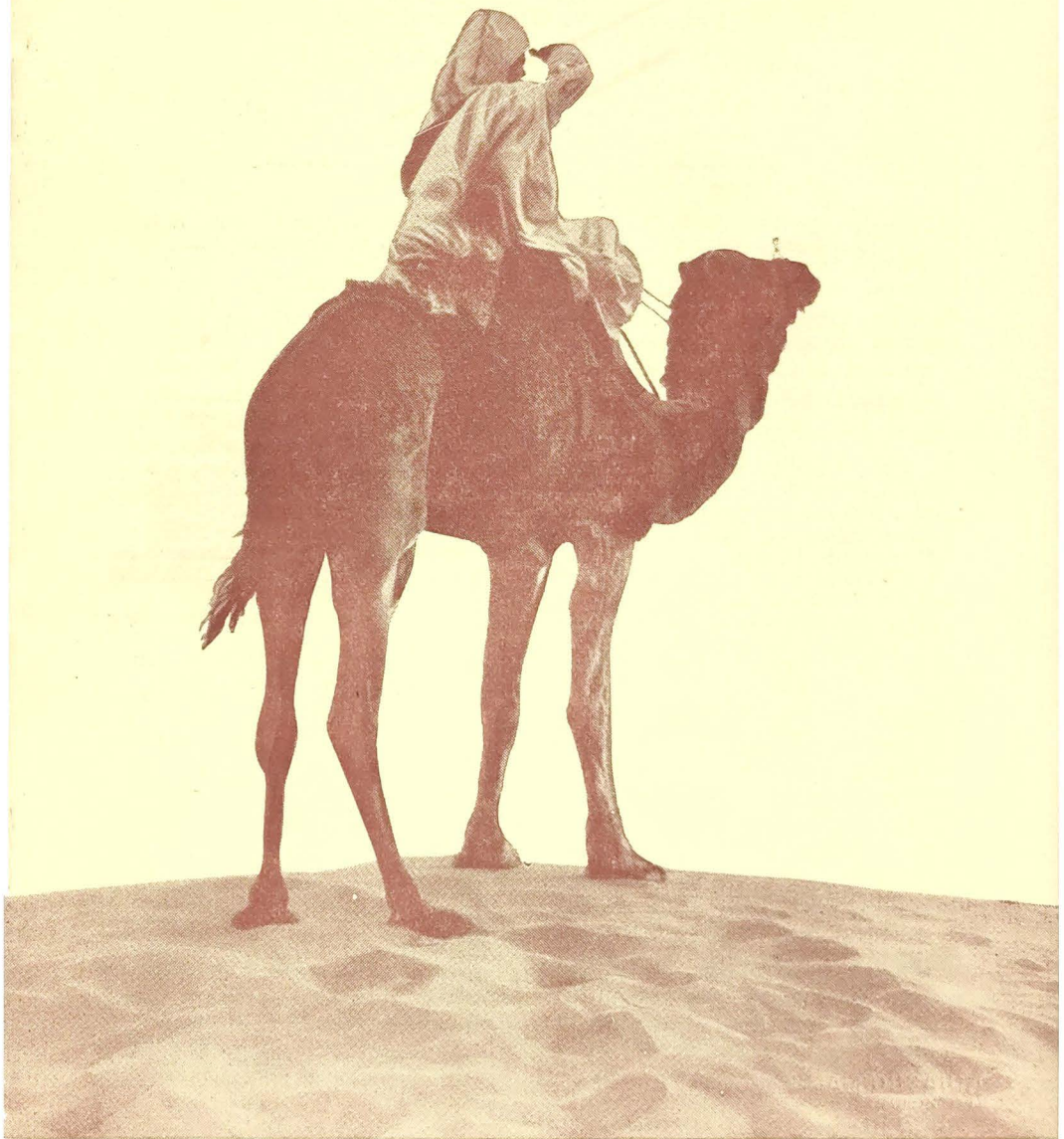


# *A Thirsty Land*



*Algiers Mission Band*

No. 144.

JUNE, 1963.

