly fed. They promise us quantities of food and clothing to come." "It is not nice to have Stukas overhead. No harm

here except a pane of glass, and the grounds peppered." "The men are desperate for literature. Old numbers of *A Thirsty Land* are appreciated, also North African guide books, and books about Algeria generally. I have now sold four copies of *The Master of the Impossible*. Many are very interested in Miss Trotter's life and work, and delight in seeing her paintings. Several little gifts have been slipped into my hand for the work, and many questions are asked."

"Some naval men came on Sunday, and greatly enjoyed the Prayer Meeting." "Quite a number of Army men at the P.M., and one sailor. They took the P.M. between them, most saying a few words. They are so happy to find there is a friendly meeting to come to." "Three Senegalese negroes who are Christians (soldiers) make a point of coming in for prayers every night. They and our men are on the best of terms."

During December, Mr. Buckenham (Blida) in addition to the hospitality which he and Mrs. Buckenham gave to large numbers of men—was able to render a further service. With the warm approval of the C.O., Mr. Buckenham and the French pastor co-operated in the holding of services for the troops in the Protestant Temple on Sunday mornings and afternoons. Mr. Buckenham took the services which were well attended by Americans and British. Later they were transferred to the Mission House so as to have the whole afternoon and evening, and time for singing after the meetings. A later letter from Mr. Buckenham says: "Ever since very shortly after that wonderful 8th November, we have had great days. We have probably had closer touch with more of our fellow-countrymen, here in this unlikely and unforeseen spot, than we could have ever had the chance of having at home! We are constantly living with, 'This one thing I do,' while these momentous days continue. Privilege and responsibility are the two aspects of it all. Some day perhaps, if there is ever time for it, we shall be able to describe to any who would like to share in the after guarding of prayer the run of the days. I can just say that not a day passes

without new contacts, and not a week without several repeated ones. Each day holds the maximum, we believe, of what we could do, and each night is devoted to precious preparations—which are of more than one nature. Despite limitations our native celebrations at Christmas were happy ones—visiting, however, just has to stand in abeyance to what we hold as our present 'first' work. It is wonderful how the dear natives understand, and rejoice in the cause of the necessity to neglect them a bit, temporarily." Miss Perkin, writes still later, that daily from 3-6 o'clock many men (often from fifty to sixty) visit Dar el Aine.

Miss Grautoff writes from her mountain Station: "So you see in spite of the sense of war around we (herself and Miss P. Russell) are busy and happy and free, and have come into our own again. The Arabs are quite excited when our 'cousins' from overseas throw them chewing gum and sweets! The pigeon English is getting most amusing, and they are even learning to hum, 'He's a jolly good fellow.' Living is very costly, but we have had presents given to us. We even tasted butter, left us by some British passing through, and tea—just think of the luxury. We had not tasted butter, milk, rice, etc., for many months." The natives had their fêtes at Christmas, with, for the children, "Home-made dolls and balls, scrap books made from old Christmas cards and advertisements, and little sacks of acorns, figs, and almonds, which are a ruinous price this year!" "We are having small but intelligent class of girls; boys are generally too busy, the roads being too interesting with passing traffic!" Mr. and Mrs. Bocking of N.A.M. (Cherchelle), and their little daughter have been staying for some time at the Mission Station as they were turned out of their own Station by the authorities and sent to Miliana. Now, of course, they are free, and were hoping to leave for Tangiers, when Miss Grautoff last wrote.

"Mr. Bocking goes twice a day to help and interpret in the hospital. We had a service there on Sunday in our own tongue, singing well known hymns, and the men were glad. We give books, dates, and anything we can think of, to help them." "On New Year's

day we had four British soldiers to tea," and "Mr. Bocking brings some in for tea and a chat from time to time." "Pray for these men in a foreign country, not knowing the language, that they may be kept from sin and temptation." "We were able to give away over two hundred French Scriptures one day to Algerian troops leaving here for Service."

