

A Thirsty Land

SPECIAL MEMORIAL NUMBER



Algiers Mission Band

Algiers Mission Band

FOUNDED IN 1888 BY I. LILIAS TROTTER.

HEADQUARTERS : DAR NAAMA, EL BIAR, ALGIERS.

President: **MISS S. E. PERKIN.**

General Secretary and Treasurer: MR. H. W. BUCKENHAM.

Corresponding Secretary and Hostess at Dar Naama: MISS V. WOOD.

Secretary in Great Britain: THE REV. HAROLD W. STALLEY.

Home Office: Campfield, Great Barton, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

Organising Secretary: MR. DOUGLAS PILCHER, 37, Stephens Road, Tunbridge Wells.

OVERSEAS REFEREES :

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New Zealand.

Home Notes.

Will friends please note two important events planned for the near future. First, a NORTH AFRICA RALLY, under the combined auspices of the N.A.M. and the A.M.B. on Saturday, March 25th. Then, our second MISSIONARY HOUSE PARTY in Yorkshire, to be held this year in Harrogate at Easter. Fuller particulars of both these events are given on the back cover-page of this issue.

Pray that these gatherings and all others undertaken by our Home Department, may be used to the deepening of the spiritual life of God's people in the Homeland as well as the forwarding of His Kingdom overseas. The one will go with the other, we are convinced.

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Will any friends who would like to have fellowship with the A.M.B. by arranging for a meeting during the week or offering an opportunity for ministry on a Sunday

please write to the Secretary at Great Barton. We have two films available now giving an interesting aspect of our work: "By Mountain and Desert" and "The Touareg Trail."

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Our Home Department has two very pressing needs. One is a ROTARY DUPLICATOR to help deal with the increasing amount of work involved in our Prayer Fellowship. The other is a LIGHT CAR for deputation work. If either or both of these could be made available to the Mission a very considerable amount of Mission Funds would be saved annually and direct help given to our workers on the Field. We would value fellowship in prayer that these needs may be supplied, and if any friends are able to give practical help in the matter the Home Secretary would be very glad to hear from them.



No. 91

WINTER

1950

In Memoriam.

“ His servants shall serve Him : and they shall see His Face ; and His Name shall be in their foreheads.”
Revelation xxii. 3, 4.

For those we love within the veil
Who once were comrades of our way,
We thank Thee, Lord, for they have won
To cloudless day.

And life for them is life indeed,
The splendid goal of earth's strait race,
And where no shadows intervene,
They see Thy Face.

W. CHARTER PIGOTT.

The year 1949 has been marked for the A.M.B. by the Home-call of a number of its outstanding workers and friends. Our last issue mentioned briefly the “ passing over ” of our beloved president, Miss Sascha Perkin, in October. In November news came that Miss Alice McIlroy had gone. Two others to whom the Band owes a debt of gratitude for their long and loving fellowship are Miss Ruth Paxson of North Carolina, U.S.A., and Mr. Edward Johnston (Mrs. Stalley's father).

This issue is therefore a special memorial number.

1949 has also been a year of new beginnings on the Field and Home fronts. Three new workers sent out in the Autumn brought the number of young missionaries still in their first three-year term of service up to eleven—half our present Field strength. A new advance was made in the opening of a station at Tamanrasset. News from all stations

has been very encouraging. We have had to face bigger and graver problems this year than we have perhaps ever faced before, but indications of the working of the Holy Spirit upon the granite-like resistance of Islam have been more numerous and encouraging. Faith has risen to higher levels in expectancy and activity.

On the Home front, development has also taken place. The extension of our fellowship of prayer has brought blessing to many of God's children. This we believe is part of the Holy Spirit's activity towards a revived Church.

The word given us early in 1949 was “ Behold I do a new thing ” saith the Lord, even now shall it spring forth ! ” (Is. 43. 19.) Quietly the “ new thing ” has begun, and now we are “ confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform (perfect) it, until the Day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 1. 6.)

Sascha Perkin

Sascha Perkin was born at Sudbury (Middlesex) and lived there till 1906 when she went out to Algiers, and the A.M.B., through Sister Annie Whisler. A nature lover and a friend of all birds and animals, Sascha tamed the birds in her home garden and they came to eat out of her hand. Her love for animals led her to become a vegetarian, for life,



Sascha helped her father, Sir William Perkin, the eminent scientist, in the work of his Mission Hall. In Bible Classes for older boys, in the Sunday School, and also in a Medical Mission in London, she began seeking souls for Christ's Kingdom. Diffident, somewhat abrupt in manner, and not of ready speech, Sascha certainly never thought during her years of missionary life, previous to the passing of Miss Trotter and Miss Freeman, that she would be called upon to lead the A.M.B. But God needed her steadfast, humble, and utterly sincere personality and used it in His work.

Loving the simple life, not seeking the limelight, but doing faithfully what came to her hand, she took up her allotted task and continued through the difficult war years as General Secretary of the A.M.B. Many who visited Dar Naama during those years, missionaries of various Missions, soldiers of many nationalities, refugees and homeless people, will remember the large-minded and sympathetic welcome they received from

Sascha Perkin. Her outlook was wide and her judgment usually very fair and restrained. She could see the different sides of a question, and members of the Band found that she had a deep and understanding love for all branches of the work.

A wide reader, and no mean student of Arabic, she had also a knowledge of the manners, customs and folk-lore of Algeria and of Moslem subjects in general, which were of great service to her fellow workers on many occasions.

