

A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

ALGERS MISSION BAND
EDITED BY

Algiers Mission Band.

FOUNDED IN 1888 BY I. LILIAS TROTTER.

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Location of Workers. Spring, 1939.

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<i>Headquarters.</i>	1909. Miss A. McILROY.	1934 & 1927. Mr. and Mrs. H. STALLEY.
1906. Miss S. E. PERKIN.	1919. Mlle. BUTTICAZ.	TOLGA.
1907. Miss RIDLEY.	MILIANA.	1928 & 1937.
1919 & 1922.		M. and Mme. S. LULL.
M. and Mme. P. NICLOUD.	1907. Miss M. D. GRAUTOFF.	NEFTA.
1937. Miss K. LAYTE	1929. Miss P. M. RUSSELL.	1920. Miss V. WOOD.
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1935. M. and Mme. MILLON.	1906. Mlle. A. GAYRAL.	TOZEUR (from Nefta).
BLIDA.	SETIF.	Miss V. WOOD (part time).
		GHARDAIA (Beni M'zab). Spring.
1920. Mr. and Mrs. H. W. BUCKENHAM.	1914. Miss A. M. FARMER.	1907. Miss M. D. GRAUTOFF (part time).
1938. M. & Mme. POQUET.	1922. Miss I. SHEACH.	1929. Miss. P. M. RUSSELL "
	1935. Mr. and Mrs. THOMSON.	1919. Mlle. BUTTICAZ "



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The Vine in Springtime.

Pruning.

The blessedness of being hemmed in is pictured morning after morning as the sun shoots up behind the mountain a little before eight, and suddenly transforms the leafbuds of the huge vine overhead into jewels of living emerald light. The whole of the growth of last summer, sweeping wreaths of lovely boughs, has been cut down almost to the hilt, and into the tiny bits of dry stick that are left the whole life-current of the great stem is streaming in concentrated power. It does not need the outlet of last year's branches, they would only weaken the force of the current by diffusing it. It will find its way out into the summer's vintage just through stumps that seem to have lost all the opportunities of past days. "He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit."

"Time is nothing to Him."

Our vine is telling me these days how swiftly God can work when His pruning has had its way. It is just a fortnight since the first green drops of light were visible on the gaunt grey stems, and now there are branches of "tender grapes" nearly as long as your hand, in the great clustering leaves. Time is nothing to Him, once the conditions are fulfilled. And He has eternity for the expanding of His thoughts that He thinks towards us.

"Souffrir passe : avoir souffert demeure éternellement."

I. L. TROTTER.

Editorial.

"There be many that say, Who will show us any good?
Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."

—*Psalm 4. 6.*

The old-time question, "Who will show us any good?" is echoing throughout the world. It is repeated from end to end of North Africa, by Moslem voices. Restless and full of fear, men and women, youths and maidens, look in vain for an answer.

Various happenings are described in this magazine: Christmas in a desert town, New Year in the Atlas mountains, a journey to a sacred city of the M'zab, everyday life in an out-station, visits to mountain gourbis and town houses. All tell of opportunities of making known the glory and love of God that shines in the face of Jesus Christ—the only true answer to the great question.

Two itinerations in the Sahara have been made since Christmas. One was to the land of the Beni M'zab, and the first news of it that has come is in this number. The other was made with the Mission Car down into the Touggourt region. We hope to tell of it in the Summer issue.

Long ago, we of the A.M.B. had a magazine, just among ourselves, and we shall never forget the series of articles that Miss Freeman wrote for her "mates," as she always called her fellow workers. We have reprinted one of these in this number of *A Thirsty Land*, thinking that it will have a message for all, whether on the Field or at home.

* * *

It is with sorrow that we record the death on February 8th of Mr. E. Short, of the N.A.M., who has entered into the King's presence. Mr. Short had completed forty years in the land on the day of his passing. He was a "servant of the Lord . . . gentle

unto all, apt to teach," and his life was one of faithful witness and steadfast labour. Mr. Short was a gifted student of Arabic, and because of his knowledge and ability he had been asked to continue the task—laid down by Mr. Theobald—of the translation of the New Testament into the colloquial. We would offer our deep sympathy to Mrs. Short and her family, and also to the N.A.M.

M. H. R.



"With God."

How many of us have said and sung with all our hearts, "Anywhere with Jesus," but at the same time we did not realise all that it meant for us. Indeed at home, and surrounded by all that home means, we could not know. When the test comes we must not forget that "anywhere," for missionaries, means something different from life in England, and let us take good care not to make a misery of anything that "anywhere" brings us.

To us in Algeria it must mean some time or other, Arab food. Do we object to it? And mice? Do we mind them? And mosquitoes, do we think them dreadful? In some parts it means close contact with dirt and repulsive disease. Yet if Jesus is there what can we possibly have to complain of? It means living among a stiff-necked and untrue people, struggling with a strange and difficult language. Yet let us evermore write over all our "miseries," big, and for the most part very little, these transforming words "with Jesus." Then the very breath of Heaven will breathe upon our whole being and we shall be glad.

I remember reading somewhere a most beautiful passage on I Corinthians 7. 20-24. The writer described the transfiguring power with which the Apostle's words "with God" must have fallen on the ears of the poor Christian slaves whose case he

had been considering ; " therein abide with God." " With God " in the midst of squalor and oppression and injustice, and sometimes cruelty unspeakable. " If thou mayest be made free, use it rather, not to escape discomfort but being the Lord's free man, but if thou art called being a slave, care not for it, but slave or free let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

What splendid examples of " anywhere with Jesus " we meet with even in these days. How about that young married couple in China who for six years never had a room, not to say a house, of their own, but travelled constantly, sometimes sleeping at an inn with all the worse than discomfort that that meant, sometimes sharing a room with the family of some poor convert. They were often hunted out of a town with stones and jibes, but never faltering, always returned again and again to the hardest places until even their enemies were vanquished by their faith and patience.

