

Algiers  
Mission  
Band

Journal  
No. 8.



A Blida woman

March

+

April

1908



in outdoor dress

Dar Naama, El Biar.

March 15.

Mr. Summers arrived on Thursday, & Mr. Smith & Miss Day will complete the revision Committee by to-morrow night. Helen Freeman & I have come to stay here too with them for the month or more that it will take.

The Algiers souls seem in fairly smooth waters with one exception, round which our prayers are centring.

This exception is Doudja, Sherifa's chief friend - a dull heavy looking girl, mostly in bad health & low spirits. She is a faithful ally of Sherifa's & her soul is visited with little shafts of the true Light.



Now comes to them both the blow that she has been asked in marriage by the husband of that Baiya who passed so quickly into the Kingdom of God, & thence into His Presence, three years ago. The man is a stern and cruel Moslem, & might well have been charged with manslaughter over Baiya's death. To be his wife would be a terrible future for a shrinking creature like Dordja, let alone the certainty that he would religiously to knock out of her any & every bit of faith Christward.

There is some mystery about it, for there is nothing to attract him towards a sickly penniless girl like this, & it is equally a mystery that Baiya, Dordja's mother,

Knowing the whole story of Baiya, who was her adopted daughter, should have made up her mind to give him Dardja. We think some of their hair-poisons must have been used to corrupt & blind her usually sensible & foreseeing mind. She speaks as one in a dream, Sheifa says, & when the plain facts of the case are put before her she assents but does not realize them. "She is like a rope when you pull it, & it gives a little but the other end is held fast." That is Sheifa's description. The only hope for the girl's release is a Divine intervention.

I was struck to-day when Mr. Summers came

4

up from a few hours in Algiers, by his saying that he did not know when he had felt anything like the devil-oppression of the air down there - that he had lived for years in the darkness of Morocco, & had just come from the fast bound superstitions of Madras (I forgot to explain he is the Bible Soc. Sec. for Spain & North Africa) but that nothing he could remember comes up to the weight of the spiritual atmosphere in Algiers. Is it the sirocco that is the precursor of the showers!

March 19.

We are well under weigh with the revisions: over

share, apart from Mr. Summers & Mr. Smith who are both first rate Arabic scholars, is only to say what is understood, & to write out the fresh text as we go along. This means at times driving away at a rate which makes us uncharitably glad when they get into a puzzle, & we can overtake them & get breath to speak! Blanche Haworth's part is to keep all in a lovely quiet that would have been impossible in Algeria, & to drag us out to our meals!

I have never explained the reason for this revision. Dr. Lupton's translation, of which I gave the story last year, was invaluable for giving the whole its start,

but it proved, when thoroughly examined too formal in language - Greek sentences put into Arabic words rather than Arabic such as the Arabs speak it, with their forceful idioms. To take the first instance that comes to mind, the sentence "his hand was restored whole as the other" is quite intelligible rendered word for word into Arabic, & yet to a native it would have a bald foreign sound. Every Arab left to himself would say "restored whole as her sister."

In view of this Mr. Smith had after the last committee three years ago, prepared a revised text, with an Arab of Constantine, whereof I put in a sample page last year:



this was admirable in many ways, but to our sorrow it proved to be too much in Constantine dialect to pass in these western provinces where it is specially needed, & we felt bound to give the people a wording over which there could be no mistake or misunderstanding. So with pain & reluctance it was set aside in the autumn at the last moment - a sad fortnight it was to all of us concerned. & this final revision with an Algerian Arab arranged for this spring.

Very much depended naturally on getting the right Arab, & it is a great rest of mind to us all to feel he is the right one. Hadj Berahim is his name, a young fellow from Laghouat - he comes up every day for the whole session,

& in the rest-house Mr Smith, who is a tireless worker, squeezes in a first revision between him & the Arab of the first chapters of St. John. Fortunately the Arabian shows an amount of staying power rare among his race. He has an intensely keen intelligent mind, wide awake all round, & yet a native of the natives — a rare combination this, for the wide-awake minds generally assimilate a European flavour that would spoil them for a task like ours, where we want everything European eliminated.