Anything "broken-winged," whether man, woman, child, bird or beast, that appealed to her, found in Sascha Perkin one who loved and helped them in the face of any obstacles, or even of criticism. The fact that they, at times, deceived her or imposed upon her, did not deter her one whit—she "hoped all things."

Sascha did not find it easy to express her thoughts. She had no use for a multitude of words, and when she spoke of what was in her heart, a few sentences showed the reality and simplicity of her faith, and of her longing to make Christ known to the Moslems.

Others have written in more detail of Sascha's love for the people among whom she lived and laboured for over forty years. As a young missionary I was alone with her in an Out-station for some time and I think two things stand out specially in my memory. One is the understanding sympathy, though unspoken, that she showed me, in a problem I was facing. The other is, her unswerving faithfulness to duty in the work—never slacking or giving in. I remember on a day of fierce sirocco, when the hour came (1 p.m.) for visiting in Arab houses, forth we went, in spite of the burning wind! An elderly Arab, who was lying half-asleep under a tree, rebuked us for going out in the great heat. But this did not deter one who all her life sowed the good seed faithfully, not observing the adverse winds that blew, in the Field to which God had called her.

M. H. ROCHE.

A Note of Remembrance from a Colleague

When I think of Miss Sascha Perkin, our beloved President, my mind goes back to the early days of 1906 when she came out to live in the old Arab house in the slums of Algiers (2, Rue du Croissant) and I remember her later when she lived in the upper cottage at Blida, our first out-station. There was her time also as a pioneer missionary at Tolga, when the station was just opening and a few weeks or months stay was all that could be attempted.

Miss Perkin made many journeys down South, to desert towns—Tougourt, Témaçine, Laghouat, Ghardaia. How well I remember our first pioneer visit to the last named place. How we slept in a tent, and at night, in a storm, went out to strengthen the stakes for fear of a collapse! There were the journeys into the mountains when we had to go by coach, changing horses every four hours, or up into the forests on mules. Sascha could manage the fretful ones better than I, for she loved and understood animals. We spent a day in the cedar forest, and she told me about the great eagles, and other birds soaring around and going to their nests in the ravine below us. It was a great joy to get her to talk of birds and animals because she knew so much about them. I remember, when living at Rue du Croissant, that during one month in the year (considered unlucky) Arabs would throw out all new-born puppies and kittens to die, in our narrow back street. Sascha would gather up many such and feed them, putting the injured ones to sleep, with chloroform, in a biscuit box she kept for the purpose.

At Dar Naama, where Sascha made her home for so many years, she took over from Mr. Smeeton the care of the blind men. They were needy, difficult people, often getting into trouble, but she had faith in them and they confided in her. There was the blind orphan boy, Aissa, from the mountains. What years of patient teaching and care she gave to him,

till he learned of his Saviour and was considered ready for baptism, and also to the orphan girl whom she brought up.

The aged Hanifa, who so loves "Mademoiselle Sascha," can testify to the years of sympathy and help that she and her wayward family have received, for Sascha trusted them. The daughter, a clever wilful girl, must have given her many an anxious hour. Now she has settled down as a good mother to her growing family. I could tell of many other such families, and many ne'er-dowells that owe much to her sheltering care and to her steadfast bearing of their burdens with them. It was the usual thing, when we made our short visits to Dar Naama, to hear under her window, Arab voices calling, "Ya Mademoiselle Sascha," and then to meet her carrying down some food or a hot drink that she had prepared for them in her room.

When, from Miliana, an ignorant mountain lad, a seeker after truth, went to Dar Naama as under gardener, it was Miss Perkin who patiently taught him all he was capable of learning of God's Saving Grace, till she had the joy of hearing him testify in baptism. Thank God for the patient, plodding missionaries who "under hopeless circumstances hopefully believe."

After the Home-going of Miss Freeman, Miss Perkin was unanimously elected as General Secretary. She held this post until 1947, when she was made Honorary President of the A.M.B.

M. D. GRAUTOFF.

An Appreciation from an Ex-service Man

The news of the passing of Miss Perkin came with a sense of loss to many of us who knew her, but there is no doubt that her passing will be felt for a long time by those whose fellow-worker she had been for so many years on the field of Islam.

To those of us who served with His Majesty's Forces in Algiers during the war years, Miss Perkin and "Dar Naama" will always be synonymous terms. Were we to return, as some of us

hope that some day we may, we should miss that smile of hers which was often the first to welcome us and which seemed to convey so much real understanding of our needs.

Life for many of us took on a different aspect when we became acquainted with El Biar and "Dar Naama". Sunday again became a day with a purpose, and from near and far "Dar Naama" was the common meeting ground for those of us who were conscious of the need for spiritual fellowship.

We remember the Spirit-filled meetings and, let it be blushing whispered, the jolly, happy and homely teas! For us "Dar Naama" was the place to which we could go and escape for a few hours from camp life. There we ceased to be mere numbers and became individuals once again. Whenever the opportunity arose, and we were feeling somewhat homesick, then a visit to "Dar Naama" revived us. If the ladies of the house were busy, then we were quite at liberty to relax as we felt fit. We could browse among the numerous books, or admire the talented handiwork of Miss Trotter.

For us the words "Dar Naama" were indeed interpreted as "House of Grace," and we know that this spirit will always be found there, as is the case wherever the workers of the Band are led to set up an abode. T. H. HOOK.