What are our miseries? If we make a list of them, what shall we write opposite to them? Shall it be " this is very hard? " or shall it be " with God? " With Him, in disappointments and troubled nights and much from which we should perhaps shrink, if we had not truly meant it, when we sang " anywhere with Jesus." " With God," these are the wonderful words, this is the wonderful fact that changes earth's sordid surroundings into the " heavenly places " where we are seated with Him.

A friend told me that she knew an old woman who lived in a little garret in great poverty. One day speaking of returning to her room after a day's work she said, " As I open the door, I find the dear Lord waiting there for me, and I say to myself, ' Can Heaven be better? ' "

F. H. FREEMAN.

" Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus,
Earth's dark shadows flee."

A Letter from Ghardaia.

Here we are in the Sahara, with daily classes of children! Miss Russell begins with little Arab and Hameri girls and baby brothers at 8 a.m., then follow the Jewish girls, ten to fifteen of them with their baby brothers, and sometimes tent children afterwards by themselves. At noon, boys are bombarding the door for my class of Arab, Jew, and negro lads of Mozabite religion, all together, though if older Jewish boys come we make them wait, and come in after the others, for they need different teaching.

The boys enjoy our little hand organ and are learning to sing, taking sides over the hymns that are written up on the board. One boy stopped me to-day when talking of the presentation in the Temple, and said, " They tell us that the Christ had no parents, but came from God." They have so much more intelligence than many of the careless inattentive lads of the northern towns.

There has been no rain here this year but water is brought to us in barrels every two days from the new deep well. It is salty, has iron in it, and is uninteresting in taste. They hope by next year for canalisation, and then I suppose we shall have street pumps and shall be sending our boy to them for water.

The Mozabite woman, A., is still very friendly, and has given me some interesting talks on Mozabite customs, etc. I was telling her, in the dialect, about Yahia ben Zacharia (John the Baptist), his birth and life. A. then told me of a custom in the town of Melika, at the Achoura (early in the month of M'harrem) to hold a three days fête in memory of Yahia, in which they gave alms to the poor. In the morning loaves made with milk, in the afternoon

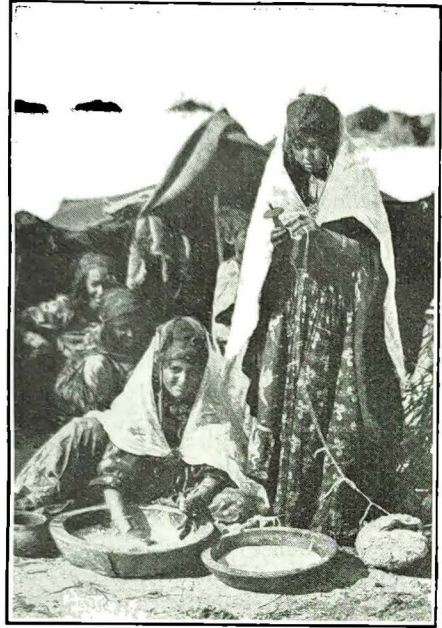
semolina, dates, and butter, and in the evening cous-cous with cabbage and oil, are distributed to the poor. I suppose that "the poor" include the freed slaves, Hameri, who are M'zabi in religion and live among them, and the nomads from the tents in the river bed. Arabs would refuse to eat the food made by Mozabites, the heretic sect of Islam. Most of their feasts are held in the cemetery, and the first dishes are offered to the Talebs (learned men), and after they have tasted are passed on out of the cemetery to the poor Arab women belonging to bedouin tents who are waiting outside.

On Friday, we—Mlle. B. and I—went into the large crowded market, a sea of Arab men and among them the groups of camels for sale, and further off the camel butchers' meat. It is sad to see a camel carrying his brother's carcass to market to be cut up into joints!

We shall soon begin our round of visits to the eight other towns. It is going to be difficult this year, because return buses only run at night.

We have made several trips to the tent women, sitting on the sand to teach them. Yesterday we were entertained in the most courteous way outside a large tent. On the ground a poor old blind woman was lying too weak to sit up. A dignified woman made us mint tea, and after sipping from each glass, presented them to us to drink. It would not have done to refuse, but I had to draw the line at a second glass, because the water from the skins and doubtful wells can be disastrous; tar, magnesia, sand, and unwashed glasses!

There was scarcely one of that group of men, women and children and babes that had not bad eyes, even the wee babies. We talked of Abraham and then of the Lord—of loaves and fishes, and then those who knew us from former years said, "Show us heaven!" I knew they meant the golden page of "The Wordless Book."



TENT WOMEN. A BUSY MORNING.

The Prodigal Son, Lost Sheep, and Lost Coin, never lose their interest, many of the people we have met before can tell of them more graphically than we can. Even M'zabi women begin to know these parables.

Little S., who loves to hear about the Lord, has her baby boy called Mouschi (Moses). She is such a child to be a mother, do pray for her. Star also has been married about a year; she is in a fanatical house so that it is difficult to get a message to her, but her face just glows with pleasure when we can speak to her of the Lord, and she remembers hymns telling of His death and resurrection; it is wonderful.

From the Jewish women around goes up the cry, "When will Messiah come? Tell us!"

One old Rabbi who saw me with the Hebrew story of the Passover, immediately took it and just refused to give it back. "I must keep this," he said, "to show to others, it is Hebrew."

This does not mean there is no opposition; alas tracts are torn up and huge stones are thrown at our door by Jews, Arabs, and negroes. Yesterday we found our keyhole blocked up when we returned from our tournée to the tents, and a tin containing tar had been slipped under the front door, either for us to step into on entering, or as a spell!!

To-morrow at 6 a.m., we are off to Guerara, about sixty-five miles from here, for a stay of twenty-four hours, and expect to spend the night at the Bordj which is run by natives. The bus of last year to Guerara has been burnt, and several lives lost. It caught fire in the hot sun; but we hope to go in the new car. At 10 a.m. we are due there, and after that we shall have a crowd of boys and lads and noisy little girls around us, up and down the narrow street till sundown. The difficulty is how to get into a house without the crowd of children following also!

