

©1948 Algiers Mission Band

A Thirsty Land



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,
Dar el Ain, Route de Chrea, Blida, Algeria.

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

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

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LOCATION OF WORKERS. SPRING, 1948.

DAR NAAMA, El Biar.

Headquarters.

1906. MISS S. E. PERKIN.

1920. MISS V. WOOD.

1919 & 1922.

M. & MME. P. NICOUD.

1946. MR. F. BAGGOTT.

BLIDA.

1920. MR. & MRS.

H. W. BUCKENHAM.

1946. MISS J. MUNRO.

1947. MR. E. BUCKENHAM.

BOU SAADA.

1919. Mlle. A. BUTTICAZ.

1946. Mlle. CHOLLET.

TOUGGOURT.

1930. MISS I. K. NASH.

MILIANA.

1907. MISS M. D. GRAUTOFF.

1929. MISS P. M. RUSSELL.

1947. MISS E. CHANTLER

(Short service)

TLEMCEN.

1914. MISS A. M. FARMER.

1947. MISS E. CLARK.

TOLGA.

1928 & 1937.

M. & MME. S. LULL.

1947. Mlle. A. J. ROBERT.

“Brethren pray for us”

A THIRSTY LAND

The Quarterly Magazine of the
Algiers Mission Band

No. 84

SPRING

1948

"The essential idea of the Cross is a life lost to be found again in those around"

—Lilias Trotter

March 11th, 1888

"We steamed into the bay of Algiers," she writes, "the water below shimmering with phosphorescence, the crescent of the shore set with gleaming lights, and the glorious southern sky above full of its quiet stars. Next morning, seen from the deck, the Arab town rose in a creamy mass in the sunrise against the



dead, deep blue. Three of us stood there, looking at our battlefield, none of us fit to pass a doctor for any foreign missionary society, not knowing a soul in the place or a sentence of Arabic, or a clue for beginning work on untouched ground. We only knew we had to come. Truly if God needed weakness, He had it!"

After Sixty Years

When we celebrated the Jubilee of the A.M.B. on the Field, we had the joy and cheer of welcoming our life-long friend—the Chairman of the Home Council—the Rev. Francis Brading to preside at the meetings. He and we had a happy time together. When we parted we did not realise that few, if any, of us would see him again on earth.

I have been looking through the list of names in the Spring number of "Thirsty Land," 1938, and notice that eleven of them (twelve including S. Munioz, N.M.P. colporteur) are no longer with us. From that time, our ranks got thinner and thinner and the survivors older and older, until it seemed unthinkable that, by the time the War would be over, there could be fresh recruits willing to volunteer to such a depleted and antiquated Band. But God "was better to us than all our hopes, He was better than all our fears." He used even the War itself to lead to North Africa two men prepared to hear and obey the call to the Moslem Field in a land where, according to the experience of most service men, the natives were robbers and assassins—proving that

"He moves to His great ends
Unthwarted by the ill."

Not only so, but our loving Father, all unknown to us, was preparing two Swiss servants of His to respond instantly to His call to Algeria as soon as the way from Europe was open.

But it is not for me to trespass further in the domain of our indefatigable Home Secretary who has laboured so zealously to create practical and prayer interest during the lean years. Suffice it to point out that since Winter 1946—1947 we can

count seven extra workers on the Field (nine with the doctors Monsieur and Madame Mouthon, who worked alongside at Tolga during that period, and then returned to France for reasons of health).

I want to emphasize here the fact that while the servants of Christ are striving to extend His Kingdom, the Moslems are also working with incredible zeal to extend the dominion of their prophet over the bodies and souls of men. There is a definite religious revival in Islam. The Moslems are now wide awake to the need of coming abreast with the times. There is a drive to overcome illiteracy in the Arabic language, and schools are springing up in all the inhabited areas of North Africa. Emphasis is placed on education for girls, to whom as well as to boys up-to-date Koranic teaching is given, with the result that girls can pass through high-grade French schools, sharing the free life of their European school-mates, and remain fervent Moslems. Arab Boy Scouts are nothing new; and last summer there was a camp at Sidi Ferruch of "Jeunes Filles Scoutes Musulmanes." The following is the last paragraph of a description of the Camp from the periodical "Es Sallam": "O young girls of Islam, who symbolise the glorious past and the great future yet to be built! May Allah guide you with His generous hand to make you always worthy of the great and beautiful mission that you should accomplish! May Allah enlighten you and lead you, so that the sons that you shall one day bear may be the cultural and social advanceguard of our people."

