



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. 78.

AUTUMN, 1946.

EDITOR :
MILLICENT H. ROCHE

"Jesus Christ. . . though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor."—2 Corinthians 8. 9.

"It is through Christ's poverty that we are rich—'as poor' in their turn 'yet making many rich' is the mark of those who follow in His steps.

"Are we following in His steps ; are we ? How the dark places of the earth are crying out for all the powers of giving and living and loving that are locked up in hearts at home ! How the waste places are pleading dumbly for the treasure that lies there in abundance, stored as it were in the seedvessels of God's garden that have not been broken, not emptied for His world, not freed for His use. Shall we not free it all gladly ?"—I. L. TROTTER. (Parables of the Cross.)

As we read this Autumn number of *A Thirsty Land*, we do indeed hear the dark places and the waste places crying out to us. May our hearts give whatever response God is asking from us !

From Algiers, Miss Perkin sent us this striking story. "Louisa came to-day. She

has always a great struggle to feed and clothe her wild tribe of children. She related that her ragamuffin boy Boualem was recently tending cows near a Senegalese camp, and singing, 'Jesus ne change pas' ('Jesus is the same for ever.')

The black soldiers, who were Christians

and spoke French, were very much interested and asked, 'Where did you learn that?' He replied 'I learnt that from an Englishwoman who is like a grandmother to us.' The Senegalese said that there were also English teachers in their homeland, and went on to tell B. that their ancestors had been cannibals. This very much surprised the boy, as it seemed he had never before heard of cannibals.

The soldiers invited him to share their rice. He saw them throwing away bread, and told them not to do so, when many people were starving. At that they gathered up the pieces and gave them to B. to take home to his hungry brothers and sisters."

Both Miss Grautoff and Miss Farmer spoke of the needs of the work in Algeria, at the Conference of "The Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems," held in June.

Miss Grautoff has summarised her address thus.

"'Come over and help us,' not because these people know their need, but because thousands in the desert towns are living and dying without the Gospel.

There is a welcome from the Bedouin tent people, the families of the camel drivers, also from the orthodox Arabic speaking Jews of the desert towns; and there are, the as yet almost unreached, Berber Mozabite tribes living in their seven towns around Ghardhaia. The women are behind locked doors, and it means much prayer and patience before the Gospel can reach them in their own dialect.

Meanwhile literature in both French and Arabic (classical and colloquial) can reach the men through distribution of Scriptures and tracts in the several markets."

In the course of her talk on the colportage work of the A.M.B., Miss Farmer said, "When we consider all that has been done in colportage in North Africa, not only by our own workers but also by missionaries of other Societies, we should, by faith, expect a rich harvest from God's Word that has been disseminated. Some may ask, 'Is it possible for God to work in Arab hearts, by the power of His Word alone, without human agency?'

I should like to answer this by giving the story of a converted Jew, who came

from time to time, to speak to the soldiers in our Canteen at Dar Naama. At one of our weekly prayer meetings he gave us his testimony. He told us that one evening, in Paris, he was very much under the influence of drink. As he was passing a Gospel Hall he heard singing and felt constrained to enter. As he entered the preacher was quoting a text of Scripture. He was quite unconscious of anything that was going on, but the text fixed itself in his mind. He sat with his head in his hands. Presently the preacher touched him on the shoulder to tell him that he was waiting to close the Hall. The Jew asked him to explain the text, but he was in a hurry, and put a Gospel into his hand telling him to go home and read it, and God would show him the truth. That night he read the Gospel and continued until the early hours of the morning. The Light dawned in his heart and he was saved. He kneeled and thanked God for saving him, praying that He would show him what He would have him do. God laid it on his heart to be a colporteur among his own people, the Jews. To-day he is a colporteur among the Jews in North Africa. His wife is still unsaved and his home life is not too easy. He felt exercised when he saw the godlessness of some of the American and British soldiers, and prayed that God would help him to learn English quickly so as to be able to help lead some of them to Christ. From what I heard of his talks to our men, God had answered his prayer. What God could do for this intoxicated Jew, He can certainly do for Arabs, who have bought and are reading, the Scriptures."