These towns and people need much prayer for they only get a message from missionaries once or twice a year; a few hours given to several thousand people, a drop in the ocean!

M. D. GRAUTOFF.

"I was an Hungred"

Among those who sometimes visit us at Dar Naama is one whom we have known since her girlhood. L. was a lively, high-spirited girl who lived in a comfortable home. She was one whose heart the Lord had opened, but she was married young to a Moslem man.

What her life is like now can be gathered

from the following account—written down from memory after she had been talking with us not long ago.

* * *

"Do pray for me that I may find work. I know that the Lord hears and that gives me courage.

"I get up at five in the morning and go from house to house and shop to shop asking for work. In vain; for the women are all searching, searching, and crying, crying. There are crowds of them. It is the women who are working now, not the men.

"I am not afraid for myself—it is my children that I am troubled about. They rush at me in the morning crying, 'Bread, bread,' and again at noon. Yesterday they went to bed hungry. Three loaves of bread go nowhere with them, and even if I had it, bread only is not sufficient. Semolina which makes nourishing native bread and porridge, is dearer than bread, and two pounds of semolina is nothing among all of us. Sometimes I make a thin soup of it with salt, pepper and a little oil.

"Yesterday I went out and gathered mallow leaves and cooked them. The children seemed to like them and I cannot afford carrots or turnips.

"The world is in a terrible state. Last year was better than this, the year before better than that. Surely the Lord is coming soon, even the Moslems say so. A man is going about from café to café warning people that all the world is coming under one Power and exhorting them to seek God and telling them that Jesus Christ is coming soon—may we all be ready!"

* * *

This woman's search for work has been rewarded by obtaining two situations of one hour each per day. Her combined earnings are just about enough to buy a loaf and a half of bread, for five children, herself and her husband.

S. E. PERKIN.

“ One in Christ Jesus.”

At our service last Sunday we had great joy in the baptism of two native couples. Our joy was shared by another Mission—the French “Mission Rolland,” for the two sisters who were baptized were in the refuge belonging to this Mission before their marriage.

Since these two families came to Algiers, my wife and I had had the privilege of helping them spiritually and they had become very dear to us. For a year they had wished for baptism and their daily life during these last months having been a bright witness for Christ, to their neighbours, we were able to decide that they should be baptised. We had invited a number of Christian families, both Arabs and Kabyles, to be present at Dar Naama and during the baptismal service several very encouraging testimonies were given.

The service was first led in worship by one of the missionaries present, and then a message was given by Monsieur Maoudj of Blida, who told of the progress of the Gospel in this Moslem land, and of the further possibilities of missionary work.

After this, a colporteur of the Bible Society, spoke most lovingly of the testimony to Christ to be shown in the life, after baptism.

What was specially striking during this Sunday morning service was the unity in prayer. In Kabyle, Arabic, French and English, praise and prayer went up to God for those who desired to witness publicly in this way to the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

At the moment of baptism, when I put the question, “Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ as thy Saviour?” the answer was clear, “Yes, I believe in Him.”

A communion service followed. What a

privilege and what a joy to take the Lord's Supper with these newly baptised friends for the first time!

After the service was over we had a simple meal all together in the Orange Court and our hearts were full of mutual joy and gladness.

* * *

The homes of the two families specially concerned in the baptism differ very much. One, in which are two little girls, is in the heart of the native town, and often the breadwinner comes home, not having found work. But in spite of this his faith in the Lord has not wavered.

The circumstances of the other family are very different. The elder brother of the man was baptised—and his wife also—two years ago, and he has helped his young brother in his study of the Gospel. This newly baptised man has more regular work than the other.

Now begins life as baptised Christians for these our brothers and sisters in the faith, and we know that the Evil One will try jealously to oppose them in every way. Will you join with us in prayer for them that a victory may be won that shall be lasting? We long also that those who were present at the baptism, and who have not yet dared to take the step may find their example a strength and an encouragement. Let us have faith to believe for this.

PIERRE NICOD.

(Translated.)



Uprooting—Planting.

Uprootings are often very painful things, but in this pilgrim life of ours they have to be, and we know that the Divine Husbandman will give grace for every new experience and make clear His plan and purpose. So it has been in our recent transplanting from Relizane, where our roots had gone very deeply down, to

Tlemcen, our most westerly outpost, which had been left unoccupied through the illness and Home-call of Miss Kathleen Butler.

How good it is when one goes forward in some new venture for God, to have unmistakable signs of His leading in the way, and these have been given to us. As though to comfort our hearts in the very midst of the "uprooting," we found waiting for us here, a thirsty soul whose longing for the Water of Life and for the Heavenly Bread seems to grow deeper as the days go by. Her own name having no special meaning, "Mounceera" (Lighted) suggests itself as one which describes her. She is a frail, delicate girl, with a sweet face and gentle ways, one of those prepared souls to whom it is a joy to unfold more of the unsearchable riches of Christ. She had begun to learn before, and her heart was sad as she saw the mission house door still shut as she passed down the street from time to time, so it was with delight that she came to us when she saw it open again a few months ago. Her prayers show a real understanding of the things taught, and she has been an apt pupil in learning to read in Arabic for herself. Her family have been passing through deep trials for some long time now, and the other day she said to me, "If I had not understood and chosen the Way of Christ and been able to come here to read the Word of God and to pray and find comfort in this way, I don't know what I should have done." Such testimonies make us glad we have been called to do some "planting" in yet another part of the great Harvest field.

