

Horizons of Hope



THE COVER PICTURE

The shrine of the Marabout—the tomb of a Muslim ‘Saint’—in the centre of the picture, obscures the palm tree behind, the only sign of life. Beyond on the distant horizon, the Oasis just visible, life more abundant at the very source of life.

Jesus said: “Whosoever drinketh the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

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ONE SHILLING



CAN THESE
DRY BONES LIVE ?

*A Muslim Cemetery
in the
Oasis of Biskra.*

The photograph on page 1 and the map in the centre are reproduced by kind permission of the "Société Shell D'Algérie."

Horizons of Hope

"The future . . . is widened by several horizons of hope in new openings and new workers that seem to be on their way to us. Beyond these human horizons, God has given . . . divine horizons of resources that lie in the Cross of Christ, for the battle against 'principalities and powers' gets more and more intensely real."

LILIAS TROTTER.

OCTOBER, 1905

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ALGIERS MISSION BAND

ALGIERS AND LONDON

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CHAPTER ONE

For My Sake and the Gospel's

IN the evening of the 9th March 1888, a steamer entered the port of Algiers in North Africa. On board were a young Englishwoman, Miss Lilius Trotter, and two companions. The following morning they disembarked. Later, Miss Trotter wrote, "I shall never forget the loveliness of our first sight out of our port-hole of the Arab town rising tier above tier in a glow of cream colour against the blue-grey western sky, the water glimmering in blue and gold below."

Lilius Trotter had made a difficult choice. She had deliberately given up the opportunity of a career as an artist in order to devote herself to the evangelisation of the Arabs of North Africa. Constantly she seemed to hear God's call to go to these people to whom no one else was taking the Good News of Jesus Christ. Writing of her arrival in Algiers, she says, "The future was all a blank; we only knew with that inexplicable knowing that makes an inward call, that we were to come, and here we were."

Algeria, the land to which Lilius Trotter felt impelled to go, is a large country lying in the north-west of the African continent. Its northern boundary is the coast of the Mediterranean, while to the south stretches the vast Sahara Desert. It is over 600 miles from east to west and twice that distance from north to south. In the north, part of the range of the Atlas mountains reaches heights of up to 6,500 feet, while the volcanic mountains of the Sahara are even higher. The climate varies greatly. Extremes are reached in the south, where it is very hot in summer, and where little rain falls. Near the coast there is a fairly heavy winter rainfall, while snow covers the mountains for several months of the year. Many crops can be grown in the north, but in the south there is little vegetation except in the scattered oases.

Lilius Trotter was one of the first to realise that Algeria should not be omitted from the command we have been given, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel."

CHAPTER TWO

Other Sheep I Have

ON catching sight of Algeria once again, when returning from Switzerland in October 1896, Lilius Trotter wrote, "He is there, among those mountains, our Good Shepherd finding His sheep at last."

The most ancient of the races inhabiting Algeria are the Berber tribes—including Kabyles and Mozabites. They were the people who lived in the Roman provinces of Africa, Numidia and Mauretania, when a high degree of civilisation was reached. Many ruins of Roman buildings can still be seen in North Africa, but a more primitive way of life returned after the collapse of the Roman Empire, and the Arab invasions in the 7th and 11th centuries of the Christian era. The Arabs dominated the land until, after a short time under the Spaniards, rule of the country passed to the Turks in 1518. Then, following the victory at Algiers in 1830, the country came under French influence in 1847. The present political situation is, however, very unsettled. Algeria's neighbours are Tunisia on the east and Morocco on the west. Both are now independent states, after having been under European protection for some years.

The Arabs now form the majority among the inhabitants. The population consists of about eight million Arabs and Berbers, almost a million Europeans, mostly French, and 100,000 Jews. The people are concentrated mainly in the north of the country, where there are several large towns and many smaller ones. Southern Algeria is much larger in extent than the north, but very sparsely populated.

Arabic is the most widely spoken language in the country—although different regions have their own local dialects. The number of people who can read Arabic is still small, but increasing. Here and there someone is met who has been trained to read the Classical books written in a literary style. Kabyle and other Berber languages are still spoken in some of the villages. French is now spoken by almost all the Europeans, and is learnt at

*" Other sheep
I have . . .
them also
I must
bring."*



school by the Arab and Kabyle children. Spanish and Hebrew are other languages spoken by minorities.