# ALGIERS MISSION BAND

*Founded in 1888 by Miss I. Lilius Trotter*

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# A THIRSTY LAND

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Algiers Mission Band

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## OBITUARY

We regret to announce the passing of Mr. John L. Oliver, on 28th February, 1963, at his home in Kent.

Mr. Oliver, who for many years was Secretary of the Nile Mission Press, became a member of the Home Advisory Council of the A.M.B. in 1925, and for a short while was its Chairman until ill-health prevented his attending meetings. He had also been a member of the Executive Committee since 1930. He was greatly used of God in the training of young people, especially in Crusader Classes.

Our sympathy goes to his widow and daughters in this their time of bereavement.

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## *Editorial*

**T**HE Annual Meetings which took place on Wednesday 22nd May '63, in the Tudor Room, Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.1., were a time of happy reunion, but they were more than that, for we were reminded of the great need for constant prayer for those serving in Algeria, and for the needy souls to whom they bear the 'Good News'.

There was no doubt that the Lord was with us at our Meetings, and the messages indeed provided food for thought and prayer, though we regretted the unavoidable absence of our missionaries this year.

A recent visitor to the Field, Mrs. D. Bland stepped into the breach however, and gave us her impressions of the present state of things in that war scarred Country, and of how they have affected work on some of the Stations.

We commend our readers to a fuller report appearing on page 4 of this Magazine.

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Owing to the present serious shortage of missionary personnel involving difficulties in gathering adequate news for our Magazine, we are having to revert to our former quarterly circulation of "A Thirsty Land" instead of the more frequent practice of a bi-monthly "News and Prayer Sheet."

This means, regrettably, that there will be an omission of the Prayer Letter, and A.M.B. supporters will receive news three or four times a year. It will be remembered that, in Nos: 136 & 137 of "A Thirsty Land," it was announced the Maga-

zine and Prayer Letters were to be combined, thus calling for a bi-monthly issue. We feel sure that the change over to the quarterly circulation will in no way affect the prayerful interest and support of our A.M.B. friends.

*E. Clark and A. E. Powell*

## RELIZANE

( January - March, 1963 )

How true it is that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways. We certainly did not think that when we invited a young lady, connected with the Society for the Protection of Animals to stay with us for a few days, it would mean a door of opportunity for her to care for many sick and overworked animals, whose owners are too poor to look after them properly themselves. Neither did we think that this would mean a door of opportunity for us to preach the Gospel to the owners of these animals, but such has been the case. We have had several interesting contacts with men from surrounding villages that we have not otherwise been able to reach. The month of Ramadan is usually a period when the normal mission programme is restricted, but during that time we were able to visit in the fonducks (stables), and as we spoke to the owners of the animals there was attentive listening and, seemingly, no resistance to the message. We have been invited to visit the home of one of the Relizane cattle dealers.

*P. G. and E. E. Longley*

## REPORT FROM ALGIERS (EL - BIAR)

( January - March, 1963 )

Regular help has again been given to the children's classes on Thursday afternoons at the Mennonite Mission in El-Biar. At Dar Naama a class for small boys from the immediate vicinity has been held on Thursday mornings. A few women have come, singly, on various occasions and have stayed to sing a few hymns and to hear a reading from the Gospel.

Some homes in El-Biar and other parts of the city have been visited, as has also the hospital at Beni-Messous. There are many doors open for the ministry of visitation, which could be entered if there were more to share in the work.

Help has been given from time to time with the office work connected with the Bible Correspondence Scheme organised by the North Africa Mission. 4,500 courses have been sent out and several hundred are progressing with the lessons already.

Few weeks have passed when there has not been a visit from one or more missionaries, of various societies. Some come just to make a call, others to stay for a while. We are privileged to have their fellowship.

While we have been able to visit freely, the difficulty now is that some of our people have removed to houses formerly occupied by Europeans and we have not yet been able to find them. One house, the door of which has been closed to us for over a year, is once again open. The father of this family, who was once so friendly, had become almost hostile. However, his attitude has completely changed and he it was who came to ask us to go and see them again.

