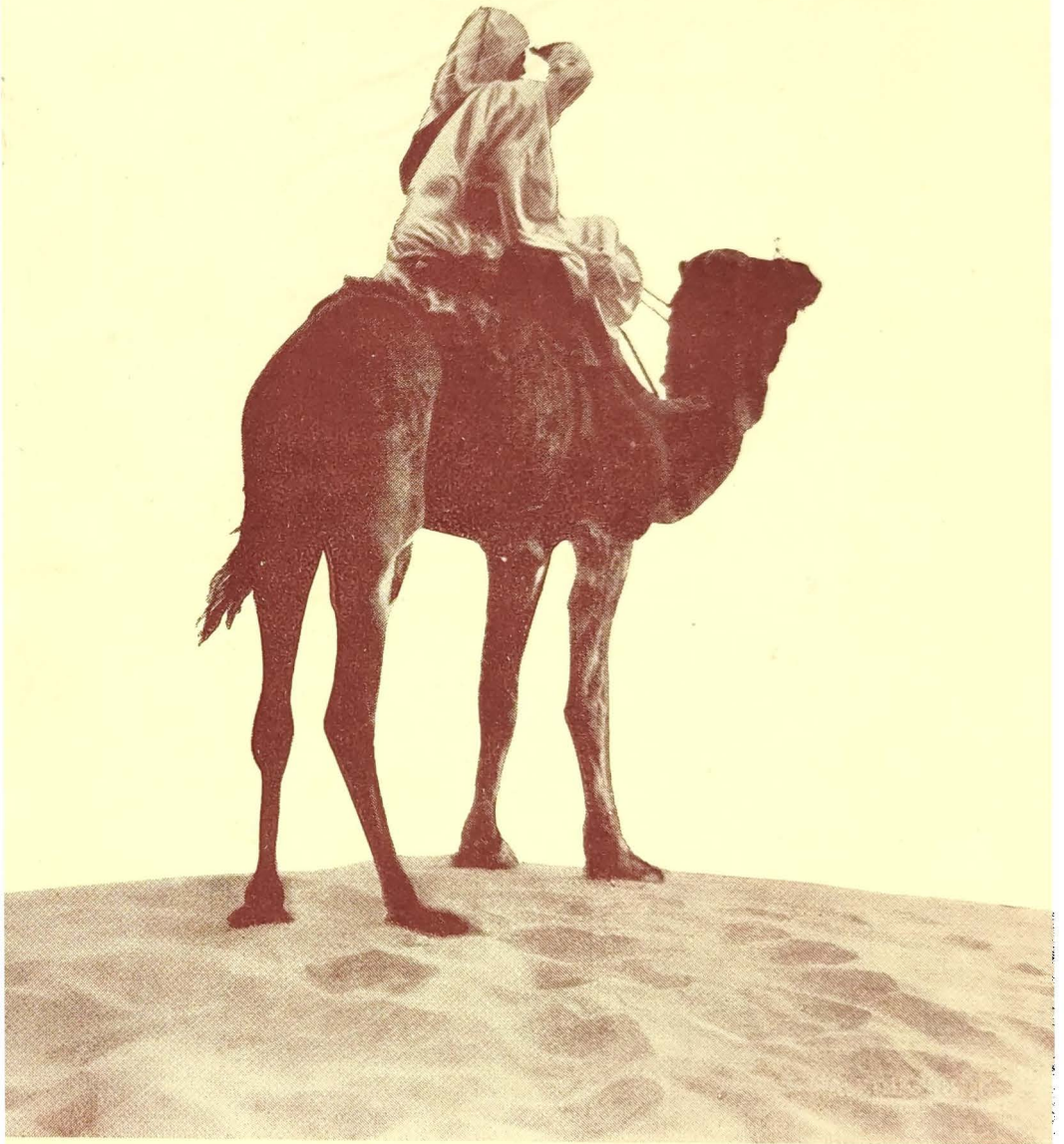


A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

No. 120.

DECEMBER, 1957.

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

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A THIRSTY LAND

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WEDDINGS UP-TO-DATE

THE bride, Rasheeda, was one of the first Arab schoolgirls to join our class in 1954. Her father was building his new villa at the time, on what had once been Mission property. She is not an intellectual type, but plump, good-natured, practical and above all, an excellent needle-woman. Her mother and numerous smaller brothers and sisters are certain to miss her very much, now that she has been taken to her husband's home, at the other end of the town.