For this kind of work Tlemcen offers great opportunities, for on all sides, hidden away on the mountain slopes, or down among the greenery of the plain are little villages and groups of native houses which make it a splendid centre for visiting. There is one quaint little mountain village within easy walking distance, which we

visited several times in the summer and which I wanted to visit again to renew contact with an old blind woman and her two daughters who are always so friendly. Things look different now in winter time with every available little bit of mountain side that is not sheer rock, ploughed up and planted with some kind of grain, and little rivulets running where before there was nothing but dry, burnt up ground, so I wasn't very sure if I could locate the house again in the confused jumble of dwellings, with no semblance of streets of any kind. However, praying for guidance, I set out one afternoon, and God sent "angels" to guide me! I had just left the main road and was taking the track that leads up towards the mountain, when I passed a group of grubby little mortals sitting by the wayside, and of course, did not at all recognise them as angels, until a voice arrested me! "There goes the one who came to visit Blind Y.'s house in the summer time. Yes, I know it is the same one!" So I turned to see a little girl point me out to her little companions, one of whom had a poor little scrap of a baby tied on to her back. "So you know me?" I asked. "Yes, I remember you," she replied. "You went to Blind Y.'s house, you and your Mother, and you read to them." (My "mother" was the senior missionary who was with us!) Then I learnt that they were going back to the village now, and that they would be delighted to come with me and would conduct me right to Blind Y.'s house if I could not find it. So off we started. It was a lovely afternoon, and we got quite warm going up the hill towards the village. "Let us rest here for a little while," I said as we came to some clean, dry boulders by the way side, "and I will tell you a story." So we sat down and I pulled out of my bag the picture book of the Good Samaritan and explained the parable to them. It was an appreciative little class. "What

lovely words ! " they said as the story ended. There happened to be just one orange in my bag so I gave it to them to divide amongst them, and was very touched when they wanted to insist on my having a bit of it too !

Then on we went to the village, so changed in aspect from the summer time, on past the fierce dog which always guards the entrance to Blind Y.'s house, and into the house itself, to receive a warm welcome there. But it is not always easy to " preach the Word " in such a place. The people are wild and undisciplined, the very fact of having a European visitor amongst them is somewhat of a novelty, especially to the neighbours, who drop in to see what it is all about, to ask you how much you paid for your dress and where you bought it, and all about your family and relations. In vain the girl of the house who does understand something and wants to listen, says to them, " Be quiet and let her read to us." The noisy neighbours have to have their say, and the Messenger has to sit in patience until there comes an opportunity for a little more " planting." Again the Good Samaritan.

On the way home I make another call, this time such a different home from the poor little mountain hut. Here there is every sign of wealth and an abundance of this world's goods. The daughters of the house are dear intelligent girls, who have been educated in French schools. A dainty tray with tea, and many delicious Arab cakes is set before me. " Taste them all," urges a small sister (one of my little class girls) her eyes sparkling in anticipation of having a " taste " too. There is a friendly talk, and opportunity given for another bit of heavenly planting, and then it is time to go. " God help you in your work," says the big sister in an affectionate farewell. " And may He give people hearts to understand," I echo as I leave her.

J. C. STALLEY.

Blida Jottings.

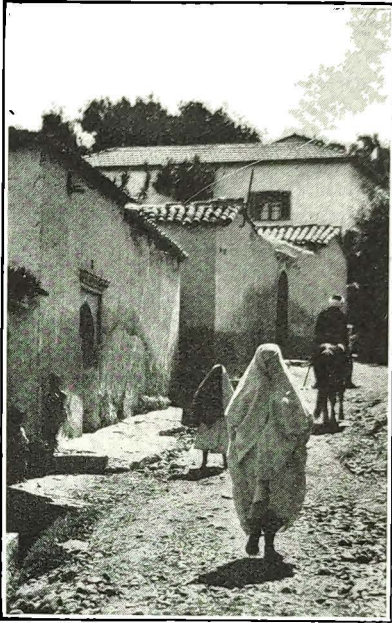
Feb. 2nd. No. 59 of the A.M.B. series of booklets for Arabs, *The Life of Elijah*, is just in from the Press. It has a most attractive cover, and is well got up. We are making a big show of it in the depot, as with all new publications.

3rd. The depot has profited once again through the " small cash " boys have to spend at their feast times. " Between the joints of the harness," is a significant word ; however invincible the spiritual armour of Islam may seem to be, there are vulnerable spots.

5th. Lord's Day. We greatly rejoiced in the boys' class to-day. There are some fine boys now regularly coming. We pray for nothing short of their salvation.

For the first time since Samuel Maoudj's appointment he was able to come to our afternoon gatherings. He gives a very bright testimony. The first of these to-day seemed to bring an extended meaning to " hath broken down the middle wall of partition," for here were together young Arab women with some of their parents, and Samuel and his next eldest brother, together with their sister and father. It was lovely to hear each of the younger women engage intelligently, and with increasing clarity, in prayer, unabashed by the presence of these men ; it was a great time of fellowship.

6th. Mrs. Buckenham and Mme. Poquet have done another mountain village chiefly composed of gourbis. In one gourbi, sitting on a bit of old carpet, was found a poor suffering creature who, for nine years, had rested mostly in a sitting position. She is very poorly clad, and her legs and arms are scarred through holding a firepot to help keep her warm. No wonder she said, " Death would be better than this." Yet she has a faint remembrance of the things spoken by our predecessors years



NEAR TO THE BLIDA MISSION STATION.

ago, and her remark opened the way for some of Christ's "comfortable words and kind."

9th. M. Poquet relates an interesting happening at the depot; a young man was in to buy books in Arabic, and after selecting and purchasing, he said, "You know this is *sin* for me to buy these books, but it is the *religion of the heart that counts!*"

11th. A call to prayer and preparation for the third native conference, this time to be opened by worship and fellowship, at "The Lord's Table," on Easter Sunday morning, is just issued by Si Maoudj. Other gatherings are announced for the afternoon and evening of the same day, but Monday and Tuesday are to be devoted to Bible Study, the general theme being "How to follow JESUS." (1) By obedience to His call; (2) In Renunciation; (3) By daily witness before the unconverted;

(4) Through vital communion with Christ.

12th. It was possible to have the whole of this afternoon's gathering in the open court, so superb is the weather. Who could not but rejoice in the luxuriousness of this early spell of spring—the narcissi, with their strong scent which the natives so much like, are still with us, the quiet, mauve wild-iris, and now the small, blue hyacinth in abundance. The hedges are lit up with the flower of the hawthorn, even as recently we could scarcely see the wood of the almond-tree for the mass of bloom!

