

DESERT NUMBER

# A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

# Algiers Mission Band.

FOUNDED IN 1888 BY I. LILIAS TROTTER.

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*Referee, Algeria* : PASTOR CUCHE, Mostaganem, Algeria.

*Editor of " A Thirsty Land "* :—MISS M. H. ROCHE.

## Location of Workers, Summer, 1936.

### DAR NAAMA, EL BIAR.

1906. Miss S. E. PERKIN.  
1919 & 1922.

Mons. & Mme. P. NICLOUD.  
1922. Mr. & Mrs. THEOBALD.  
1927. Miss J. JOHNSTON.  
1935. Mons. & Mme. Millon  
(language study).

### ALGIERS.

1930. Miss I. NASH.  
1922. Mrs. THEOBALD.

### MOSTAGANEM.

1906. Mlle. A. GAYRAL.

### GHARDAIA (BENI M'ZAB). Spring.

Miss M. D. GRAUTOFF (part time).  
Miss P. M. RUSSELL " "  
Mlle. BUTTICAZ " "

Miss MARY MAY (in U.S.A.).

*Evangelist Colporteur* : Senor MUNIOZ (of the Nile Mission Press). Headquarters at Relizane.

### BLIDA.

DAR EL AINE.  
1920. Mr. & Mrs. H. W.  
BUCKENHAM.  
1934. Mr. H. STALLEY (part  
time).

DAR ER RIH.  
1907. Miss RIDLEY.

### MILIANA.

1907. Miss M. D. GRAUTOFF.  
1929. Miss P. M. RUSSELL.

### TOZEUR.

1920. Miss V. WOOD.

### SETIF.

Senor S. LULL (part time).  
Mr. J. THOMSON " "

### TOLGA.

1928. Senor S. LULL (part time)  
1935. Mr. J. THOMSON (part time).

### TLEMCEN.

1916. Miss K. BUTLER.

### DELLYS.

1914. Miss A. M. FARMER.  
1922. Miss I. SHEACH.  
1935. Miss S. WRIGHT  
(language study).

### BOUSAADA.

1909. Miss A. McILROY.  
1919. Mlle. BUTTICAZ.  
1932. Miss S. HANSEN (part  
time).

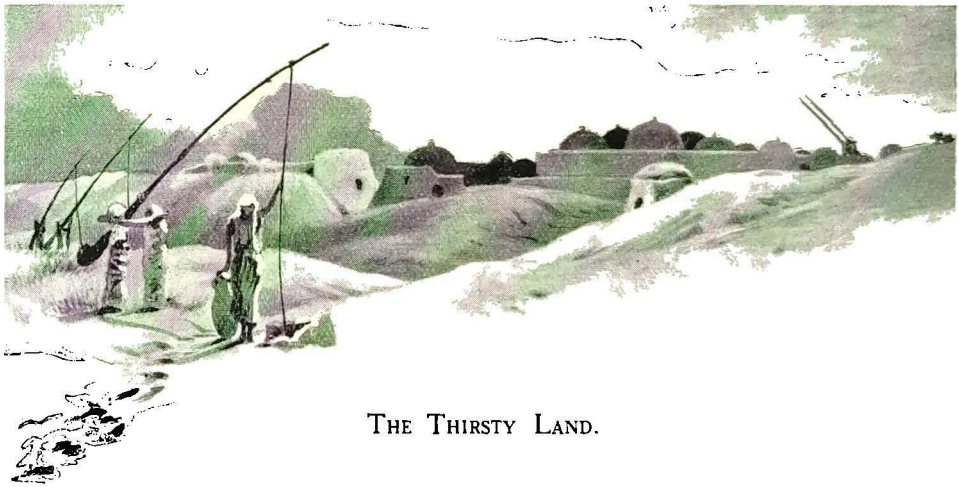
# A THIRSTY LAND

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Algiers Mission Band

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THE THIRSTY LAND.

It is a land hardly to be imagined by those who have never known it: on the cover you see a glimpse—that is all. The cream coloured sand dunes trend away like billows, soft and deep, till they reach the horizon—the camel rider is gazing in vain for the line of blue-green that means a distant oasis, or the little white dome that marks a well. All is death except where there is a water supply: then, all is life.

Bring water and you will see; where God's touch has set the streams flowing, the miracle awakes. A forest of date palms will rise, sheltering beneath their shadow an undergrowth of fruit trees; pomegranate,

fig and apricot interweave in a realm of luxuriance: within a literal stone's throw you have this garden of the Lord alongside the wilderness.

It is by means of channels, seen and unseen, that the supply comes. It is brought by the way of the watercourses, the springs and the wells. Each of these has its own lesson concerning the other "thirsty land" that is figured by the literal waste places. Each has to do with us, if we would bear our part in the fulfilment of the word that "in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert."—I. L. TROTTER.

## Editorial.

Summer in Algeria brings days of cloudless brilliant sunshine and intense heat, with burning sirocco winds blowing up from the desert. Fields and hillsides are brown, earth becomes hard and baked, and only constant watering keeps flowers and plants alive.

During this spring God's Spirit has been working in the hearts of Arab men and women, boys and girls, some here, some there. The fierce blasting winds of Islam will beat upon them specially during the summer time when they may not have a Christian friend at hand.

Let us be faithful and expectant in our prayers for them, believing that our Lord will fulfil His promise, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

Pastor Stalley's visit to Algeria has been much blessed, and we hope to give some account of it in our next number.

This issue of *A Thirsty Land* is full of news from our desert Stations and Outposts. It was over the needs of these "practically untouched regions of the interior" that Miss Trotter specially yearned and prayed and towards whose far horizons it was her utmost joy to journey in the Name of Christ.

Among those who will be home this summer on furlough are Miss Jessie Johnston and Mr. Harold Stalley, who are coming for their marriage. We offer them our warmest wishes for their happiness and pray that God will bless and use them increasingly in His service.

We hope to have our Annual Meetings on September 29th (see Home Notes) when Home workers and those on the Field will be able to meet and to rejoice together over what "God hath wrought" in Algeria and Tunisia during this past year of work.

## In Loving and Grateful Remembrance.

During this spring a very dear friend of the A.M.B., Miss Isabelle May, entered into rest after a time of much weariness and suffering. She and her beloved friend, Miss Emily Newton, spent some months in Algeria on various occasions and endeared themselves to all the members of the Band. Miss Isabelle had a very large heart and she poured out love and gifts for her Lord and for His work among the Arabs. She collaborated with Miss Newton in making a fine translation into English of that wonderful and tragic story of a Moslem woman of Algeria, "Thamilla," by Ferdinand Duchêne.