We were enjoying a Saint Luke's summer, when the father of Rasheeda called, at his wife's request, to invite us to take a final glimpse of the bride, before she left home. We found our neighbour's courtyard full of visitors, chiefly women, with just a sprinkling of small boys, brothers and cousins of the bride. As it was such a hot day, everything was being held out-of-doors. Rasheeda was sitting with her back against the wall of the house, enthroned, amidst a bodyguard of young married women, with a small girl cousin in attendance. She was clothed entirely in white, and on her head she wore a golden coronet which held in place a short, transparent veil. There was very little, if any, "make-up," though she sat very still and took no part in what was going on around her. The little bridesmaid was also dressed in white, and both of them wore the inevitable nylon gloves.

Most of the guests stared in surprise, on seeing two European women wending their way towards the bridal group, in search of the bride's mother.

Oriental politeness probably dictates that one should quietly subside into the lowest place, until invited to go up higher. We ought to have known this from our Lord's own teaching on the subject. The appearance of the bride's mother and grandmother, however, soon put us at our ease. We had visited the latter in her own home at Médéa. Chairs were brought and coffee and cakes offered to us. When our humble gifts were presented the bride took no apparent interest in them. One of them was a book, illustrated by Elsie Anna Wood, extolling the virtues of the heroines of the Old Testament. Rasheeda's mother took this and handed it over to someone whom she called "Malika," whom we took to be the future sister-in-law. Having asked after absent members of the family—the eldest son, doing his military service in France—the eldest daughter, already married and having to nurse her husband, in bed with

influenza—and so forth, we made the excuse that we must return to the workmen who were repairing our roof, and took our leave.

White is the colour chosen by the Arabs as a sign of mourning ; and it amused us, afterwards, to remember that we had hesitated about putting on a white hat, to attend the wedding, for fear it should give offence.

P. M. RUSSELL.

MOSTAGANEM

“ BEFORE THEY CALL I WILL ANSWER ”

DURING our short visits to Mostaganem last winter, it was impressed upon us that it would be needful to stay for a longer period, to consolidate the work already begun. As summer drew near we wished we could do as we did last year, spend the months of July and August there ; but our problem again was where to stay. There seemed no possibility of finding anything. However, we committed the matter to God in prayer, and in a very wonderful way, and without her knowing our need, the Lord laid it on the heart of a friend to offer us the use of her flat, during the months of July and August whilst she was away. How we rejoiced in this exceeding abundant answer to prayer, because it meant that we should be free to visit when and where we pleased. We had great plans for those two months, but we were to learn anew the truth of the words—“ My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord ” (Isa. 55 : 8).

We had hoped that by going to Mostaganem we would avoid the extreme heat of Relizane, but, alas, this year it was not so. The heat seemed to follow us there ; and, of course, our plans for visiting were somewhat restricted. Nevertheless, we visited when and where possible, and although not on the scale we had planned, the visits on the whole were more profitable, in that we were able to read and give God's message in every house we visited, whereas on our previous visits it was almost impossible to get a word in for the Lord in some of the houses. For instance, in one house we visit regularly the woman is always pleased to see us, but she did not seem interested in the Word of God. On our last two visits we were able to read with her and give God's message. She came to see us at the flat, and again an opportunity was given to say a word. Until recently the neighbours of this house were not at all friendly. They disappeared into their rooms as soon as they saw us. On our last visit, not finding the woman we came to see, one of those neighbours invited us in, and, as it was hot, she fanned us with a newspaper while we talked with her. When we left she invited us back to see her, and so we gained an entry into a new house. In another house no matter when we went to see the woman there was never any opportunity to speak to her about the Lord Jesus. This house is situated on the other side of the town from where we were living, and as it was such a long walk, we had to go later in the day when the heat was not so intense. How great was our joy on this occasion to be able to read with her, and to talk to her of the things of God. A relative who was preparing a

meal in an adjoining room, stopped what she was doing to listen to the message.

WITNESSING TO NATIVES

Because of the troubles we were advised by the authorities not to visit in one of the big native villages. We were sorry about this because we had made some good contacts there, and felt there was a ready response to the Gospel. One morning a woman we had visited in this village called to see us and gave us news of the women in her court. She came several times and we read the Word of God and talked with her. Praise God there is no limit to what He can do. When we could not go to the people, God brought the people to us.

We had a great welcome from the stallholders in the vegetable market. They remembered us from last year. One man in particular was glad to talk to us of his difficulties, and it was grand to be able to tell him of One Who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. We also had an interesting conversation with one of the merchants in the fish market. In the shops too, God gave us opportunities of witnessing for Him.

