

AN EVANGELISTIC MISSION AT WORK

It was an inspiration several times during the life time of Lilius Trotter to catch a glimpse of the household at DAR NAAMA ("House of Grace"), the mother house at El-Biar of the Algiers Mission Band.

To be there with Lilius Trotter was to be aware of the glow and stimulus of spiritual genius, all the more warming and stimulating because in her life of humble surrender to Christ she had no self-conscious intention to influence and stimulate the friends that came to her. "She was the greatest missionary in North African Missions" said a French fellow-missionary to the present writer, but it was an unconscious greatness, for like the children 'of whom is the Kingdom of heaven' or the scientist or the artist that she was by nature and endowment, Lilius Trotter's habit of mind was one of an intense, self-forgetting, reverent and delighted absorption in God's world and His ways whether in outward beauty or in the spiritual drama.

Under her inspiration life in the beautiful old rambling Arab house at El-Biar had a true evangelical simplicity, a habit of unencumbered living as of soldiers on campaign, but yet escaped from that cramping of sympathy and interest that in our poor human nature sometimes goes with an intense devotion to one subject. She knew the freedom and joy of surrender and in speaking to the writer of a young missionary, earnest, easily shocked and too solemn for the gracious play of humour, Lilius Trotter said: "But she'll shake free. They always do." "This one thing I do," she herself could surely say, but when the "one thing" which a soul sets before herself is nothing less than the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the sacrifices involved are not cramping but liberating. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" was a word on which she loved to dwell. For her the winds of God blew freely and even in those last bedridden years her life was spacious and she could welcome a fresh thought or a new idea with a child's zest of interest.

It was the writer's privilege recently to return for some weeks to El-Biar and at the request of the Algiers Mission Band to extract from Lilius Trotter's personal diaries a little volume of her spiritual sayings for publication in connexion with the mission's jubilee. (1) *The Master of the Impossible*. S.P.C.K. London. Price 3/8. The winter rains poured down outside and the little squat diary volumes were piled up on the table in the long Arab room where the earliest committees of the Mission were held, and where saints now with God, Lilius Trotter, Percy Smith, Pastor Villon and their comrades had spent long hours in consultation over the translation of the Gospels to Algerian Colloquial Arabic. The room opened on the lovely tiled court that has been the scene of so many spiritual happenings and so many family gatherings of the mission group.

The daily handling of those diaries brought before me not only the spiritual life of a saint but also a vivid picture of the development of a small evangelistic mission with a marked individuality. As from day to day I noted some little touch of the resourcefulness or the wisdom of love I copied a sentence here and there with the sense that these ought to be put at the disposal of fellow evangelists in Muslim lands. This paper is the little sheaf of those gleanings.

For those unfamiliar with the general outline of the story we may say that Lilius Trotter and two friends went fifty years ago at their own charges as evangelists to the Muslims of Algeria. They believed that, since except in the summer heat, the climate was an exceptionally good one, it would be possible to gather round them for each winter season girls of leisure as "short-service workers", and they did, year after year gather a houseful of such maidens, several of whom became devoted missionaries in Algeria

or elsewhere. A town house in the swarming Arab quarter of Algiers was the first home of the band. When, both physically and spiritually, it became desirable to have a breathing place the way was shown to the purchase of a large rambling Arab house with a wide old garden at El-Biar, a high-lying suburban village; and this is still the mother-house of the mission.

Evangelistic journeys were at first much limited by political circumstances, but as they became possible frequent tournees were made, and the leaders of the band (after their struggles in the narrow alleys of Algiers) were deeply attracted by the call of the desert towns on the Saharan fringe, and by the sense that in touching these towns they were reaching out into the very heart of Africa. In early evangelistic tournees the strategic points of various places as possible mission stations on routes giving access to further centres of population were noted: Miss Trotter never thought of a town without its hinterland. Thus she wrote:

“Three lines of concentration link the coast with the desert.

- 1. Relizane down the borderland of the Moroccan frontier to a group of oases name Fignig which were our very earliest day dream when access was only to be had by travelling with a caravan.*
- 2. The oases of the Beni Mzab must be in the hinterland of Miliana, inhabited by a Berber race (the Beni Amab) of a dissenting attitude in some minor points of Islam, and so aloof that they never bring their women folk to Alger and themselves go through ceremonial purification when they return from trading at the coast.*
- 3. Alger to Touggourt and Oued Souf. Several men from Touggourt found their way to the book depot of Tebessa where the convert man M. was so much struck with their spirit that he sent us a message of appeal to send workers there.”*

The second stage was to return for a long visit to some one centre where spiritual response seemed promising, hiring an Arab house and welcoming visitors from morning to night for several weeks on end. The final stage was the opening of a station where two missionaries or a missionary and a younger helper lived together. In seeking a house for permanent occupation three ideals were kept in mind: the house should if possible be an Arab house like those of the people amongst whom the missionary had come to live; it should be readily accessible, not shut off in a European quarter; and if its main door opened on a public place it should if possible have some quiet entrance in a side alley that could be used by those described as “Nicodemus souls.”