From Tolga

The following extracts, from letters sent to Mr. and Mrs. Stalley, are of great interest both in retrospect and prospect.

From Monsieur Lull.

It is now nine days since we left the desert and here we are again installed in Setif for the summer. At Tolga we have had another good year of work in spite of

many difficulties and opposition from the men during these last two terms. During the first term we had one and sometimes two meetings, both with young and old, nearly every evening. We had consecutive studies in St. Matthew's Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John. Many of the listeners showed a real interest in the Word of God and often asked that the meeting might be closed with prayer. Crowded Christmas fetes brought the first term to a close. There were 420 children and adults present altogether. The most impressive meeting was that for the men with 132 present. The classroom being too small the fete was held in the courtyard and in spite of the numbers we were able to deliver the Christmas message in great quietness. Most of the Europeans of the village also joined with us in celebrating the Christmas season. . . .

The two following terms of work were much more difficult. A strong spirit of opposition manifested itself and numbers were smaller at both the men's and boys' classes. We had, however, many opportunities of giving our testimony before them and several came alone in the evenings for quiet talks during which we realised that the Holy Spirit had been at work in their hearts. Having more free time I was able to do more visiting in the surrounding villages and sold quite a number of Gospels. In some villages I realised more opposition than in previous years. Political questions are agitating the minds of the people.

At El Amri where we had hired a room for two years past, we had encouragement all through the year. We had a regular meeting each week with an average attendance of twenty. There was always a good spirit and I sold about one hundred Gospels at the close of the meetings. The marabout and the sheikh of the village came to several of the meetings.

At the beginning of May I made a ten-days' tournée in the Touggourt area, but sandstorms made the work difficult. However with the help of my bicycle I was able to visit twenty-seven villages and sold several hundred Gospels. Everywhere I had interesting conversations with men, especially Jews, one of whom bought a Bible.

We left Tolga, as usual, with not a little sadness, but with hearts full of thankfulness to God for His daily mercies towards us.

Pray for us !

S. LULL.

From Madame Lull.

We want to thank you very much for your prayers for the work at Tolga and for us. We feel greatly the need of being upheld by the prayers of our friends so that we may not get discouraged in the face of present difficulties, and that we may have strength and courage to go forward.

We have had a year of blessing ! At each difficulty or apparent victory on the part of the enemy, God gave us proofs that He was intervening on our behalf. He is the Living God.

The work among the girls and women has given us much joy. Mr. Buckenham has just forwarded to us a gift for the girls work at Tolga. Will you please thank the giver on our behalf. This gift will help to pay for the new grant of material which is being given us for the class. We should receive two metres each for the thirty-five girls this year. Last year they only allowed us twenty-five francs' worth. After Christmas the girls continued to come regularly right up to the end of the term.

We thank God that in sending us little by little the necessary medicines, He allowed us to continue our medical work among the most needy of the women. In this way over 6,000 were enabled to hear the Gospel. As I had less work with the two youngest children this year, I was able to visit many of the women in their homes and to doctor them there. In this way I gave over two hundred injections to poor mothers. In several cases I was able to persuade the husband or father that it was absolutely necessary to take their wife or daughter to the Biskra hospital, and each time, either the medical or surgical treatment has saved the woman's life. It was very touching to see the great confidence they have in us. I often have to tell them that what they are asking is beyond my capabilities, but they always like to have our advice.

You will remember that we were asking God to send along a missionary-midwife, and we are amazed at the wonderful way

in which He is answering our prayer. He has put it into the hearts of a young French Christian doctor and his wife, to come and start work in Tolga, in order to help us in the dispensary work, and in other plans too if God wills. So you can imagine our gratitude.