The Christian Church was established in North Africa at an early date. By the end of the second century A.D. it had considerable influence, but instead of devoting itself to the spread of the Gospel, it was divided by controversy. This deadening dissension was the cause of its final collapse. It failed because it had no vision. The Bible was never translated into the language of the Berber people and so they were an easy prey to the Arab invasion. All traces of Christianity disappeared.

While the modern European population of Algeria is nominally Roman Catholic, almost the entire Arab and Berber population are adherents of Islam. This religion claims more than 350 million Muslims, in a broad belt of the earth stretching from Morocco in the west to Malaya and Indonesia in the east. These millions blindly follow the teaching of Muhammad which fails to uplift them or to transform their lives. Islam was at first propagated by the sword and is now professed by a short creed: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet." The Islam of Algeria is largely mixed with animism, and rests more on custom than on Muslim doctrine. To-day, however, it seems as if an Islamic nationalism is taking the place of a purely religious attitude.

Islam denies the Divine Sonship of Christ, and His Death for sinners on the Cross. It is hostile to the Bible and the Christian Faith, and has demonstrated its power in taking over a land once nominally Christian and making it thoroughly Muslim. What a challenge to the Church! Are we prepared to go forward with this assurance, ". . . greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" ?

Love Thy Neighbour

IT was in response to the challenge of Islam that Miss Trotter and her companions settled in Algiers, in the Arab section of the capital city. By slow degrees they gained an entrance into Arab houses with the message of Life. Soon other missionaries joined them, and in 1907 this small group took the name of the ALGIERS MISSION BAND. In the same year a large Arab house was obtained at El Biar, a suburb three miles from the centre of Algiers, on the hills overlooking the port. It was named "Dar Naama"—Arabic for "House of Grace"—and later became the Headquarters of the Mission. It was here that in 1928 Lilius Trotter passed into God's Presence, after forty years of giving herself for the people of North Africa. But the work she began has been continued by those who have followed in her footsteps.

For many years the work was carried on from premises in various parts of Algiers. This fine city has been progressively modernised by the French, and now, with its suburbs, has a population of over



General view
of modern
Algiers
Photo, "Ofalac."

*Dar Naama—
Entrance from
garden*



half a million. But it is a city of contrasts. Large blocks of flats stand side by side with old Arab houses and the wood and iron huts and shacks of the poor. Branches of large stores compete for trade with the traditional open-air markets. Since 1944, however, the activities of the Mission in this area have been concentrated at El Biar.

Dar Naama has been for many years the scene of important aspects of the Mission work. Here the administration of the Mission is centred, and here also all the missionaries gather from time to time for special meetings and conferences. It is a welcome change for those stationed in the hotter parts of the country to come here in the summer months. Here, too, language study occupies the time of those who have recently joined the Mission. Services and meetings in French and Arabic are held according to circumstances. Women missionaries visit Arab homes in the neighbourhood with the Gospel Message.

Another notable feature at Dar Naama is the Literature work. Over the years large quantities of booklets, tracts and Scripture portions have been published in French and Arabic. These are distributed not only to A.M.B. missionaries, but to Christian workers of other agencies in many parts of the world. There is continual scope for the production of the Gospel Message in printed form, which can often reach where man cannot go. Now that literacy is on the increase, this is a very important branch of missionary endeavour.

Those at present sharing in the work at El Biar are: Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Buckenham, Miss V. Wood, Rev. and Mrs. R. J. Waive, Mr. and Mrs. P. G. Longley, and Mlle. Y. Félix.

“They went forth, the Lord working with them.”

Reaching Forth

LILIAS TROTTER'S vision was, however, much wider. "It was only three or four years after our arrival," she writes, "that the call of the inland stretches began to sound in our hearts." Other missionaries had by this time begun to settle in some of the coast towns, and in the hilly region of Kabylia, but the mountains and the desert beyond them seemed to appeal to her as to no one else. She made several journeys to the south to survey the land and its opportunities. Gradually the work extended east, west and south, and missionaries began to settle in a number of towns and villages.