On evangelistic journeys the worker hunted in couples, and as “short-service workers” developed into missionaries or others joined the band, new stations were also occupied by pairs of workers. The object of the mission being pure evangelisation, it was always kept mobile: *“I feel ashamed if there are too many of them round this table,”* Miss Trotter would say at El-Biar. Such natural friendly services as giving simple eye drops or cough-mixtures or teaching reading or embroidery to girls with empty lives were never allowed to develop into fully organized medical or educational work, partly because such activities by foreigners might have been unwelcome to the government, but more because the mission had set itself the task of pure evangelisation. It was and is a mission of numerous weekly classes maintaining touch with many of all ages of both sexes, but of no institutions. Miss Trotter knew that other forms of Christian witness were of equal value, and especially that the more stable organization of Church life was a necessity; for this reason she eagerly welcomed the coming of other missions, while she and her colleagues retained for their own work the ideal of spear-head evangelisation.

The fact that the original workers were all women proved to be of great advantage in the early days: the quiet entrance of two women into a fanatical town being possible where the appearance of men would

have roused instant opposition. But Miss Trotter and her colleagues fully realized that the right development of work must call for the cooperation of men and women. From the beginning she used the help of young men of French or Spanish Algerian Colonial families; specially on bookselling tours; and toward the end of her life she had the joy of welcoming men members of the band. Several stations are to-day occupied by married couples. Her desires were latterly reaching out towards a sort of brotherhood of men workers with a Christian zaouia for her many friends among the dervish orders.

More than most missions (and perhaps to this it owes some of its spiritual quality) the Algiers Mission Band has refused to be hustled by time-tables and clocks. Twice a year all stations are closed and members gather at El-Biar for a "rally" lasting several days. A few committees may meet (it is not a mission of many committees); country workers may do some buying of stores in the Algiers shops; but the "rally" is far more a time of spiritual fellowship, informal consultation and common prayers. To an outsider the comparative leisure (except for the house-mother) and spaciousness of this time of fellowship is an instructive lesson. So also with the life of prayer that is lived in the mother-house throughout the year. The stations are held in close fellowship by a weekly paper of requests for prayer and praise to which one contributes and which one receives. The note of informality is always kept. There is prayer at the end of each common meal, but its beginning and ending is not marked by the clock. Someone needing a time of solitude may stay away from public meals without comment or excuse; and whereas some mission headquarters give one a sense of stirring business Dar Naama makes the impression that prayer is of primary importance. The following extract from Miss Trotter's diary gives the spirit of the house:

"We have set aside the drawingroom as a quiet room during these blessed hours when our Lord hung on the Cross, and we are all free to come and go as we can alongside other needful calls. Unless we "call a Fast" for some special and pressing need the dinner bell rings as usual and people can obey its summons or not in perfect freedom; and perfect freedom also reigns as to prayer in silence or in expression."

With this introduction we proceed to give from Miss Trotter's diary illustrations of the methods of the mission "The Resourcefulness of Love" at work:

COLOUR.

"When three unknown foreigners planted themselves in an Algiers slum alley 'in an old fortress-like house known as 'the House of the Turk's son in the street of the Crescent,' Sunday classes for market and shoeblack boys were our first ventures."

"In classes for this quick-silverish section of humanity the appeal of colour was early discovered, and the A.M.B. more than most missions has used chalks and paint as a way of taming and winning the turbulent: -"

"The bigger set of Sunday boys are caught just now by the joy of an illuminated edition of Psalm 51, a verse traced out for them each week which they paint. Out of a few half penny colours they evolve, in shocking workmanship, colourschemes impossible to imagine. Colour is a passion with these Arabs. Five minutes ago in the street I saw a basket of silver sardines crowned with one huge golden celandine, for no reason but the pleasure of the sight. I feel sure that the instinct is one that we can use."

Or again: -

“Hosaniya (a 14-year old girl) has begun illustrating the Bible stories on her own account with penny chalks – the mustard tree with a large blue bird seated on it, a woman with a French apron sweeping to find a large and obvious grave lying at her feet.”

SINGING.

One of the three founders of the mission had had experiences of Salvation Army work. Consequently from the beginning, as soon as the missionaries could put a few Arabic words together these were strung into simple choruses some of which have survived to this day. Classes and house visitation were punctuated with these very songs that by their brevity and repetition hammered in one thought of praise or prayer.