WORK AMONG EUROPEANS

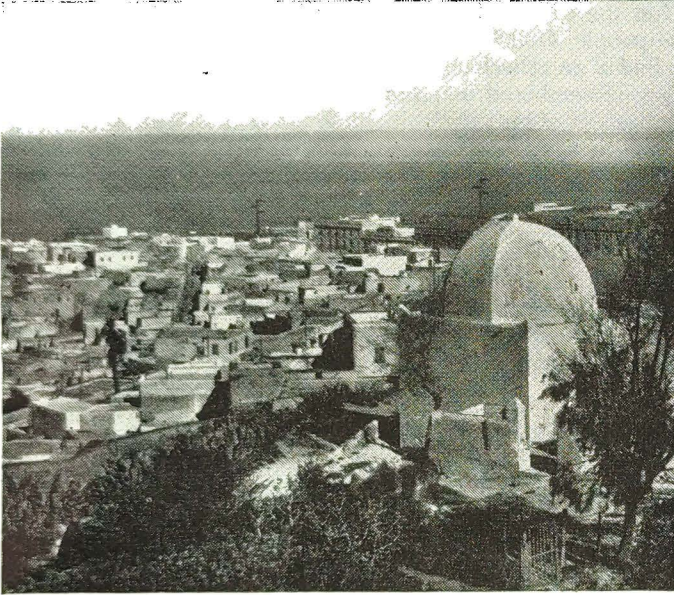
It was evident that God had a work for us to do among the Europeans also. One day a policeman (R.C.) called, asking if we taught English, because he was looking for someone to help his daughter aged 13 with her lessons. We explained that our reason for being at Mostaganem was to take the message of the Gospel to the Arabs. He went away but returned a few days later asking if we would help his daughter; and, feeling that perhaps God had something for us to do, we agreed to help her. Before leaving for Relizane the whole family called to see us, to express their gratitude; and we trust that as we hope to visit them from time to time, they may come to know the Saviour.

We had the privilege of visiting several members of the Protestant community. One dear old lady, aged 89 years, who was a friend of our former missionary, and who had not been to a Church service for many years, was delighted when we had a little service with her. She asked if we could not go and stay with her always, so that we could read and pray with her.

We helped at the mission for Spanish speaking people, which is under the auspices of the French Reformed Church. The Missioner died last spring, and no one had been found to take his place, with the result that there had been a falling away in attendance. We took the services on two Sundays, and visited those who could understand French as well as Spanish. In one house that we called at we found an old lady reading and explaining the Word of God to another old lady. We learned that this was a usual occurrence. Three or four women met together in the house of one of them, and the one who could read explained the Word as best she could. This old lady had been taught to read by the Laubach method. On the day we called we joined them in reading, after which a short message was given, and then we all engaged in prayer.

“RIPE ALREADY TO HARVEST”

There is much more that we could say, but we trust that what we have written may help you to realise afresh the great spiritual need of this large town. Mostaganem with her suburbs and many surrounding villages is a field of great possibilities; and we feel that the time has now come that there should be a permanent mission station there. This would necessitate a house and more workers. Perhaps to some this may seem a foolish idea in view of the existing troubles, but troubles and



Editions Alexandre Sirecky.

Tidjitt on the outskirts of Mostaganem.

restrictions are nothing with God. In all our contacts with the people we were conscious of a hunger in their hearts and an eagerness to listen. Surely no other indication is necessary to show us that this field is ripe already to harvest. The promise is “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13 : 5). Or, as another version has it, “I will in no wise desert you, or leave you alone in the field of contest or in a position of suffering. I will in no wise let go—loose hold of—my sustaining grasp.” Someone has said : “This promise cannot fail. Let us stand upon it and rejoice in it, and in times of trouble let us show to all who observe us that these words are for ever true. Christ our Lord is with us, Alleluia ! From all fearing, from all weakening, from all turning back, the Lord deliver us—that, standing fast in one spirit, strong in the Lord and the power of His might, we may be to the glory of His grace.”

EDITH CLARK & ANNIE E. POWELL.

A STORY THAT LED TO A CHRISTIAN WEDDING

THE BRIDE

“**B**ELOVED” was only a little girl of four, but she was already motherless when her father brought her in great distress to us that we might dress her poor wounded feet, suffering from broken chilblains. The father, a religious Muslim, had found himself with the responsibility of a baby boy of two years and this little girl, and his only helper was his sister, who was fast going blind.

Later the girl was sent to school and, though not a brilliant scholar, she learned to read and write French. At an early age she took over housekeeping for her father, and her rather wayward brother.