A short time ago we had a visit for a few days of four colleagues of the North Africa Mission from Oran, also the colporteur of the Bible Society there. The whole of Relizane and some of the surrounding villages were visited. Many Gospels and other portions of the Word and Christian literature were sold and distributed. They visited the jam factory and had opportunities of talks with the workers there. They also visited the public buildings, cafés and shops. The first two days they were very well received, then some of them met with opposition. Nevertheless, we praise God for the seed sown and believe that many will be delivered from the power of Islam, as they read God's Word for themselves, for "The Word of God is not bound."

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*P. M. Russell and J. Guibé*

#### **BLIDA**

( January - March, 1963 )

The fast month came right in the middle of the period under review and inevitably slowed down our activities, but in the interim we were occupied with a visit from Miss Grautoff and Mrs. Bland.

Several factors have combined to keep the schoolgirls away from us. Most of them were fasting and in addition, sports were organised for them on Thursday afternoons. Much publicity was also given to the creation of a new mosque in what was formerly known as the "Hall of Tobacco." Ben Bella, himself, was present at the inaugural ceremony, which took place at the end of Ram'than. The small girls have been influenced, too, but in a lesser degree, and the little day-school for

learning French has dwindled down to two members, who live next door.

Against these depressing facts, we have to report a most remarkable "come back" on the part of the boys. A set who had not darkened our doors for about three years suddenly turned up to the class held in Arabic. They have continued coming, about twenty strong, throughout the month of March. As we watch their eager faces and remember how violently unfriendly they were towards us, during the Summer months and right on into December, we can only say, with awe, "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes."

We were greatly cheered on the last Friday of the month when five of the mothers of these boys came to a Women's meeting. We hope and pray that others will follow their example.

Several of our near neighbours have gone to live in houses down at the other end of the town. A visit to one such family resulted in the return of the three little girls to the class, in spite of the very long, uphill walk involved.

*M. D. Grautoff*

#### **MILIANA**

( April, 1963 )

With the help of Miss Chantler and Mrs. Bland I went up to Miliana to find out what had been happening there and how my Arab friends were doing. It was also necessary to clear up papers, empty desks and set the poor little Mission station in order, while awaiting God's leading for the future.

Unhappily, Miss Chantler and I both caught influenza from the many embracing friends, so several days

had to be spent in bed. Yet, thank God, a few I much needed to talk with, came to see me.

One's heart was giaddened in two cases, especially. One witnessed when asked by a Moslem: "Are you a Christian?" by replying: "Yes. I need a Saviour from my sins." Another, when he and I were alone in the room, said quietly: "Yes, yes; I follow Jesus Christ."

Let us remember that it needs faith and courage to be a Christian out in this new country. As far as one knows there is not a Protestant left in Miliana . . . no one to read to the half blind or to talk to the women and children about their Saviour. They must feel forsaken.

Let us who are in the Homeland also remember to pray, daily, for these people.

*Winifred D. Pearce*  
(*Author and Journalist*)

ANNUAL MEETINGS  
Caxton Hall, Westminster  
( May, 1963 )

Although no missionaries were present at Caxton Hall on May 22nd for our annual meetings, in the afternoon we had up-to-date news from the field. Mrs. D. Bland, a friend of Miss Grautoff's, who had accompanied her to Algeria on her return after an absence of six months, gave us a most interesting account of what she had seen during her short visit, and of the impressions she had gathered.

She began by saying that when she was thinking about what she would tell us, Isaiah 58: 6 came to mind: "To loose the bands of wicked-

ness, to undo heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke." These words just expressed the condition of the people of Algeria. She had seen the crowds milling in Blida; Arabs everywhere, and in the bonds and yoke of Islam. It was to be observed in their faces and in their attitude. "I thought," said the speaker, "of the faithful band of missionaries living and working in their midst, despite so much discouragement, and I wondered how they could reach all these thousands. *They* cannot, but God uses them to proclaim the liberating Gospel. Only He can unloose bands and break yokes, but they are there as His representatives."