This method is of course not peculiar to the Algiers Mission Band, but what is striking is the fact the bare simplicity or crudeness of the examples used made it possible for new Christians from the very beginning to create their own tiny hymns, an example that might be fruitfully followed. Thus Miss Trotter writes of an old black Christian from Kordofan:

“Belaid this morning, instead of his usual 'experience' as to the week's doing, broke out into a chorus – words and tune of his own composition. I had suggested last Sunday that they should sometimes give us a fresh one. I had forgotten this, so the effect was rather remarkable in his sonorous voice, with its queer negro quavers; it was:

*My Lord I beseech Thee, guide me and give
me repentance
Jesus I beseech Thee, guide me and give
me forgiveness.”*

Or another time,

“We sang Owirda's chorus. Its minor cadence makes it one of the easiest for them to get hold of. It is:

*Bear our sins
Cover our defects
Cleanse our hearts
O Jesus, Son of God.*

(It is noteworthy that these little hymns by ex-Moslems address our Lord as 'Isa.')”

Another idea which might well be adopted in many stations is contained in the following sentence:

“Our next excitement is a service of songs, texts and hymns, set to the pages of the Wordless book.”

HOSPITALITY .

Few missions can so fruitfully have entered into the beautiful Arab ideas of hospitality. The entrance to the first house in Rue du Croissant was known as “the door of a thousand dents” from the frequent bangings it endured. The diaries show how natural it was for Arab families to come (generally without notice) and plant themselves happily in the mission house to spend the day. Costly it must have been in time and energy to the missionaries and those responsible for the commissariat, but little else could have given the same sense of confidence and friendship, the same belief that the mission house was really their house. The guests breathed fresher air in the mission house courtyard, fingered everything

within reach; learnt a new chorus, listened to a class or meeting that happened to be going forward on that day and had some opportunity for a long personal telling of their troubles and their family news.

It was not unknown for a family from a desert town or a mountain village, bewildered on a first visit to Algiers to arrive at the door saying confidently: "Lili (Lilias Trotter) loves me, Lili will take care of me" and mats and sleeping room would be found somewhere for the new arrivals. In spite of the cost of time and energy Miss Trotter was always anxious that guests should feel that their hosts had leisure for them, and very patient when those guests showed no sense of the value of time and the desirability of fixed meal hours. Of one such she wrote: -

"It must be extremely irksome to be under such restraints as the hand of a watch and life must be full of small prickles for him."

When the house at EL-BIar, with its large garden was acquired, new ideas for hospitality were put into practice. The only fresh air outings for town women and girls were these to the cemeteries or to the tomb of some marabout. Why should there not be such a ziara to the garden of Dar Naama? Moreover, when families visited some famous marabout they camped all round the shrine providing their own food, but yet the guests of the holy place, and drinking its water. Why should not Dar Naama with its Arab courtyard be a similar camping place for family parties? Miss Trotter began to see the great possibilities not only of making oneself at leisure for guests of a few hours, but of having friends to stay for several weeks. She writes to a friend who had helped in the furnishing of Dar Naama:

"Such a gift is very welcome for the dear El-Biar House is clean and sound in every corner, but even the Prophet's allowance of 'a bed, a bason and a candlestick' is hardly secured yet. The beds are, but not much more, and we are doing all in the simplest way so this gift will be such immense lift. It will make us free to go forward, in one or two directions that are on my heart: one is fitting up a little room in the outhouse into a cosy place for giving country air to lads on the verge of consumption, there are so many of them and a bit of fresh air turns the scale sometimes, if taken in time."

"There has been a sudden influx of Arab guests at Dar Naama. It began with the usual 'days' for batches of them, girls, women, babies, in the garden. Trams like all things else (in war time) are rare and expensive, all the children were packed like a bunch of flowers into an old donkey cart and brought up. Then began the signs of a new thing as families came to us to be lent the rooms, bringing their own food. We are so very glad about this because it is on the lines of their own ziaras, which we have always wanted to see transferred to a Christian setting."

"Our sum total of native guests averages twenty – not guests exactly for they are all camping 'on their own' as they do with their marabouts. . . The Arab lawyer who stayed here last summer has again brought his large family to pass the hot weeks in the rooms opening out of the orange court. His spirit has swerved from its old self-satisfied attitude. 'I envy you – I envy you – from the bottom of my heart I envy you,' he said the other day; and he sets his womenkind free to listen, not carelessly, but deliberately."

"It is lovely that we are getting by degrees a guestroom attached to each station, and willing guest-families to stay in them now and then."

RAMADAN.