The father, though of a respectable family, was poor—unable to work much owing to bad sight. At first he made a living by dyeing wool, but when weaving went out of fashion, he turned to earning by odd jobs, and later came to be our monitor at the boys’ classes twice a week. We named him “the faithful one” for he never failed us, though it was a somewhat thankless task. The bigger lads were rude and rough, yet when he overheard bad words the perpetrators were seized and thrust out of the front door.

We were grieved at their unruly behaviour, and felt they needed a man to teach them; but God was working His purpose out, and our faithful monitor was drinking in the Bible stories and learning many a hymn.

The joyful time came when, after a year of Bible study and preparation, the father declared his faith at a conference of Christians and inquirers.

The daughter was growing into a merry girl, who came with others to our big girls’ classes, and learned many texts and hymns. The time came when her father took her also to the yearly Christian conference. Later, under the sympathetic training of a couple who were working with me, “Beloved” also awoke to the great truth of salvation through our Saviour and His death for sinners, and she begged for baptism. After a year of study and preparation, her father had the joy of seeing her witness in baptism,

THE BRIDEGROOM

Meanwhile, in another town, unknown to us, a young Arab man was being led into the Light; he also bravely witnessed to his faith and suffered for it, for his father turned him out of his home. But, before this, the father had taught his son to be a good Arabic reader.

There were Christian friends at hand, and he was offered a home with them and a position as helper in their mission. Later, difficulties drove him to France—where Christians again opened their door to him.

News came to him that the young girl he had seen swinging light-heartedly in the mission house garden was now accepted into the Chris-

tian church; and he asked through the missionaries for the father's permission to correspond with her from across the water.

When he returned to his own country his great desire was to meet the father and ask for his daughter. This was planned, and the girl of 19 met her fiancé of 26, and later their wedding was arranged. As they are both of Arab nationality, they had the civil marriage before the Mayor, followed by a Christian ceremony and dedication with many friends present—though, owing to the dangers of travelling, some were obliged to stay away.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE ?

During the summer the young couple stayed in the mission house down south while the missionaries were away. We had hoped that on the return of the missionaries the young people would be offered a post of helpers to the American Baptist Mission, for their desire was to go on preparing for mission work. Instead, we heard they were advised to leave the mission house and earn their living by other work. The husband's parents offered them a home for the time, and we now hear that the young man has found work as a plumber, and they are hoping to find a room (or rooms) where they can have their own little home.

There has been much prayer and we had even sought Christian work for them in France; but it may be God's answer is that they should have through this disappointment, some discipline He sees they need. We are thankful that they can join the Christian fellowship on Sundays, and we pray that God may go on preparing them for future Evangelistic work among their Muslim brethren, and lift up their hearts to see His will for their lives.

M.D.G.

SUMMER WANDERINGS IN FRANCE

(Those of our readers who remember seeing the photo of Mlle. Butticaz and Mlle. Chollet in the September issue of "A Thirsty Land," will also remember how they were going in search of a young married woman who had been their "child" when they were working in the North African desert land. Below you will find their own account of the happy ending of their search. They journeyed through France alone in their own "Renault 2-chevaux car" which Mlle. Chollet drives so skilfully.)

"LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE . . . LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

AFTER a few weeks rest in July, Mlle. Chollet and I had decided to go to Northern France to visit some of our Arab friends, now living there. But A. the one we specially longed to see had moved, and we did not know where to find her. However we prayed that God would open the way for us, and shortly after a letter from A.'s brother brought us news of her, and the new address of her family. So we were able to start on our way as soon as we were ready. We saw the hand of the Lord taking us along and undertaking in every detail. After some very blessed days in Guebwiller, during which we visited several Arab families, we went on to Mulhouse and Strassbourg, where we found

openings for the Gospel in some Arab homes. When leaving Strassbourg we saw again the hand of the Lord protecting and guiding us. We were rather nervous about crossing this large town with the car, and afraid we should not find the right way. But while we were taking tea in a house with some friendly people, a "black man" came into the house. He heard us speak of our difficulties, and offered to take us to the road we wanted to find, as he himself was driving his van that way. So he went slowly in front of us, waiting now and then for us to catch him up, until he saw us safely on our road. It was grand! Praise the Lord!