To Miss Newton and to the four sisters of Miss Isabelle May, we offer our most loving sympathy in their sorrow which we also share. And we rejoice with them as we think of the "Joy unspeakable and full of glory" which is hers.

M. H. R.



We have translated "Thamilla" because we heard in it the poignant and inarticulate cry not only of the Kabyle women, but of all the women of the East. The scene is laid, to be sure, in a corner of Algeria and has a charming local setting, as all lovers of North Africa will recognise, but it is thoroughly oriental and in many respects is true of Moslem conditions in all Eastern lands.

Every Christian reader of this story "Thamilla" must still answer the summons:

"Deliver them that are carried away unto death,

And those that are ready to be slain, see that thou hold back."

ISABELLE MAY. EMILY M. NEWTON.  
(From the Foreword to "Thamilla.")

## The Hodna.

*"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and earth." Ps. 121. 1-2.*

A few days ago, while crossing the great unfertile plain of the Hodna, my thoughts went back to these words of the Psalmist. Was David perhaps traversing the desert when he wrote them? One thing is certain, that with all his soul he awaited the help of the Eternal. As one crosses this shott, whose name means "dead calm," one cannot but be impressed with the mournful atmosphere which overshadows the road as one goes along. Here are the whitened bones of a camel, there the skull of a horse, farther on two ravens are quarrelling over the carcase of a smaller bird, and from the balustrade of a bridge a solitary owl gives out his plaintive cry. It is the calmness of death. There is no vegetation, only slimy earth, saturated with salt. By the side of the road are two flamingoes, tired out from a long flight, and their beautiful rose coloured feathers are spotted with blood. Above them soars an eagle, ready to swoop down on the poor carcases. Almost involuntarily the cry of the Psalmist comes to one's lips, "From whence cometh my help?" so much does this desert speak of desolation and distress. It makes one think of certain religions, certain philosophies, which from a distance appear like enchanting mirages such as one sees on this plain when the days are hot. Visions of cool lakes with leafy gardens reflected in their waters, and white houses along their borders! Will you ever arrive and be able to rest your weariness in those cool shadows, or refresh your thirsty lips at the waters? Never! for the farther you advance, so the picture retreats before you. After all, it was only a mirage, and the desert remains the same, with its calmness

of death. Let us with the Psalmist "lift up our eyes unto the hills" and not allow ourselves to be tempted with empty visions. Alas, so many of those we meet in our daily work have not yet realised that they are living in this place of the calmness of death, and have not lifted up their eyes to the Lord from whom alone can come their help.

Come with me for a moment into this little desert town with its houses of sun-dried bricks. Here misery, sickness, hunger, nakedness, reign supreme. Here are five children, and three of them nearly blind. Look at their pale, half starved faces, and then at this little baby in its mother's arms, with limbs that remind one of thin sticks, holding in its tiny hand a piece of black bread. Its little brother of three years, hungrily tries to snatch it away. The baby, unable to resist, wails feebly while the small boy runs away to nibble his crust alone. Behind a loom two women are seated, weaving quickly with their clever fingers. They are both suffering, and complain of rheumatism. My companion speaks to them of the good news of salvation, of joy and of patience. "Yes," replies one of the women with a sigh, "oh yes, we have been learning patience ever since we were children, and there is no use in complaining." This is the lot of our Moslem sisters, to endure pain, sickness, weariness, misery. When will the moment come when they too will lift up their eyes to the Crucified, and receive help from the Eternal?

In a deep valley over there, towards the mountains which we admired from a distance, when crossing the shott, hundreds of men are at work. They are stopping the flow of the waters in the gorge. An electrically worked carrier takes the cement and empties it between the huge blocks of stone, and bit by bit the dam is built up. It reminds one of an enormous ant-heap,—each one is busy about his own task. Over

there, blasting is being carried out, here is a blacksmith's forge, there they are making the cement, and farther down they are building, and all this in order that the great sterile plain of the Hodna may be made fertile. The waters which are being held back between the rocks, will be directed to those uncultivated lands, and everywhere this living stream will bring life and fruitfulness.

Does not this remind us of the words of Christ when He said, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," and again, "out of him shall flow rivers of living water." Just think what the Hodna will be like in a few years time! No longer the abode of the calmness of death, but a verdant plain where abundant harvests will be reaped. In the same way let us bank up our spiritual strength, and by the power of our intercession let us pour into this dead calm of Islam the Living Water, Christ Himself, subduing all and bringing Life eternal. Then shall we see the desert blossoming as a rose!

A. BUTTICAZ.

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## A Visit to Metlili.

This town was formerly the centre of a brigand tribe of the desert, and its inhabitants must have been dreaded for pillage and bloodshed. It is curiously hidden in a ravine formed of sand hills and rocks, and the dry river bed.

Our motor bus (the mail car) had been running over the desert track for thirty three miles when it turned into this ravine. After about two and a half miles of descent among boulders and rocks we came to a mass of ruins and a narrow street, and on between sandbrick walls to a large market square, a substantial Caid's house, a small mosque, and the main street.

Only one hour, the driver said, and we must be in our places for the return run, or be stranded for several days, till the next mail came! So we hurried down the main street giving tracts wherever we found readers. With the exception of the work at certain seasons in the palm gardens these men must have little to do and much time to meditate.

Last year a marabouta (holy woman) had invited us to her house so we sought her out again. She had moved, but they took us to women who had met us in her house, and these gave us welcome. Though the story of the Saviour was so new to them they found it wonderful, and tried to concentrate on the strange things we were telling. We felt it was well worth while the long trek, even if it meant only this one short visit.

Outside the boys were clamouring "Open come, the bus is starting," so no more houses could be entered, but as we drove off we saw groups of illiterate men and boys standing around readers who were, perhaps unwittingly, giving them the Word of Life.

His Word shall not return unto Him void, it shall prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it.

Such promises comfort.

M. D. GRAUTOFF.

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## Desert Roses.

Have you ever seen them? They are a particularly lovely stalagmite found in quantities in the desert sand. Very dainty they are sometimes, especially the tiny ones of a pinkish fawn. But, beautiful as they are in form and colouring it is needless to say they only give a blurred suggestion of a flower, and a world of difference lies between them and the dewy fragrance of a real rose.

This morning we sat in the skiffa (vestibule) opposite two or three desert roses, but human ones this time.

Such a blaze of colour they made against the white walls. It suggested a gorgeous flower-bed.