Has any other mission made of Ramadan (so often regarded as a sheer interruption of work) a special

opportunity? The A.M.B. first found that the bored and listless and hungry groups of young girls in the courtyard were particularly glad of a visitor who would teach an embroidery stitch and tell stories to help to pass the hours till sunset. They later discovered that after the great sunset meal was a time when everyone was prepared for entertainment and that a magic lantern show for a group of neighbouring houses was more than usually welcome at that hour:

“Another onward step this Ramadan is one for which I have longed for years – the taking round of a magic lantern to the houses where the women sit for hours gossiping together between their night feasts. Last summer brought the gift of a portable Church Army lantern and it is being used nearly every night, and with such listening that we have altered plans and kept two of our numbers back from Blida to follow up the openings that come day after day for it.”

VISITING – From the Known to the Unknown.

The flowing extracts from diaries that tell of visiting show the skill of love in using whatever object is at hand as a medium for presenting the things of the Spirit. They need no comment.

A VALLEY IN THE BLIDA ATLAS:

“On the other side of the valley were tent people gathering the torrent stones for roadmending. . . Here they (the women) were like great children, going into peals of laughter all the time, and peering at us with their dark, unawake faces.”

“The only chance of a hearing with such like is to work from the seen to the unseen, so I began with the stones how one was not very big, but that as two, three, twenty, fifty went into the basket the weight grew heavy: and so with the burden of sin – the lying and the thieving and the quarreling. They were a bit puzzled at first at having to get hold of an abstract idea, and stones and sins got a bit mixed up – were stones sins? Or sins stones! And when B. went on to tell them how alone they could not carry the Shouare full of stones but had to call a man to help them, so God had sent Jesus to carry their sins away, some faint glimmer crossed their faces. Then 'Fast, fast, it is fasting that will take you to heaven,' came in a chorus of voices.”

“Had any anything penetrated? Just a ray I think, by the fact of contradiction rising. We felt it would need a week of living in a tent by them to bring the light fully within their reach.”

A VILLAGE HOUSE IN THE SAME VALLEY:

“I am bringing these people in: 'we are only asses, we do not know.' And she sat crouched down before us in the court and drank in every word – how the sins were a heavy burden like the stones that the tent people were gathering. How she could no more mount to heaven with such a burden than she could climb with a sack of stones up to the pure snow-line that showed above the court wall – and one felt that God was speaking. Christ could lift the burden off her that she might be light and free. He wanted to lift it. 'Does He want to? I will tell Him to lift it. I will tell Him to-day.'”

A FEAST PROCESSION, BORDJ BON ASSIDJ:

“We fell back towards the women's group, veiled most of them in golden muslin, spangled and shining. 'Go with them, be not afraid' said a man, and we went. A minute more we had entered a mud courtyard and the inner room beyond. The veils were thrown back and we were surrounded by such a shimmering tangle of gorgeous colour as I think I have never seen, framing dear walnut brown faces and dark enquiring eyes. Twenty-five to thirty women and girls gathered for a feast, - or rather gathered for us at a breath by God. We had a silent and intent listening as we told of the adorning God

wanted for His feast in heaven.”

THE ENTRY TO THE VILLAGE:

“She was so absorbed in her hospitality (which we vainly tried to check in view of the seven half-starved looking children) that it was long before we could get a hearing. At last we got to the subject of heaven and the way to get there. We said that just as we should not have ventured into the village (dogs and prickly pear hedges guarded the mountain villages from strangers) if one from the village had not come to let us in, so we can only venture into the gate of heaven with the Son of Man who came forth from heaven.”

PRAYER FOR THE SICK:

“We had a good day visiting to-day (hill villages near Tenieh) so slippery going about in the deep mud, up and down the village slopes. Even the children were staggering about.”

“The best house was the last. They called us in to write a charm for the sick woman. Instead we prayed for her in the Name of Jesus, and their hearts seemed touched and opened. Again and again they kissed His picture.”

“Your words are ripe and sweet. We would like you to come and live here,’ and a great cake of fresh bread was thrust into our hands. ‘We have only the earth of God to ask you to sit on,’ they said.”

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN:

“Fatima at last seemed to understand a glimmering of our message, very rudimentary message for one feels in these utterly dark fanatical places there is much preliminary ground to be cleared before one can even mention our Lord's Name. Sin, forgiveness, forgiveness not through the repetition of the SHAHADA but out of God's Heart of love when we come for it – even that much means a long step towards the light down here.”

“The younger woman alongside was of the self-righteous type. After a bit we showed them the picture of the Pharisee and the publican, and told them the story of their two prayers. ‘Which of the two was accepted before God?’ I asked. Almost invariably the Pharisee is pointed out. But this old Fatima's finger passed him by and showed the publican, and the story of Jesus the Sinbearer seemed to come to her like the dew. ‘Yes, I will speak to Him about my sins,’ she said, ‘I will speak to Him today.’”