Leadership

I have had the privilege of knowing Miss Perkin for nearly forty years, and worked under her during the first years of my missionary career in the Algiers Casbah.

One thing I noticed from the very first was her genuine and spontaneous love for the natives, and her great patience with them. Miss Perkin was never lacking in this. No matter what she was doing, or what was the hour, or who was the caller, she would immediately go to them, and listen attentively to the end of their tale of woe, then, relieving their physical needs to the utmost of her ability she never omitted to apply the soul remedy.

Up and down those Casbah steps we often went together, but when I had acquired a slight knowledge of Arabic, Miss Perkin did the very best thing she could do to help a rather shy recruit. She took me one day into a room full of native women, and whilst I was trying to get out the proper greetings she disappeared into a neighbour's room! So having no one to depend on I was obliged to try and make myself understood, gaining courage in the process, and freedom of tongue, thanks to Miss Perkin's wise, although for me at the time, rather disconcerting, action!

At other times we visited the villages surrounding Algiers, a very pleasant change from the stuffy streets of the Casbah. I found she was always most warmly welcomed wherever we went, and the women and children would flock round her to listen to the Word of life, or to sing some hymn she had previously taught them.

Miss Perkin also manifested a deep compassion for the poor, long-suffering animals of this land. I have seen tears come to her eyes as she listened to some story of cruelty. Birds were a great joy to her, and she could tell one almost anything about them and their ways.

This last summer at Dar Naama we missed Miss Perkin very much indeed. She was always so cheery and so full of interesting topics of conversation. Her native friends were constantly calling to ask for news of her, and great was their grief when told she was dying. It seemed so strange and sad not to welcome her back with the others in October, but one cannot grieve for her, for she is now in the Presence of Him Whom she served so faithfully.

So one more of those gallant warriors of the Lord has entered into rest and we have lost another link with the original little group of workers, out of which the present Algiers Mission Band has grown. May we who remain ever seek to be endowed with the same faith, hope, perseverance and love which was characteristic of our pioneers.

I. K. NASH.

Comradeship

My first meeting with Sascha Perkin was forty years ago when I went to Algiers to enjoy sunshine. There I made the acquaintance of Miss Trotter who, seeing my evident interest in the work of the Algiers Mission Band, suggested a tour into the hill villages.

"Why not go to Blida? You, Annie," and she turned to Miss Whisler, "take Mrs. Howe there. Show her something of actualities and possibilities." Delightful! What could please me more than such a proposal? It was one day in Holy Week that we two travelled to Blida. *En route* Miss Whisler related experiences and incidents connected with the work.

Among the stories Miss Whisler told me, I was deeply impressed with the following. At a village meeting the ladies had been speaking of the love of Christ in the heart, and how when that love enters hatred must flee. To their utter astonishment two women suddenly embraced and kissed each other and a boy. What could this mean?

"You said hatred had to go when Christ came into the heart; well, we have been quarrelling a long time over this boy, so now we have made peace!"

Surely an immediate and practical application of the teaching.

"A year later we revisited that village, for it is but once a year and often less frequently that we can return to the same place," Miss Whisler continued.

The women who had acted apparently so oddly and yet so divinely were amongst those who gathered round us to listen.

"And what about the quarrel?" one of us asked.

"That was done away with last year and has not returned," was the reply, and then in surprised tones:

"How can there be a quarrel with Jesus in the heart?"

"Miss Whisler, could we not visit the

village where these women live?" I asked.

"That is quite possible," she replied. "We'll go by mule early in the morning and then we can manage it in one day."

In Blida I was the guest of Miss Sascha Perkin, daughter of the British Scientist to whom the world owes aniline dyes. This lady lived in a little Arab house in utter simplicity amongst the people whose confidence she was winning more and more. Love does win its way invariably.

I saw what there was to see; took part in the housework, felt a shock of earthquake, and then one morning early, we went off into the hills. At last we came to a village, and there, under a tree, we sat down and a group of women gathered around us to listen. It was very soon possible to discover that "one soul" for whom the message had had to be brought. She just drank in the words.

Further along, lying on the ground, was a man whose face was awful to see. "He is possessed," some woman explained, and he looked it. My friends spoke to him of One Who had driven out demons whose numbers were legion. Letting my friends interpret for me, I too said a few words, to which the poor man listened eagerly.

We had to pass on as some woman had invited us to her house. My first glimpse of an Arab village interior! Through a gate in a mud wall we entered a courtyard. The house, I cannot describe better than as a low, windowless stable. Outside, in a corner of the courtyard some women were sitting before what looked like a mound, but what in reality was their oven. Hot flat cakes were offered us, and as long as I nibbled at the crisp crust it was all right; the inside I can only compare to a linseed poultice!

Sour milk in bowls was offered us, and kus-kus, a semolina dish, *pièce de résistance* of Algerian Arab meals.

The repast over, our hostess and her neighbours who had flocked in were

ready and willing to listen to the ladies, and I sat by, watching the faces. Suddenly I saw one of the women gesticulate with both hands as though depicting a heap, and speaking emphatically at the same time.

"What does she say?" I asked in a whisper.

"She says, 'I have as many sins as that heap!'" was the explanation given me.

When we were walking away, Miss Whisler remarked to her friend: "To think that that woman acknowledges having sins! What marvellous progress."

Then turning to me: "Not so long ago when we spoke of sins, the women would say condescendingly, 'The foreigners may have sins, not we; our hearts are as white as milk.'"