One of them was a wee spoilt little lady of four, wrapped in a length of dainty white stuff that was fastened on her shoulders by big silver ornaments. A handkerchief of cloth of gold with brilliant stripes covered the little shaved head and framed the rosy face. Heavy bracelets decorated the bare brown arms, and her huge ear-rings had to be supported by a scarlet cord passed over her head lest they should tear the tiny ears. Her brilliant red leather heelless slippers were edged with brightest green that matched her girdle and the veil her negro attendant held for her. And the little creature gleamed and sparkled more than ever a northern baby could. Beside her, a sharp contrast, sat a little negress, a relation of her black nurse's and very poor. But she made even a bigger splash of colour with her veil of crudest orange over indigo blue draperies.

Even the gaunt old negress herself was a picture, in the same dull blue, with a touch of rich cloudy crimson on her head.

Flowers of the desert clad in richest hues, bewitching to watch but, alas! very few minutes sufficed to reveal the emptiness of heart, the ugly glaring faults. No dewy freshness of baby souls fresh from God, no "trailing clouds of glory"—One's heart ached to think of the upbringing these daughters of Islam get in their Christless homes. No strong yet loving Saviour for them, no prayer for pardon and cleansing after childish naughtiness. Just day after day in an atmosphere that, at its best is empty of all that makes life most worth living, and, at its worst may not be described to European ears!

"And the desert shall blossom as the rose" is the promise, but roses need cultivating. May the Great Master Gardener reveal to each one of us what share He would have us take in this. M.W.



### The Children of Islam.

I hear the children crying in the night,  
The little children—"God of stars and sun,  
We do not like the darkness: send down  
light  
From where there is so much to where  
there's none.  
Fireflies and flowers we love, and all things  
bright,  
But in our hearts it's dark; dear God send  
light!"

A little child we've heard Thou once didst  
send,  
Light to the heart of all the world to be;  
And so we think dear God Thou didst  
intend  
Some light for little children such as we.  
For what a child can bring a child can take!  
Then give us light, dear God, for that  
Child's sake.

And if it be there is no light to spare,  
Dear God, forgive if what we ask is wrong,  
We're only Moslem children: is it fair  
That others should have all the light so  
long?  
We would not wish that they should have  
our night,  
But—when will our turn come to have the  
Light?

ANON.

## “That Reminds Me.”

“Bou-shouka, bou-shouka,” they shout in the Tozeur market-place; and *that reminds me* of the story of a missionary, rather raw and ignorant, who went to buy some “bou-shouka” which is the name given by the Arabs to a kind of small marrow. She was well laughed at on her return with half-a-dozen—cucumbers! but she knew cucumbers were long and slim, and these were very short and fat, and really much like “bou-shouka” to look at.

Talking of cucumbers reminds me of a small friend of three years old, whose grandmother came hammering on our Mission house door one day. “Is Abdullah here? Have you seen him? we don’t know *where* he is!” He might well have been here, being a constant visitor, but he was not, and the whole day he was sought for anxiously. Only late in the evening some one recognised him in the oasis, and brought him home. But where do the cucumbers come in? Why, it seems that Abdullah knew that his granny loved



ABDULLAH AND HIS GRANNY.

them (so did he) and he thought he’d go and find her some in the gardens. But in the end all he gained was a sound whipping. However, a few days later he saw two little cucumbers in our kitchen and a soft-hearted person made him a present of them. She was quite surprised, I fear, that he gave the biggest to his Granny only keeping the very little one himself! and that was the end of his running away.

But that reminds me of another little lost boy, of just about the same age, whose brother left him to go home alone, “only a little way, and he has been so often he *must* know it.” Whether he did *not* know it, or if he wanted to explore, who shall say? Anyhow, late in the afternoon women fetching water from the river found a little stray boy, who could not explain himself any better than “I’m the son of the Gazelle” (that is the meaning of his mother’s name). One of the women, a Bedouin, said eagerly, “There are no children in my tent—I’ll take him and keep him if no one comes to look for him.” So away he went to a tent far out in the desert, but he wept for his mother and would not eat, so he had a miserable night of it; so did his poor mother who did not know whether he had been drowned in the river. And the town crier went round crying, and eleven men hunted for him all night! However, in the morning some one brought word of having seen the Bedouin woman taking a little boy, so they went to the tents and brought him away. Perhaps the poor woman was not too sorry, for he cried and cried and would not be happy with her, though she did *so* want a little boy!

And that reminds me of a sad-faced woman named Miriam, in a house in Nefta, saying to me, “I can talk to you, because you are a woman too,” and confiding her sorrow that she had no little children and her husband would have liked some so much. His brother’s young wife, who had got a little baby, mocked at



her, and told her husband he had better get rid of her and get a pretty young wife instead, and she was so afraid her husband *would* do that. Nevertheless, years and years ago when she was very young, before she married this husband, she had had a son. When her son was grown up he had married, and now his little daughter Zohra is with Miriam, and seems to be just as dear to the husband as if she were his own child. A delightful little thing she is, only six years old, but she has quite an air of dignity about her. With great decision and clearness in her baby voice she pronounced judgment on the missionary who refused offers to have a meal cooked for her. "Then," said she, "we will bring her some coffee, and make her drink it *by force*." Zohra likes to entertain a visitor, and brings out her picture book, which is only an old shop price-list. Turning the pages busily she says, "Presently, we shall come to a dog, but he does not bite! There he is." She was lucky enough to get a present of a little doll on one visit. Granny suggested putting it in a box for safety, but Zohra said, "No, she would be dull there." "Don't take her out in the street, then, lest she should be stolen," said granny. Someone suggested (to enforce this), "She'd be shy of all the people." But little Zohra was quick in replying, "She was not shy when you brought her *here*, and there are a lot of people." Someone put a tiny bit of palm leaf between the doll's teeth, and Zohra, who was delighted, said "She really did bite it—see, she's bitten a piece off!" and then the doll was put to sit beside her little mother who asked for, and heard again, the story of "the little girl who died and came alive again," and then my hand was taken and little Zohra acted as guide to another house where too, "they want to hear that story and they want to hear you sing." A little guide like that is good at opening doors for us.

And that reminds me of other houses in Nefta where the mothers of little girls say, "If you lived here, we would send our children to you." I don't know if they *would* all of them, but some would, and that reminds me of the visions that are beginning to get clearer (and nearer I hope) of a little abiding place in Nefta, wherein to spend at least a few days at a time now and then, trying to gather in the children and to visit the "open door" houses. And the dream goes on of perhaps in the end making a permanent post there, where there are so many needy souls living in darkness, with no one to show them the light.