While some converts had stood firm during Miss Grautoff's absence, others were a great disappointment. Can we be surprised when we remember that hundreds are unable to read, and those who can have no Bible in their own colloquial Arabic? And for six months there had been no missionary, no services, no meetings. A man and his wife who had been caretaking at the Mission House had abused their office by appropriating articles.

Following the revolution there was race hatred, and it was to be seen even in children. In the Islamic schools they were taught that it was their duty to hate the foreigner, and Sunday School attendance had been badly affected. These things constituted a clamant call to prayer on the part of friends at home, and among individual cases needing special remembrance was that of a Christian couple recently divorced. This was a heart-breaking slur on Christ's name. The instigator was

the husband's fanatical mother who was angry because her son had married a Christian girl. He had admitted that he was in the wrong, but it was difficult for him to go back to his wife.

Mrs. Bland concluded with another special prayer request for Mrs. Longley, who had remained in Algiers during the revolution, continuing her visitation of the homes during that unsettled time and going out into the streets when others feared to do so. Things were easier now, but that period of strain had left its mark. God's word to Ezekiel was, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman." We should watch events that we might pray intelligently.

This afternoon meeting was presided over by Mr. C. Bird, who pointed to the concluding verses of St. Mark's Gospel as the strongest argument for missionary work at home and abroad.

In a closing address the Rev. J. S. Potter, of Tollington Park Baptist Church, used the narratives of fishermen mending and cleaning their nets when called to follow Christ, to demonstrate the need for cleansing, adequate preparation and obedience if we are to be successful fishers of men.

At both meetings we were privileged to listen to the inspiring recitation of challenging passages of Scripture appropriate to the occasion, by Miss G. Martin-Harvey.

Miss D. B. Edge gave news of retired missionaries commending them to the prayers of all who know them.

She said she felt that we heard much at meetings (quite rightly) of missionaries in action on the Field, but let us remember those who have also served, and who have given of

their best to the Lord for so many years in the forefront of the 'battle'. They, too, need our prayers as they have to adjust themselves to a new life behind the scene of activity, through age or infirmity.

Miss Edge mentioned Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham and Miss Farmer in a settlement for retired people in Norfolk, Miss Roche in Norwich and Miss Wood in a Home at Bickley, Kent.

In the evening, the chair was occupied by Mr. E. Pearson, who paid tribute to the memory of Miss Ida Nash, who had served the Lord faithfully for many years in Algeria, and to Mr. John Oliver who had been chairman of the Home Council for a number of years, previous to Mr. H. F. Berry. He again called for the exercise of the weapon of prayer in the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged.

The guest speaker was Mr. E. J. Long, Home Secretary of the North Africa Mission, who said he rejoiced in the co operation between the two missions in the seconding of Mr. and Mrs. Ewing to Tlemcen. With forty years' experience of work in North Africa, at the beginning of which he was associated with missionaries who had laboured there for a similar period, Mr. Long was able to give an illuminating review of progress from those early days when mission stations were isolated units, there being no form of wheeled transport whatsoever, and the vast majority of the people were totally illiterate, to the present time, when missionaries were in contact with one another, schools were opening up everywhere, and new methods were disseminating the Gospel, notably in Bible correspondence courses for which there were over 2,000 enrolments.

*M. D. Grautoff*

THE 75 YEARS OF  
THE A.M.B.  
( March 10, 1888 - 1963 )

We have come to an important date in our mission, for on the 10th March 1888, Miss I. L. Trotter and her friend, Miss Haworth, arrived in Algiers, beginning those 40 years of strenuous mission work. Shortly after Miss Freeman joined them, there were a few other missionaries already in the country, but no one had tried to live in the Casbah, i.e., the native quarter of the town.

A few years later when some Arabic had been learned, these pioneers began preparing the way for their Band of Missionaries by itinerating far and wide.

In those days it meant travelling on mules over the mountain tracts or for longer distances, and the four mules had to be changed every four hours to get to the towns, *now* we arrive in 2 or 3 hours by taxi or car!

When their way turned toward the desert, camels and camping tents with the dangers of highwaymen were the order of the day as even I can remember.