In 1903 Blida became the first town other than Algiers itself to be occupied by the A.M.B. It has a population of about 67,000 and is 30 miles inland. Lying in a fertile plain at the foot of the Atlas mountains, it is only ten miles from the winter sports centre of Chr ea, which is situated at an altitude of 4,500 feet. In the vicinity there are some forty Arab villages.

The town was founded in 1535 by Moorish refugees from Spain, who introduced orange trees and a system of irrigation. Agricultural produce is the chief source of wealth in the district. As Blida is at the junction of several routes from the interior, many different types of people can be seen in its streets, some wearing the immaculate white robes and high turbans of gentlemen from the south. Roman Catholic influence is very strong among the European population, many of whom are of Spanish or Italian origin. About 7,000 children enjoy French education in a number of modern



Blida

schools. Among the Muslim people, schools for teaching the Quran (their holy book), and schools for teaching children to read and write Arabic, are established in many quarters of the town. Blida, possesses several large modern hospitals.

The Mission house is located on the outskirts of the town and is at present occupied by Miss P. M. Russell and Mlle. J. Guibé. Classes for women and children have been the main feature of the work from the very first. Children of those who formerly attended the classes as children themselves now come to the mission. Intensive visiting in the homes of the people has been combined with the classes. The early missionaries went on mule-back into the surrounding mountains. Many of the mountain villages have been regularly visited at some time. Old women still remember first hearing the Gospel as young girls in their mountain homes.

During the second World War, when Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham were in residence at Blida, the house was opened to British and American servicemen. Evangelistic meetings were held in the large new classroom which had already been built. A number of men were led to Christ and others were helped in their spiritual life here. Some of these gained a vision of the needs of the Mission field, and several are now back in Algeria, or elsewhere, as missionaries. Yet the thousands of Muslims in Blida are still without Christ. What can we say to them? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and . . . be saved."

CHAPTER FIVE

Say Unto This Mountain

WRITING of her journey westward on 5th January 1909, Lillias Trotter says, "We looked up at Miliana as we passed it, lying along the mountain side with a silver fillet of snow crowning the crest above." About eighty miles west of Algiers, Miliana is 2,320 feet above sea level, built on a spur of Zaccar-Gharbi, a mountain 5,000 feet high at the end of the Atlas range.

The mountain is rich in iron ore and train loads are sent to the port of Algiers daily. Of the hundreds of miners employed the majority are Arabs. Some live in a village on the mountain side, but many live in the town. The population of Miliana and its ever growing suburbs is more than 12,000. Most of the industries

are in the hands of Jews, Arabs or Mozabites—men from the M'zab region, a group of oases 400 miles to the south. The Mozabites leave their wives at home and come as shopkeepers to the northern towns. Miliana is noted for its fruit and vegetables and has vineyards on the steep mountain slopes. Above is the cork-oak forest, with its cork industry.

In the first century A.D. the town was a walled-in fort commanding the surrounding plateau. In the tenth century it was rebuilt by the Mozabites. At the time of the French conquest of Algeria the town was burnt to prevent it from falling into French hands. In 1840, after some years of siege, the French entered and soon rebuilt the town.

In recent years, French schools for boys and girls, and higher schools for students, have given the Arab youth a wider outlook. Young people take French certificates to prepare themselves for positions as teachers or in the Civil Service. Many are also taught trades. Yet the present trend is to send more to the Medersa, the Muslim school. Among the middle-aged people few can read their own language; this is left to the religious leaders and priests. However, many of the people are indifferent to Muslim teaching, and only conform to its practices as a protection against public opinion.

It was in 1909 that a house was secured outside the town by Miss Trotter, and mission work was started. The present house is more central. One of those who commenced work there in 1909 was Miss M. D. Grautoff, who has been at Miliana from that time until now. She has recently been joined by Miss E. Collins. The work is mainly daily teaching, in classes and homes, of the simple Gospel message. Now it is the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the first boys and girls to attend classes who come weekly for Bible teaching; and of the women who come each week, a large number have been regular attenders for many years.

To the visitors who come for simple medical remedies, or for any other cause, the Word of God is given as far as possible. Visits to the hospital, occasional colportage trips, and journeys to Affreville, a nearby town, help to spread the Message. There are many disappointments in the work, but there are also joys in the knowledge of some who died in the Faith, others baptised and witnessing, and secret believers who dare not testify openly.