That in its turn, might be a starting point for work farther south still—"on and ever on" till the Lord comes.

V. WOOD.

(A Sequel to "That Reminds Me.")

"I think I have found and got the offer of a little house in Nefta for next season. It has many good points; position, pretty central, near market and water-supply, but turning its back on the main road, so quite easy for women to visit. There is a nice little court, and a good sized room with windows and a brick floor, which would be all I should need for myself, for bed, sitting, cooking, and everything. Another room, nearly as big, would be nice for women and children; also a small room without a window (but the owner would put one in). There is also a large skifa (porch) with seats which might be very useful.

The owner, a decent sort of man, lives on one side, and his brother on the other, which would be a protection and make it easier to leave the house at any time.

The guide of all tourists to Nefta, who is very friendly, told me of it, and undertakes to make any arrangements, to see that the owner does not ask too much rent, that he whitewashes and cleans it, and leaves it all

ready whenever I want it. It is a newish house and the present occupants seem clean sort of people.

I am going to find out from the guide about the lowest rent the owner will take, but I thought it better not to seem in too much of a hurry about it and have made no fixed agreement yet, but in my own mind I feel almost certain it is the right place. Already the women I know are eagerly promising to come and visit me, and to send their little girls to be taught. With its nice skifa too it would be quite a good place for men's work as they could easily and quite naturally read there without coming inside the house. But judging by the visits I paid when I spent a night at Nefta and saw the house, I am wondering if perhaps the Nefta men are to be reached through the women.

In one house two or three young men (I did not see them so do not know how many) sat in their skifa listening, while I talked and sang with the women, and sent requests round the corner for more hymns; and in another house two older men were listening all the time I talked and told stories to the women, and seemed just as much interested, one expressing his approval even of the "moral."

Perhaps you will pass on this news to all who are interested in Nefta, and ask for prayer about it. It seems to me if God wills, it might be a very good opening to work there.

*Later.*—The house is hired for next season.

V.W.

"The essence of praying involves the expectation of God's answer. We offer no true prayer unless we not only desire but wait for a reply — not always the granting of our request, but some real response from the Eternal Listener."—T. H. DARLOW.

## For the Young Folks.

### A DESERT DREAM.

Dreams can be very exciting things at times, perhaps some of you could tell of some you have had yourselves. We read of quite a number in the Bible, for God has used them as a way of speaking to men. He can, and sometimes does, do the same to-day.

Away down south on the edge of the Sahara, in one of a group of villages that seem to play hide and seek amongst the acres of palm gardens, is a little Arab home, side by side with the Mission house. The young father, proud possessor of two rowdy little imps, at first was not at all interested in the mission folk, but as they were leaving the village for a time he at last asked that he might have one of their holy books, so a New Testament in Arabic was sent him.

Some months later two missionaries returned to the place, one a newcomer. Bel-Kassem greeted them both warmly and specially the one he knew.

"I've read your Book through again and again," he said. "It is a wonderful book and I believe—that Jesus is a great prophet." "But that is not enough, Bel-Kassem. He is more than that!" Weeks went by and missionaries and Bel-Kassem did not often meet although they were neighbours; but one evening in the oasis they came together. Stopping a moment to speak he said again "I am still reading your Book and I believe now that Jesus is the greatest of the prophets!"

"But He is more than that, friend."

A week or two later there came another evening meeting, and this time he said.

"I believe that Jesus is the Son of God"—a great confession for a Moslem. "I have been reading your Book still more, and I cannot but believe it."

"But that is not enough, Bel-Kassem. He wants to be something more!"

"Ah!" and with the parting salutations he went on.

Still a week or two later, and just over a year ago now, in the very early spring-time of the desert, he burst with shining face into the missionary courtyard. It was early morning.

"Oh!" he said, "I'm so happy, I've had such a wonderful dream!"

"Well, tell us about it."

"I dreamed that I came here into your courtyard, and you were standing one on either side of me. We talked of the Lord Jesus and the things in the Book, and while doing so another Form stood before us. As I looked at Him He smiled and said, 'Now you are all'—indicating the three of us—'united with Me in this life and in the life to come.' He put out His hand and grasped mine. As I saw that hand I knew that it was the hand of the Lord Jesus. I woke up then with a wonderful joy flooding my heart, for now I know He is not just a prophet, but the Son of God and the Saviour of the World—my Saviour!"

We are reminded of another desert dream. Jacob saw a ladder from earth to heaven. Bel-Kassem climbed that ladder, step by step, and he found as did Jacob, God at the head, revealed in Jesus Christ, and in finding Him He found a Saviour and a Friend, and a wonderful heavenly joy. He couldn't keep it to himself but just had to tell his family and friends of his new found treasure, not ashamed to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was only a dream, but what a happy one, that brought a Moslem to the feet of Jesus and found for him eternal life.

"In the last days, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions." Acts 2. 17.

HAROLD STALLEY.

## Praise and Prayer Requests.

### Praise.

For the working of God's Spirit during these last months, specially in delivering believers from a spirit of fear, and leading them to open confession of Christ.

Praise for the good beginnings at Setif both on the women's and men's side of the work.

For the little new Outpost secured at Nefta (near Tozeur) and to be opened in the Autumn, D.V.

For answered prayer for Pastor Stalley's visit and for what it has meant of blessing to the work.

For all the many opportunities of sowing the good seed of the Word in the itinerations of the past three months.

For the gifts that God has sent to us during the last few weeks.

For the timely payment of a legacy which has enabled us to close our financial year without deficit.

### Prayer.

That the new converts and those who have been led to confess Christ openly, may be kept steadfast and that the Holy Spirit may more and more reveal Christ to them.

That God will watch over all the Stations where the workers may be absent and that the Holy Spirit may continue His work in hearts and may enlighten those who are reading the literature distributed.

For God's enabling for those who will be doing deputation work and that those to whom they speak may get a real vision of the great need of the Moslems of Algeria and Tunisia for Christ.

That our Annual meetings on September 29th may be richly blessed and used mightily for God's glory.

For renewing and refreshing for all the workers during the summer months whether in England or on the Field.



## From Ghardaia.

### A Mission Out-Station in the M'Zab.

It is the end of Friday, our market day in Ghardaia. The day closed down with a glorious sunset, rich rosy rays as of an Alpine glow lit up a few small clouds racing along in front of the wind, and invested the sombre sandhills with delicate coral and rich salmon tints, so that the sky line above them looked, in contrast, an intense soft blue.

The Souma or Mosque tower stood out sharply against this background of glory and through the aperture at the top we could see the dark form of the Mozabite Muezzin and heard his voice ringing out the "call to prayer."

