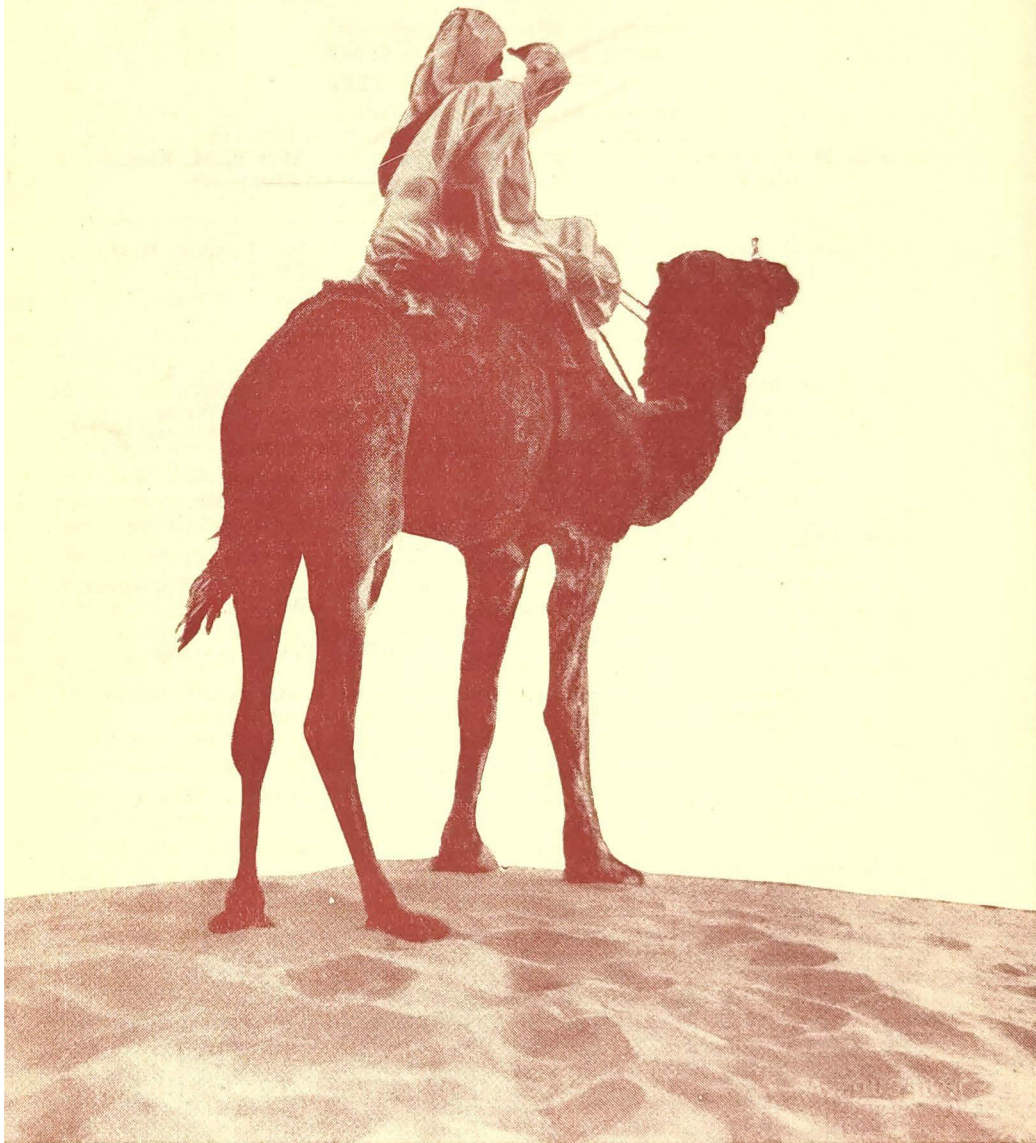


A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

No. 137.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1962.