Talking things over with a man of this stamp shows up in strong contrast the richness & the poverty of his language:

he happened in conversation to say there were 100 words for quicksilver, of which he knew 50. ("lightning of the earth" is the only one of them I remember) - when we want a word for humility, or hope, or holiness, we can only use one borrowed from the classical, & dimly to be guessed at by ordinary readers. We write for a people as yet unborn spiritually; the words will be understood when the realities for which they stand go to need expression. We have to make a spiritual language against the time when it will be wanted.

March 24.

The tangle round Doraja's path remains entangled still. Her younger sisters are anxious to push forward the

engagement, for in well-bred families (& they are not= withstanding their penny, of good birth) the younger daughters should not marry before the older: therefore they want her out of the way.

Hanifa has so far broken through the rule, that she has offered one of the younger sisters in Dondja's place: a bright looking girl, with much more "savoir faire" in the way of self-protection. This has been declined, sealing thereby our conviction that it is another of the plots of Sherifa's enemy to get hold of her. He is a friend of the sultors, & has probably bribed him to this marriage so as to lay a trap thereby knowing that its purpose accomplished, nothing is easier than to

11  
him Doudja adrift again: her ill health would give plenty  
of reason for divorce in an Arab's eye.

The only plan that has come to us is to ask for  
6 months' reprieve - thereby giving ourselves time to pray,  
& time for the brain dry to wear itself out, leaving  
Haniifa's mother heart time to assert itself again. In the meantime  
we can set ourselves to getting Doudja strengthened  
physically, & giving her as much embroidery work as  
she can get through - she does the "gargaf" beautifully.  
By the end of that time, if she is no longer a weight  
on her people's hands there is no excuse for marrying  
her off. Round the answer that Haniifa will give to

this ultimatum our prayers are gathering now.

March 29.

St Luke is slowly growing into its final setting, there are words & phrases that will always be linked with prayer victories, when no clue came to involved passage or untranslatable expression, and suddenly the solution would come, dropped down from heaven upon one or another, sometimes on David Balaam himself, & in that case all the more evidently from God in that, as often as not, he was all unaware of where the complication existed, or the cause of difficulty lay.

There are side touches too that bring this near. Yesterday "Fear not little flock" came in the chapter that we were working on, & we were getting at the right word for "little flock."

"Would this word 'jeliba' mean such a little flock that it would not be worth the Shepherd's care"? asked Mr. Summers. "No - if it is a very little flock the Shepherd cares for it all the more" answered Hadji Bralim, & up went the echo of the words in thanksgiving to the Great Shepherd who has such a very little flock in these Moslem lands. He "cares for it all the more." Hallelujah!

Trabel Gran toff's father has come out to see



her, & they have had some days together at Blida, with  
the result that I can at last give 2 or 3 Snaps of  
Oulades Sultane. The verandah with the little lad



Muhammed who  
is factotum in  
the house - and  
the "Arab room"  
where the boys  
have their classes  
& the women their  
"athome"; & the  
one overleaf from  
picture off shows  
the shed that is  
to be used as soon



16

as it is ready, for the men's meetings - & for the  
double of the future!



ap. 4.

14

The victory for Dondja's freedom seems on its way. Hanifa has accepted the proposal that she should be treated by a clever American doctor who helps us in difficult cases & see whether thus she may gain strength to bring grief to the family will instead of being a burden.

All the Aegien news comes in letters from Annie. for we are unable to get up & down these weeks - She wrote on Sunday

"After the girls class to-day the elder Fatema was telling me something, & assured me "by the prophet of God" that it was true.

This Fatema is one of the girls from the embroidery

school about whom Isabel wrote when we were in  
 Churchells. Two years ago there was a distinct soul  
 - call to her from God - then she sheered off under  
 home influences - she belongs to a hard war about  
 family. Of late the softening has come back to her  
 spirit, the heart clinging has never failed towards us.