Quickly darkness fell and while we lit lamps and closed for the night the stars shone out brilliantly in a blue black sky.

An evening duty is to note down the doings of the day, and thus it was chronicled—

First, at eight this morning little Jewesses came to class, Rachels, Miriams, and Rebekahs, Julia and the Star. After, with bags well filled with tracts and Scripture portions we went to the market with its camels, sheep and goats, and sauntered among the sellers of Mozabite carpets, dates, wool or camel hair, giving our leaflets in Arabic or French or Hebrew, as required. Even the Moslem bookseller, seated before his stall of Korans and Moslem literature,

took from us. Shoemakers, sellers of hardware, materials, and wonderful silk dresses, were most of them willing to take a pamphlet. It was only the religious leaders who shook their heads or said with quaint humour, "I cannot read."

Now as we count up numbers we find over two hundred and fifty books and leaflets were distributed, some of them being sold, though selling is hard, and a Mozabite seldom buys our books. After the market a little group of eight boys came to class and later several eager little lads came with their sous to buy Gospels.

In the afternoon one of our number went for a lesson in Mozabite dialect from our faithful Aicha (she could not teach a single grammar rule, but she tries her very best to translate the Bible Stories that we tell her). Meanwhile, the two others of us accompanied by four talkative little Arabs went to visit the tents of the camel drivers, Chaamtas, many of them families from Ouargla. In the first tent was our happy faced blind woman and she remembered the hymn about Heaven; the happy land where is no sin, sorrow, or suffering and where all is pure. A very sedate baby girl sat on the sand floor of the tent watching us. She had just one tuft of hair in the middle of her otherwise bald head and it stuck up straight like a feather. We had to

skirt round carefully to the next tent because each had its savage, barking dog and even though it may be tied to a stone one is never sure if the rope will hold! The woman received us as old friends and spread a carpet, while the man sat on his heels before us listening to the story of the Prodigal Son. His chief interest was in a picture of the younger son leaving his father's house riding a camel. Was it a mehara, i.e., the beautiful swift highly bred camel? Later he marvelled that the Prodigal Son was pictured walking barefoot with no sandals or old rubber tyres or even rags bound round his feet! This man who tramps so many miles over the rocks and sand knew what suffering that would mean.

Our Arab boys had rejoined us; in the Porch others were waiting, saying that they wanted a Class, so we had to put down our bags and begin. This time the subject was the lost sheep, because our merry little companions had pretended that they were lost, in the walk outside the town! Hymns were learned and explained and one bright eyed tent boy kept on telling us, "we are not naughty, we are very good indeed." They went off, each the proud possessor of an Arabic Text Card, and we went on to the roof to watch the sunset, and to thank God for the opportunities the day had brought, of giving His Word.

There are many thousands in this town who are very religious, but only a little handful believe in the Deity of our Lord, or that He died and rose again.

M. D. GRAUTOFF.

February, 1936.

As yet the Moslem world has known no share in those sudden mighty manifestations of God's Spirit that have been seen since Pentecost throughout all ages and in all lands. It may rest with our faith to set free in the land where God's cause has been put to shame, this final victory.

I. L. T.

## In the Desert Reading Room.

Such a wild ignorant fellow he was. One wondered, as so often, what had brought him in, for unlike many of the visitors *he* had no thirst for the truth. But, as we were waiting, he explained to another reader how the worker had found him, some weeks ago, lying in the sun slowly burning a beetle's legs off with his cigarette.

To his surprise she had objected to his occupation, and objected in such forcible and energetic Arabic that, as he put it, "By the time she had finished the beetle and I were about the same!"

God uses many means to draw His prodigals within sound, and this special one decided that if this champion of beetles had a reading room open he might as well hear what she had to say.

The simple gospel talk with a new student was just over, and also a Bible Reading with a recent convert, so when the ne'er-do-well lounged in there was time for him, and a special prayer was telegraphed up for wisdom to deal with him.

He sat there jauntily sure he was a very good fellow, in fact he said as much, free from sin of every kind, therefore not needing a Saviour naturally.

But the ever-faithful God sent just the message he needed. A word on the day of judgment stirred him to a frank, "Yes, I am afraid of God—I am afraid of man." Then in a short talk on sin the word lying stung him again to attention, and he poured forth his own views on the subject, while we sat listening, getting fresh insight into the sophistry with which the Devil beguiles his victims. The boy almost laughed as he said lightly, "How can I help lying? It is not *my* fault I lie. If I work for anyone and I oversleep or idle in the market-place and arrive late I must lie. If I don't he will be angry and beat me,

A few more grave words from the Book and then comes another plausible excuse. "I don't lie from my heart, my heart is true, it comes from my mouth only. That sort of lie does not matter, God is merciful, if I pray and fast and give alms and witness to the one God and His prophet I shall enter heaven all right."

"No liar shall enter therein" stops him for a moment, but once more he tries to shake off the words that are pricking so. "It is only wicked to lie about the things of God, not about the things of the world."

Again with prayer the "Sword of the Spirit" is wielded and stern, straight warnings are given that pierce through all his poor self-deception, till, quieted and awed, he gets a glimpse, for the first time in his eighteen years, of what is sin and how a Holy God regards it. Then he says, "Rest in peace" and slips away quietly, we hope to think and pray.



## Desert Stars.

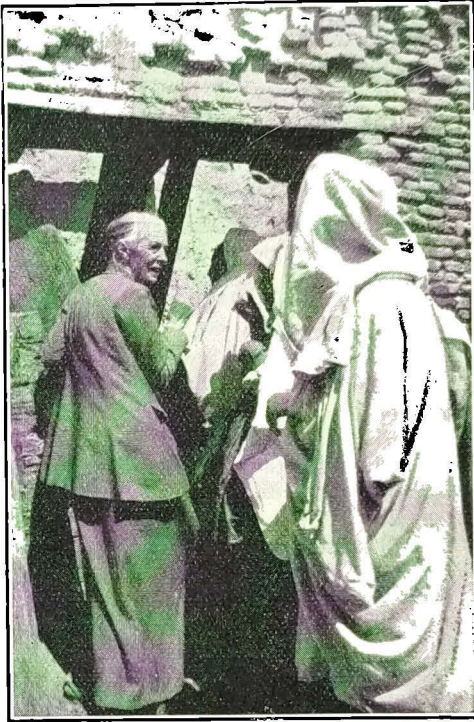
How beautiful the stars seem in the desert! Their brilliancy, undimmed by clouds, surprises those who look upon them for the first time. One remembers so well those first nights in our desert home, when on the flat roof of the house we spent much time in quiet meditation, never tired of gazing up into that wonderful starry vault. The Arabs say that above the sky there is an immense golden dome over which God has drawn a veil pierced with many holes, so that through these, we mortals can get a glimpse of the glory beyond!