Miss Trotter, with her gift for leadership, was thus studying the land for her future workers while visiting the Caïds and sowing the seed of the Gospel in many isolated places.

In 1907, Miss Trotter felt the time had come to give a name to the band of missionaries who had joined her. She therefore chose the title "Algiers Mission Band" and held her first Committee of 6 to watch and pray with her as the work developed.

In the autumn of 1909 three couples of women workers were sent out — one to Blida (though that station had been worked for some years), the others to Relizane and Miliana.

It seems another world to look back upon, but those who have read the life of Miss I. L. Trotter will remember her forethought in the preparing of tracts and suitable literature especially for the Arabic readers of the south. How we thank God for that gift He gave her. The first desert station was Tozeur in South Tunisia, with Nefta a few miles beyond, then came Borisaada and Tolga, and later Touggourt.

Tolga is still a prosperous mission station where Madame Lull (since the Home Call of Mr. S. Lull, so beloved by the Arabs) has carried on among her women and girls.

Now, in 1963, we look around sadly, for Touggourt has closed for the time, owing to the death of Miss I. K. Nash. Tozeur and Nefta were lost to us during the second world war, when Miss Wood had to leave suddenly before the oncoming armies.

Sétif awaits new workers, for Mlle. Chollet has had to retire owing to ill-health; and Miliana, open till June 1962 awaits young workers to take over.

Tlemcen (closed for well over a year) has lately been occupied by capable missionaries of the North African Mission who will understand that town of Arabic Scholars — We thank God for their help.

Meanwhile, Dar Naama (El Biar), Blida, Relizane and Tolga have been carrying on faithfully in spite of difficulties, disappointments and, at one time, dangers.

Now, since the referendum, it is



a more peaceable time, yet, the properties must be manned and holidays for the workers are somewhat vague, for an empty house might be easily seized and Arab families installed.

D. B. Edge

### A TE DEUM TAPESTRY

The Lord was my stay.

—Ps. xviii. 18.

It is impossible to over-estimate the blessing of a restful heart. To be calm and peaceful "with sorrows surging round;" to be still, yet active, even when "by thronging duties press'd," are privileges that belong only to those who have found the soul's true Resting-place. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust."

We cannot say "My heart is fixed" until we have found the Rock that cannot be moved. It is not the strength of our efforts to cling that is our stay, but the firmness of the

Rock on which we rest. The Lord is our Stay. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." (Isa. xxvi. 3.).

The Scriptures teach us that God is immovable, unchanging, unfailling. The Lord is *immovable*. Of nothing here on earth can this be said. Until we have made Him our Rock we can know nothing of true abiding rest. The Lord is *unchanging*. What we find Him to be to us to-day He will be to us to-morrow. He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8.). In Him is "no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James i. 17. R. V.).

The Lord is *unfailling*.

"Broken Bread",  
By The Reverend Evan H. Hopkins.

\*

"Even the winds and the sea obey Him!" — Matthew 8. 27.

"And though by storms assailed,  
And though by trials pressed,  
Himself our life, He bears us up  
Right onward to the rest."

Anon.

## PRAYER CYCLE

*“ Pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” James v. 16.*

<b>Monday:</b>	Algiers	Mr. & Mrs. P. G. Longley.
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Blida Miliana	Miss P. M. Russell & Mlle. J. Guibé Miss M. D. Grautoff
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Relizane	Miss E. Clark & Miss A. E. Powell
<b>Thursday:</b>	Tlemcen	Mr. & Mrs. F. Ewing (North Africa Mission)
<b>Friday:</b>	Tolga Sétif & Touggourt	Madame Lull  Temporarily Closed
<b>Saturday:</b>		Missionaries on leave of absence in England: Rev. & Mrs. R. J. Waine Retired Missionaries in England: Mr. & Mrs. H. W. Buckenham, Miss A. M. Farmer, Miss M. H. Roche, Miss V. A. C. Wood.
<b>Sunday:</b>	London Centre	Miss D. B. Edge Members of Executive Committee & Home Council.