H. W. BUCKENHAM

Sing!

Sing, sing!
Now I have a gospel of my own,
Now I know what it really means,
I understand the great simplicity.

Sing, sing!
This is why the birds sing,
And why the mighty rivers
Rush down the mountain sides.
Now I know why the flowers blossom.
It is because God,
The far-away, shadowy-seeming One,
Has made Himself available in Jesus Christ,
And is prepared to impart all His goodness
Unto us His children,
In the Person of this Holy One.

Only take what the Almighty offers!
Dry your tears,
And hush your sad complaints,
Give over doubting.
Put God to the test,
And the eyes of your soul shall be opened,
You shall see a new world,
And everything in it shall be your own,
You shall cry out to the woods and the
meadows,
"Sing, sing,
This is the Gospel of God!"

PLEASANT HURST.

New Year's Day in the Atlas Mountains.

After having had a series of Christmas fêtes for our Arab friends here in the Boulevard Bru, Algiers, I set out on New Year's Eve, for Boghar, at 5 o'clock in the morning with Mlle. Ruperto, secretary of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in North Africa."

Boghar is a village on the top of a mountain 170 kilometres from Alger, which we had visited several times in 1938, Mlle. Ruperto having opened a branch of her work there. This has opened to me and to the Gospel many doors which otherwise would have remained closed, just as it has done down in the desert and elsewhere.

We had been deeply impressed by three things in Boghar—its beauty, its restfulness and the utter poverty of the majority of its inhabitants and of those of the surrounding district, and this had prompted the idea to have a Christmas Tree for them.

On we drove through quantities of snow, and then through thick mist when one could scarcely see a yard ahead. Finally, after about five hours of this, we seemed to emerge above the clouds, and the nearer we approached to the mountain top the brighter the sun shone and the colder the air became.

When we arrived at the S.P.C.A.N.A. premises (an old-fashioned European house with large rooms, spacious stables, court and garden) we found a huge log fire burning brightly in our bedroom and another in the dining-room, where a tree was waiting to be trimmed. This was quickly accomplished, for we had brought with us a silver powder which we sprinkled all over it, and which sparkled like thousands of diamonds in the firelight. Then in real old-fashioned style, candles were clipped on to it, as many as it would hold, and the effect was most fairy-like. Next a rope was put across the room on to which we pinned

the warm garments for boys and girls which kind friends had supplied, fifty-eight of them there were, mostly of woollen material. At the foot of the tree we placed fifty parcels, each containing 2 lbs. of semolina, and plates full of gingerbread and chocolate. Last, but not least, there was a large table piled up with loaves of bread!

From about 9 a.m. the next morning crowds of children began to gather round the house, entrance ticket in hand, awaiting to be admitted; they had, however, been invited for 2 p.m., so had to be sent away ever so many times.

About 1.45 we closed the shutters, the candles were all lighted on the tree, and a bright fire was burning merrily on the hearth. Then the back door was opened and into the court flocked men, women and children, many of them shivering with the cold on account of the scarcity and thinness of their garments. They could not, of course, all get into our dining-room, so we had the children in first, and the blind, and they sat round the tree on the floor, whilst the others crowded into the hall to hear the Christmas Message, which I had the joy and privilege of giving them. Several French people also came in who understood Arabic. One and all listened in reverent silence. Then came the distribution and the children stood up to be measured for their dresses. One little girl, about two years of age, kept tugging at my skirt, for she was too small to see over the heads of the others and was afraid lest she should be overlooked! At last her turn came, and she just hugged a warm little frock close to her, out of sheer joy. A blind woman on receiving a loaf of bread ran her hand along it, and when she found it was a whole loaf a beautiful smile broke over her face and her gratitude was pathetic. All were most orderly and as docile as sheep,

even the men who passed through the hall one by one from back door to front to receive, according to the size of their families, one loaf or two, one parcel or two (of semolina), as they passed.

At 5.30 p.m. the room began to fill again : men, boys and girls poured in, and we had great difficulty in getting these latter to sit in rows facing the sheet on which the lantern pictures were to be shown ! They would keep on sitting themselves down in circles, in real native style, and as soon as we got one group broken up and properly seated another circle would form behind us, or we would find a whole row looking at us instead of at the sheet. However, the Arab men were very helpful, and soon everyone had his or her eyes looking in the right direction.

The outline of a man was perceived on a roof overlooking our garden, bending forward in eagerness, hoping to get a glimpse of the pictures through the window. He was a Frenchman who had lost both legs from the knee in the Great War, but who is wonderfully active on the two wooden stumps which replace them : nevertheless how he got up on to that roof is amazing ! Of course we immediately invited him to come down, and both he and his wife joined us, and were much touched by what they saw and heard that evening. As in the afternoon, we were very conscious of the Lord's Presence in our midst, as we showed the Bible pictures and spoke of the Saviour Who loves us and Who died that He might save us from sin. This time there were about a hundred people packed into that room, from which we had turned out everything but a wooden case on which the lantern was placed, and although the meeting lasted nearly, if not quite, two hours. it was not long enough for them ! Thus ended a most memorable and most happy day ; one which we believe will count for Eternity.

I. K. NASH.

Relizane.

During January we paid a visit to Relizane and had a very happy time with our Arab friends there.

On the Wednesday morning a group of five women gathered early at the Mission House and we had morning prayers together. It was a very lovely hour and each one took part in prayer. Fatma's mother came, and one felt there was a definite softening in her. I have never seen her look so really interested in what was being said. She is still wrapped up in her own sorrow, and spends nearly all her time in the cemetery weeping over the graves of her two children. She loves to go over and over again those last hours of Fatma's, of the vision she had of the two white robed ones who came to call her at the last, and how she died with a smile on her face. Hers is a sad case for she seems alone in the world.

As soon as I possibly could, I went out to do some visiting. The first call was on S. I went into their court and peeped round the corner not knowing whom I should encounter, and there stood S. in the doorway. You should have seen her face when she saw me, as she had not heard that we had come ! She was all alone so we had a happy half hour together and prayer, before I had to go on, promising to come back for a longer visit next day.