“The Lord knoweth them that are His.”

Sunrise over
sea and
mountain



CHAPTER SIX

Throughout Every City & Village

AFTER passing Miliana on her journey westwards, Liliás Trotter goes on with her description in these words, "Then hours of travel among low, tawny hills splashed with dark tent-like bushes, like a panther's skin, then the widening into the plain, the hills falling back from it into a pink-fretted distance full of touches of bluish prickly-pear plantations which mean villages all unreachd." Soon she entered Relizane for the first time.

Relizane is a town of 40,000 people, situated on a wide plain, 35 miles inland and approximately 185 miles from Algiers. The climate is dry and very hot in summer, and cold in winter. It is an important agricultural centre, noted for oranges and jam making. There is also a large animal market.

Missionaries of the A.M.B. first settled at Relizane in 1909, and two years later Liliás Trotter wrote, "It is good to see here, in Relizane, how the feet of the Good Shepherd are going after His sheep, one by one." The work progressed with a succession of missionaries, but due to the shortage of labourers in the harvest field it was unoccupied from 1938 until 1950, when Miss E. Clark took possession in the name of the Lord. She was joined the following year by Miss A. E. Powell.

The Mission house is situated at the entry to the Arab village, making it very convenient for the work. The most profitable method of approach is by visiting the women in their homes.

Classes are also held several days a week for women and children. There are still some in the town who remember missionaries from earlier years, and this often helps in gaining entrance to new homes.

One of the great problems of evangelistic work—here as elsewhere—is the number of difficulties which have almost always to be faced by Muslims who honestly attempt to follow Christ. Most families will outlaw any member who becomes a Christian. Profession of faith in Christ means, in most cases, that family ties and daily work must be given up. Then the convert faces a most difficult time. Often there is much violent persecution. This means that many who sincerely believe in their hearts will not dare to profess their faith openly. Especially is this so with women, many of whom are secret believers, but cannot make an open declaration of their belief.

To the north of Relizane lies Mostaganem, a large port on the coast of the Mediterranean, which was formerly a sphere of A.M.B. work. Since 1945 there has been no resident missionary, but now it is again being visited from time to time by those living at Relizane. They have already been encouraged by the visits they have made. If more missionaries were available, more visiting could be attempted, not only here but in the surrounding districts.

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

CHAPTER SEVEN

These Shall Come From the West

“IT is wonderful to wake up to the New Year’s morning with the joy of last night’s telegram telling that Tlemcen has become another post held for Him.” So wrote Lilia Trotter on 1st January 1925.

Tlemcen is in the extreme west of Algeria, 335 miles from Algiers, and only 45 miles from the border of Morocco. It is a large town of about 60,000 people situated at the junction of the east to west highway with a road from the south bringing travellers and merchandise from the Saharan oases to the great seaport of Oran. With the Atlas mountains as a background, and sur-

rounded by a wooded landscape, Tlemcen combines beauty with agricultural prosperity. It is at an altitude of 2,400 feet and has sufficient rainfall to supply its cascading streams.

The town is predominantly Arab, and is a museum of Berber customs and remains of Moorish art. It is renowned for its people of high birth, and its rigid observance of Islam. Celebrated for its saints, it is so strict in its exclusiveness that Mozabites, who infiltrate other towns, never dwell in Tlemcen. All this natural beauty and historical interest is overshadowed and permeated by the Muslim theological and mystical passion that dates back to the Arab invasion.

Tlemcen was first opened to the Gospel in January 1884, by members of the North Africa Mission, who remained there until political unrest obliged their withdrawal in 1896. Following a visit by Dr. Samuel Zwemer in 1922, the possibility of a Christian witness again being established in this Muslim stronghold became a fact in 1925 when it was occupied by the A.M.B. Seemingly

A
Tlemcen
Street



insurmountable difficulties were overcome and a foothold procured in the town where a mission station could be set up. In October 1926 regular activities began, and the first loom was bought to begin the girls' carpet making school. The labours of devoted missionaries in Tlemcen gradually overcame suspicion and prejudice in the eyes of the French authorities and the Muslims, and in this way the work of succeeding missionaries has been made easier.