ANOTHER. FATIMA. HOMESICKNESS:

“In the house of that Fatima whose soul blossomed so brightly for a few months and then seemed to wither under the impression of her mother-in-law. For the first few minutes she was Muslim. Then we read the story of Zacchaeus and the wahash (untranslatable word for longing and homesickness) that he had for Christ. ‘You have that too,’ I said; ‘yes I have,’ and her whole soul was in heat and voice. And before we left we felt that the contact with Him was reestablished.”

THE BABY'S FOOTSTEP:

“My soul has begun to run to Jesus’, she said. ‘And has he received you?’ ‘I know not.’ I looked at the lovely dark-eyed baby thing between her knees. ‘Has she begun to run yet? If she stood there by the

door and took her first steps running towards you, hardly knowing how, would you turn away and say 'wait till thou knowest better how to walk; or would you stretch out your hand in welcome'? 'I would welcome her,' she said, enfolding the baby in her arms. 'So Jesus welcomes you,' we said, and she needed no further persuasion."

LITERATURE.

Few missions have more fully grasped the importance of literature in evangelist's work and of the careful planning and grading of it for various ages and interest. In the earliest days in the Algiers streets the plan was adopted of issuing a story leaflet a month to be distributed by men workers to all the readers in the Arab cafes in the town.

Great care was taken (and the A.M.B. were pioneers in this) in getting a touch of eastern beauty into all the little publications and it was felt that with colour-loving people the extra cost of printing a leaflet in two colours was worth while. Arabesque page decoration was studied and used, and the reward for this came when it was discovered that few things gave greater joy, than to be allowed to colour these essentially Arabic designs.

A horse van (formerly the property of a lion-tamer!) was bought for the carriage of literature to all villages accessible by road and *tourne'es* were made, in hiring fresh horses or mules from stage to stage as in the old coaching days. The workers slept in or under the van or in a friendly Arab house. Later, as the roads improved, to Miss Trotter's great joy a motor van was shared (and is still shared) with the Nile Mission Press for similar touring. It is now possible to drive to formerly inaccessible desert towns.

"In the one land of Algeria are well over half a million boys between the ages of five and fifteen – all shepherdless, all starving in soul. The bulk of them is scattered in villages and hamlets and roving tent-settlements, far and wide."

"I have vision – or is it only a dream, to be disillusioned by wiser people? A vision of the day we shall have colporters for the boys, each of them a man with the boy-objective before him, the boy hearts for this realm to conquer; a man who would study boy-nature, and lay himself out for it, that he 'might by all means save some.' He would get a knot of them round him outside the village, and give them bicycle rides, or set them to run races for sweets, till he had got into comradeship, and then tell them stories or show them pictures, and note who could read the best, and who was captain of the gang, and who showed most response, and then give to a carefully chosen few papers to read to the others when he is gone. A man like that would have a network of friends among the lads all over the land; when a breath of the Spirit comes, they might in after years 'rise upon their feet, an exceeding great army.'"

"I know this leaves out of count the adverse currents; parents and native teachers may well intervene and confiscate. On the other hand, with the growth of Western influence, much is allowed to pass with a philosophic 'it is decreed' - and among the younger fathers are many who are proud that their little sons and their acquirements should be noticed, and will probably do nothing to raise the wind. And should it be raised, it will only serve as an advertisement, and it is pretty sure that those who have not 'eaten the stick' as they graphically express it, will be back again to see the sequel through, next time!"

THE WISDOM OF LOVE.

APPLIED BIBLE TEACHING.

In the training of souls the authentic pastoral note is struck in the notes of Bible teaching scattered here and there in the diary. The lessons were always kept close to the actual needs of the souls to whom they were given:

“Taitum has been coming every morning for a reading lesson followed by an 'instruction' in the Lord's Commandments. I feel this is one thing in which we have greatly failed. - The 'teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded' and that this is why they have got on so slowly.”

“We want them to get hold of all that He has bidden and forbidden. It is the first step toward sanctification. 'By the law is the knowledge of sin' from the beginning.”

“We have got to heart sins in our little Tuesday instruction. We have just finished sins of the tongue, and the two Fatimas were telling us how their respective children disapprove of their new light on 'not rendering railing for railing.' 'Thou hast no heart,' said Munira to her mother. 'Thou hast no nose' said Bonalem to this, 'a nose' being a synonym for self-respect.”

IN A DESERT TOWN.

“The men were back in a troop, twenty five or thirty not counting the boys. As yesterday we hammered, or rather I believe God hammered in, The Sermon on the Mount. I feel that is what they need, it seemed so written for them, with their content with externals. The big talebs sit alongside us and mostly follow with their red Testaments, and then towards the end they said, as yesterday, 'Now read to us about the Death of Jesus'. And again they listened in perfect silence. . . that wonderful hush that comes from God.”

