



NEWS SHEET
REPLACING PRO TEM.

A THIRSTY LAND

The Quarterly Magazine
of the
ALGIERS MISSION BAND

Home Office : Douera, Glenwood Road,
West Moors, Dorset.

Headquarters : Dar Naama, El Biar,
Algiers.

No. 68.

SPRING, 1944.

1/6 PER ANNUM
POST FREE

**"It is God which Worketh in You both to Will and to do
of His Good Pleasure."—Phill. 3. 13.**

Dear Friends of the A.M.B.,

You will I know, rejoice with us as you read in this News Sheet, of God's working both among the Moslems of Algeria and members of our Forces stationed in that land. As we praise, we need to pray, for our Band is facing many problems in these days of changed and changing conditions. We would ask our friends to have fellowship with us in earnest prayer that both on the Field and at Home our God may work in us, individually and as a Band, "to will and to do of His good pleasure."

We are so glad to hear from Miss Grautoff that she is feeling better and stronger, and has had a good report from her doctor.

She is busy preparing leaflets with texts and designs for French and Arab boys and girls to colour. Miss G. writes: "I have had cheering news from Miliana. Our little Arab girls did not wholly lose their Christmas. Madame L., the wife of our French pastor invited several of them to the Christmas Tree at the French Protestant Church, and alongside the French children they were able to join in the Christmas carols. Afterwards they received packets of nuts, oranges, etc.; Madame L. tells me that the little six-year-old son of blind Y. is so helpful to her; he runs her errands and does many little services. He now goes to school. His father who is back in

Miliana has found work near the town at present, and seems to be treating his wife and family better. Our house is in good hands. The pastor visits it from time to time, and there has been no attempt to requisition it, I am glad to say."

From Tolga several letters sent on by Miss Perkin tell of the work as it began again in the Autumn, and also of Christmas doings. Mme Lull wrote early in November: "Since our return the work has had a good re-start. M. Lull has meetings every day for boys and men. The three little girls are well, Danielle is a great joy to her sisters. The matter of food is very difficult here. Fortunately we brought some provisions from Setif. Mme O. can let us have a litre of milk daily, for the children and we are content." (They are, of course, allowed a ration of tinned condensed milk for the baby.)

In a letter on December 1st, Mme Lull thanked Miss Perkin for a tin of milk powder that she had sent, and wrote: "On Friday I gave a tin of Danielle's milk to an Arab woman who for lack of milk was feeding her baby on an infusion of herbs. For a month now the sale of condensed milk for native babies has ceased. Can it be because the milk might be re-sold to the black market? I took care to open the tin of milk that I gave, so that it could not be re-sold. Yesterday I had a good class of girls." At the same time M. Lull wrote: "I have just begun visiting the villages in the neighbourhood. Yesterday I visited El O., and had a very warm welcome. Twice over I was able to read and speak with groups of men and distributed tracts and Gospels. We are hoping to hire a room at this village to deepen the work there. I shall be able to go there regularly once a week. We will take it for four months only as a trial. In our own village the work has started well, and we have had some good classes and meetings, though for ten days now there has been a lot of opposition and numbers have greatly fallen off. However, some boys have come back and the girls came for their class on Friday. Some men have come in for talks and some young fellows came to buy Gospels."

After Christmas M. Lull wrote: "Since my last letter, work among the men has begun again. The evening meetings have been well attended by people of the village, and above all by a group of workmen from C., a village to the east of Biskra. At the magic-lantern meeting last week there were sixty-three present; late arrivals could not find room and stayed out in the street. We had a good Christmas time. Mr. P., an Englishman, a Christian soldier, whom we had known at Setif, came to stay with us for three days. He is very interested in missionary work, and we had some good times of fellowship together. On Christmas day we had sixty little girls and also two European families. We had as usual a tamarind tree to replace the fir tree which has not been procurable during the war. I managed to find some candles at Biskra, nothing was wanting, the children's joy was full! On Sunday afternoon it was the boys turn. There were 120 of them, and as the room was too small we had them in two groups. About a dozen Europeans came with the first group. Although bread is short we were able to get enough to give to these boys, and we also had enough to give to the women who came to-day, twenty-five of them, with their little children, and had a good meeting. On Sunday evening we had the men and 115 were present. The gallery and part of the courtyard were filled. We had a magic lantern service on the subject of the birth of Christ. In spite of the number, there was quiet during the whole of the time. We praise God for His presence and help during this meeting and all those held at Christmas."

From another desert Station, Bou Saada, comes the story of an expedition to a village. It is told by Mlle Buticaz who is working alone down there. She went with a missionary who was on a visit to Bou Saada. I have left the story in its vivid and original wording.

"About 8.30 a.m., Miss D. and I started out to go to Roumana; a very small donkey was to carry us part of the way, but it was so weak that when we tried its back it could not walk. We soon found out it was of

little use except to transport our belongings—lunch and literature. The sky was clear and the sun shining brightly when we started, but soon a piercing wind rose, pushing us in the sandy path. Black clouds gathered on every side intercepting all sun-rays. To Miss D., Saharan lights looked bewitching and very beautiful, though the way was long and painful. Once across the big dunes we lost our way for some time, as no trace could be seen in the deep sand. A man riding a mule came to our rescue showing us where the road lay. Soon from the top of a hill we saw, in the distance, green trees nestling between yellow sand dunes; it was our destination. Two shy little girls came to welcome us, asking if we would come to their house as some years before. We left our sunny spot and went into these dark houses. The children taking us by the hand guided us from yard to yard. The mother of the two girls is completely blind and has seven children. One by one the eldest presented them. 'Here is Kheera with very bad eyes, then Giltoum who suffers from malaria; little baby Saida has worms and Aisha has grown so thin, what shall we do?' They were like sparrows around their mother extending their hands to her as she spoke with such love about each one. The tract of the Lost Coin made their admiration and joy; we left a few medicines and said good-bye.