Aunty goes on

"I told her not to say that, & in an astonished tone  
 "she asked "why?" Chisa was standing there & guiltily  
 "looked her back into the Arab room & had a talk  
 "with her. When she came out, the child came up  
 "to me with such a sweet little soft look in her eyes

19  
I said "Forgive me Annie - I did not understand."

Later Chira said "Fateema pleases me greatly I think she begins to ... Oh! I don't know how today it you mean she begins to understand" I said "She is beginning to receive him into her heart." "Yes that is it" she replied.

The sorrow down there is over Dumstapha, he never comes near us now - not so much from hardness I think as from shame over his rejection of all the chances of work that we have him which would with patience have enabled him to earn his living at home & keep his Sundays free. We cannot tell how far his people are to blame

not allowing him to take any work but what brings immediate pay, or how far it is his own choice. All we can do is to hold the prayer-rope tight he cannot get away from that.

April 14.

The Revision was finished this evening. Mr. Summers' bit of india rubber was a monument of patience, it had been reduced from a new solid square to the size of a pea with its months work!

Overleaf stands the group of us, done by Blanche Hawes & Mr. Smith between them. Hadj Brahim demurred at appearing in it as he thought he would come out too



dark. He seems relieved at the prints and wants several copies.

Left to right  
Hadj Bralieu  
M. Villon  
M<sup>r</sup>. Smith  
M<sup>r</sup>. Summers



Left to right  
I. L. Trotter  
F. H. Freeman  
Miss Day

The crown of the day, as we said good-bye to him in the garden at sunset, was to find that he is

husband to the Halouma over whom hopes and fears have been alternating this spring. There must be some thought of God's behind it for them both.

Helen & I stay on another fortnight to get the fair copy done, away from the noise & interruptions of Algiers, so bringing this stage to its end.

And out of the end is springing as is God's wont another beginning. At our last monthly prayer meeting up here, last month, Mr. Cook-Jelabert & I were comparing notes on the strange slackness that so often comes over the converts when the first days of their new life are over, & talking over its recurring causes.

We ought all to meet + get to the bottom of it" we said  
& the thought was stayed. On Monday Blanche  
Haworth asked Mr. Summers if he would come back after  
his visit to Tunis & preside at a 3 days conference on  
the subject, & within 24 hours all was settled & the  
invitations drawn up for the first week in next  
month.