Alongside of the social and educational advance the tremendous impetus of the Pan-Arab National Movement is contributing to harden and intensify the resistance to the Gospel of our Invincible God.

This is how our friend Miss Jenny de Mayer faced the position at the end of the First World War—and we know how gallantly and unfalteringly she met “opposition, danger and persecution” with “the shield of faith,” beckoning us to follow in her steps. “The shadow of protection by the Government, as formerly not requested but all the same enjoyed, will be gone. Mohammedans and Christians will meet now as equally free citizens. Opposition, danger, persecution, will have to be met with the shield of faith alone; but this shield has proved a good one and we do not desire another. On the other hand the House of Islam itself has been so mightily shaken that its windows and doors are wide open—enter who will, whosoever dares in the Name of the Lord.”

And now a word of encouragement from Miss Trotter (the Story of 1925-26).

“Sure to win, sure to win”: that refrain has sung itself with a triumphing, ever since the lines reached us, by way of Dohnavur three or four months ago. The wave is a small fore-runner, swept by the wind out of the ocean’s heart, falling back shattered, into that heart without having done much, apparently, to help the cause. The tide is the ocean-heart itself, moving irresistably to victory, yet needing the broken waves, every one of them, whereby to do its work. They are but little waves out here . . . the “thunderous din” does not characterise at present the progress of Christ’s cause in the Moslem world.

“On the far reef, the breakers
Recoil in shattered foam,
Yet still the sea behind them
Urges its forces home.
Its chant of triumph surges
Through all the thunderous din,
The wave may break in failure,
But the tide is sure to win.

O mighty sea, thy message
In changing spray is cast—
Within God’s plan of progress
It matters not at last,
How wide the shores of evil,
How strong the reefs of sin,
The wave may be defeated,
But the tide is sure to win.”

S. PERKIN.

Tipaza—1919

“I came here for two or three weeks’ rest and solitude before we all gather up again for the winter’s start. Tipaza is a land of waste places, with ruins of the early Christian churches. They stand in a golden brown against the turquoise sea. It is a good place in which to listen for God’s ‘Go Forward.’ Those ruins challenge His power to retrieve His lost heritage. A vision has come in these quiet days of the fallow ground stretching around us out of sight, a realization of the two million Arabic-speaking men and boys, and only four European men with any language-qualification for reaching them. The realization burned itself in until it kindled into prayer for twenty Arabic-speaking men—ten for ourselves, ten for the other missions. That would not seem a great supply if it concerned earthy need, earthly commerce, earthly warfare. It was a rather pitifully small request to put before the King of Heaven, yet so it focussed and so went up.”

“Even so it would mean, as we know, a launching out of faith; for no inch of margin remains to our seen supplies, yet as we look back, we can see how God has slowly brought us to this point in many a tender way, sending us funds again and again, only just ahead of the needs that developed. For years we have not been in the dry dock, so to speak, of resting on known resources, but gently the waters have been flowing under our keel, and we have been

afloat on God, hardly knowing it; so now when His word comes at last to 'launch out into the deep,' we know that it only means ceasing to hug the shore and keep within sight of human help, and so the cry went on, and those returning from furlough joined in it; come what might—send us twenty men for the Arabs."

These words were written just after World War I. Do they not strangely echo our prayer and testimony in 1948, or vice versa, are not ours an echo of hers? And as God is again answering our cry in the sending out of a further twenty, other of Miss Trotter's words find a response in our hearts:

"There is a sense of dawn all around. I do not know that outsiders would consider it; it needs eyes accustomed to the darkness to recognise the first streaks of dawn."