On Friday morning we had a gathering for the women. I had not had time to go round to look up more, but about ten turned up and we had a blessed little meeting with a sense of God's presence with us. At the close five again took part in prayer, and I feel sure that God will hear those earnest prayers, that the house, " His house," will not remain long closed and that meantime He may use them as shining lights for Him in the midst of their own people.

J. C. STALLEY.

Christmas in the Sahara.



CHRISTMAS GUESTS AT TOLGA.

We lit our Christmas tree six times ! First of all for the eighty-seven little girls who accepted our invitation and who came, every single one with a baby on her back ! It was very amusing to hear them singing, each in her own fashion.

Then it was the boys' turn ; one hundred and fifteen turned up on Christmas Day, and the men came in the evening, forty of them, to see the magic lantern and to enjoy a cup of coffee. They were as much amused as the children were by the tree with its candles.

On the Monday afternoon we invited the beggars. We were very touched by how attentively they listened. Then, on the Tuesday after Christmas, the sick women and children heard, some for the first time, the story of our Saviour's birth.

Our little Hélène is a great joy to us. She is so good, that I am able to work

among the women, to visit them and give them medical help, etc. She lies in her cot playing and singing to herself. She loves the Arab children, and when they come round her perambulator out of doors, she tries to talk to them, and smiles and smiles: She is very happy here in the desert !

The girls at our Thursday class are knitting scarves with much delight. The younger ones are making bags or handkerchiefs.

Mr. Lull has visited six villages, and tomorrow hopes to visit another one.

Lads and men have been coming in very good numbers every night to the meetings.

Please pray for some who are bitterly opposed and for those of the young men who came last year but have not come back to the Mission house this year.

M. LULL.

(From a letter. Translated.)

Heavenly Light on Daily Life.

Under this title Miss Trotter wrote a number of short and beautiful articles for Moslem women and converts. These were published by the A.M.B., in Arabic and French. The English version of three of them is given below.

The Lesson of the Coal.

If you were asked to name the blackest thing you know, the first thing that would come to your mind would be a coal : you could wash a coal till you washed it away, and the last crumb would be as black as ever.

Yet if you look in your kanoun (brazier) next time you are cooking, you will see that black coal changed, through and through. It is glowing with light and heat, not a black speck is left ; the fire has taken hold of it and transformed it : it is a new creature, it can shine, and warm and work.

Our hearts that we have from our father Adam, are black and cold with sin, and useless before God. No effort of our own will make them worth anything. It is the fire of the love of Jesus Christ our Lord that can transform them.

Bring your heart to Him : tell Him that it is black with sin, and cold with lack of love, and useless for His service. Let Him take hold of your heart as the fire takes hold of the coal. Let the love of Jesus, Who loved you and gave Himself for you, go deeper and deeper into your heart like the fire that goes deeper into the coal, till it possesses it altogether.

Then your heart will begin, as it were, to grow warm and shine, and those around you will share the blessing that has come to you. For those in whom the love of Jesus shines, and glows, bring light and love to all who come near them. They cannot keep it to themselves, but " they that enter in

may see the light," for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us."

One heart really aglow can set on fire many hearts around. So bring your heart to Christ the Lord just as it is, and see what He can do with it !

The Lesson of the Lamp.

Some people sleep in the dark all night. In other houses where there are sick people or little children, you see a light all the night through.

But what happens when the sky grows yellow with the dawn ? The light of the little lamp was well enough for the night while it lasted, but already the flame was getting low, and now you have put it out, you have something better.

The world has pleasures that are like the tiny flame of the lamp—feasts and fine clothes, and jewels and such-like for those whose souls are still dark and who have nothing better ; these things make a little light for a little while.

But Christ our Lord says, " I am the light of the World." He is like the sun that shines, not for one room like the lamp, but for all lands and always. If your heart turns round to Him altogether, like the earth turns round to the sun, a new brightness will come to you like the brightness of the sunrise, and you will not care for these old pleasures any more. They will seem as dull and meaningless as a candle in the sunshine.

This paper is meant for the younger women, to whom the fear comes about the things they may have to give up, if they surrender themselves altogether to Christ.

Do not be afraid. You know the time for putting out the lamp. It is the time when the light of the new dawn has grown brighter than the light that you have had in your dark room all night.

So there will come a moment in the new life if your heart keeps turning round

to Christ, when the new joys get brighter than the old joys, and to please Him becomes sweeter than to please anyone else. That is the moment to let all go for Him. It will not be really hard. Sacrifice is no sacrifice to those who in their hearts have seen Jesus !

The Lesson of Spinning.

This lesson is about the fleece that you buy in the market, and how you get it ready to be woven into a burnous for your husband or your brother.

To begin with you wash it. But we have spoken already of that lesson ; the mud is gone, but there is still much work to do. You take the kerdash (comb), pass it through patiently till every knot and tangle is cleared and it is soft as a little cloud, and then you take the spindle and twist the threads firmly together and each little strand helps the other to hold fast till they take their place in the garment you are weaving.

This is a lesson about living together in love. God has put us in families and often in houses where there are many neighbours, and He wants us to be like the kerdash that smooths out the knots of difficulties and the tangles of quarrels. For instance, if a neighbour gets a day's work and fears to leave her children alone, cannot you say, " I will take care of them," and the knot of difficulty will be gone. Or if there has been a vexed feeling with another you can say, " I am sorry about those words between us, let us forget all and be sisters again." And when the children quarrel do not slap them both, but try patiently to find out the cause and set it right. Then you will be like the kerdash and the tangles will be gone.

And thus with loving thoughts and words and looks we can, as it were, twist the threads of our lives with the lives of others, and specially with our sisters in Christ, that we may help each other to be strong

like the little strands of wool help each other, and so we shall grow fit for God to use us.

He has said, " Let all bitterness, and wrath . . . and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice : And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

I. L. TROTTER.

Who's Knocking ?