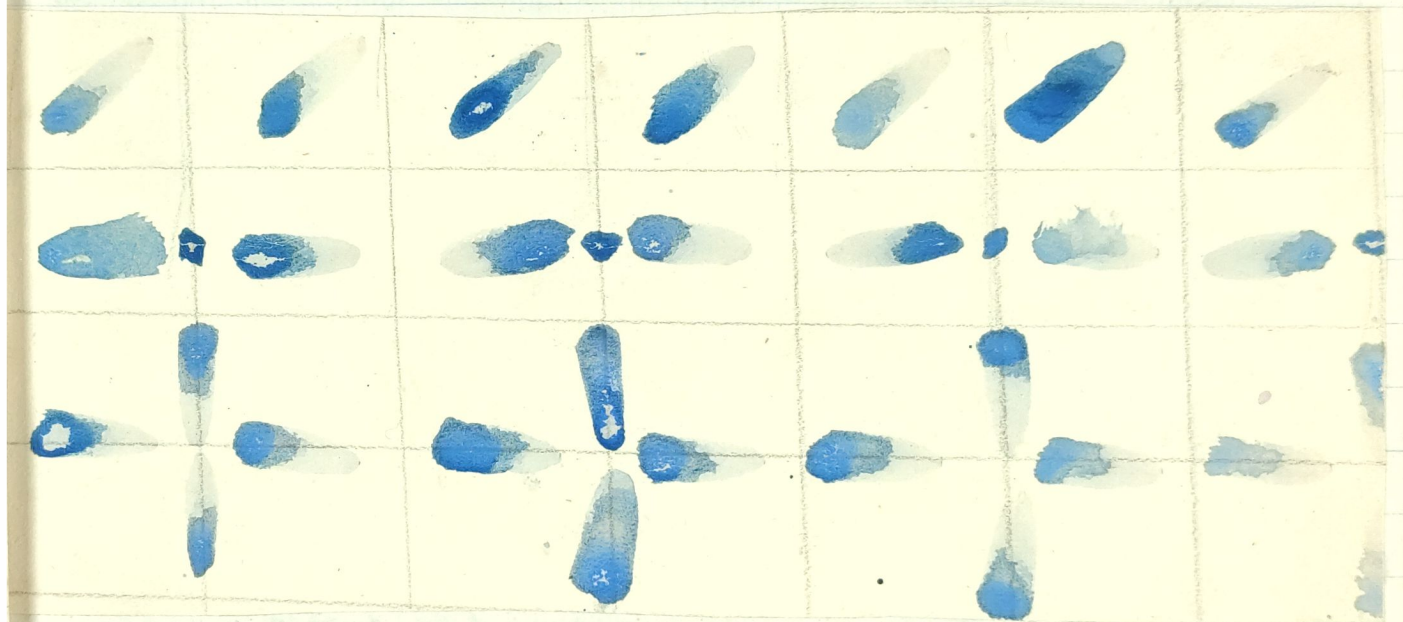
April 17

A shadow - we hope just a passing one, has been  
over the little Ouled es Sultane home these last weeks  
for Michel Olive's has been suffering by a blow in the  
eye fr. a vine-branch. His resource has been

his beloved boys, who come & go about the place with perfect familiarity, & the hours of enforced leisure have been employed in making Kites with them in the Arab room (Kites are always the rage at this time of year.) The one thief among them has thereby been melted to the heart of him - he could not make out why he should have a beautiful Kite made for him after having stolen. "It is because my Jesus is not like your Mohammed" was Michel's answer.

Our Alger attempt to become boys to the boys that we may win the boys has its ups & downs, through which Michel Grantoff & Tracy Ridley patiently

plod their way. Here is a scrap of the brush work that



still seems the chief attraction on Thursdays, though

one or two other small handicrafts have been tried. They have at last lighted on a plan for overcoming their native dislike to having their names put down on a register, by making them keep their own - marking themselves on an inspiring looking roll of honors for every attendance. To mark themselves seems to do away with the uneasy feeling that they are being inscribed, & answers the purpose just as well!

April 21

A sudden answer has come to far back prayers. The dear child, Gisela whose coming was such a ray of sunshine two years ago has been lost to sight ever

since the following summer when her father suddenly took her away & carried her off to Bone. Now the other day when Kawasch came up here to give an extra hand for a bit, she brought word that the child & her father were not only in Algiers but in her house, & when next she went down to the baths she brought back with her the little lost lamb - very scraggy, very dirty, & no bigger than when she left us. The old scowl was there too at first: next day it had changed to a silent running round with her tongue out - always in the past her expression for great satisfaction. Now already it has grown to a chronic



grin of delight as she teases about the place, doing an amount of real helpful word you would hardly believe possible from a morsel barely awake.

The queer shy soul had has folded itself up again in these two years of inclement surroundings - only we know the memory of its stirring in its sheath is still there. She will not be "talked to" & disdains even Bible pictures - only when she saw Blanchie's auto harp she remarked "that is for bed-time" and the Welsh tune to which she made her little private hymns sends her great dark eyes into a day dream. Some luminous & divine, will make an atmosphere whi:

will bring the blessing in God's time, if only her people will leave her.

It comes as a comfort for Basalim's leaving taken himself off: we could not have kept them together.