“The Pink Shell and Brown Berry (two children staying in the mission house) came down to sing their Christmas Carol. The women were delighted and a thawing began. Then we told them that love as well as joy was Christ's Christmas gift and asked those who were willing to let all old grudges drop to hold up their hands. With one accord, by a touch of God, up flew a crowd of hands, - with such vehemence that their owners flew on to their feet and looked such a dear old wild crew. Then came a greeting one another with a holy kiss after an impromptu sort, and finally Yamina and Zuleika the chief delinquents fell on each others necks and kissed and kissed again.”

“He had been comparing the account in St. Matthew and St. John of Peter's denial and brought, in no carping spirit, but really wanting to understand it, the puzzle that one spoke of two men servants and a maidservant questioning Peter, and the other of two women servants and a man. E. answered him that probably the whole crowd of servants was questioning, and we went on to explain how each Gospel story told just what one person had seen and heard. 'Yes', he answered, 'I see how they would not all be the same. If I and some of my comrades were listening to the Lord and I went out to drink some water I should have missed a bit, and my account would not be the same as the others.'”

TRAINING TO STAND ALONE.

Miss Trotter had a wholesome dread of over-shepherding souls. Her intensely sympathetic nature steeled itself against such care of new-born souls as should make them dependant on her rather than on

God. She learnt that prayer is the greater part of shepherding. On this point the diary contains a significant little meditation curiously arising from Deut. 22.1-4:

“There are some of us who 'hide ourselves' and let the poor sheep go wandering on, unhelped by human love and pity and caring. There are others of us who 'bring it home' to our house, but are quite content to have it stay there, content to take the place of its true shepherd to the end of time, forgetting that this is to rob Him of His last one of their right to one another, losing sight of the fact that our business is simply to get them together again at the very first chance.”

“It is here that the word comes home to me – there are weak-kneed souls like Ali and Mustapha always getting into hobbles, who remain weak through overshepherding on the human side. Oh to have Christ 'nigh' enough to take them over.”

REFUSAL OF CONCEALMENT.

“Then came a difficult moment. In walked one of the headmen of the town with one of the builders to see about faulty work they had put in. Should I sent Sadiq away or should I close the reading room door (which always stands open into the courtyard) that he might remain unseen. I felt no. We must not show enquirers the example of fear. Yet it was a test of faith when the man, on his way out, looked straight and keenly into the room where Sadiq sat yet on the dais intent on his book. He could not but see him and seeing him must recognize him for he belongs to one of the best families.”

BREAKING RAMADAN:

“She is not a year old yet in the new life. A while ago we would not have brought the step before anyone so young in the faith of the Son of God. But I have been beginning to see that we have no right to keep them hanging about on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. When once they know the sprinkling of the Blood, we have to give them God's 'Go forward' and hold out the rod of faith that their way may be opened. If we have not faith and courage to tell them to go ahead, it is not likely that they will rise to it alone.”

PREPARATION FOR DIFFICULTIES:

“I was telling him tonight of the path of separation which lay before him when Jesus should call him 'out.' 'Yes' said he, 'I remember when I was boy we were out in the country and several of us were going barefoot. We came to a rough prickly bit of ground and began to go thus (showing hesitation, tentative step with his hand) but our leader said 'That's not the way, rush it and it will not hurt.' 'We saw him rush it and we rushed it and we hardly felt the thorns.' And his face glowed as he swung his arms to show the 'elan.'”

TRAINING OF EVANGELISTS:

“I believe it is wiser to begin with to let them go backwards and forwards into the secular calling as our Lord willed for the first disciples rather than to take all at once the plunge into the spiritual work with all its flood of new temptations.”

THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH:

As we said before the object of the Algiers Mission Band was and is spear-head evangelisation. Miss

Trotter's hope was that other missions would give themselves to the building up of the Church and community. But no evangelistic mission can quite dissociate itself from the shepherding of converts and her thoughts on this were often illuminating as she sought to defeat the loneliness that assaults them:

On some isolated converts:

“How I wish we could get them and X and Y together. The next best thing I think would be to try some little sort of MS. magazine in which each should write something every month, were it only a text or a verse of a hymn.”

Coming together:

“In the old days the converts used to be like little balls of quicksilver and would roll up near one another and even touch but never co-coalesce. Now they have run together in a way that marks a new era.”

She was always experimenting in ways of common prayer that would be both natural to new Christians and would give them a sense of fellowship in God. The discovery of the attitude of prayer, standing with outstretched hands, palms upward, like the pictures of primitive Christians in the catacombs or on ancient sarcophagi was a delight to her:

“We were teaching them 'Give me a clean heart' when they (a group of small boys in a desert town) suddenly realised that it was a prayer. They said 'Shall we hold out our hands?' 'Yes,' we answered, and the six pairs of little brown hands were stretched out in the prayer attitude, and ours with posture – there is a 'believe that ye receive' about it.”