One can understand pagan peoples being filled with fear of and admiration for the stars and other wonders of nature. Through these things some see the power of God, and others, the influence of a spirit. We as Christians, can only be silent before such marvels and worship

Him who is the Creator of earth and skies. The Psalmist says, "The Heavens declare the glory of God . . ." but it is true also that the earth is His footstool. The celestial glory of the sky should find its reflection in the earth beneath, and Christians should shine in the darkness of this world as the stars illumine the night sky.

It is striking to note that the night of Islam stretches over the greater part of the regions where the starlight is brightest and most pure, and Tozeur is here included. The twelve thousand inhabitants of this oasis are far from being "children of the Light." Sin reigns in their hearts, and the Lord Jesus stands outside the door. How long must we work in this hard soil? God only knows. We do know, however, that powerful as Islam may be, it will not always remain so, because the one who made it what it is, was vanquished long ago by the death and resurrection of the Saviour. One day the True Light will shine out where Islam now reigns, and meanwhile we go on in faith that the victory will come.

Here and there one already sees several little points of light beginning to shine like stars in the darkness. Their light is pale as yet, but we have faith in Him who can perfect the work which He has begun. Here is one, an old blind woman who confesses herself as a Christian. Her son, who had been working in the palm gardens, came home one evening saying, "My master (an Arab) has just dismissed me from his service because he has found out that you are a Christian. To-morrow I will look for other work, but meanwhile, what are we going to eat?" "My son," replied the poor old woman, "Jesus satisfies, and even if we haven't enough bread to eat sometimes, the Bread of Life is never lacking." This same woman one day longed to do something to give pleasure to her missionary friends, and decided that if she could earn something, she would buy them



MISS TROTTER AND DESERT ARABS  
AT TOZEUR.

a little present. Later on a neighbour asked her to help in grinding corn, and for this she paid her half a franc. Full of joy, the blind woman went off with her little nephew to buy a few vegetables from one of the stalls. "I want garden carrots," she said, "not wild ones." "Tell me, first," replied the Arab, "you are a Christian aren't you?" The blind woman hesitated a moment. If she confessed it might mean difficulties afterwards. But she knew that to tell an untruth would displease the Lord, and decided to speak out boldly. "Yes," she said, "I am a Christian." "So am I," said the man, to her

great astonishment, "and because I love the Lord too, I will let you have two bunches of carrots instead of one for your half franc." These she brought to us, full of joy at having been given courage to testify, and over the possibility of giving us pleasure by her little gift.

One day we visited a young Arab girl, who was evidently dying. We found her lying on a mat in a dark, poverty stricken room, looking terribly thin and suffering. Such sights are heart-rending. A few comforting words were spoken to the sufferer, whom God took to Himself only two days later. An Arab woman who also professes faith in Christ, told us that at the end, the dying girl refused to repeat the Moslem prayers that were required of her. "The words are difficult and do me no good," she said. "It is only when I say the Name of Jesus that I feel comforted in myself." It appears that in spite of the opposition of her relatives, her last words were of Jesus.

Another young woman had heard of Jesus through her friend. When they were young girls they often spent a night together, and when lying on the same mat, with all the other members of the household fast asleep, the elder girl would speak to her friend of her Saviour. She had been in contact with the Mission, and knew that Jesus had come to earth to save from sin, and that we might have pardon, salvation, and assurance of life eternal, and that through Him we could speak to God as to a Father. The younger girl wished to follow the elder, and sought to speak of the Lord Jesus in her own home. But nobody wanted to listen and at last they persuaded her not to talk of these strange notions. So she kept quiet, but in the depths of her heart she loves to repeat to herself that she too is a Christian.

We long for the day when these "Joseph of Arimathea" souls will become apostles of the Light, and when they will not be

afraid to speak aloud that which they now keep hidden in their inmost souls. Pray for these little stars which have already begun to shine, and ask that many more may soon shine out in the darkness of Islam, until the night is driven away and Christ, the Perfect Light, illumines all hearts.

R. MILLON  
(Translated).

“And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light;  
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look, the land is bright!”

## Then and Now.

A Journey from Algiers to Bou Saada  
in 1894 and To-day.

May 1st, 1894. We left Aumale at 11 a.m. yesterday, meaning to spend the first night at Sidi Aissa, but found no room there. We could only leave a text, in the time we stayed in a tiny shop. En route we dropped two tracts as we went on. When we got to Ain Naaga we found it still less possible to stay the night, so we had to be content with our covered cart, for there was still a twelve hours journey before us. However, we were comfortable, and had the needed strength and a lovely time in the star-lit darkness. As night set in our Arab guard in his snow-white clothes, with his gun across his pointed crimson saddle bow, cantered slowly alongside, clanking like a knight of the middle ages and having the coach in charge. About midnight we met the return coach and its guard—such a pair they looked. At 1 a.m. we reached Ain Kerman where we stopped for an hour. We got out into the thick silver sand, how weird it all was! We were getting near the desert, and by 7 a.m. we had arrived here at Bou Saada.

Such a picturesque place, it is, with its one-storied white houses and palaces, and the indescribable glow that comes only into desert scenes.

(from Miss Haworth's diary.)

\* \* \*

May 1936. A fleet of brightly coloured, well-swung, motor-buses start from above the Port of Algiers to all parts of the country. Chief among them is the blue Ambrosi bus which goes down to Bou Saada and beyond.

In the early morning we settle ourselves in the comfortable upholstered seats, and off we go. Soon we are beyond the dull outskirts of Algiers and speeding along the plain of the Metidja to the great mountain range that sentinels the road to the south. Now the road goes gradually up and up in long curves. Sometimes we hold our breath as another bus or huge lorry suddenly emerges round a hair-pin bend, and the chauffeur steers us perilously near the crumbling edge of a deep ravine. Once up among the mountain tops and over the pass the road winds sharply down to Tablat; there is a brief stop there, then over the river and on to Aumale where the passengers get out for lunch.

The stage from Aumale to Bou Saada, which took Miss Trotter and Miss Haworth twenty hours to cover, in a hard-seated, uncomfortable cart, takes now no more than four hours! The road runs in an almost straight line through scant pasture land and alfa grass regions. The scenery becomes rather monotonous until we see afar off the oasis of Bou Saada, a green and white speck, set in a large circle of red sandstone hills. It is farther off than it appears, but before long the bus is passing between sand walls and palm trees, and then we approach white houses. Here we stop in the midst of Bou Saada. It is only one o'clock. We have come all the way from Algiers in seven hours! J.J.