I remember that day and its events, and that walk as though it had been yesterday.

A little maiden of ten, clad in nothing but a "shift" as the Irish would say, showed us the way to her grandmother's house, "the woman with the quarrel," as I called her.

The path was narrow, and winding along the hillside on which maidenhair fern grew in profusion.

"There is the house," the child said, pointing to what looked but a mud wall, and then turning, she ran back to the village.

We went along a narrow passage between mud walls, and entered a small courtyard. In it, sitting on a stool was a boy, and a man standing above him was shaving the lad's head.

Opposite, on a kind of higher platform made of the soil of the hillside, stood the house, that same stable-like building. Just below it, to the left stood an old tree, all knotted and twisted.

Out of the house stepped a woman of the most perfect womanly beauty I had ever beheld, but oh! the unutterable sadness of her face; all hope gone, all light extinguished.

Words of greeting were exchanged and pleasure expressed at the visit.

As long as the man was in the yard only ordinary matters were discussed, but a few minutes after our arrival the husband left, taking the boy with him. The woman, a red shawl flung over her, stood with her arms clutching a branch of the old tree.

"What has happened?" Miss Whisler asked, deeply moved by the sight of this speechless, tearless grief.

"You say it is Jesus, but they say it is Mahomed," the woman said slowly. "How am I to know who is right, you or the menfolk of my family? I have prayed to Jesus, oh so earnestly. I did ask Him to make me well, but He has not answered." Her voice dropped and her head drooped. "So how am I to know, Jesus or Mahomed?"

With what tender love my friends spoke to the sad woman, who having left the tree sat down beside us on the mud step.

I could only watch and pray! Pray for this woman, whose grief surpassed all sorrow I had ever witnessed.

Her story was so simple; illness from what we realized to be insufficient and wrong food, from the "linseed" cake and black coffee, and not enough of either!

When I was told what was the matter, I exclaimed: "Right treatment and right food could bring about the answer to her prayer; oh, do treat her medically."

My friends words of comfort and explanation seemed to have reached the crushed heart, and that sadness lifted from the beautiful face.

My faith was to be put to shame by that of the woman, for this is what she said as we left: "I will believe in Jesus, even if He does not make me well, and I will never again repeat the 'Shehedda.'"

Is it any wonder that I remember that day, and every incident connected with it?

(To be continued.)

SONIA E. HOWE.

Alice McIlroy

"There was nobody just quite like her!" Everyone was agreed about that, and it was always a great day at Headquarters when "Mademoiselle Alice" was coming! She came in like a fresh Spring breeze with a twinkle in her eyes and a happy spirit which was most infectious. "The 'Bou Saadas' have



arrived!" someone would shout, and there she would be surrounded by her packages, always so many of them, for she believed in travelling prepared for any emergency. There would be travelling rugs, Primus stove, baskets with cooking utensils and provisions, and generally something for Dar Naama from

the Bou Saada garden. She teased us by trying to sell us her lemons, or her apricots at a good profit! We teased her in return and however dull the day had been before, now it seemed that the sun had come out and we were in for a happy time! But although she had come up to Headquarters for a break, I don't think she ever felt that she was "off duty" and it was characteristic of her that she never lost an opportunity of speaking a word for her Master, wherever she might be. Even on one occasion when accompanying a sick missionary on a long journey by ambulance, when the party halted for lunch by the wayside and a group of curious little children gathered to see what was going on, she was quick to speak to them of the Lord Jesus and His love. Perhaps they might never have another chance! Another time when escorting two new recruits out to Algiers in a crowded boat, she insisted on giving the newcomers the two available bunks and sleeping herself on one of the dining room tables which was the only other accommodation offered! She was also very practical and was never happier than when she was busy with hammer and nails repairing or improving some part of her domain. Her improvised "bathroom" in the middle of the Bou Saada garden was a joke to many of her visitors, but to her a source of pride and joy.

After thirty-two years of happy, fruitful service in Algeria, she returned to her home in Ireland in 1940, but soon her health failed and she was not able to return. On November 14th, 1949, she joined the Church Triumphant, and although we miss her still, we can thank God for the inspiration of such a life and the privilege of having known such a friend.

J. C. S.

A TRUE YOKE-FELLOW.

I would like to write a few lines in memory of Miss Alice McIlroy, in whose company I spent twenty-one years of my missionary life. The first of these years were spent in our Algiers post at Rue du Croissant. Together we visited the homes of poor and rich, both Arab and Kabyle. Many families we found living in cellars and tenements, some little bigger than cupboards, and in terrible squalor and misery. Through dark, foul narrow streets and up and down winding rickety stairs she would take me. Nothing could stay her zeal in giving the Gospel and seeking to win souls for her Master.