After Forty Years

*from Miss L. Trotter's Diary, 1928.
Thursday, March 8th.*

Our forty-years celebration of tomorrow has begun, in proper Arab fashion, with its vigil—as with the old time Jewish reckoning, it is the "evening and the morning" that are *the day* and not vice versa. And such a beginning—a cheque for £100 which floats into a quiet haven all our dear Treasurer's quarter-day anxieties; and, more than that, gives impetus to all faith for forward moves.

Friday, March 9th.

It has been a beautiful day in its showers of love all around from morning till night. It began between eight and nine by the door opening for the entrance of little George and Bobbie, in their apricot coloured jerseys—bearing great bunches of carnations, pale creamy pink and white—and behind them a whole string of the dear houseparty with "birthday" gifts

of every kind of preciousness. Then came a moment's pause and then our prayer meeting with its praises first and foremost . . . and the last surprise was the trooping in, in the late afternoon of all the native part of the establishment, bringing the babies to be kissed; and the procession ended with the two Miss Mays and Miss Newton, bearing two little mimosas, one to be planted in the garden here, the other at the Hostel in memory of the day.

Going Forward — 1948

It seems fitting in this Anniversary number that we should not only have a message from the pen of our late founder, and the senior member of the Band, our President, but also from the latest recruit to reach the Field. Herewith is the message given by Frank Baggott at our Annual Meeting last September:

When they saw Jesus, they worshipped Him: but some wavered . . . Matt 28:17v.

The scene here is well-known to us. The eleven disciples had come together to the mountain in Galilee, where JESUS had appointed them, and there HE appeared to them for the last time before HIS ascension, to give them HIS last great missionary commission. The Risen CHRIST! "When they saw HIM, they worshipped HIM, but" (oh, the tragedy of that "but") "some doubted," that is, wavered.

Worship means devotion, and that implies loving service, faithful following. It is a personal matter, too: "LORD, what wilt THOU have me to do?" We are living to-day in a generation of broken loyalties and many of GOD'S own children are failing in their loyalty to HIM. They waver, because the cost is too great. Make no

mistake, GOD does not seek our patronage and support. HE has declared that "JESUS shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run." But HE is willing to use us in HIS eternal purposes, and CHRIST'S hope is in HIS lovers, for they are HIS true witnesses.

"Go ye!" The Risen CHRIST brought that call to me personally several years ago and I could only obey with joy. I felt conscious that it was among the Touareg of the Sahara that HE wanted me, and it was wonderful to learn that the special vocation of the A.M.B. was "to evangelize as far and as fast as we can."

I am sorry that we have no map of the Field before us, but if we had, it ought to be longer vertically than horizontally. Our Founder, the saintly Miss Lilius Trotter, according to her diary, also had a burden for the Touareg. She wrote: "One great hope we had that we might find some Touareg there and get books into their unreached land . . . Our faith focussed involuntary on one point, the Touareg. There must be some touch to be had with them."

Some time ago a missionary said to me: "Missions are like elastic, they will stretch, but if you stretch them too much, they break." I don't quite agree: but I do believe that with the "lengthening of the cords" there must inevitably be a "strengthening of the stakes." As we stretch down south into the great Sahara, there must be a strengthening of the stakes at home, in real faithful prayer and sacrifice.

I am conscious of some of the difficulties and disappointments that are to be expected in going to the Moslem stronghold of North Africa. But it is at the word of the Living CHRIST, and with HIS unflinching presence and unlimited power, that I go forth—sent by HIM,

The M'Zab Re-Visited

Here is the latest report from the Field where Mr. Pierre Nicoud, with Miss Grautoff, Miss Russell and Mademoiselle Butticaz have been able to re-visit the M'Zab country for the first time since before the war. This account gives a vivid picture of present-day conditions in the South.

Mr. Pierre Nicoud writes from Ghardaia on March 21st:

"Here we are at Ghardaia! We are glad to have been able to come as far south as this, six hundred and forty-four kilometres from Algiers, in spite of all the difficulties which such a journey by car presents to-day.