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

Founded in 1888 by Miss I. Lillias Trotter

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A THIRSTY LAND

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January-February, 1962

EDITORIAL

READERS of "A Thirsty Land" will have seen from the December 1961 issue, under "Notes from the Secretary's Desk, Algiers" that, with the new year, we are venturing on combining with a bi-monthly Magazine, the News and Prayer Letter hitherto sent to Prayer Partners. And so this new number comes in a spirit of prayer that it will continue to prove a very real help and blessing.

When remembering our Missionaries as you read their news and requests for praise and prayer, may we draw your particular attention to the Prayer Cycle on the back page.

* * *

There has been no fresh appointment to the position of General Secretary of the Band. Instead, Mr. P. G. Longley has been appointed as Executive Secretary & Treasurer. Mr. Longley will, of course, continue to work in Algiers.

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK ALGIERS, JANUARY 1962

Throughout the month of January a tense situation has prevailed in the main towns of Algeria. Hundreds of people have lost their lives, or been wounded, in acts committed by rival extremists. We ask all our readers to pray to the Lord that He will soon permit peace to come to this troubled country.

With the changes that we are now making in our magazine, there are also changes in the arrangements for the Editorship.

In the place of Miss V. Wood, Miss D. B. Edge—our Secretary-Treasurer in Great Britain — now becomes Editor of "A Thirsty Land." In this, we are reverting to a former practice of having our Editor in England.

At the request of the Committee, Miss Wood took over the editing of "A Thirsty Land" in the autumn of 1950, and she has nobly continued to bear the responsibility of this posi-

tion until now. We are thankful to her for all the hard work she has put into the task. Miss Wood will continue to assist the new Editor by collecting items of interest on the Field, and forwarding them to London.

Another change which has taken place with the New Year is that Mr. H. W. Buckenham has now relinquished the position of General Secretary, which he has continued to hold since his retirement from the Field. We shall not, however, altogether lose the benefit of Mr. Buckenham's experience and advice, as he has now graciously consented to become President of the Algiers Mission Band.

Mr. Buckenham was appointed General Secretary in February, 1947, in succession to the late Miss S. Perkin. His time in office has been marked by faithfulness to the Mission and its principles, and by a continuous devotion to duty. We are sure that Mr. Buckenham will carry these qualities with him into his new office.

PETER G. LONGLEY.

News and Prayer Items

SOWING THE SEED AT RELIZANE

"The sower soweth the Word"

(Mark 4: 14)

WHAT a privilege it is to be called by the Lord Jesus to be instrumental in sowing the seed of his Word in the hearts of men and women and little children. The hearts of people to-day are just the same as when Jesus told the parable — some hard, some shallow, some occupied, and some receptive. The wonderful

thing is, that God the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer, can *change* hearts and *make* them receptive to the Gospel.

One woman in a court we visit regularly, seemed very hard, and not only did she *not* want to listen, but she tried to prevent others from doing so. Recently there has been a complete change in that woman. Although she has to go out to work in the morning, and only returns home just before we arrive there, usually very tired, she always makes time to sit down and listen. She also asks questions, and seems eager to learn. She has a young sister aged seventetn, whom she invited to come to her house the day she knew we would be there, so that she too, might hear the message.

We went one day to see an old lady who often came to the Mission house, and who loved to sing the hymns, and to listen to God's Word. We had not seen her for a long time, and had tried to contact her, but without success. Quite recently we found out where she lived with her son and his wife, but when we called she was not at home. However, on another visit, we found her there. The son's wife received us graciously, inviting us in for coffee. There were two other women there, and a child, (relatives), all sitting on the ground in the court, and the old lady had a pack of cards, which she was setting out in front of them, which made us think that she was telling fortunes. They stopped what they were doing, and we asked if we could sing and read with them. We sang one or two hymns which we knew were favourites with the old lady, and then proceeded to read. To our amazement out came the cards again, and they did not take the

slightest notice of the reading. Hearts occupied with trivial things and no time for the Gospel. *How* we need to pray for these women.

Some time ago, a teen-aged girl who is showing a real interest, asked if we could supply her with a Bible. We visited her home, and found there an opportunity of giving God's message to quite a large audience, consisting of members of her family and neighbours. She, and other young girls are desirous of coming to the Mission house, so we are to have a class for them each Thursday. We pray that their hearts may be prepared by the Holy Spirit and that the seed sown may bear fruit to His glory.