Every three months or so, we would leave the squalor of the Casbah and go off on itinerations into the interior. With a suitcase, a "couffa" (native basket), and a load of tracts, Algiers would be left behind for the countryside. Often our nights would be spent in "gourbis" (crudely built native huts), sleeping on a few boards covered with straw, and wrapped in a travelling rug. Sometimes we passed the night longing for the dawn to come soon to warm us. Often we started the day's travelling before sunrise under a dark and starlit sky. We visited many villages on mule-back, riding for hours through the lovely Aurès Mountains or over sandy deserts. Her splendid faith never failed. One day, it was a Monday, we went off without food for the journey. Our two guides were not too pleased at the prospect. Miss McIlroy had not made any provision on the previous day, because it was Sunday. Joyfully she said to me, "The Lord will provide!" We each gave our bit of bread to the muleteers and ate a bit of chocolate. The way was rough and the men still more so, but our hearts were in tune with God. Soon we saw the village we were heading for against the hillside. Our guides decided to stay outside, fearing that the tribesmen would not permit them within their walls. We walked carefully through the long dark entrance to the village, and through the

still darker narrow tunnel-like streets. Suddenly a cow appeared, running, her tether rope held by a small boy, and behind came an old woman. We tried to let them pass when suddenly we heard the woman shout to the child; "Take the cow to the field. Here are the women God told me to prepare food for!" She took us by the hand and led us to an upper room where a basin filled with boiled eggs was cooling. There was also a basket filled with figs and another with dates, and bread prepared, ready for the oven. We had to wait for this to bake and while she fanned the fire the old lady was asking: "Where did you come from? Tell me about this God, the One you know. Who is He? He loves you? Could He love me too?" She did not understand Arabic, but a verse or two in Kabyle helped her. Her son could read, she told us, and accepted a New Testament for him. We went off with her blessings and an abundant supply of food for all the journey. Our wild muleteers were amazed and we praised God's Name together.

Several times we were in great danger, but Miss McIlroy would never doubt the power of our Heavenly Father to protect us. One night, sleeping in the guest room of the village Caid's house, we felt something moving under our pillow. We had no light, but managed eventually to strike a match, and found a big scorpion hiding there. We managed to shovel it up somehow and throw it out of the window. After that we prayed and had a good sleep for an hour.

After several years in Algiers God opened a new door for us in Bou Saada. From the very beginning we could see His Hand guiding and providing in every detail. Miss Trotter had called Bou Saada the "Impregnable City" because of its hardness and fanaticism, but to us it became a much-loved "home" and together we worked there for nearly twenty years.

A. BUTTICAZ.

A Tribute

It was in the autumn of 1907 at a small railway station in Mid Lothian that I first met Miss McIlroy. Introduction to one another was not difficult, as she was the only person waiting on the platform, and I the only passenger to descend. She had been three years in the Faith Mission, and was now in charge of missions to be worked in the Mid and West Lothians, while I, a candidate, as yet without training, was sent to work with her. At our first meeting her Irish wit was to the fore with "I think you'll do, you've a Bible wallet and a Bible—but can you *preach*?" The six months that followed were very happy ones, made so through a close and rich fellowship and the inspiration of her tireless zeal and passionate seeking for souls. Later, when she was assisting in a training course for young workers, the same fellowship was renewed, and often she would speak to me of the need of the Moslem world—with her French book in hand. Her call to this field had been sealed already. I doubt not that she was already praying that I too might get the call. In those early days, and often since, I have thanked God for having sent me into some hard work with Miss McIlroy.

After coming out to the Field in 1909 she regularly sent me copies of Miss Trotter's Journals, and upon the occasion of our wedding in 1915 gave us pictures of Bou Saada which later were a reminder of her faithful service there. During her furlough of 1919 she stayed with us, and when leaving challenged us: "If God calls you to sell out, relinquish all that you hold dear, and offer for Algeria, what will you do?" Under God, we, as doubtless others, owe our call to the A.M.B. entirely to Miss McIlroy.

From the moment of our arrival on the Field we were again impressed by her singleness of purpose, her "in season and out of season" passion and zeal for souls. It was the 25th of January, 1920, and together with Miss Trotter and Miss Govan, she was at the port to meet Mr.

and Mrs. J. G. Govan and ourselves. In the then tedious journey up to El Biar under the dim gaslights of the route, her chief concern was to get to grips with the "cabby," seeking to bring home to him his need of a Saviour.

It was soon my privilege to cycle out with her to the villages round about El Biar, and to observe that the same zeal which had so inspired me when with her in the Lothian villages had not flagged. She had lost none of her keenness for souls, and whether French, Spanish, Jew, or Arab, never let slip an opportunity to press Christ's claims.

Whilst itinerating around Colea, she found a house for Mr. Smeeton to rent, which afterwards became our home and first station. She frequently came over from Algiers to visit Arab homes with me and to open new doors which remained open until we removed to Blida.

In the life of the Band she was ever endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and steadfastly set herself to overcome evil with good. Her outstanding qualities were of infinite worth. She had the "mind of Christ." How much we have missed her since her departure from the Field, and now rejoice that she is beholding HIM Whom she loved and served so well. Truly a *great* soul has entered into HIS JOY.

ANNIE BUCKENHAM.

A Sunny Memory

"Miss McIlroy," "Dear Alice," or "Madame Alice" (as her Arab friends called her)—the very name, spoken to anyone who has known her, seems to bring a smile to the face of those who hear it. This smile tells of pleasant memories—memories of love and sympathy shown in joy or sorrow, of help and wise counsel in difficulties, of a living example of loving consideration for all, and desire to help any in need;—and there are lighter memories too of the happy humorous talk which none could resist, and which never had any sting of sarcasm in it.

"She was a *real good* Christian," years

ago I was told that an Arab (who had not a high opinion of Christians in general) said of Miss McIlroy; and all who really knew her would agree with him. Memory brings many thoughts of how she carried out the teaching of one of her favourite texts: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much": and also of her faithfulness to her ideal, expressed in another often quoted verse: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." She was indeed a lover of unity and a true peace-maker.