At a town half-way here we halted and hesitated as to whether to turn back, for the authorities advised us to go no further owing to the very bad state of the track, which, they said, would get worse and worse. However, after consulting the Administrator, we decided to go on, asking God to guide and undertake for us.

Naturally we arrived quite safely! The next day I got a mechanic to look over the car, and we found that a good many nuts and bolts had worked loose, and that much of the oil had escaped from the rear-axle. We could not have gone another fifty kilometres without an accident! The trail was sometimes hard and ribbed like corrugated iron over long distances, and in other places very stony. At other times we had to pass through soft sand, almost axle-deep.

Since arriving we have been able to re-visit three of the M'Zab towns, besides doing colportage in Ghardaia itself on the market day. In one place Miss Grautoff and I were selling our books, when a Mozabite man came up in a terrible rage. Never in twenty-nine years of colportage work have I met with such virulent opposition. He spat in my face in his anger, and said he would not be

afraid even to shed blood for the honour of Islam! We did not move, and when he went away another man came along to chase away would-be customers, both boys and men, forbidding them to buy our books. Then the first man came back, more angry than ever, and began to address the crowd in the name of the Prophet. We sought to tell them that God is more concerned with the state of a man's heart than with the books he reads, and that what he demands is a heart made free from sin.

In spite of this bitter opposition, we were able for at least an hour to sell our literature in that busy marketplace. Miss Russell saw some of the books torn up afterwards, but the "Good Seed" has been sown in that needy place, and, no doubt, the very fact of the books being forbidden will cause some to read them to see what they really contain. In one village an Arab postman bought several books.

We have found great changes since we last visited this region before the war. The hotel where we used to be so comfortably lodged has become a place of ill-repute, and there is much drunkenness. . . . We can only pray that God will answer the many prayers that have gone up for this itineration." P.N.

"Thou Shalt Remember"

March 5th, 1948, will stand out as a land-mark in the history of the A.M.B. The meetings at Caxton Hall on that day celebrated, as nearly as we could get to the actual day, the landing of Miss Trotter and her three friends in Algiers. Sixty years ago, on March 11th, 1888, they took that step of faith which we recall to-day with praise and thanksgiving.

At the afternoon meeting in the Tudor Room there were some who had loved and laboured with Miss Trotter, and to them this meeting was of unique

interest. Our thoughts were taken back to "the former years" by three who had known Miss Trotter intimately.

Lady Procter, who presided, spoke of a childhood memory of the day she first saw her. The most striking thing about her was the light that shone in her face. That first glimpse was but for a moment, but it made an enduring impression. Lilius Trotter had come to see Lady Procter's aunt, Miss Helen Freeman. "After that interview," said our speaker, "I saw that my aunt's face, too, had caught that light." It was the Holy radiance of joy and inward peace that one always associated with the founder of the Algiers Mission Band.

Miss Roche then drew from her personal experience what might be called "foundation" impressions. She was thinking particularly of the foundations of the work that Miss Trotter had built up. They were laid in her very life. First and foremost was the foundation stone of a life of "self-renunciation"—so marvellously exemplifying the truths set forth in her books, and demonstrating the high standard the Lord calls for in His Own. Next came "Faith"—a faith that could go on, and did go on, without seeing results. Then, "Prayer," that went out and enfolded every mission station, and even went around each room in loving intercession. Above all, there was a deep "Love" for souls, and for the whole Bible—the Word of God. With all this, there was an utter simplicity in her everyday life. Another foundation well laid was the emphasis she placed on the need for simple literature for the simple folk she was seeking to win. She led the way in writing and illustrating Gospel truths not only for humble readers, but also for the mystics of Islam, the hungry seekers after God, the Brothers of the Inward Way.

The final foundation noted was—"unity." The unity of the Spirit was something that she most earnestly

sought, prayed and worked for, not only amongst her fellow-workers in A.M.B., but with other groups of missionaries in the land, and, above all, with fellow Christians in the French Protestant churches.