Another time God undertook for us in a remarkable way. We heard a terrible noise in the motor, and were afraid something was broken. So we stopped at a garage. But it was past 6 p.m. and too late to get the repairs done that night. We were advised to go and camp near the lake, and bring the car the next morning. This we did; and as we stopped near the forest, we decided to take a walk round the lake. On the way, we found a children's camp of young Protestants. We went in and asked for the minister. He came and introduced himself, and to our joy we found he was the pastor who had been so kind to our A. and her husband when they were both ill, and had helped them to get into hospital. I had corresponded with him, but never seen him; so we were glad to get to know him. And he was glad of the opportunity to help us also. He invited us to bring our car into the camping ground—to be safer—and made us very welcome. The next day we joined the children in their morning service, and they were all very friendly. Three of them were Arab boy-scouts who were glad to meet someone who knew their beloved country (North Africa).

ALGERIANS IN FRANCE

The car repairs were soon done and the car working much better; it was not long before we reached the town where our dear native friends were waiting impatiently for us. How sweet it was to find them fairly well, and so happy. Their two boys and the grandmother kept running in and out of the big room, while the husband was busy bringing lemonade and fruit. We were able to make time to read the Gospel, and to invite the neighbours to listen to the Gramophone Gospel Records, which were much appreciated.

Next morning we went visiting with A.'s husband, who knew where all these South Algerian people lived. It was sweet to find in one of them a former "class-girl" with a nice family. Just across the narrow street were others who were glad to hear the message of salvation, also.

After dinner we had to prepare to leave, and we saw A.'s husband bringing in all sorts of provisions for the journey. It was sad to part from these dear people, but we felt they were trusting in the Lord, and that He would undertake for them as He had done before.

The road was a long one now, as we went back southward. One evening we put up near a small village, took our supper near a brook, and then settled down to sleep. In the night I heard men's voices

saying—"That car is Algerian ; they may be bad people." So they brought the police along. But the Gendarme was kind to us and refused to wake us up! And he went off again, rather cross at being called up for "nothing." In this too we felt that the Lord was our Refuge and our Protector.

A. BUTTICAZ.

BACK AGAIN IN TOLGA

I THANK the Lord that He has faithfully kept His promise "The Lord will preserve thy going out and thy coming in." After an excellent voyage I had a very warm reception on my arrival.

Friday the 4th we opened the school, thanking the Lord that all the bigger pupils had come back, though they had thought they would be "shut in," having reached the age fixed for girls to be veiled.

So many new ones also flock in that I cannot find room to seat them in the class room. It is necessary to make two classes. And "O." who is entering her sixth school year, and who is more than 14 years old, is very willing to take charge of the little ones in the house. I have chosen O. because she is the most sensible of the big girls, and above all she loves the Lord Jesus very much. She comes regularly to the service on Sunday. There are in all 65 pupils, and I have had to refuse all of the age for the government school.

Influenza has not spared the school and the whole village is affected. Whole families are in bed. The two military doctors are devoting themselves to the care of the sick, and from every family someone calls for my help. The Lord will need to double my strength, physical and spiritual to meet all these calls.

Let us thank the Lord that His Presence so fills the house, that I have no feeling of loneliness. Let us thank Him too that the atmosphere of the village is more peaceful and less strained than last year.

Let us pray that the hearts of many may be opened by the hearing of the Word in the school and in the homes.

May the Lord grant me the help of which I have need. Pray much for O. for difficulties are sure to beset her path.

M. LULL.

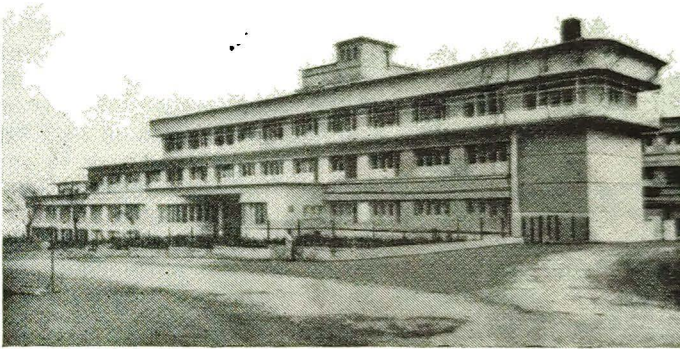
OBITUARY

AS we go to press we learn with very deep sorrow that dear Mademoiselle Buttica, for long years a faithful member of The Band, has received her call to Higher Service. The last years have been spent in fruitful ministry in the region of Setif on the High Plateau, she will be much missed by many who have come to look upon her as confidante and friend. There will be sorrowing souls too at Bou Saada, where, with Miss Alice McIlroy she laboured many years. We extend to Mademoiselle G. Chollet, her closest associate of recent years, and to all the sorrowing relatives and friends our deepest sympathy in this time of sudden bereavement, and pray that The God of all comfort might minister to them richly in their sorrow.