The carpet making school ceased with the inauguration of civic schools for that purpose, but the evangelistic work has been continued, principally through classes for women and children, and visiting in the Arab homes. Men are contacted by colportage in market towns, villages and open country. Evening meetings, under

cover of dark, help those with enquiring minds and sometimes hungry hearts. The paralysing fear of their fellow Muslims makes the Arab men hesitate to embrace the Gospel, which carries as much conviction and persuasion to their hearts, as to any other sinner, when presented in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What fruit there is in souls saved is precious—though exceedingly sparse in comparison with the years of missionary labour in the town. Arab men and women have been baptised in the underground chapel, some of whom have faced bitter opposition for their faith in Christ. Others have failed to stand firm, fearing perhaps the consequences which still threaten those who deny Muhammad.

Behind the word "Tlemcen" is the Arabic root meaning "to entreat for." Before there can be fountains of "living water," at the source there must be intercession. Who will pray for these needy souls? ". . . praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

Mr. and Mrs. A. Porteous, from Scotland, who occupied this station from 1949 to 1957, are now obliged to remain in Great Britain, for health reasons. Much prayer is needed that those called of the Lord might be found to continue the work in Tlemcen.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Tell Ye and Bring Them Near

LILIAS TROTTER once wrote these words, "The glimmering light in which the Arab walks is not that of the dawn; it is a twilight settling into night. Banded together the souls wander away, only the bands are not to be numbered in units, but in scores of millions. Let His voice sound down into our hearts till we roll away the stone of unbelief that is helping to shut down these poor souls into their prison-house."

Fifty thousand of these Arabs live in Sétif, a market town in the eastern part of Algeria, 190 miles from Algiers. Being on an elevated plain, about 3,600 feet above sea level, the climate is fresh and healthy, which makes it an important centre for education.

In 1934 Sétif was occupied for the first time by two missionaries of the A.M.B., and then in 1937 a second mission station was opened in another part of the town, some distance from the first. Owing to the war, these two open doors were closed, and the

missionaries withdrawn, in 1941 and 1943. But in 1950, with the opening of a mission station at Ain-Arnat, a village seven miles west of Sétif, it became possible to regain touch with many of the families in the town who had been visited, or whose children had attended classes at one or other of the two mission houses.

For seven years the visiting in Sétif formed an important part of the work of two Swiss members of the A.M.B., Mlle. A. Butticaz and Mlle. G. Chollet. In November 1957, Mlle. Butticaz was taken to be with the Lord. At present other missionaries are giving temporary help. The work in the town would be greatly helped if it were possible to obtain a hall or room in which meetings and classes could be held. The missionaries are well received in many homes, where groups of listeners gather to hear the Gospel, and the intellectual and spiritual development of some of the young girls has been a cause of much joy.

Since 1950 there has also been regular work going on in the Protestant church house at Ain-Arnat, where the missionaries live.

There is a Protestant church in the village, one of the first to be built in North Africa, but regular services are not now held there. It serves as a meeting place from time to time for Protestants scattered about in the towns and villages of the region.

Missionary work among the Arabs consists of teaching the Gospel to women and children, caring for them in sickness and helping them in their difficulties. Sunday school, held each Sunday morning in the house or garden, is a joyous time, when hymns in Arabic or French are heartily sung by the children. The numerous villages on the surrounding high plains are visited for colportage work on market days. The missionaries are not only tolerated but welcomed by the people, who are so destitute of any spiritual help.

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

"The harvest
truly is
plenteous . . ."

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In The Wilderness Shall Waters Break Out

IT was in 1900 that Miss Trotter paid her first visit to Tolga, a Muslim centre 250 miles south-east of Algiers with only ten European families. From then onwards it was her prayer that a mission station might be established there.

Tolga is the most important of a group of thirty oases. The surrounding region is rocky and barren, having only about two inches of rain yearly. Yet an abundant supply of water can be had by means of the twenty wells in the oasis. The palm gardens are the beauty and wealth of the region, and the fine quality dates form the basic food.

The growing population numbers about 10,000. The Berbers, who were converted to Islam after the Arab invasion, live in the villages. The nomad Arabs wander with their tents from place to place, spending the summer months away from the desert in the higher areas to the north, where they find pasture for their sheep and camels. There are also a few Negroes who are the descendants of slaves set free by the French occupation.