The B. family at Tolga, have given us much joy. We have regular services with them. Their souls are thirsty and God is continuing His work in their hearts. They have helped greatly in procuring for us most of the medicines needed for our medical work. They are the only people here who really understand our work, and they support us by their sympathy and affection. This year, too, they have lent us a piece of ground in one of their palm gardens, to make a vegetable garden. Thus Mr. Lull has been able to grow all sorts of vegetables in abundance, enough for ourselves and to give to others. This has solved the food problem for us and we have lacked nothing this past winter. In the smallest details of our daily life we have seen the hand of God. For instance, one day I was cooking the last potato for the children's soup when an Arab man came along with five or six pounds of magnificent potatoes! Another day when I had no more semolina for the children an Arab woman gave me four pounds of pure wheat cous-cous for them, and so on. I could give you many more examples.

"And why take ye thought for raiment?"
". . . If God so clothe the grass of the field
. . . shall He not much more clothe you?"
We and our children have had what was necessary for God has put it into the hearts of friends to help us. Mrs. Kellar sent us several parcels and we were able by re-making and mending, to clothe ourselves and make many of our Arab friends happy. To God be the praise!

Will you please thank the friends who have sent us boxes of sewing and mending cotton, buttons, etc. We have always received them with thankfulness. Now I have no more sewing needles for the girls. Here they cost six francs each, and you can imagine that these awkward little fingers break a good many. My mother was able to send me six pairs of unbreakable knitting

needles from France. Here a pair of knitting needles cost one hundred francs!

Mr. Lull will be telling you about our building plans. Could you interest friends in our proposed dispensary? I shall need all kinds of medical equipment, special table, syringes, needles, bandages, swabs, etc.

Will you please thank the friends who made the garments for babies which have been so useful. In addition to the great famine of this past winter among the native population, the question of clothing remains an acute problem. During the whole year there has been only one distribution of cotton material, and then only two metres for each person.

Now we have just arrived at Setif for the summer months and were delighted to find plenty of vegetables in the market at prices slightly lower than last summer.

Excuse all these details. It is only to show you the greatness of our Heavenly Father's love and the extent of His care in the smallest things.

May God raise up many with a definite call to the work. . . . The need is immense and we are but a handful.

M. LULL.

South Horizon

The work at Tolga, pioneered forty-six years ago by Miss Lilius Trotter herself, and now under the care of Monsieur and Madame Lull, has been coming in for particular attention from the Enemy of Souls of late. One can readily account for it by the fact that in this important desert region his kingdom has been feeling the impact of a sustained and faithful ministry to a marked degree. Elsewhere we have given news of the activities of our fellow-workers and the blessing that has followed them during the past year. The story is characteristic of the many preceding years of steady unwavering advance in faith. Over a long period the pressure of prayer and witnessing to Christ Crucified has been mounting up on the side of the conflict which is in the unseen spiritual realm of "the heavenlies." On the earth-side there has been the continued infiltration of the silent printed

Word of God to draw renewed opposition to this spot. Miss Trotter herself wrote of this conflict : " The powers of evil feel the shock of the battle that has been re-awakened in the heavenly places by our cry down here, and set themselves to hinder the fresh tide of victory that is freed, as with Daniel. The stirring is the first thing we are conscious of." Despite the apparent lack of recordable results, men's hearts have been stirred and the working of the Holy Spirit below the sullen surface of Moslem opposition has been evident. A crisis was bound to come.

The situation that now faces us is this. The native owners of the house, which the Mission only rents, are being pressed to demand the return of it by January next, and no offer or reasoning on our part can change their minds. There are no properties of any sort available, for sale or to let, to which the work could be transferred. On the face of things it looks like a set-back, that will force us to retire from that vantage point, temporarily.

This has not come as a surprise to M. and Mme. Lull, who have been able to watch the situation develop from close quarters. The best mode of defence however, is attack. The conviction has been burning in their hearts for a long while that this is not the time to retire, but to advance. Their vision is of a new mission station, built to meet the needs and possibilities of the work far more adequately than the present building, which can provide but little more room than is needed for the missionary's family. Throughout the history of Tolga classes and meetings of any size at all, have had to be held in the courtyard and under the verandah, while the numerous cases for medical help have been dealt with in the " skeefa " or entrance hall. Men and women have to come at different times for there is only one door. The development of the work now overflows the resources that have sufficed hitherto. The thought of Jabez (1 Chron. 4. 10) comes to mind just here. A beautiful " miniature " suspended on a long chronological chain. We see him praying " Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, AND ENLARGE MY COAST, and that Thy

hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me ! " The one glimpse we have of this Old Testament saint ends with delightful and simple brevity also : " And God gave him that which he requested ! "