OCTOBER IN MILIANA

WE have already started the Winter Session here in Miliana, and have been wondering how things would go. Missionary work does not get easier in this land, but there are the bright spots; and we thank God for every opportunity He gives us of telling others of His great Salvation.

Recently we visited the hospital. We had been given the names of three young women who had been in an Algiers hospital, and had been sent to this town for further treatment. A French friend had got into contact with them, and spoke to them of Christ. Will you pray for these native friends, that the light of the glorious Gospel may shine into their hearts.



Editions Photo Africaines.

The Hospital, Miliana.

We had the joy of visiting a European in the “hospice,”—a young fellow, a sadly nervous case, whom the Protestant matron had led to Christ. The joy of the Lord shines in his face. Pray that his witness may tell among the other men. There are 34 beds in that infirmary.

We visit the homes of some of our women, they long for friendship and peace, and how glad we are to be able to tell them of the Prince of Peace. Some of them say, “Do come again.”

We are so sorry we cannot visit outside the town, we long to go on the mountain side seeking these needy ones. Pray with us that this may soon be possible.

E. F. COLLINS.

BRIDEWELL HALL—THE ANNUAL MEETINGS

THE attendance was slightly higher than in previous years but still many of our friends were unable to be with us at Bridewell Hall on September 17. It is with these friends in view that we are including a full report of the meetings that you too might share with us some of the blessing of the day.

Just before 3 p.m. friends began to gather in the Lecture Hall. It was a joy to see other Algerian Missionaries in the gathering some of whom had made long journeys to be present. Miss Olive M. Botham took the chair and spoke briefly of her recent visit to Algeria. The Waine family being victims of the Asian 'flu epidemic, Mrs. Waine spoke in the afternoon and Mr. Waine in the evening. Evidently much burdened Mrs. Waine told of living and working conditions in Algiers the city of "barbed wire and propaganda posters." The strain of daily bloodshed and scenes of violence took its toll as did shopping with "basket, shopping list and Identity card" not to mention the all too frequent searching of shopping bags each time a bus was mounted or a large store entered. Although many friends were afraid of open contact personal work was still the key to the door of Hope. To many, the missionary is the only one to whom they can turn. This is a precious if exacting privilege and she asked for special prayer that love, wisdom and much tact be given to all who today were seeking to "sit where they sit."

Many needy souls come the back-door, and irritation has been changed to blessing as this "ministry of interruptions" has seen the smile of God. Family visiting too has led to many profitable and interesting contacts "four little missionaries" are wonderful door and heart openers. One or other of the four was bound, sooner or later, on Sunday afternoon walks to wander into a back yard or court and after apologies and explanations it was possible to "gossip the Gospel."

Mrs. Waine closed with four word pictures. *A lost girl*, a child of two years old, representative of many who have lost parents through the fighting, was brought to the door utterly stunned and hardly able to respond when offered toys and food by the "four little missionaries." *A bewildered boy*, one who attended our Easter Bible School. His father missing and mother left with many young children for whom to care and provide. *A desperate mother*, her eldest son arrested for questioning and as she received the news turned and pathetically asked "who will help me now?" After prayer together she returned home and the son was released within 24 hours. *A faithful witness*, a Christian persecuted by his own for his steadfast stand for Christ, and suspected by the authorities because of the association of relatives with the rebellion.

The Rev. A. C. Robinson spoke movingly from Phil. 3: 10 "and the fellowship of His sufferings" challenging all to a deeper and more intimate identification with Jesus Christ. Illustrating his message with a story of "Woodbine-Willy" of World War I fame, who when challenged by a sentry on one occasion replied to the "Who goes there"

“The Church.” “The Church?” said the sentry incredulously, “What the . . . is she doing here?” So said Mr. Robinson the missionaries, with many years service are there, in battle conditions in likely and unlikely places carrying the message of Salvation through Our Lord Jesus Christ. All were asked to stand, and silently rededicate themselves to God for His service.

Tea followed, fellowship was enjoyed with old friends, and new friendships were made. During the interval there was a continuous showing of recent Kodachrome slides bringing happy memories to ex-servicemen present and renewed interest to others.

The evening meeting was under the chairmanship of Mr. W. C. Cecil Smith who graciously led our Praise and reminded us of the difficulties facing the Band in these days, yet stressing the already accomplished victory that was to be seized by faith. Mr. Stedford the British and Foreign Bible Society Agent in Algiers, was invited from the chair to make a brief contribution to the meeting and told of the happy association between the Bible Society and Missions in Algeria and of his own fellowship with the Band.