These outstanding characteristics in the life of Lilius Trotter of necessity stamped themselves upon the character of the Band. They became the recognised standard by which its work was to be judged, and the guiding line of all planning. Miss Roche, who was herself an active worker on the Field for twenty-five years, voiced a hope that a re-inforced and re-equipped A.M.B. might ever build upon these foundations, and jealously uphold the same standards.

Sister Annie of Friedenshort closed the afternoon meeting by bringing before us some happy memories of past years spent in fellowship with Lilius Trotter. Going out in 1904 to help in the household for six months, she stayed for seven years! Looking back upon those years she felt that there was one word of St. Paul's that aptly summed up the life of her friend, and that was Gal. 2, 20: "Crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It could truly be said "Christ lived in her" for "in her we saw the Living Christ moving about amongst us." A delightful picture was given by Sister Annie of Lilius Trotter's perseverance and indomitable faith—going around its "Jericho" (in this case Bou Saada) itinerating in the southlands, visiting the lowliest of homes in the north country. She spoke of the joy she found in all things beautiful, and the invincible courage with which she recognised and tackled the powers of evil. A life of absolute self-renunciation—but what powers of leadership! Suggestion and example were her way, and to those who worked with her, suggestions became directives.

In recalling and recording these impressions and memories, it was emphasised by all the speakers that Lilius Trotter and those associated with her, including Miss Helen Freeman and Miss Blanche Haworth, whose names were repeatedly mentioned, would be most emphatic in saying "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be glory!" One felt how gladly they would have joined with us in our closing hymn of praise that afternoon

"Crown Him with many crowns
The Lamb upon His Throne."

To all present the meeting was a very happy one, and in the words of the one who presided, there was "a lovely sense of the 'Communion of Saints' with those who have gone from us, and a quickening realisation of the power and purpose of God."

The evening session was devoted to a display of lantern pictures showing all sides of the work, and the different stations now occupied by the Algiers Mission Band.

Pastor W. G. Stalley, of Bourne-mouth, was in the chair, and gave a brief and inspiring message, the keynote of which was "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing." Mal. 3, 10.

Mr. W. Cecil Collinson, Chairman of the Home Council, showed interesting slides of the South lands (A.M.B.'s "wider horizons")—of Bou Saada, the "Jericho" of early days referred to by Sister Annie, and now occupied as a Mission Station since 1925; of Ghardaia in the M'Zab country, which closed land Miss Grautoff and Miss Russell, with M. Pierre Nicoud, are hoping to visit again this Spring; of Colea, once occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham who have recently had fresh touch

with a former class-girl from that town; and even of some of the un-reached Touareg people.

The Home Secretary followed, giving a glimpse of the more northerly stations, Blida, Miliana, Tlemcen, Algiers and Relizane. As pictures of Relizane were thrown on the screen, Miss M. Ridley gave a brief tribute to Miss Helen Freeman, who opened that station in 1909. Miss Ridley herself carried on a remarkable work there for many years with God-given results, but, owing to lack of workers, the station has been closed since 1938. For ten years our Arab friends there have waited for the doors to re-open. May God grant that it may soon be possible to do so!

Pictures of the desert station of Tolga brought before us the vision for the future development of the work there, and the need for reinforcements. The showing of "Dar Naama" recalled the need of suitable workers to shoulder the responsibility of running that house, and thus relieving Miss Wood of this heavy burden, while in Algiers city there is a need for workers to man the newly-opened Book depot.

All the pictures brought a challenge to faith, to which God will surely grant a willing response on the part of those to whom so much has been given.

And so the Diamond Jubilee Day ended with the singing in a burst of triumphant praise, "Jesus shall reign"

Notes and News from our Stations

ALGIERS. M. Nicoud and Mr. Baggott have completed the work of preparing the premises for the Book depot. Prayer must be focussed around this, that the right workers may be forthcoming to run it, and also for stock.