The news that she had gone (after weary months and years of failing health and powers of mind and body) to be with the Lord Whom she so loved and ever longed to serve, brought another vivid memory of her face, radiant with the light of joy and faith, as she sang, in the words of a French hymn she loved: "Oh, que la vie est *grande et belle* Pour ceux qui veulent Te servir."

Now indeed she knows what is "far better" even than a life lived in Christ on earth, and we, who have known her echo Saint Paul's words: "I thank my God on every remembrance of you."

V. C. WOOD.

"In journeys oft . . ."

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me."

There is a tendency these days in Missionary circles to impress on candidates and young workers the need for being "sensible" in Missionary service: three—if not four—meals a day, served regularly—regular hours of sleep and recreation and missionary work fitted into a regular programme. This is a natural reaction to the impetuous zeal of some which has resulted in breakdown and curtailment of the years of fruitful ministry, but it is well to remember that the Lord Whom we follow had no home and no settled routine in which to labour.

Indeed the words quoted above were used by our Lord when His disciples, having left Him wearied and hungry, came back bringing Him food, only to

find Him alert and refreshed, after His interview with the woman of Samaria.

I was reminded of these words when I recalled an itineration I took with Miss McIlroy and Mlle. Butticaz in the Aurès Mountains in the Spring of 1927. The first weekend was spent in the cafés of Khenchela, and as the ladies talked with the men and distributed Scriptures, Miss McIlroy was seeking guidance for the days ahead. There was a town on the other side of the mountains which had long been an objective in such itinerations, but there seemed no way of reaching it. In the course of conversation, Miss McIlroy heard of a 'bus service which had just started, run by an enterprising Frenchwoman, so three places were booked for Monday morning.

The 'bus was timed to leave at 6 a.m. so at 5 a.m. we took a meagre breakfast of black coffee and rolls. As a matter of fact, the vehicle did not appear until 8 a.m., by which time the youngest member of our party was already peckish, but we had been promised that we should arrive in time for lunch at Khanga Sidi Naji, so we set off.

Needless to say, the 'bus was only a lorry with planks of wood for seats, and the road, after a couple of miles, degenerated into a mere "piste" with no pretensions to surface, but we were on the way to villages where seldom or never had missionaries penetrated with the Word of God, and so such details were unimportant.

At the first village the driver allowed us a halt of half an hour—just time to make a cup of tea on the meta stove and eat a few of the biscuits we had with us? Not a bit of it! There was the Bread of Life to hand out to starving souls and long before we satisfied their hunger, time was up and we had to take our seats in the 'bus. Never shall I forget the picture of the men who had not been able to buy a book running after the 'bus, their money in outstretched hands, calling out, "Give us books."

The road steadily deteriorated and presently the driver was hailed by a

Garde Champêtre, who warned him that after three days' rain the road was impassable and it would be well to turn back while it was possible to turn round. Consultation with the passengers, all (except the three ladies) men from Khanga Sidi Naji, revealed that all were ready to take the risk of being stranded in the mountains rather than abandon the hope of reaching Khanga.

We were now climbing steadily and soon came to the first mud patch. All the men got out to push and put branches under the wheels to give them a grip, but even so, we only progressed inch by inch, and as we lurched forward and slithered back, it was only by watching a particular stone or flower that we could measure our advance. But at last the summit was gained and there, perched on the edge of a precipice, was another village, the houses seeming but a continuation of the perpendicular face of the cliff. To us it was quite inaccessible, but hardly had the 'bus drawn up on a welcome piece of flat ground, than men and boys appeared, as if they had dropped from the skies. Another hectic half-hour emptied our bags and filled eager, clutching hands, and once more we were *en route*.

If the climb up had been difficult, the descent was positively perilous, for now the steep mountain-side was strewn with boulders and every now and then another crashed down, sometimes missing the 'bus by a few feet. However, no accident befell us and even the water-course, which should have been dry but wasn't, was safely negotiated and we could see the walls of Khanga Sidi Naji ahead.

Surely now there would be an opportunity for a meal! Inside the gates we were greeted by the Caid and several of the elders. Though it was Ramadan, the month of fasting, when no food or drink must pass the lips of a true Moslem from dawn to sunset, they sent for coffee and we each had a small cup, hot, sweet and viscous, but very welcome. Miss McIlroy, quick as ever to buy up oppor-

tunities, produced the few remaining books and offered them to the Caid. Courteously, but very clearly, she was made to understand that while we were welcome guests for as long as we cared to stay and to the limit of Arab hospitality, there was no welcome for our message and that it would be considered a breach of hospitality should we give or sell them in the town. How we rejoiced to know that every one of our fellow-passengers had already brought into that closed town copies of all the books we carried—Gospels, tracts and stories, all bringing the message of salvation.

Our luggage had been sent off to the rooms we were to occupy, but when we suggested we might follow, we were informed that the Caid's sons wished to have the honour of showing us the Mosque, the view from the city ramparts and other sights of interest. We were a weary, hungry party as we climbed innumerable stairs and simulated an interest in the exploits in war and peace of the ancestors of our hosts, who had been the rulers of the district before the French conquest. It was nearing sunset before we were escorted to our rooms, on the roof of part of the Caid's house, and eagerly we thought of that meta stove and our precious teapot! But no, the gun had not signalled the time for the evening feast, and so our hosts had nothing better to do than spend the time with the foreign ladies who had come so unexpectedly to break the boredom of the long afternoon. So we all sat down on the flat roof and the conversation continued. How Miss McIlroy and Mlle. Butticaz could carry on, skilfully turning every subject introduced into an opportunity to preach the Gospel they were forbidden to proclaim otherwise, I had long ceased to wonder, as I sat, faint with fatigue and hunger, thankful that I had no part to take in the endless discussions.