Sometimes, we have unexpected opportunities for sowing the Seed. For instance, on one occasion, four men, sitting together on the opposite side of a street, called the missionary across, and said "Tell us about the Lord Jesus Christ!" What a joy it was to give them the message of our Lord's birth, death and resurrection, and to warn them of His near return. May the light of His glorious Gospel shine into their darkened hearts.

One Sunday morning we were returning from the French Church, when an Arab whom we had not met before, stopped us and asked if we could let him have a Bible, saying he wanted to read it. He is a public writer, and does a good trade seeing that there are so many illiterate people. A few days after this incident, a native grocer, with whom we deal, also asked for a Bible. He and his family, who live opposite us, are staunch Muslims, and up to now we have not been able to visit the womenfolk. We were very glad we could supply the Bibles, and we pray that as they read, God will prepare

their hearts to receive the good seed of His Word. And so we continue to sow, and to look to the Lord for a time of reaping. A. E. POWELL

E. CLARK

AN UNFORTUNATE HAPPENING AT SETIF

AFTER a busy autumn at Sétif, and a very happy period spent at Bousaada with Miss Mee, Mlle Chollet returned to her post at Sétif, hoping to be able to continue her work there. But it was not long before an unfortunate accident occurred in which she was involved, reducing her to a state of inactivity. And the first month of the new year saw her disabled for the time being. We have no very clear account of what had happened; but she was out in the town one day, when some trouble arose in the street—(a quarrel or dispute?, an evil-doer in flight) whatever it was, the affair came to such a pass that the soldiers were obliged to interfere to restore order. Shots were fired, probably to disperse the crowd, and a stray shot wounded Mlle. Chollet in the muscular part of the leg above the ankle. Though not a dangerous wound, it entailed much loss of blood necessitating days in hospital and a further period of being laid up at home and unable to put her foot to the ground. At the time of writing, she is said to be making slow progress, though still unable to get up, and weak from loss of blood. Miss Gow soon joined her at Sétif, and she writes that the wounds are healing well, and the doctor had ordered her injections to re-establish circulation. We praise God that she is improving, though slowly, and hope that by the time you read this she may be looking forward to full recovery very soon.

DAR NAAMA

OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 1961

TWO series of Bible Study Meetings in Arabic have been held this quarter—both at Colonne Voirol. On 28-29 October, they were led by Mr. Marsh, and on 9-10 December by Mr. Brown of the North Africa Mission. Attendances were not large on the whole.

The Prayer Court at Dar Naama was made use of on the 7th of October by the Hussein Day Assembly for Baptists; on 12th December by the "Conseil des Missions Evangéliques en Algérie" for their Annual Meeting; and on 17th December by the English and American Sunday School, for their Annual Carol Service, when 36 adults and 30 children were present.

Miss Gow returned to Dar Naama on 4th November. Following her return, the class for girls was reopened. To make it easier to manage the class, it has been divided into two groups, one meeting on Monday afternoons, and the other on Thursday mornings. The average attendance on Mondays has been six, and on Thursdays, 12. Special Christmas classes, illustrated by a film-strip, were held on December 14th and 18th.

With the reopening of the classes, less time has been available for visiting, though a certain amount has been possible, and one new home has been entered. At the invitation of the Misses Dudgeon and Wicks, a few Arabic-speaking women at Guyotville were visited on 29th November.

The number of women coming on Fridays has again varied from 2 to 6. For the first three weeks in December no one came; the young

woman who is usually so regular, was ill.

A happy Christmas Service, conducted by Si M'barek in Arabic, was held in the afternoon of Christmas Eve. We were glad to welcome the 12 adults and 10 children who came.

Benaissa has been able to get work at the "Cité Départementale d'Enfance" in Algiers. He began on 6th November, and is in charge of a group of boys.