April 24

To-day has brought a letter from Lucy about their coming up to the Conference - She says

"We have been helped these days, all is going well - on Easter Monday we went to Herk's farm. "Hadj Basalim" (a Bliola neighbour not our Laphonati translator) lent us their donkey - they would not let

" us have it unless we took it as a gift. We  
" had a good time & as the rain came on they wanted  
" us to stay the night, which we think we might do  
" another time, as it is a pity to be coming down  
" as the men come home - we feel so much pleased with  
" the muledrivers Ali & now that we know the way to  
" the villages we do not need anyone with us... 16 of the  
" boys had the right to the magic lantern yesterday & their  
" pleasure was a joy - in the afternoon they brought us  
" bunches of flowers as thanks. In the evening we had  
" eleven of Hadji Ibrahim's family to see the pictures  
" men & women, & it was a good time. When it was

over one of the big lads put his hand on the lantern  
saying "Don't sit small & least tonight us all this"  
- now that we have the shed settled we have plenty  
of room - Michel has boarded and whitewashed  
it all over & with a couple of mats it looks quite  
like a native cafe."

Another of the bits of hope they told us of there not  
long ago was over a taleb - cousin to the AbdelWader  
of whom I wrote in February - "the slave of the  
mighty one." He himself gets dumb & frightened, poor  
lad, yet he wants his people to hear. This taleb  
- cousin had a fopel given him & was found by

another man reading it with tears in his eyes - When the cause of the tears was inquired into he gave answer that he had been yawning! subsequently he owned that it was the wonderful things in the book that had started them. That a bit of these little things should come among his own people ought to trace AbdelNader's courage to hold on. Pray for this.

April 28.

One more proof, to end this journal, that the Good Shepherd is not forgetting the waifs & strays of His "little flock". The Blida Haoria has been

found, in one of those flat-roofed houses in "Djome"  
living safely with her mother & little boy & girl, & with the  
"incorruptible seed" still alive in her heart. Her people seem  
to think they have got her safe back & therefore do not shut  
the door against her: whether they will allow Naoro to  
go & see her alone is yet to be proved. Praise God for having  
her even thus far within reach.

April 30

The Swifts have been reading me a faithful lesson. They  
come in flights at this time of year: one slept in my  
room last night & another darted in at the open window  
before I was up, swept round & out again.

Their faith lesson is this - that their wings need the surety of an air gulf below to give them a start, their leg muscles have no spring in them, & when they perch by accident on a level place they are stuck fast. Poor things we did not know that natural history fact in the past, & when we have found them on our flat Algiers roof with its parapet protection, we have thought they had somehow got hurt & more than once have tried to feed them till they died, instead of doing the one thing that they needed - tossing them off into emptiness!

- - - - -

So we need not wonder if we are not allowed to stay long in level, sheltered places - our faults - wings we like theirs, in that we mostly need the gulf of some emergency to give them their start on a new flight.

We will not fear when we feel empty air underneath them - if we have not the spring that can soar up like the lark, we can swing off recklessly like the swift!

P. T. O

J. L. Trubw



Miss Collier. 19 Richmond Terrace. Blackburn

Lady Perkin. The Chestnuts. Sudbury. Middlesex

Mrs Shaw. Oak Manor. Baltham. Cheltenham

Miss Soltan. C.I.M. 92 Grosvenor Road. Highbury. London N

Miss Williamson. C.I.M. Newington Green. N.

Mrs Mack. Bereford House. 64 Highbury New Park. London. N.

Miss Edmund. 18 Canonbury Park South. London. N.

Lady Doddworth. 36 Collyer Road. Clifton. Bristol.

Miss Webster. <sup>42. Beaujeu Road. Edgbaston. Birmingham.</sup>  
~~At South Rectory. Beaumont St. London. W.~~

E.L. Dwyer Esq. Fairbrag. Northwood. R.L.O. Middlesex

Mrs Kirkpatrick. Coniston Penn. Wolverhampton

Mrs A.V. Prier. The Moorings. ~~to~~ New Ferry Road. Northwood R.S.O. Middlesex

~~Miss Hume. Kirkpatrick. The Grange. Mansel.~~

Miss Irving. Inverness House 80 Highbury New Park. London. N.

Miss Mabel Rickard. Elvaston. Thornlow Park 12. West. Sussex