The Rev. Ronald Waine, taking as his theme the words of Jesus “I will build my church,” stressed as the most vital challenge facing the Christian Church today, the unbuilt church in Algeria, “the land of the Vanished Church.” The Political unrest only served to cause to stand out in bolder figures the “certainty of Promise” and the assurance that the present was a day of opportunity that must be, in the anointing of the Holy Ghost, fully taken up.

The Rev. Geoffrey King basing his closing message on the words of Gal. 6: 9, “Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” brought to all a message of challenge and inspiration as we thought of A Work to be done “well-doing,” A tendency to be avoided “not be weary,” A promise to be fulfilled “reaping in due season,” and a tragedy to be averted “if we faint not.”

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by” cried the prophet Jeremiah centuries ago. The same cry comes to us all today as we face the anguish of Algeria. This surely is God’s moment, when, with both sides disillusioned and bewildered, we boldly proclaim the answer to this agonising problem. Jesus Christ alone is the answer. He alone can change hatred to love and desire for vengeance to a desire for reconciliation, let us all to whom is committed this ministry of reconciliation, seek so to live and work, that the Cross may yet overthrow the Crescent in troubled Algeria.

“Let His voice sound down into our hearts till we roll away the stone of unbelief that is helping to shut these poor souls into their prison-house. If He is doing ‘no mighty work’ among them, the cause may be as of old. For remember, it is not the handful who are out among them that can win the battle. If it is Satan’s stronghold what is it for a few score of us to go up against it, many of us weighted down with the pressure of spirit that comes on one in lands that are steeped in the power of Satan? It is you at home in the bright, free, spiritual air, who could have power with God for victory.” “Challenge to Faith”—Lilias Trotter.

CHANGING TIMES AND CHANGING WAYS

MEMORIES ranging over about thirty years, these bring a realisation of the changes that have taken place in the lives and customs of the people of Algiers, in many ways—notably for the women. Formerly it was a comparatively rare thing to see two or three Arab women out walking in the streets ; and those one saw were closely veiled and one gave them a wide berth, for their out-door trousers made of about 12 years of white calico stretched from one side to the other of the pavement. Now there are many more women about, and it is not uncommon to meet a woman neatly dressed in what looks like a waterproof with a hood whom, were it not for the little muslin veil which hides (rather inadequately) most of her face, you might take to be a French woman covering her best dress with an “impermeable.”

What a change ! But what a practical one when we think about it. For the modern young woman is not content with the shut-in life of domesticity that her grandmother put up with. She wants to be able to go about, to visit the Cinema, to do her own shopping, even to drive her own car, or ride a motor bicycle : and how awkward it would be to do any of these things when veiled in a sheet-like garment, which had to be constantly rearranged over the head so as to show no hair, and carefully held together by one hand to conceal the face all but the eyes—or sometimes all but *one* eye. Even the indoor dress has changed with many ; and the desire to have “a French dress” with a short and sometimes narrow skirt has helped to break the custom of sitting cross-legged on a cushion on the floor, and taking off the shoes to do so. The tight skirt and high-heeled shoes make it so much more comfortable to sit on a chair.

The account given on another page of an up-to-date wedding, notes a change from the days when brides were decked in the gayest colours, with henna-stained hands, and unnaturally coloured faces ; concealed, at the coming of the bridegroom by a veil which left nothing visible of his bride, till his own hands uncovered her. Now the European fashion of white satin and a transparent veil is the ambition of many young girls ; but in old days to have the head swathed in white muslin was a sure sign of being in mourning.

The same change to European dress in various ways marks the modern man. The inevitable red cap of a Muslim not many years ago is often replaced by a permanently waved head of hair ; and the European coat and long trousers and neat brown shoes have banished the baggy native trousers and heelless slippers, now only worn in the town by older men.

These are changing times, too, with regard to many other things. New ways of treating sickness are becoming more and more acceptable ; even an operation can be anticipated now without too great horror : X-ray photos are really something to be proud of ; and injections (the needle or “a thorn” as they sometimes call it) is so highly esteemed that a patient is apt to feel quite hurt if not treated in this way.

There was a time (not long ago) when we spoke of one woman's infant as "the only baby in the town who has a bath every day"—now ideas of cleanliness and hygiene for the little ones are seeping in slowly.

We could write volumes on the changes to be seen in many Arab or Kabyle homes in other ways, for their quickness in accepting and adapting themselves to European ways and inventions is often remarkable. Motor cars, cinemas, wireless, electricity, air-travelling—all seem to be adopted without the least difficulty as a part of their lives; and the always increasing number of children whose parents wish them to have a French education makes the problem of providing schools and teachers enough, really embarrassing to the Government.