## From a Mail Bag.

Tolga.

Here we are back again after five days of itineration. One day we visited Sidi Okba and our reception was better than it was last time we went. On the same afternoon I did some colportage in the shops at Biskra.

Next day we went to El Kantara and visited the three native villages. In the "white village" we had a long conversation with a Taleb and a group of men. The Caid invited us to have coffee, and he bought two books, one of them being "The Seven-fold Secret." In the afternoon we first visited the "red village" and then the "black." We did not sell many books but we had a good many conversations.

Yesterday as we travelled in the bus there was a halt of a quarter-of-an-hour in the little village of Liana, and we made the most of our time in visiting the shops and cafés. We were well received and people bought a good deal of literature; one man bought a Bible and three other books. We arrived at Khanja at two o'clock, and setting to work at once we quickly realised that we were in a very fanatical centre. On every hand we heard the word "koufar" (infidels). We sold a certain number of Gospels and other books, but to our sorrow they were almost immediately torn up or burnt. One boy bought a Gospel on purpose to tear it up in front of our eyes! We slept the night in the bus as there was no hotel. The village policeman who went to ask the Caid if he could put us up did not even come back to give his answer!

This morning we started at 5 a.m. and at 3 o'clock we were back here at Tolga. It was a rather difficult trip, and we met with more fanaticism than we have found in most places. But God gave us great opportunities.

S. LULL.

Setif.

Mons. Lull and I had some great times during those six happy months we spent together in Tolga. Our hearts are full of praise and gratitude to God for all His love and goodness towards us. We are both now in Setif and are looking forward to good times in the Lord's service in this needy town and district. The main work here will be colportage and we are trusting that much of the Word of Life will be bought and thoughtfully read. The beginning has been very encouraging and we go forward with hope and expectation. There are many important markets around Setif and we intend to visit these too with the literature. We have been able to get a class for the boys started, pray that God's blessing may rest on this effort and that definite results may be forthcoming.

J. G. THOMSON.

Dar el Fedjer,

Algiers.

Si M. seldom misses coming to see us once a week. He goes for a walk with his wife and then calls in for a chat and a cup of tea before returning home. When he is away on colportage Mrs. Theobald goes down once a week and brings F. here to tea and goes back with her in the late afternoon. They are so happy together and one rejoices to see this Christian home in our midst. God grant that there may be many more such homes!

A. E. THEOBALD.

\* \* \*

"Saw ye not the cloud arise,  
Little as a human hand?  
Now it spreads along the skies,  
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land:  
Lo! the promise of a shower  
Drops already from above;  
But the Lord will shortly pour  
All the Spirit of His love."

## Ramathān in Tozeur.

I was at Tozeur during the month of Ramathān and during my missionary life I have never come into such close contact with the Fast. The result was that my dislike of it increased more and more as the days passed, and as I watched the people and felt in my own soul the power of the Evil One in this thing. Truly the institution of Islam and especially of the Fast of Ramathān was a direct attack of the devil on our Lord's Kingdom. How it binds Moslems together! and the breaking of the fast makes testimony to Christ the most difficult problem for the converts. It is not easy to put ourselves into their place, but we can realise that their trials are such as we have never been called upon to endure.

In actual practice they do not fast, they only turn day into night and night into day, and eat a great deal more than during any other month of the year, thus often getting hopelessly into debt. Certainly it costs them something in bodily discomfort during the day, but that is forgotten when the time for feasting comes at the setting of the sun. During that month there is much quarrelling and fighting and one realises that instead of steadying their lives and making them better people, it leaves them worse than it finds them and more fanatical.

I have written this so that once again we may plead with you to be instant in prayer for these people. In the midst of my discouragement during that month I had this text given me, "Is not my word like a fire saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces." Jer. 23. 29. It was a rebuke to my lack of faith. God is able to melt these hard hearts by the fire of His love and to mould them into His image. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Jer. 18. 14.

I. SHEACH.

## Home Notes.

During May the Acting Sec. took a meeting for the A.M.B. at Teddington, in connection with the "Young Peoples' Christian Band" (Free Church of England). A good number were present and real and prayerful interest in the work in Algeria was shown. There have also been several opportunities in Woking of telling of the needs of the Moslems.

Some meetings are already arranged for those coming home on furlough but we do want to find more openings, and shall be so glad to hear from any friends who can give an opportunity to speak of the work of the A.M.B.

Will any friends of the Band who are going to Keswick make themselves known to Miss Grautoff, who is going, or to any other members of the Band who may be there? The "Fellowship of Faith" gatherings for prayer, which are held daily during the Convention, are a good meeting place!

Will our friends please take note of the date and place of our Annual Meetings, and be sure to come and bring their friends. *See opposite page.*

By courtesy of Mrs. Elwin, an A.M.B. Prayer meeting will be held at 6 Pembroke Square, Notting Hill Gate, at 5 p.m., on Friday, July 3rd. It is hoped that several members of the Band may be present, and all friends who wish to unite with them in praise and prayer will be most welcome.

The next number of *A Thirsty Land* will be our Report number. If any of our friends could use some extra copies of the magazine to make the work of the A.M.B. known, we will gladly send them, free of charge, if they will let us know in good time.

"Thamilla." 7s., postage 6d. By Duchéne.

## 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 Evangelization of the Arabic speaking Moslems with special emphasis on the needs of the practically untouched regions of the interior.

## Local Representatives:

### ENGLAND.

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.—Miss E. Bullen, 14, Clifton Terrace.  
CARLISLE (Fisher Street Mission).—Mr. T. Child, 11, Ferguson Road, Longsowerby.  
DARLINGTON (Pierremont Mission).—Miss E. Armstrong, 37, Green Street.  
EASTBOURNE.—Miss C. Firmin, "Dar Naama," Baldwin Avenue.  
FELIXSTOWE.—Miss E. Threadkell, "Raebury," Constable Road.  
HEATHFIELD (Welcome Mission).—Miss E. Phillips, 2, East View, Alexandra Road.  
ILFORD.—Mr. Walter Sarfas, 121, Coventry Road.  
IPSWICH.—Miss Challin, C.A.W.G., Bolton Lane.  
LEWES.—Miss Lee, "Cobury," 20 Prince Edward Road.  
LEXDEN.—Mrs. Willsmore, 26, Halstead Road, Lexden, Colchester.  
TEDDINGTON.—Miss Ethel Little, 32, Field Lane.  
THORNTON HEATH.—Mr. C. J. Ford, 13, Heath View Road.  
WEST SUFFOLK.—Mrs. Ed. Johnston, Campfield, Gt. Barton, Bury St. Edmunds  
WOKING.—Miss F. K. Currie, Walden Cottage, Waldens Road, Horsell.  
WOODBIDGE.—Miss M. Fisher, 24, Chapel Street.  
WORTHING.—Miss Gotelee, White Lodge, Mill Road.