The " enlargement of coast " desired at Tolga would not only have living quarters for the present workers and re-inforcements, but a Hall also to serve as the first home of the Native Church, with rooms for dealing with the constant stream of women and children, others for the men enquirers, where they could come without fear of intrusion whenever desire impelled them. With all this, they long for a properly equipped dispensary to meet the unceasing demand for first-aid and simple medical treatment, a centre where all who seek relief from suffering hear the Glad Tidings. Such work is still debarred, officially, to British missionaries, but there is no such restriction in the case of Mme. Lull who is of French nationality.

Our friends have been longing for a missionary-midwife to come to their help and lay hold of the opportunity which now offers as never before, of ministering to Moslem motherhood.

Their faith has risen to ask all this of God, and fellow-workers of the Band stand with them in prayer. God's answer so far seems to indicate an even wider range of possibilities. Building land which seems hard to procure even in the Sahara, has been offered to them at a price. One or two gifts have come in marked for the purpose, giving a further indication and seal. More marvellous still, instead of a midwife, it appears that a young French Christian couple, both doctors, and both missionary-hearted, are willing to settle alongside them at Tolga, for the Gospel's sake, and help them in their work. Can you imagine what this would mean to isolated and hard-pressed missionaries to Islam ? Is not this a call to faith and prayer that the whole vision for that part of the Field may be realised ?

That is not all, however. The Tolga horizon is wider still. For a long time the need of a " Mission-farm " has been on the heart of our brother. Such a thing as this

under his own capable over-sight would be of tremendous value in helping the many destitute people, and particularly converts, who run the risk of losing all things for Christ's sake. Consider what a sense of security and brotherhood such a place of refuge would afford to such of the Lord's brethren, outcast from their old relationships, and suffering for the Faith. Here they could work under Christian guidance, could provide food for themselves and support to other branches of the Mission Station.

Our fellow-workers at Tolga have been face to face with the needs and problems of that region for a long time, and their constant thought has been—how best to meet and deal with them, accompanied as they are by many restrictions placed upon missionary work in that land. They have told us what the Master has laid on their hearts as they approach the present crisis. May we count on you to help us turn this critical moment into the beginning of VICTORY? "If ye abide in Me . . . ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done." This is the New Testament warrant, from the Lord's own lips, for every faithful Jabez. Ask HIM for Victory now on our southern horizon; for more workers to come forward and carry it through; and for all the needed means to accomplish it.

"Attempt great things for God,"
"Expect great things from God,"
"Receive great things from God."

H. W. S.

Work for the Master in Belcourt

The Mission Car took us both to the door of the Arab Cemetery, which we found well-arranged, with iron trellis-work and gates to the different parts of it. There was red earth and green grass around the marble gravestones. Most of them were engraved with name and age in Arabic; one of them, very tidily kept, was written in French saying "To our darling Bella—three years." How much she must have been beloved, as many years had elapsed since

then and one could still see the loving care for the small plot.

A little further on a woman was sitting. She had placed a bunch of boxwood on a grave before her, and her tired face spoke of sleepless nights. I sat near her and tried to comfort her with God's own Word, but slowly moving her head and refusing all comfort, she merely said: "He was only thirteen, my boy! my boy!" As I offered her a tract, she added: "Yes, he could read French and Arabic; now it is no use." Her sorrow was so deep, she could think of nothing beside. With prayerful thoughts the words of love came from the Giver of all good gifts. She looked up, finally, and took the precious Word of God for her husband. Many like her, well-dressed and refined, sitting here and there, sorrowing in their loneliness, received a message of hope and of salvation.