On her visit to Cairo the Arabic services led by Canon Gairdner were an inspiration to her:

“That little C.M.S. Church within a stone's throw where Canon Gairdner has charge has been the greatest joy and uplift of our time here on the spiritual side. It is still the day of small things there for they keep to direct work amongst the Moslems. But the little crypt-like church is scintillating with light and life. To hear the burst of praise in the 'Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father' in the midst of the strongest Moslem city in the world is worth going there for.”

She felt the benefit for newly Christian souls who had cut loose from a great community, of sharing in the prayers and praises of the saints of the past, of the great community into which they were being welded and to this end saw the benefit of books of prayers.

“We issued for Easter-day a tiny prayerbook. We feel that with the limitations of the linking with the saints of the present, the linking with those of past ages grows in its value for these ex-Moslems to whom brotherhood means so much.”

Realising that new Christians came from a community rich in feasts she was very anxious that the joy of the great Christian feast might be theirs and that it might be expressed in ways natural to them. She delightedly caught at any domestic days of celebrating feastdays. The Arab custom of a feast in honour of recovery from illness was practised by her when some member of the mission group has been ill, and helped to build up fellowship.

The following notes in the diary show the development of the Christian festival.

“Mimoun made a Christmas tree, or rather an erection which he fabricated in private with canes and palm fronds and decorated with candles and mandarine and the first winter jonquils, it was such as they make for the birth of Mohammad. He brought it triumphantly to our joint house-party in the court, and was so delighted with our appreciation that he said 'Next Christmas I will make a car instead and drag it through the village.'”

“Ten of the women of the church and their children have kept Easter with us at El Biar. They had been to the baths, some of them had whitewashed their houses and done their hands with henna. Children arrived in the full glory of their 'Aid' cloths, the first time that these had been worn for a Christian feast.”

“One after another has spoken of the reverence and stillness, a heaven sent stillness, of the Good Friday meeting, with its rending, almost without comment, of the Story of the Cross.”

“They prayed that the atmosphere of Easter might reign in the house. That the prayer was heard was proved by a sensitive little soul exclaiming as she came in 'What has happened? Has Jesus come?’”

The following questions planned for discussion at a “rally” of the mission show how the care of new Christians was given its place in evangelistic thinking.

1. *“Up to what point should Sunday observance be brought before the converts” How can the day best be marked and used by them?*
2. *What is the best method of giving systematic instruction to converts? What are the chief lines on which it should be given?*
3. *What is the right principle as to our giving taken as a whole? i.e. balancing the Bible commands as to the care for those who are in need, against the danger of fostering a spirit of begging and a want of self reliance and the danger of people coming for what they can get?*
4. *How can converts in their turn be best encouraged in the spirit of helping and giving? And brought on to definite witnessing and soulwinning?*
5. *Is it found possible to teach women converts to read? If so how? (How Miss Trotter would have rejoiced in the movement headed by Dr. Laubach of the Philippines!)*
6. *Can any plan be suggested by which the converts belonging to the different missions of the town could from time to time meet for prayer and have the strength of recognising each other? Could the chief Christian feasts – Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday, be used as rallying times? And could mission converts from other stations be asked to join us? (Again what joy would be hers at the Easter gatherings for Christians from all churches and missions held in Kabylia under the leadership and inspiration of Dr. Maoudj, once himself a Muslim.)”*

DREAMS AND DEVELOPMENTS.

The members of the Algiers Mission Band were sedulously taught the Christian use of imagination, whether in the writing and illustrating of a story for children or in plans for the future of their work. Miss Trotter held that the dreaming of dreams and the seeing of visions was a part of the Spirit-filled life. The imagination is so often the last power that a man surrenders to God) fed and illuminated by prayer might bring (to use a favourite quotation of hers) -

News from the inner courts of things

And hear the bubbling of the springs
That feed the world.

In contrast to many mission leaders, sensitive to the narrowness of the budget who warn the missionaries that “no advance involving further expenditure can be considered,” she would always have the younger members of the mission dreaming dreams of advance praying over them and sharing them with their comrades – certain that when God's chosen line was discovered and God's hour had struck the financial difficulties would be overcome. Of dreams that seemed for the moment impossible she wrote:

“It is good to note these visions as they come, against the time when they can be put side to side with reality when God brings the dream castles to earth.”

“In all the dreams that God turns to fact there is, I think in a lesser degree than that of our final vocation, a fulfilling of St. Paul's words about apprehending that for which we are apprehended. In these visions that come before us, Christ Jesus apprehends us. He takes hold of us with the thought or the prayer or the interweaving of both together. . . and then we 'follow after' till we apprehend that for which we have been apprehended.”