" The daily ministration," is a part of mission work which is difficult to describe and explain. It is not teaching or preaching, and it takes time from what some might consider to be more important. It is often unforeseen and unexpected and means doing very varied things, such as writing a letter for a mother to her soldier son far away in France, tracing a needlework design for a young bride to be, or giving counsel about a baby that seems to be growing smaller instead of bigger !

It is inevitable, and is a matter for thanksgiving, that these Moslem women, often down-trodden and friendless, should turn to those who offer them sympathy and love, asking nothing in return.

A few glimpses of such love in action may arouse understanding prayer for those who are constantly meeting unsought calls on time and strength and who long that always " Christ shall be magnified."

* * *
4.45 a.m. and still dark ! There is a tap on the shuttered window, and a woman's voice calling for one who will help her in her time of need. Dressing hastily the missionary hurries out. By 5.15 they have made their slow way together through the dark streets to the Hospital. That morning a baby boy is born !

* * *
A loud knock on the door announces an Arab woman hitherto unknown ; two or

three children, friends of the Station, are there with her. After many greetings a letter is produced, wrapped carefully in a bit of rag—"Please" could it be read to her? Evidently it *had* been read to her before by someone, but these illiterate women find it hard to trust to one reading—perhaps by a male relative who may or may not truly tell what is written! The letter is difficult to understand for various reasons, and long and involved explanations follow. It is from the woman's husband who is doing time in a penal settlement, for a crime which she declares he did not commit! She wants a letter written to him and he must be told all about the children, and this and that must be explained. No hasty job this! It is not work planned for, and time has gone, but, it was in the name of the Lord and for His sake that the prisoner's wife was made welcome.

* * *

A child's shout outside the house, with clapping hands, calls the attention of the missionaries! It is a cold winter afternoon, raining a little with a blustery wind that sweeps in as the door is opened. A small girl is revealed barefooted and wrapped in a tattered shawl. "Well, my little daughter wherefore hast thou come? This is not the hour when the children read."

"I know, but my mother has sent me, to ask thee for some sprigs of rosemary for an infusion, my grandmother's bones are aching and she is shivering with fever."

"Wait till I get my coat," says the owner of the rosemary, and then in the rain she sallies forth up the garden path to the bushes, and gathers what is needed. The small messenger departs, hugging her fragrant bundle and calling down blessings on the head of the giver, while the door of the mission house shuts out the wind once more.

* * *

"Time to do several visits this afternoon," thinks the out-stationer! Taking

her bag of books she is just locking the door, when a closely veiled woman appears, saying: "I desire to speak with thee, oh my friend." The door is unlocked once more, and the two go back into the house and sit down on the cushions in the guest-room. After greetings and polite enquiries, the woman takes out a roll of rather dirty and tattered papers from the bosom of her dress.

"Oh, my sister, the man has come to me demanding the interest on a sum of money and this we have already paid. Moreover, it is not the correct sum, and I desire to find the last receipt. I am sure it is here, but none of us can read, please wilt thou find it for me?"

Then begins a hunt! birth and marriage certificates, tax-receipts, pawn tickets, rent receipts and so on, in French and Arabic, must be carefully scrutinised and at last the desired paper may be found. The anxious guest departs reassured and comforted, after drinking a cup of coffee and listening to some words from the "Book of God."

* * *

The day is drawing to a close and after a busy round of visiting it is good to sit for a little while—but what is that? a loud and insistent knocking by someone who will not be denied!

"Give me medicine," says a girl's voice, "my tooth is aching and I have no rest. All night long I was in misery!" Obviously the poor girl is suffering, and though she *should* have come for help in the morning, it is not the moment to say so, but rather to do something for her. So a remedy is found and put into the tooth which is terribly decayed and uncared for. With gestures of gratitude the sufferer departs, as dark is falling and lamps are lighted in the mission station.

M. H. ROCHE.

Praise and Prayer Requests.

Praise.

For the desert itinerations carried out during February and March, and for the souls reached through colportage and visiting.

For encouragement in the work in Ghardaia, and for some fresh openings into Mozabite houses.

For the eager listening and real interest shown by many at Setif, for buds of promise at Bou Saada, and for some at Tlemcen who want to know more of Christ and His way.

For all those converts who, though sorely tested, are holding fast.

Prayer.

For the literature distributed in the recent itinerations, and for all those who heard of Christ for the first time. That the Spirit of God may make His Word living in many hearts.

For the sowing of the good seed during these next months in all Stations and also in the villages. That there may be an abundant harvest.

For those in need, sorrow or temptation, that Christ Himself may draw near to them and a way of help and blessing be found.

That the Conference to be held at Easter for Arab, Kabyle and European Christians, may be a time when Christ's presence shall be manifested in power.

For God's blessing on two candidates applying, and for His guidance concerning them.

That new centres of prayer and interest may be created in the homelands this summer.

Home Notes.

4, Waldens Road,
Horsell,
Woking.

Dear Friends,

We have many letters from the U.S.A. which are so welcome, and we are indeed grateful to the Algerian Mission Band of America, and to Iowa friends and others for their continued help.

We are so very glad to find that the Hephzibah House Book Room,
51, West 75th Street,
New York City,

will gladly supply any of the literature advertised in this magazine, to friends in America. They will furnish prices, if requested, in American currency.

Our Local Representative in Belfast has been working very hard and we are greatly cheered by the number of new boxes taken and by the care for the work that has been manifested in that city, both by individuals and by classes of young people. A keen nucleus can do a very great deal to create fresh interest and to spread information.

Our next number will be our issue for the Summer, when workers will be coming home on furlough. Meetings for them will need to be arranged beforehand, and we have already heard from one of our Local Helpers of the plans she is making. We shall be so glad if any who possibly can will arrange an opportunity for one of our missionaries to speak of the work of the A.M.B., either at a special meeting, or at some prayer gathering with which they are connected.

Please mark Wednesday, September 27th, in your diary, as the day when (D.V.) we shall have our Annual Meeting at Caxton Hall; look out for details about it in the next magazine!