Miss Russell had gone down the wide entrance-road where children and grown-ups were clamouring for more tracts, when the door-keepers interfered, objecting that the women could not pass, etc., trying to make Miss Russell get out of the cemetery; she had the excuse that I was inside and that she must wait for me. As we went to meet each other, we saw a group of ten or more women, sitting under an old olive tree; a boy was despatched to fetch us to them. All wanted to know who we were, and what were the tracts. They were all chattering and it was difficult to get a quiet word in, but after a while they listened intently and received the word with gratitude, saying: "Come again another day."

Yet another old woman, very desolate, was sitting near a freshly-dug grave. She told us her son had been killed, and it is a terrible thing for a Moslem to die accidentally.

"Oh, if only he had come home, and died in my presence, but he was killed . . . He was killed" . . . was the desperate cry. It made me think of St. Paul's words, when writing to the Thessalonians . . . "Ye sorrow not, even as others which have *no Hope*."

Shall we not remember these "others" in our intercessions?

A. BUTTICAZ.

Home Notes

It is hoped that all readers will take particular notice of the announcements on the back page of this issue. There you have the glad news that many have waited long to hear, that the *Parables of the Cross* is being republished. What a wonderful Christmas gift that book would make to any Christian friend and worker. A slip enclosed with this issue will facilitate your order and assure you of prompt delivery the moment copies come from the press.

ANNUAL MEETINGS in London. The back page gives you further details of these also, and we pray and look forward to a good gathering of friends at Caxton Hall on October 15th. We are having an evening meeting this year as it has been felt in the past that some of our younger friends who are not free in the afternoon would be glad to have fellowship with us at a later hour.

Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Buckenham reached this country for furlough at the time our last issue went to press. We were glad to welcome them back after a long term of service under very trying conditions. It is good to know that they are feeling refreshed by their stay, so far, in this rainy climate of ours. However, they were soon talking of escaping back to their beloved Blida, and have now given us to understand that they have booked their passages early in November. Apparently they could get nothing earlier! We look forward to having them however, at the Annual Meetings on October 15th, and hearing something of what God has done for them, and through them, during the past seven years. Please uphold them in prayer that health may be fully restored to them both, and that God's richest blessing may attend their return.

Miss Grautoff and Miss Farmer are also planning to return to Algeria at an early date D.V. We wish we could say this of certain others as well.

May we commend to your prayers also, Mr. Frank Baggott, our first recruit of this

year, who has now started his language studies in Paris.

DEPUTATION WORK. The coming three months promises to be a very busy period for the secretary. Scotland especially offering plenty of openings. We should be very glad if friends in England who would like to help on the work and could arrange a gathering of some sort would communicate with the office to that effect. Ireland beckons us again in the New Year.

A little word of explanation appears to be due regarding the title of an article which appeared in our last issue—CHRISTIAN LITERATURE CRUSADE. A great work has been begun in this country, and is already pushing its activities into other lands, that has adopted these words as its title. Its new headquarters were recently opened and dedicated at 39 Ludgate Hill, London. Confusion might have arisen in some minds and a question asked: "Is this Crusade one and the same thing with the work you write of in Algeria?" In spirit it is, as an organisation, no! In speaking of the vision of A.M.B. for North Africa it was a little difficult to avoid that title. We might have done better by putting the article before it and calling it "A Christian Literature Crusade." However, our friends of the C.L.C. are by no means upset about it. Their vision is a world-wide one, and they extend us the right-hand of fellowship as "your servants for Christ's sake." They are building up sources of supply, and channels for the interchange of knowledge and information regarding literature essential for the Mission Field in all languages. The kind of literature that it deals with is that which we can trust, true to the Word, and God-honouring.

The A.M.B. looks forward not only to a profitable use of the services it offers to Missionary Societies, but also to contributing to its usefulness, and in carrying out something of the great plans it has in view. May we commend it, and ourselves, to your prayers.

“Parables of the Cross”

By

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FIELDS.”

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15th

at 3.0 and 7.15 p.m.

in the

COURT ROOM, CAXTON HALL
WESTMINSTER.

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Speakers :

3.0 p.m. Mr. H. W. BUCKENHAM—Blida.

Chairman: The Rev. T. L. LIVERMORE, M.A.

7.15 p.m. Mrs. H. W. BUCKENHAM—Blida.

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