V. WOOD

P. G. LONGLEY.

E. E. LONGLEY

THE CLOSE OF 1961 AT MILIANA

JANUARY 2nd, 1962

THIS Christmas we planned a cartescope service for the women's meeting, and later for girls and boys' classes. A cartescope has its advantages for we use post cards; and when we want the boys or girls to sing or learn texts, we write these in French or Arabic (reversed) and they come out in large clear writing on the screen. So a cartescope show can be funny or instructive and the many beautiful Scripture cards enable us to explain the Bible stories. The constant changing of pictures keep little legs the right way round on the forms, and eyes alert for the "next one."

This term has been a busy one, distributing to certain displaced women — brought from their villages by the soldiers, to live in the suburbs of Miliana or wherever a room could be found. Also we had a number of widows and aged, some of whom could only live by begging. Then there were some with families of children, but with the husband missing, or

possibly serving his term in prison; and lastly, there were homes where the breadwinner was in bad health, and unable to earn for them.

The gifts that came from the Cimade to be given away, were powdered milk, excellent cooking oil, wheat, and sacks of second-hand clothing and shoes. From the spiritual side it meant for us a good congregation, for 50 to 60 women came twice a week to a Bible reading — a wonderful opportunity for consecutive teaching. Hot cups of black coffee and bread cheered their spirits to listen, and they were an attentive audience, even during a prayer at the end.

These were cheering times in the midst of anxiety and sorrow, for the angel of death came among our inner circle, and one of our Christian women lost her husband; another brave little wife lost her precious only baby of about two years old — a weary time, for their customs mean sad wailing, with scratching of faces, etc. and binding their foreheads with white bands.

I feel that the little babe has been taken by the angels from a sad Moslem world. And we thank God that the husband of Buchta had a Christian Arab alongside, who was reading the Gospel message to him, and at his request praying up to the last. Our heavenly Father knoweth the hearts.

I rejoiced when one day I had omitted the final prayer at a meeting, and one called out "You have not finished, you have not prayed with us to-day."

Miss Russell was able to be with us for a while, and many were glad to welcome her and to listen to the message she brought.

In one way it was a sad time for Buchta's husband was suffering, sometimes in hospital where I could visit him, at other times in his home up the mountain, where no doctor would risk the danger of calling on him. At last the doctor said he could do no more and Medjehed was taken home to die. Djeloul his brother-in-law spent the nights with him and at his request read the well known passages of the Gospel to him and at the last he asked Dj. to help him to witness. Dj. came to me after, full of joy that the Lord had let him help this soul. He prayed for him the Lord's prayer which he had been teaching him, and Medjehed thanked him for his help.

As to Literature, the numbers are small. A Jewish shopkeeper took a Hebrew - French New Testament promising to read it: an Arab who had been some years in prison, asked for an Arabic New Testament in literary Arabic; and another French Bible went to the widow of a Jew by request of a French Lady. The boys' class accepted tracts; and "The finest Story" went to several girl readers. It is not yet the time when we can do colportage openly in the streets.

M. D. GRAUTOFF
with help of
MISS E. CHANTLER

BLIDA

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1961

C LASSES began late this autumn, as workmen were busy on the roof, and one of us was away in Milliana, with the car. We finally opened our doors on November 2nd (while political slogans were being shouted in the lane) and made a

modest beginning with the quieter element of our girls' classes. Next day, Mlle. Guibé began her daily French lesson to a group of little girls, who have not been able to enter school. By the end of the term, ten of them were coming as regularly as clockwork, and were making visible progress. One former pupil has dropped off, however. She is our nextdoor neighbour and quite a personality. Apparently she has decided in her own mind that there is something wrong (Query? Heretically or politically) in Mlle Guibé's French teaching, so she will now attend only the Thursday Bible class, when the lesson is given in Arabic.