At last, the report of the gun! Up jumped our hosts and made off to the courtyard where their meal awaited them, but for us—an empty table, spread indeed

with every refinement of linen and silver, but bare of food. There we sat for another two hours, while servants hurried in and out, keeping us on tenterhooks so that we could not escape to the bedroom where our own supplies of biscuits would have seemed a sumptuous feast. Not till the Lords and Masters had eaten their leisurely meal did they return and by their presence sanction the servants to bring in the food. And even while we ate, and for more than two hours afterwards, they sat, talking, questioning and listening while these two faithful witnesses spoke of their Lord and Master.

To me that day and the two following days were momentous, never to be forgotten, but to Miss McIlroy and her co-worker they were but incidents, like many others, calling for no special comment except in so far as they gave opportunity of doing the Will of God, which for them was to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the hard places of the Moslem world. Miss McIlroy will ever live in my memory as one who followed her Master with a devotion which left no room for selfish considerations.

B. H. COLLINSON.

Edward Johnston

On the 13th of December last another faithful friend of the A.M.B. passed into the Presence of the King in his home at "Campfield," Great Barton, at the age of 84. When he was sixteen years of age he became a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and for a number of years witnessed for His Master as bookseller and colporteur in the Border country north and south of the River Tweed. Later he came to East Anglia as a farmer and was the means of introducing the Faith Mission, founded by the late J. G. Govan, to these counties, and through it was introduced to the Algiers Mission Band. Twenty-four years ago he accompanied Mr. W. Cecil Collinson to Algeria to visit Miss Lillias Trotter and her fellow-workers, and the memory of this visit was long and lovingly cherished.

He loved to recall how at that time the Mission House at Bou Saada was acquired and when Mr. Collinson had informed Miss McIlroy that the first year's rent had been paid, she had said that all that night she could not sleep for joy!

As a result of this contact Mr. Johnston's only daughter and son were led to offer their lives to that same Field. The son Tom, however, received an early call to Higher Service, after having made a brief visit to North Africa.

"Campfield" to which so many of you have addressed your letters, was his home, and he and Mrs. Johnston gladly opened its doors to provide a place for the "Home Office" of the A.M.B. during the past five years.

All who had the privilege of knowing him bear testimony to a life and character of Christ-like fragrance, humility blended with humour, self-sacrifice with joy, and love for all. In spite of physical weakness and blindness which overtook him during the closing years of his life, he was always courageous and had such a happy praiseful spirit. He seemed always to see the best in everyone and to look persistently on the bright side of things. "I seem to have forgotten most of the unpleasant things that have happened in my life," he said one day, "and only the happy memories remain." That was typical of his spirit.

Miss Ruth Paxson

With the passing of Miss Ruth Paxson in October the A.M.B. lost a much valued "Referee" (U.S.A.), and a real friend of nearly twenty years standing.

It was through our dear Miss Mary May, who was one of her great friends, that Miss Paxson came to Dar Naama for a fortnight's stay, together with her friend, Miss Davies, in October, 1931.

Miss Paxson endeared herself to us by her gracious and joyful personality, and we felt that she brought blessing with her.

Her talks at the "Rally," on "The Life of Victory," were full of the power of the Holy Spirit and God spoke to our

hearts and His work was continued in personal talks with Miss Paxson.

Through the years this busy woman, whom God has so greatly used in many countries, kept in touch and did not forget the A.M.B.

In the letter in which she kindly undertook, in June, 1947, to be our referee in the U.S.A., she wrote:—

“I will be glad to act as your referee in U.S.A. I have always had the greatest admiration for the work of the Lord through the A.M.B. You are very kind to ask me to take this place.”

M. H. R.

Free from the fret of mortal years,
And knowing now Thy perfect will,
With quickened sense and heightened joy
They serve Thee still.

Impressions after the Rally

More workers by next year! This was surely the yearning in every heart at this year's Rally as from every hand came reports of souls hungering for the “Word of Life” and thirsting for those springs which Christ has promised to all.

From every station came reports of increased opportunities and we heard words such as these over and over again during our three days together. “The whole town is open” . . . “There is nothing to hinder the work” . . . “The walls of our Jericho are down” . . . “classes are increasing” “children just love the flannel-graph” . . . “opportunities for home-visiting are limitless” . . . “now we have a man with us we hope to re-open the book depot.”

Certainly more workers are needed to cope with the increased activities on the stations at present open, not to mention the hoped for re-opening of places now closed, due to shortage of personnel. Occasional visits can be made to some of these stations and the plaintive “When are you coming back” is most heart-rending. How can we tell them that the

Christians in England, in America, in France, in Switzerland just don't care enough to bother about coming to tell them?

One word picture that remains with me yet seems to set the tremendous thirst of these dying souls in beautiful parable form. Please pray as you read it that He Who so often taught in parables might interpret to you its meaning.

One day in their journeyings, said Mr. Stalley, as he told of one of his colportage trips in a desert region with Mr. Nicoud a few years ago, they noticed lying in the track of the car, what appeared to be a bundle of rags. On closer inspection that which seemed to be “filthy rags” proved to be a man, in dire need, almost dead, but a human soul dying of THIRST in a desert place! At last they were able to rouse him sufficiently to ask what he was doing there in that lonely spot. “I'm waiting to die” came the answer in a hoarse whisper forced through parched lips. His water supply had given out far from any known source of supply, and so, despairing of life, he had lain himself down to await the end.