Of the dreams noted in Lilius Trotter's diary some have been fulfilled or are in process of fulfilment (like that of the gatherings of fellowship for former Moslems noted above) while some are yet awaiting God's fulfilment perhaps in ways not ours. Here are some of the earliest noted:

“I have been thinking over the general outlines of advances; of how we should keep to the Arab lines socially, instead of losing power (for power leaks out in friction) by trying to run on European lines.”

“If we study Arab lines of social intercourse there would be:

- 1. For the men. The native cafe on Christian lines.*
- 2. The story-teller or blind musician with his tomtom or its equivalent. Mr. Smith is getting passage after passage of the Bible now into a rhythmical recitative in which one can almost hear the Arab lilt and swing.*
- 3. For the women and children, Christian 'ziara's' to take the place of the outings to shrines which are their only chance of fresh air.*
- 4. The 'dar mu'allima' for the little girls to learn embroidery and needlecraft as they have done from time immemorial.*
- 5. The guest house for men and women in families.”*

A still unfulfilled dream of hers concerning literature is that of a boys' magazine, not like the several children's magazine she saw in the Near East planned for Christians and Christian in vocabulary, but written and edited with Muslim boys in view.

“Another dream of the future, would be a boys' magazine, with temperance, purity, physical culture, bits of natural history and scores of other topics. Anything specially striking to be reprinted in leaflet form. How many such magazines does Christendom possess? Could not different lands and missions combine in one for Islam? We need combination, and we need fresh writing powers to be laid at Christ's feet.”

Another vision of hers has bound its fulfillment in the establishment of the Central Literature

Committee for Muslims through which one Muslim field can share the work of the others. When first invited by Dr. Zwemer to a literature consultation in Cairo, Miss Trotter wrote:

“Is this the beginning of what may be a great missionary exchange mart in the time to come, where the good things from the land may be, as need arises imported to another?”

But the dreams of her latest years turned more and more toward work for the members of the dervish orders who deeply touched her sympathy. On an evangelistic journey when the members of a zaouia had been among her closest listeners she writes:

“An invitation to the zaouia, a real honour for womenkind. It was very interesting to see the real inner life of our hearers. Up a winding stair we went into a big book-lined room, the floor spread with great camel skins, and lined round the skirting boards with solemn white-robed figures sitting round. We had coffee and talk and promised them a big Bible for their library.”

Gradually those large Bibles were presented to many a zaouia and she began feeling her way to approach to the member of the orders:

“The line of approach that we make to Moslems of the ordinary talib class slips off their souls and fails to grip them in the least. Whereas if we read them a few verses, say from St. John's Gospel, there is response at once. It seems strange that hardly a thing has been written for them, hardly a thought given to them except by George Swan of Zeitoun and one or two others. Yet of all the millions of Islam they are far and away the truest seekers after God albeit in weird and dangerous paths.”

Or again later:

“It comes as a new, strong call to bring them the true mysticism of the life hid with Christ in God, and a new possibility of access on a hitherto untried side. Their mystic beliefs and longing are not generally spoken of. Only now one sees why 'the way' is always the word used by them for salvation in Christ.”

“One of the points that interest me most deeply down there (Tozeur) is the contact with these mystics, offspring of the countless brotherhoods of the desert. They recognize Christianity as another species of mysticism and St. John's writings appeal to them strongly. By a seeming contradiction but consistently with the framing of their religious orders, they want to have an exact rule laid down. 'You must tell me everything' they say with touching earnestness.”

These experiences bore fruit in her last bedridden years in her little book of the Sevenfold Secret. And her prayers of those last years were turning towards one more dream. It was first suggested by an old blind convert himself trained in the Sufi life. She writes from El-Biar:

“The Hadj is very full of the idea that this should be a zaouia where people can come to learn, from the interior, and that there should be another at Miliana where people can come and stay, and at the other mission centres. 'Your old men shall 'Dream dreams.'”

So she lay and prayed and dreamed a dream not yet fulfilled.

“A zaouia of the future where a group of young English men willing to live say for five years in a Brotherhood could spend the first two or three of these living alongside a corresponding group of Arab

enquirers and converts, on the same lines as in their own zaouias – study intercourse, prayer in solitude and together – studying together with the seekers working together with the finders.”

“It is not a thought that any of us would dare to follow up except with the certainty that God's hour had struck . . . and most certainly about it is that such a place would be a mark for the enemy and likely to end in a tragedy of some kind unless under a special sheltering from heaven.”

So, dreaming to the end those dreams that were prayers, she passed to the land where dream gives place to vision.

– Constance Padwick