

# AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL THESSALONICA, GREECE

Founded by REV. JOHN HENRY HOUSE, D. D.

CHARLES L. HOUSE, Director

Mrs. ETHEL H. BLISS, Executive Secretary

17 EAST 42nd STREET,

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

## NEWS LETTER

November 1943

More than six months have passed since we sent out the last News Letter with the word that Mr. and Mrs. Charles House, who had been interned together at the American Farm School, had been transferred to Germany and interned there at separate camps. Mr. House near Salzburg and Mrs. House at Liebenau.

We have received many interesting letters telling of the busy life they led in their respective camps. So busy, they wrote, that it helped to make the days pass more quickly.

One of the most interesting things which Mr. House did in addition to being head of his room and teaching was his work with some young Greek-American internees. The restrictions of camp life were particularly difficult for them. He played quite a bit of volley ball and became a real friend. In another letter he writes that he had been able to get Testaments for nearly all of his room and was very pleased that they were reading them.

Mr. House also speaks of his two trips away from the camp to visit sick internees in a hospital in Salzburg. One of the greatest pleasures of these trips was seeing children and is well expressed in the following sentence. "It was a joy to be seated by a little girl of about eight in the train. I miss the children so much."

Mrs. House carried a heavy teaching program in her camp and had charge of the religious services there. In June she was transferred to a family camp in Vittel, France. This had been a camp for some two thousand British and American women and children with some space set aside for reunited families. Mr. House joined Mrs. House in August after nine months of separation and it was a joyful reunion. We have had official word of his arrival at Vittel and two letters have come from Mrs. House at Vittel. She says she has enough food; thanks to the regular weekly American Red Cross packages,- and she has found many friends in the camp.

We are glad to quote from a report of an American Red Cross delegate that the lodgings of the internees at Vittel are very good, "with excellent hygiene and invigorating air, that the basic German ration together with the Red Cross shipments gave a sufficient diet and the internees were gaining weight; that there had been no epidemics or contagious diseases and that regular religious services were being held for Protestants, Catholics and Jews".

During the past nine months both Mr. and Mrs. House have received messages from the American Farm School in Salonica, and some food packages from members of the staff there. The season had been a very dry one with the result that the rye and oat crops had been a failure but at the time they wrote in June they expected to harvest sixty-five acres of wheat. They reported that although they had lost the bull and several cows that the herd of young calves was in pretty good condition, as well as the pigs and sheep. They also reported that repairs on the tractor and combine were completed and that they had light and water continuously.

All those who have been interested in the Greek people and their desperate plight have been grateful for the news of regular shipments of relief supplies to Greece. Canada is furnishing wheat; the United States through Lend-Lease Administration is furnishing dried vegetables and dried milk as well as special protein foods and is paying the charter hire of the Swedish vessels that are carrying this relief to Greece. In addition, the American Red Cross is sending important quantities of medical supplies. At the present time the Greek War Relief is carrying on such a successful campaign for clothing that we are assured that a first complete outfit will be available for anyone who needs it. Immediately following this first distribution the plans are already made for setting up shops where clothing may be made available to the people.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the whole plan for the rehabilitation of Greece here in the United States is the cooperation of the more than twenty American agencies which were working in Greece before the war. These agencies, of which the American Farm School is one, have been working under the Greek War Relief Association and have been meeting frequently in the past months to consider and plan programs which will do the most good with the greatest amount of efficiency and the least amount of duplication, and waste of labor and money.

The Trustees of the American Farm School are wholeheartedly interested in doing everything possible to help in the rehabilitation plans but, of course, are very eager to have the school return to the work for which it was founded and that is the training of creative agricultural leadership for Greece. They are eager for the return of their students for their four year course of intensive training in agriculture and its industrial accompaniments. They are eager to resume the extension work and bring many of the more than four hundred graduates of the school, scattered all over the country, back to the school for short refresher courses so that they in turn could expedite the matter of helping farmers all over the country to get back on their feet.

We are glad to note that in his acceptance speech of Director General of UNRRA, (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), the Honorable Herbert H. Lehman stressed many times that it was the desire of UNRRA to get the liberated people back on their feet as soon as possible. With short and special intensive courses and the necessary tools and seeds these well-trained farmers could hasten the rehabilitation of the village farmers all over Greece.

The Trustees of the American Farm School also feel that this is surely the time to consider starting the needed girls' department as soon as possible. The women as well as the men in Greece, as in all other countries, must be able to work intelligently in solving the many problems of the post-war world. In Greece the women will have special need of training because of the extent and intensity of the suffering and devastation in this war.

We look with great hope to the future of the American Farm School in Salonica, Greece, and with the help of the many friends of the school express this hope in the words of Charles Wesley -

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees  
And looks to that alone;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries it shall be done."