Drop by drop precious life-giving water was allowed to trickle through the cracked lips until at last signs of life came back to the weary body. Soon two hands were stretched out to take the bottle and drink freely. Wisdom prevailed and he was given just a sip at a time until he was sufficiently revived to be helped into the car and taken to the nearest town.

When the town was reached and the door of the car was opened, he who but a few hours before had been at the point of death, now had sufficient life to be able to slip out of the car and slip away into the shadows without even a “Thank-you.”

Yet that day a soul had passed from death unto life. Many more who are “dead in trespasses and sin” would pass from “death unto life”—IF ONLY THERE WAS SOMEONE TO GIVE THEM TO DRINK.

R. J. WAINE.

NORTH AFRICA RALLY

SATURDAY, 25th MARCH, 1950

AT THE

MARY SUMNER HALL

TUFTON STREET, WESTMINSTER,

3.30 and 7.0 p.m.

Speakers representing NORTH AFRICA MISSION and the ALGIERS MISSION BAND will include Mr. W. CECIL COLLINSON ; Revs. T. WARREN, E. J. LONG, H. M. FIFE and H. W. STALLEY.

TEA PROVIDED AT 4.45 P.M. MISSIONARY FILM AT 6 P.M. - - EXHIBITION.

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

MISSIONARY HOUSE PARTY

EASTER, 1950

in the

C.A.W.G. HOSTEL, HARROGATE, YORKS

COME AND SPEND A HAPPY EASTERTIDE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH US, FRIDAY TO MONDAY INCLUSIVE, APRIL 7TH—10TH. TARIFF 10S. PER DAY.

LEADER—REV. H. W. STALLEY.

CONVENOR—MISS A. POWELL, to whom all enquiries should be sent at 44, Hammerton Road, Pudsey, near Leeds.

Algiers Mission Band

(FINANCIAL SUPPLEMENT TO "A THIRSTY LAND," JANUARY, 1950).

The Treasury.

"They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness."—(Ps. 145. 7.)

"As good stewards of the manifold grace of God."—(1 Pet. 4. 10.)

EVERY Financial Statement ought to be a song of praise, and the figures which follow in this supplement are presented, in the first place, as a thankful witness to the goodness of our God. All our needs have been supplied. This is an increasing miracle. While, in the early days of the Mission, the needs of the work were largely supplied from the means of the workers themselves, none of the recent recruits has any private financial means. More and more the Mission looks directly to Him "Who openeth His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." Notice how He has supplied our need.

In the year ended 30th June, 1948, gifts amounted to £1,312, and legacies of £943 raised this total to £2,255. During the last financial year, to 30th June, 1949, gifts were increased by nearly £500 to £1,899. A legacy of £169 increased this total to £2,068, about £200 less than the previous year, with an increase of four new workers. Then, *in the last month of the financial year*, came news of a legacy received on the Field direct from U.S.A., amounting to £1,600, enough to complete all allowances and cover Field expenses up to November. We thus testify to the faithfulness of God and praise His Name for His goodness.

Secondly, this Statement is a testimony to the faithfulness of God's people, who, having first given their own selves to the Lord, gave also, as God prospered them, to His work. We in the Mission thank you all from our hearts for these gifts given to the Lord. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: . . . Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God." (2 Cor. 9. 8-11.)

We would also like to express hearty thanks to Mr. H. Turner and to Mr. Neville Russell, who have audited the respective accounts and helped in the preparation of the Statements.

Thirdly, this Statement is a report on what has been done with these funds. You who read this magazine know that, humanly speaking, interest in God's work depends on the receipt of news. The burden of deputation work and correspondence has grown year by year, and it has been felt necessary to develop our home organization accordingly. This development is also making it possible for the Home Secretary to visit Algeria more frequently and to give much valued help both to new recruits and to the tried and experienced workers on the Field. As to the Algerian expenses, you know, from news through the magazine, from missionary meetings and from letters, how the workers are not only using the funds, but spending themselves, to make Christ known from Algiers to Tamanrasset, from Touggourt to Tlemcen.

The depreciation of the franc has continued, under His control.

A.D.P.

Will friends kindly note that our colleague Mr. Douglas Pilcher has now been designated acting Treasurer for the A.M.B. in Great Britain. In future, all correspondence concerning finance should be sent to him at his home :—37, Stephens Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

We take this opportunity of expressing warmest thanks on behalf of the Mission, to all whose fellowship with us in sacrificial giving has made it possible to carry on the Lord's work in Algeria. We count on your prayers in the days to come, that this may be continued to the glory of God.

Harold W Stalley

HOW CAN I HELP THE A.M.B.

1. By becoming a Prayer Partner. The periodical Prayer Letter will be gladly sent on request, by the Home Secretary.
2. By taking the Magazine "A Thirsty Land" and by introducing it to others.
3. By arranging Missionary Meetings to spread knowledge of the work. The Home Secretary will help or advise as to speakers, slides and films.
4. By purchasing A.M.B. publications.
5. By giving as the Lord may direct you. An A.M.B. Missionary Box will be gladly sent on application. Income Tax is recoverable, in some circumstances, on Convenanted Subscriptions and full details will be supplied on request.