The home-made brick houses with thick walls and flat roofs give good protection from the sun, but the sanitation is primitive and there is much sickness. The women must remain indoors. Even girls from the age of ten or twelve are rarely allowed out, and are obliged to veil when they leave the house. The market is an important event taking place on Fridays and Saturdays when the nomads from the hills come down to obtain their provisions. Many of the Muslims are very fanatical. Nearly all the



"The well
is deep"

" Rivers of living water."

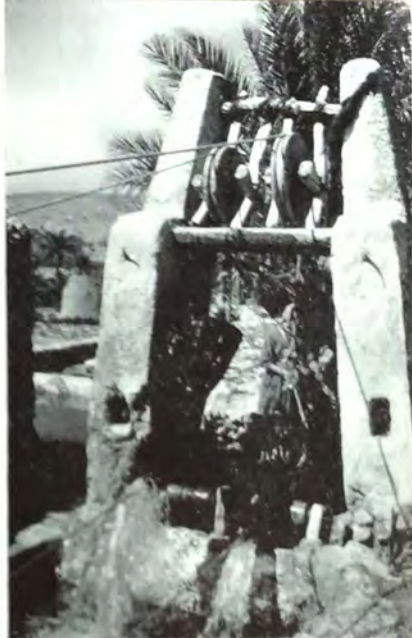
children go to the numerous Muslim schools, even those who also attend French schools.

It was not until 1923 that a house was hired in Tolga and Miss Trotter had the joy of spending some weeks in the newly opened station. For a few years Tolga was occupied by women missionaries. From 1930 Monsieur Lull was there with the help of several young men who went in turn for missionary training and language study. When in 1937 he married, work among women and children again became possible. Under the efforts of M. and Mme. Lull, the succeeding years showed much advance. In 1949 the Mission School for little girls was established, at the urgent request of many parents. In 1950 a hall was found in which to hold meetings for men and boys. These came in increasing numbers and seemed thirsty to hear more of the Gospel truths. Some confessed their sinfulness and enquired as to the way of salvation. The Spirit of God was working in their hearts.

Then, suddenly, in January 1951, God called M. Lull to Himself. Mme. Lull has continued the work of the school, which has a great influence on the families of the pupils. Many of them are children of the men who used to attend the meetings. The work among women has been intensified. Many come to get help and sympathy in their troubles, some being free to come because their husbands are in France. Their sufferings and their loneliness make them more ready to listen.

Another missionary to work alongside Mme. Lull, and also a man qualified to be God's witness to the men and boys of Tolga, are urgently needed. It would also be helpful if the dispensary could again be permitted to operate as in the past. Through this channel many hundreds heard the Gospel message.

" God our Saviour will . . . have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."



Come Ye, Buy, and Eat

“**T**OUGGOURT was reached at last, and such a sunset over the desert!” It was in March 1894, that Lilius Trotter set foot in this large town, 400 miles south of Algiers. When the journey was made by camel it took several days, but now it is quickly reached by train or air.

Touggourt is now becoming an important centre in connection with the recently discovered oilfields in the Sahara. During the first period in the transit of petrol to the Mediterranean coast, it is here that the change is made from pipe-line to railway tank wagon.

The town is entered by a long avenue of palm trees followed by a wide street with white-washed arcades and shops of which only two are European. Behind a square, there is another wide street of shops—an important part of old Touggourt. At its end begins a labyrinth of narrow dark streets. It is difficult to distinguish one from another. The houses are built of sand, clay and stone. In heavy rain they often collapse and cover the occupants and their possessions with mud and stones.

Friday, the Muslim holy day, is also market day in Touggourt. On Thursday evening merchants install themselves in the market place. The next morning it is filled with a motley crowd, hundreds coming from miles away on camel, mule or donkey. The whole square is covered with stalls and tents where goods of all kinds are displayed—ironmongery, groceries, perfumery, materials, clothes—often of the most brilliant colours. Near the centre of the town is the Roman Catholic church, a simple but picturesque little building. On a hill overlooking it are the infirmary and dispensary run by the White Sisters, to which men, women and children go daily. Behind are the convent and school where girls are taught not only reading and writing, but also weaving, sewing, embroidery and lace-work. There are four Muslim mosques in the town, and each of the surrounding villages has its own.