BLIDA. Praise for restored health to Mr. & Mrs. Buckenham. Edmund Buckenham gives splendid help with children's classes. There has been unusual interest and attention in these of late, and a recent note spoke of larger numbers than usual. It is good to hear of happy meetings with Christians—natives and French, and also renewed contacts with Colea families. Colea was our friends' old Mission station. Blida now looks forward to fresh re-inforcements. Miss Jean Munro became officially engaged to Mr. Alec Porteous recently. The latter has been accepted for service with the Band, and our two friends hope to be married this coming summer, and then to return to Blida to work alongside Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham. Blida, by the way, is Alec Porteous' spiritual birthplace.

BOU SAADA. Such sad things are happening here. Hunger and distress bring the people to savagedom again. Our hearts are stirred as we see and hear of their darkness. For instance, some men came with dates from Tolga, the young wife of one just at her confinement; she gave birth to a baby boy who died four days later. The mother was so poorly that she could not lift herself. Her sisters-in-law and aunt did not even give her water, so that she died. When enquiring of a relative why it was, she replied "Because they wanted the dates. They ate like beasts, and let her die. No one in the house could control their greediness."

The day before yesterday, we heard our house guard calling me. It was a young girl, half Arab, half French, who was running away from her brutish father. The mother (French) is in France. The girl is seventeen years old, and, of course, not free yet from her father's control. Twice he married her, once to an old man and then to an imbecile. He wanted to re-marry her as third wife to a very

unpleasant young man. She managed to get to Algiers dressed as a European. She speaks French with no accent, so will manage with God's help. Do pray for her.

In spite of all these dark things, we have many bright spots of light. Arab teachers have asked for literature, and after the first gift, one came back here saying "Please, I have fifteen more pupils. Give me more." Then, from time to time, we find men reading the Gospel, and we know that His Word shall not return void. Three of our old boys read their New Testaments, and their friendly attitude proves that God is working in their hearts. Pray that they may come to a knowledge of Him and obey His Will, so that they may not be afraid to tell others of their joy.

TOLGA. Mlle. Robert arrived safely on January 26th, and writes already of her joy in assisting at a class of forty-five girls. In remembering all the branches of the work there, we may think specially of her language study (a teacher has been found for her), and that she may soon be able to take a good share in the women's work, and relieve some of Mlle. Lull's burdens.

TOUGGOURT. Miss Nash's ministry to French as well as Arab friends continues to be blessed. She had the joy of receiving Pastor and Madame Mousseigt, of Constantine, recently on their pastoral visit. These two friends were delighted to have the use of the Mission Hall in which to gather the French Protestants of the region for spiritual ministry.

MILIANA. Miss Grautoff and Miss Russell should have returned by now from a short visit to Ghardaia and the M'Zab country, one of our outposts closed by the war eight years ago. We hope to have news of this in our next issue.

TLEMCEN. Our workers report that Y., the young Christian woman for whom they have been seeking for months, has been to see them. She remains true to the Lord, although through much suffering. Y. was delighted to meet them, but asks them not to come yet to her home.

Miss Farmer has been unwell, and needs to rest much. Please pray for her restoration, and for Miss Clark who is with her.

THE HOME BASE. On March 6th, the Council of A.M.B. accepted four candidates: Miss Iris Fletcher of Cardiff, now in the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow; Miss Muriel Smith, S.R.N., of London, now completing her midwifery training; Mr. Ronald Waine, of Gillingham, training at the All Nations' Bible College, Taplow. These will be proceeding to France after the summer vacation for language study. Mr. Alec Porteous, already mentioned under Blida, is finishing his training at Emmanuel College, Birkenhead.

Spirit of Prayer in Algiers

"The week of Prayer" of January, 1947, was the most vital for twenty years. This year, 1948, "The week of Prayer" was even better! Pastors, Salvation Army officers, missionaries, all took part, and the intercession covered far more than the subjects presented by the Evangelical Alliance. To many, the spirit of prayer and harmony came as a revelation. It has been decided to continue these meetings monthly. On February 12th the first of these took place. Leaders of the six principal organisations gathered with other fellow Christians in an atmosphere of true brotherly love and desire for God's glory.

"Never, in Algiers, have I had such an impression of unity and expectancy," wrote one at its close.

“Parables of the Cross”

By

I. LILIAS TROTTER

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By passing on this magazine to another Christian friend.

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

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