So quick to learn, so eager to copy, so ready to adopt new habits of thinking and living in many ways—the people of Algeria are yet so obstinately conservative, so incapable or so unwilling to see and accept changes that are really important. The modern Muslim clings to the old beliefs, the old superstitions, the worthless forms and customs of former days. Or if he is so modern as to have largely lost his faith in the Creed of Islam, national pride or ambition holds him to the outward form, and renders seemingly impossible the only change that really matters—the change of heart.

How doubly precious it is then to find among them some humble souls who do not turn away from Christian truths with utter indifference or scorn, but seem to be looking with longing eyes to see if they may not find in them the "something better" for which their hearts are blindly seeking! Something which Islam can never give them.

One solemn question must often come to us—these people are so ready to accept what seems good, useful and beautiful to them—is it partly because they do not see the beauty and immeasurable value of Christianity in the lives of Christians that they are so slow to accept Christ? At our best, what poor sign posts we can be to show the way to Christ: at our worst we may only be stumbling blocks to make the way harder. Would that we might be more able to say—as St. Paul, who knew himself as "chief of sinners" and "less than the least" of saints—"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

V. WOOD.

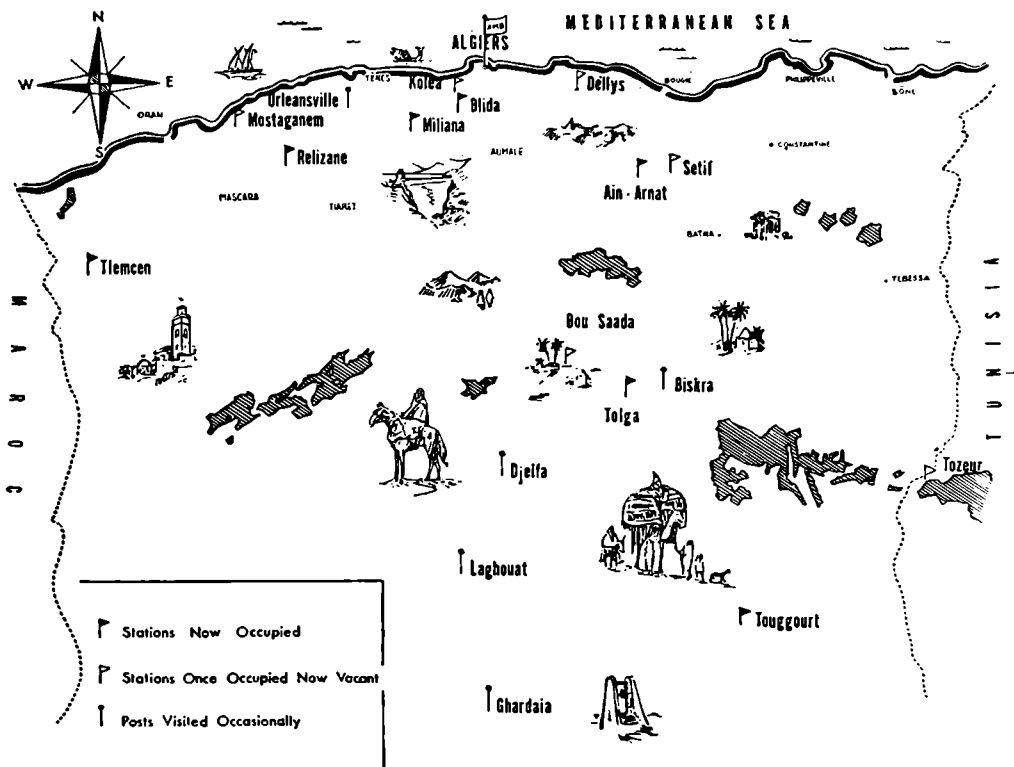
LITERATURE

The following four booklets by Miss Trotter have recently been reprinted. Have you read them?

"Focussed" @ 3d. each. "A Ripened Life" @ 3d. each.
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The "Master of the Impossible" is still available at 5/6d. each. This is "Sayings, for the most part in parable, from the letters and journals of Liliás Trotter." "Parables of the Cross" written by Liliás Trotter, illustrated with some of her own beautiful paintings now offered at 6/6d. per copy.

Other booklets by Miss Trotter:—"A Challenge to Faith" at 3d. "Vibrations" at 3d. "Trained to Rule" at 2d.



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