There is a mixture of peoples in Touggourt: Jews, Arabs, Mozabites and Negroes. The latter, who form the largest propor-

"How shall
they hear . . ."



tion of the people, are descended from the black servants of the Berbers. There are also some hundreds of Europeans. Children of the different races are taught together in efficient schools. The French headmistress of the Girls' School takes a personal interest in the welfare of her pupils and encourages them to attend the Sunday and Thursday classes at the Mission house, where Miss I. K. Nash has been serving God since 1944. On Monday and Wednesday classes are held for the Negro children who do not attend school.

The children all love to come but are often withdrawn by their parents. Most of them can repeat at least a dozen parables, and can understand the meaning. They also learn other Scripture passages and many hymns. There are just a few to whom all this means more than mere head knowledge. After the class is over they whisper, "Father says will you give me a Gospel?" That request is granted with joy. Often the next day, under cover of their school-fellows' chatter, they whisper their father's appreciation, sometimes adding a request for more books.

For months a "Nicodemus" used to come, tapping on the shutters after dark. He wanted to hear more of the Way of Salvation. He took a Gospel of John and became so convinced of the Truth that he encouraged many others to procure a similar Gospel. But he lost his job in consequence and became afraid to come near the Mission house.

These people are not beyond the reach of the One Who knows the frailty of human nature and all the fiery trials they have to face. Even the walls of Islam can fall before the prayers of God's people in the Name of Jesus. "Pray without ceasing."

Regions Beyond

LILIAS TROTTER always had a keen interest in the places still unreached, especially the great stretches of Southern Algeria. She made several journeys in these vast areas. Her followers have attempted to visit some of these districts as opportunity has occurred. At some places residence has been possible for a while. Bou-Saada, 155 miles south of Algiers, on the edge of the desert, was occupied by missionaries from 1925 to 1952, but since then has been the scene of only occasional visits. Further on there are dozens of magnificent oases, some with many inhabitants, but scarcely a Christian witness among them.

Ghardaia, 400 miles from Algiers, centre of the M'zab region on the road leading across the Sahara, was occupied each winter for some years up to 1940. During the past few years, short Spring visits have been made, which it is hoped will be continued, notwithstanding the fact that an independent French missionary couple are now in residence there. Work at Tamanrasset, 1,300 miles south of Algiers, was begun in 1949 by the A.M.B., but is now the responsibility of another mission.

The country of Tunisia was also included in Miss Trotter's vision. She journeyed across its plains several times. It is a land very much like Algeria, but is considerably smaller. A.M.B. missionaries were resident in South Tunisia for a number of years, but since 1940 it has not been possible to visit the area.

Now, in 1958, eight centres in Algeria are occupied by the A.M.B. The reopening of those that have been closed, and the opening of fresh ones, depends on the forthcoming of additional



Ghardaia

" I bring you
good tidings "

Colportage in
an Arab quarter.



reinforcements. The ranks of the mission have been depleted due to a number of causes, so that there are fewer members today than twenty years ago. At present there are less than twenty on the Field ; almost all of these are women. Other missions are at work in Kabylia, and in several coastal and other large towns, but the total number of Protestant missionaries in Algeria is only about 100. Of these, very few are able to reach the Arab population.

To-day, materialism is steadily encroaching on orthodox Islam. Only a handful of Christian believers exist in the country, and many towns and villages with large Muslim populations are entirely unreached with the Gospel. Colportage and evangelistic journeys are undertaken from time to time, but these can only touch a very limited number of the people. Millions have yet to hear the Gospel for the first time.

Can it be that the Church is failing in its responsibility to make disciples of the Muslims ? Some would suggest that the task is too difficult, and that there is no hope of the conversion of Muslims. But to say that is to confess failure, and to ignore the triumphant victory of Christ. The truth is that these people have been largely neglected by Christians. If the might of the Gospel was concentrated upon them, in the power of the Holy Spirit, with persistent prevailing prayer and a sense of sacrificial giving, who can estimate what the result would be ?

There remains very much land to be possessed. " Let us go up at once, and possess it ; for we are well able to overcome it."

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

Dar Naama, El Biar, Algiers, North Africa.

76 Marylebone High Street, London, W.1, England.

609 California Blvd., Toledo, 12. Ohio, U.S.A.