### SCOTLAND.

DUNDEE.—Miss Stewart, 8, Woodlands Terrace.  
FAITH MISSION TRAINING HOME.—Miss I. R. Govan, 18, Ravelston Park, Edinburgh  
GLASGOW.—Miss Guthrie, 90, Barrington Drive, C.4.  
NEWPORT (N. Fife).—Mr. D. R. W. Gavin, Benruaig.

### IRELAND.

BESSBROOK.—Miss R. Bailie, Deramore House.

### NEW ZEALAND.

AUCKLAND.—Miss D. Markham, 23 Lake Rd., Takapuna, Auckland.  
Miss R. Smeeton, Deep Creek, Torbay, Waitemata, Auckland.

## Literature.

To be obtained from The Secretary, A.M.B.,  
8, Sydenham Road, Croydon.

Books by I. Lilius Trotter.

- "Between the Desert and the Sea." With sixteen pages of Miss Trotter's beautiful illustrations in colour. 6s., postage 6d.
- "The Life of I. Lilius Trotter." Compiled from her Letters and Journals by Blanche A. F. Pigott. 6s., postage 6d.
- "Parables of the Cross." Illustrated. 3s. 6d., postage 3d.
- "Parables of the Christ Life." Illustrated. 3s. 6d., postage 3d. Bound in one volume. 5s. postage 6d.

## *Please Take Note!*

### ANNUAL MEETINGS.

Our Annual Meetings will, D.V., be held on Tuesday, September 29th at

### CAXTON HALL

(Room 18).

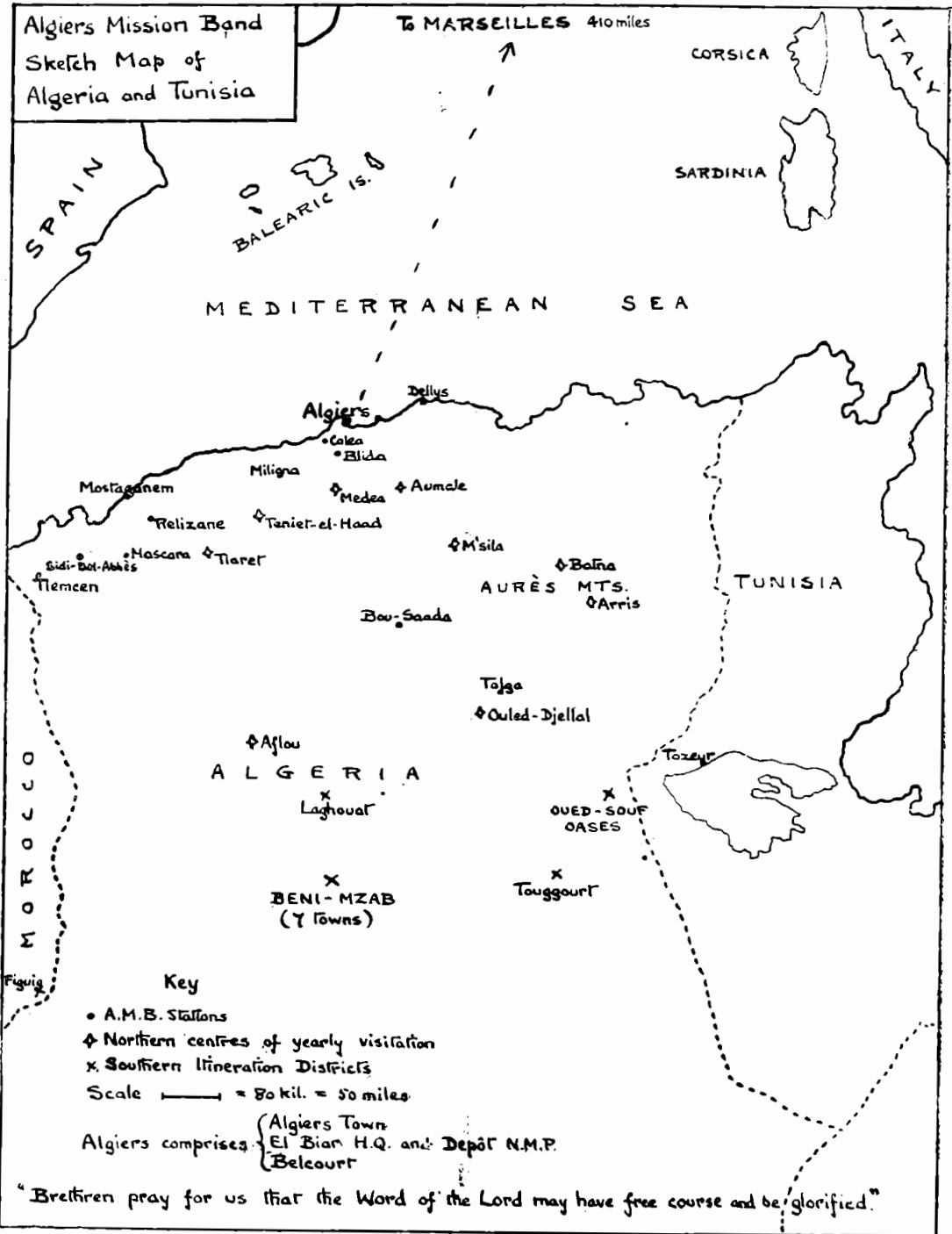
Afternoon Meeting 3.30 p.m.

Evening Meeting 6.30 p.m.

Missionaries from the Field will speak at both meetings. The evening meeting will be of special interest to Young People.

Algerian Pictures. Native Costumes. Arabic Choruses.

Algiers Mission Band  
 Sketch Map of  
 Algeria and Tunisia



Key

- A.M.B. Stations
- ◊ Northern centres of yearly visitation
- x Southern Itineration Districts

Scale ——— = 80 kil. = 50 miles.

Algiers comprises { Algiers Town  
 El Bian H.Q. and Dépôt N.M.P.  
 Belcourt

"Brethren pray for us that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."