Mr. and Mrs. Stalley and Miss Wood have been very busy with American visitors. Mr. Stalley wrote, "Besides having little groups in to meals we have had Sunday Services in our Church in the Mission Station. We had a Special Service on Christmas morning, and were then whisked away to a hospital camp in an ambulance, to have lunch with the officers, and then a Service for the staff afterwards. This was in the open-air. It was a lovely day, and the spirit of the gathering was fine. Andrew (young Arab convert) went off on Monday to join the African Free Corps, but is just too young. He did what his conscience dictated, in volunteering for service, but is content to await the opening of the door in God's good time." Mrs. Stalley writes a little later, "I wish you could see Elizabeth with her soldier friends! She is shy with any new ones for just a few minutes but that soon goes and then she is up on their knees and searching their pockets! (for chocolates). They all love her and it is amusing to see her solemnly offering her Teddy bear or her rag doll to each one in turn, be he colonel, major, or private!" "Since Christmas, those whom we had worked amongst, have been moved away and others have come. This time there are several chaplains, who are very friendly and glad to co-operate and use our premises. We had quite a big united service in our own church here on Sunday. We thought how pleased Miss Butler would have been to see the building nearly full. . . . We have met one or two nice Christian lads—one had been quite recently at Dar Naama and knew the friends there. Another very frequent visitor is Edmund Buckenham who is now stationed here."

We rejoice with Mr. and Mrs. Thomson in God's good gift to them of a little daughter—Maureen—born at Setif in

January. May God shield this little life begun in stormy days, and make her a great joy and blessing. Mr. and Mrs. Thomson were electrified when a Scottish regiment suddenly marched into their town, playing the bagpipes! Since then they have been in contact with the troops, receiving visitors, holding services, organising a canteen and club. Mr. Thomson writes: "The Sunday afternoon services we have started in the Protestant Church have resulted in the finding of some of the Lord's own among the troops. The joy was mutually shared of course."

A delayed request has come from M. Lull, asking prayer about a room he hoped to hire in Tolga itself for boys' and men's meetings. So far these have all been held in a suburb of the town. Probably he has been able to arrange this by now.

F.— is a very willing and capable native helper at Dar Naama, on whose co-operation a good deal of the comfort of the house depends. She is an earnest Christian girl, cared for by the Good Shepherd since she learnt His Name as a child at one of our Mission Stations, guarded by His love during years when she was almost alone in the world and might so easily have gone under. Now she is a baptized Christian who is learning to love her Bible and joins in meetings of young people. I hear that there is a hope of her engagement to a young Arab Christian. True Christian homes are lights amidst the darkness of Islam, and the powers of Evil are dead against their creation. Let us pray that God's perfect will may be worked out, without hindrance, in the lives of these two young people.

There is no change at present in financial matters. I am allowed to send out a sum monthly, to be divided up—but may not send to individual workers. We praise our God for His gracious provision for our needs.

Since our last News Letter was published, the A.M.B. has lost a very faithful friend of many years, the Rev. Francis C. Brading. Mr. and Mrs. Brading worked for some years in Algeria with Miss Trotter in the early days of the Mission. When, for health

and family reasons they had to return to England, they continued to be firm friends and helpers of the work. Mr. Brading has been Chairman of the Home Council ever since it was formed a good many years ago, has revisited the Field more than once and has given us his help in many directions. As secretary, I shall very greatly miss his counsel and advice which he always gave me most willingly.

Another very beloved friend of the A.M.B., Mrs. J. A. Walker, Secretary of the Algerian Mission Band of America, passed away at Los Angeles on December 21st. Mrs. Walker first visited the Mission in Algiers in 1907, and took both the members of the Band and the work among the Arabs, to her heart, from that time forward. Her love showed itself in very many ways, one of the chief being her indefatigable work as Secretary of the Algerian Mission Band of America, which she herself helped to found. For many years they supported two of the workers in the A.M.B. and still continue to help us. How much we shall miss her wonderful personal letters so full of loving interest in our homes and doings! We think of Mrs. Walker, so interested and so interesting and so full of helpfulness when she came to Algeria on one of her long visits. We remember how hard she worked in America taking every possible opportunity of making the work of the Band known.

This small, brave woman served the Lord whom she loved, with all her might, a special share of her large heart being given to the little children of the world, and to those of Algeria in particular. We shall miss her, as a Band and individually deeply and always. To her family and to the President, Treasurer, and members of the "Algerian Mission Band" of America we send our most loving sympathy.

Your fellow worker,

MILLICENT H. ROCHE.
(Hon. Sec.)

FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH FOR THE MOSLEMS.
Conference to be held (D.V.), at
"Slavanka," Bournemouth, June 4th
to 8th.