Yours very sincerely,
MILLICENT H. ROCHE.

Basis.

The A.M.B. is interdenominational and desires to have fellowship with all who form the One Body of Christ. The Band holds and teaches :—

- (1) Absolute Faith in the Deity of each Person of the Trinity.
- (2) Absolute confidence in the full inspiration of the Old and New Testaments.
- (3) Absolute belief in the Cross of Christ as the one means of access to God, and the redemptive power for the whole world.

COMMISSION.—The aim of the A.M.B. is the Evangelisation of the Arabic and French-speaking Moslems of Algeria and Tunisia with special emphasis on the needs of the practically untouched regions of the interior.

ENGLAND.

Local Representatives :

BEXHILL.—Mrs. Brownrigg, Gorse Cottage, Terminus Avenue.
BOURNEMOUTH (Winton).—Pastor W. G. Stalley, "Kurichee," Norton Road.
BIRKENHEAD (Emmanuel).—Mrs. J. D. Drysdale, Emmanuel Training Home, 1, Palm Grove.
BRIGHTON & HOVE.—Mrs. Sudds, St. Monica, Berricdale Avenue, Hove.
DARLINGTON (Pierremont Mission).—Miss E. Armstrong, 37, Green Street.
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ILFORD.—Mrs. Walter Sarfas, 121, Coventry Road.
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WOODBIDGE.—Miss M. Fisher, 24, Chapel Street.
WORTHING.—Miss Gotelee, "Heston," St. Botolph's Road.

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FAITH MISSION TRAINING HOME.—18, Ravelston Park, Edinburgh.
GLASGOW.—Miss Guthrie, 21, Danes Drive, W.4.
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BELFAST.—Mr. J. H. Bennett, 60, Hillsborough Drive.
BESSBROOK.—Miss R. Baillie, Deramore House.

NEW ZEALAND.

AUCKLAND.—Mrs. Reevely, 49, Ridings Road, Remuera.

U.S.A.

NEW YORK CITY.—Hephzibah House Book Room, 51, West 75th Street.

CANADA.

OTTAWA.—Miss Anderson, 92, Stanley Ave.

HOW YOU MAY HELP.

By becoming a Prayer Partner. Intercession on behalf of the work and the workers is greatly needed and deeply valued.

The monthly Prayer Letter giving the special requests and news from the Field will gladly be sent on application to the Secretary at Home.

By forming or joining an A.M.B. Prayer Group in your district, or by bringing A.M.B. needs before Prayer Groups already formed.

By taking the magazine *A Thirsty Land*, so that by following the reports given of the work, its needs and opportunities, your prayers may be definite and intelligent.

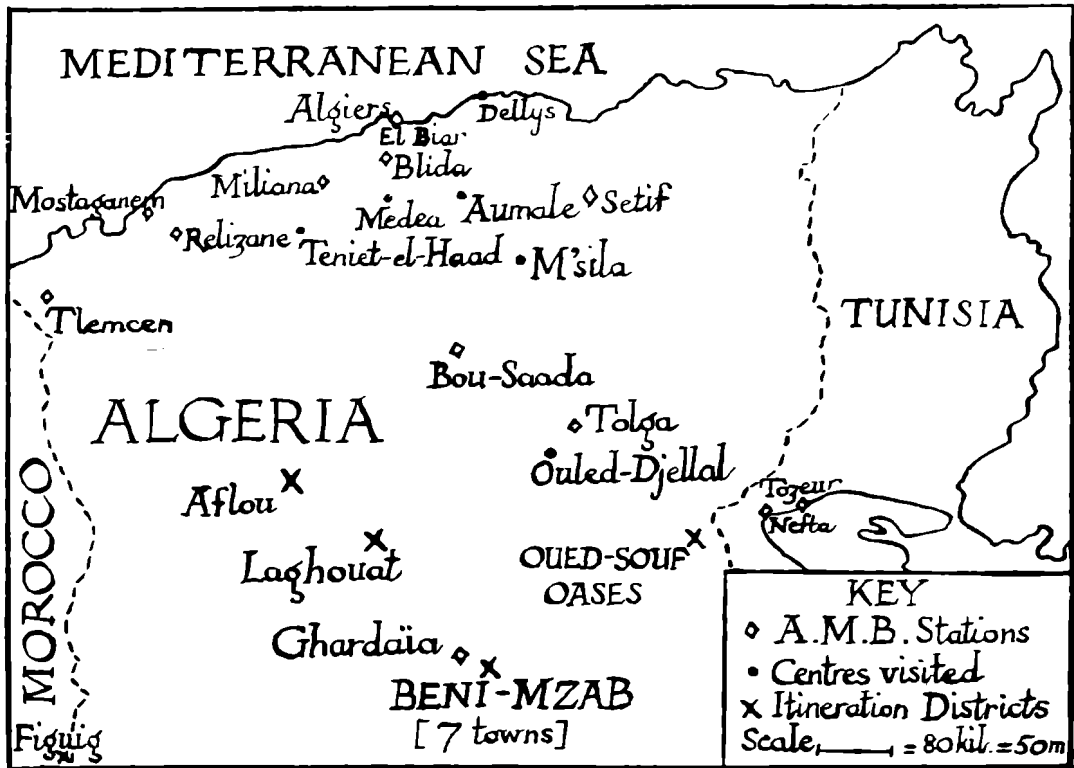
By arranging meetings in drawing room, hall, or church, thus giving an opportunity of spreading a knowledge of the work.

By undertaking to be a Local Representative for your district.

By purchasing A.M.B. publications, which include Miss Trotter's unique and helpful writings.

By supporting the work in a material sense in any way that God may direct, such as by taking an A.M.B. missionary box. Sums left to the Band by will, would help the work of the future.

By facing God's call "Who will go for us?" in view of the need of the Moslems for Christ.



Literature.

To be obtained from The Secretary, A.M.B.
4 Waldens Road, Horsell, Woking.

Books by I. Lilius Trotter.

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