We decided that it would be unwise to receive big boys into the classes at the present time, but the little ones have been coming faithfully, one of them from as far away as Montpensier. This gives us an excuse to visit one of the new "skyscrapers" recently erected there! Visiting, in general, is attended by many problems. It must be carried out during school hours, and even then Koranic school children mob us, shouting and laughing until women look out to see what is happening, on the mountain side. Small wonder that the mother to be visited for the first time is doubtful of our intentions, when she sees the crowds of small children in attendance. In some cases, where a friendly welcome has been accorded and the stage set, so to speak, for the preaching of the Gospel, an adroit hand will turn on the wireless, in order to drown any possible message. The Arabic meetings, held on two occasions in El-Biar, were attended by six natives from Blida, who showed great interest.

The Christmas Fêtes were more than usually joyous and colourful

this year, for Miss Grautoff was our guest speaker. She not only played the harmonium, but explained the film of the Shepherds going to Bethlehem, as only some one who has really been there herself, could do.

The women's gathering was limited to the mothers, aunts and grandmothers of the ten little daily scholars, who were also present, to sing their Christmas hymns and receive a woollen garment each, by way of award.

P. M. RUSSELL
J. GUIBE

TOLGA

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1961

IT was not without a heavy heart that I decided to give up the daily school class and direct my attention more to the work among the older girls; it seemed to me that the little girls would desert the house altogether, but the result has been very different. Not only do the former pupils come almost every day to the Mission house as soon as they leave school (a Government school for girls) specially on Thursdays and Sundays, being days when they do not attend, but they also bring with them several of their classmates, who have never been to the house before.

The gatherings for the older girls are very interesting. We have finished our studies on the women of the Old Testament, and have begun on the New Testament. Each one in turn reads the Bible passage or a hymn, and then we give an explanation. One often feels that certain girls are a bit fanatical and don't want to listen, especially when we have prayer. But, God will know well how

to find the way to their hearts. Most of them have great joy in coming.

The Sunday school for the little European boys has been well attended.

The season ended in the glad Christmas time, with the Christmas Tree, and the usual fun.

On Christmas Day we had a service of Holy Communion with the Europeans; and in the afternoon the Fête for the schoolchildren and the more senior girls (sixty of them in all). On Wednesday morning, no less than two hundred and four boys of 6 to 14 years old, squeezed into the class-room to hear Mr. Bellet talk to them of the Magi coming to worship the Son of God. On Wednesday afternoon, seventy five little girls and about ten women heard the Christmas Message.

M. LULL

A 'TE DEUM' TAPESTRY.

Writers in the whole world of books are legion, and indeed so are the great composers, artists and architects of all time, who, through their immortal works have found expression in praise and beauty to the Glory of God.

One need scarcely enlarge on this, but it is perhaps as well to recall for instance, the great heritage we have in the Psalms of David and in other treasured passages of the Bible and, not the least, in the whole realm of masterpieces in music, literature and painting which can lift up the human heart, so furnishing and enriching and renewing the mind that, for the Christian more especially perhaps, there is always room for thanksgiving and praise to the One to Whom it is due.

"Something lives in every hue

That Christless eyes have never seen!"

It is the purpose of the writer to 'weave' in prose and verse, month by month, something of a 'tapestry' of great thoughts, the 'threads' of which will be drawn from various 'skeins' of colour, in the hope that comfort and strength may be found, with a fresh zeal to witness for Him and to serve Him better in the days ahead, *because* of a new 'te deum' in the heart!

And so, at the beginning of a new year, I leave with you the first 'threads' of *A Te Deum Tapestry*.

"Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving, glorifieth Me:
And prepareth a way that I may show him the salvation of God."

Psalm 1, 23 (RV. margin).

D. B. EDGE.

JOTTINGS The Annual Re-
FOR YOUR Union Meetings for
DIARY 1962, are fixed D.V.
for Wednesday, 3rd
October, at 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.,
(with tea interval) in the Tudor
Room at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

The Prayer Meetings, held on the last Tuesday of each month, are at 7.15 p.m., at Algiers House, 92 Gordon Road, Ealing, W.13. (Single-decker Bus 211 from Ealing Broadway Station, passes the house every few minutes).

Do join us on these occasions? We feel sure there must be many more supporters in the London area who could do so, and who would be doing a very real service to the Lord's work in Algeria, particularly perhaps at the present time. D. B. EDGE