Don't take it for granted that we are well received everywhere. No, the next house we were huddled in, no one asked us to sit and the dog kept on barking furiously, so I had to shout when questioned, and as we were leaving this 'inferno' a young woman screamed with rage, 'here we have nothing to do with your Messiah! We have Mohammed; you'll never enter the gates of heaven because you do not say the witness.' (God is God and Mohammed is His prophet.) Turning calmly I told her: 'I do know the way for Christ said, 'I am the Way.'" The door was already closed behind us. In spite of this, children took us from door to door and in a narrow street two men came asking eagerly for tracts. Further on we were taken to the village Chief; splendid

carpets had been spread for us, where we sat to sip sweet coffee and eat some cakes. Several men came to question and listen to the tract about Israel coming out of Egypt. All kept quiet and interested, as I showed them the efficacy of the blood for the remission of sin."

Miss Wood writes from Tlemcen, about Christmas doings. She says: "The women and little girls seemed to enjoy themselves, and were very glad of some of the good things our American friends had given me before leaving. A., one of the Christian girls recently married to a young Moslem man, came with her mother-in-law. She tells me that her husband is good to her and that he likes to hear about the Lord Jesus." Miss Wood also tells of Kheera—another Christian girl who has been married for several years now to a Moslem cousin—a worthless fellow who drinks and ill treats her constantly. She needs prayer that our Lord may comfort her and undertake for her in His own best way. With regard to Andrew, the young Christian Arab often prayed for; Mr. Stalley has heard from him and news has also come from Miss Wood; letters have, however, been delayed. It seems that in his very eager desire for marriage he became engaged to a cousin, an educated girl—a Moslem. A. hoped and believed that she would become a Christian. There was some delay about the wedding, but it has now taken place. Let us pray that God in His goodness and mercy may over-rule for blessing. That the young wife may be converted and not be a hindrance to her Christian husband.

At Headquarters (Dar Naama) they had a good Christmas time. Miss Farmer writes: "On the Thursday before Christmas we closed the canteen for ten days, and invited different groups of men every day, some for tea and others for supper. Some nights we would be twenty-five people for supper, and some men slept in the house and were very happy. The Army Scripture Reader stayed most of the time. He took charge of the meetings on the Sunday when we had a number of R.A.F. men.

He gave a very helpful message in the evening, and most gave their testimony. There were some very fine men among them." Miss Perkin also tells of Christmas. She mentions a Church Army Sister who had just arrived in Algiers and who was brought, on one of the days. She also says that one evening there was a festivity for a little party of Corsicans. Another day Fifine's friends came, including a Kabyle girl and her husband. F.'s husband has been on leave for seventeen days at Dar Naama. He is evidently a very nice Christian fellow, and so ready to be helpful. It was with deep regret that we heard of the death of Pastor Caron of Algiers. He was a loyal and most helpful friend to all missionaries, including those of the A.M.B. He will be greatly missed by them and by all the French Protestants of Algeria.

The day that this News Sheet was going to the printer two letters arrived from overseas. One was from Mrs. Foster Bryner of U.S.A., a very old friend of the A.M.B., and President of the Algerian Mission Band of America. This letter showed the same deep interest and loving-kindness that she and other dear American friends have always shown. Mrs. Goodrich, their treasurer still sends us regular and much appreciated help for the work in Algeria.

The other letter was from Mr. Buckenham (Blida), and is full of praise to God for the wonderful spiritual opportunities with members of the Forces. The Mission house is not a canteen but a "home" for the men and is open to them daily from 2 till 9.30 (except on Sundays). Teas are provided and refreshments during the evening. On Saturdays two hundred or more come in the afternoon and another group in the evening. There is a prayer meeting every night or perhaps more than one, and these are well-attended and greatly appreciated. Mr. B. writes: "The Hall was packed to capacity last Sunday evening, and the power of God was present." As we read this letter and think of that little Mission house on the hillside, and realise that, there, fettered souls are being set

free, and those walking in darkness brought into the light of Christ, we rejoice, and say, "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes."

Mr. Harold Stalley has been very busy with deputation work. He writes: "I feel sure that our friends who have been bearing our deputation campaign before the Lord in prayer, since it was brought to their notice in our last *Thirsty Land*, will be glad to hear of its progress. The Lord has opened and is opening many doors for telling of the work in Algeria, and in looking through my diary from the beginning of the year until February 29th, I find that I have visited twenty-five different churches, or Christian Fellowships, or schools, in East Anglia, and Southern England, where I have given forty-eight addresses, nineteen of them illustrated with lantern slides. By the time this appears at the beginning of April, I shall, D.V., have visited South Wales and Somerset, where at least eighteen different openings await me. I would particularly ask prayer for the forthcoming tour in Scotland. From April 12th-25th, I hope to be in the region of Glasgow, and from then on to May 14th, calls will be answered to visit Dundee, Edinburgh, and places in the counties of Fife and Stirlingshire. After that I shall be south again for the rest of the quarter, in the Home Counties and Southern England. Bookings are many, but there are still quite a number of free dates. Let us continue steadfastly to pray and believe that His blest plans and purposes which we see budding now, through these many open doors, may be fulfilled to the uttermost."

In this short News Sheet, there are many matters calling for praise and prayer. Let us not forget among other things to pray that Christian men and women in the Forces, out there, may have their eyes opened to "Look on the fields!"

"God is working His purpose out."

Your fellow worker,

MILLICENT H. ROCHE.