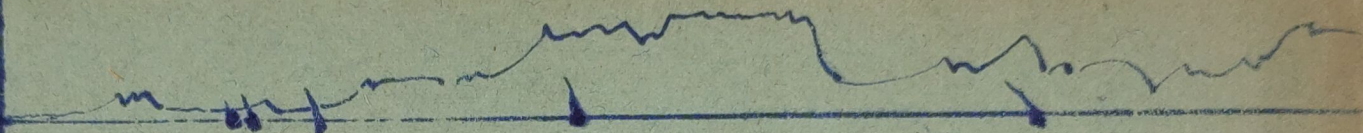
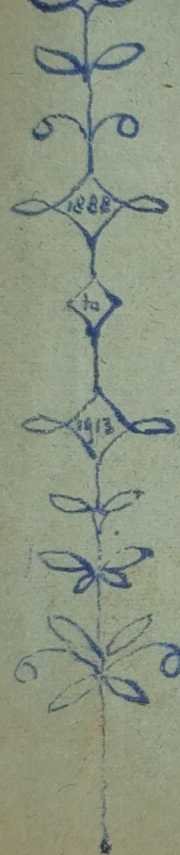


P. M. B.



Back-ground
+
Fore-ground.



ALGIERS MISSION BAND.

Staff in 1913.

Date of arrival.

1888.	I.Lilias Trotter.	1909.	*Miriam Madsen.
"	. B.G.L. Haworth.	"	. Alice MacIlroy.
1890.	F.Helen Freeman.	1911.	Clare Mennell.
1905.	Annie Whisler.(Absent.)	"	. Sara Pelissier.
1906.	Sascha Perkin.	"	. Ida Nash.
"	. Alexandrine Gayral.	1912.	J.H. Smeeton.
1907.	Mabel Grautoff.	"	. Joachim Pons.
"	. May Ridley.	"	. Esther Regojo.
1909.	F.K. Currie.	"	. Laura Carr.
"	. Milicent Roche.	"	. Elsie Thorpe.
"	. Alma Krebs.	"	. Mary Freeman.
"	. Mary Watling.	"	. S. Soler.

*Entered into rest, Mar: 26th. of this year.

* * * * *

Short Service Hostel.

Pleasant Hurst, Emmie Walters, Grace Russell, Ethel
Greenway, Kathleen Butler, Dora Van Berohem, Sybil Cavell.

* * * * *

ALGIERS MISSION BAND.

Stations in 1913.

Date of opening.	Algiers.		Country.
1888.	Headquarters.	1901.	Blida.
1906.	Dar Naama.	1909.	Relizane.
1909.	Beit Naama.	1909.	Miliana.
1911.	Dar El Fedjr.	1912.	Mascara.

At Touzer a Mission House
waiting permanent occupation.

* * * * *

Council of Reference. London.

Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Trotter.	Broomfield Lodge. Chelmsford.
Sir H. & Lady Proctor.	Norheim. Chislehurst.
Rev. S. W. & Mrs. Howe.	St. Lukes Vicarage. C.E. Finchley. N.
F. Bishop Esq. Hon. Sec.	Welwyn. Northwood. N.

* * * * *

Algerian Women's Mission Band. America.

Mrs. W. G. Pearce. Hon. Sec.	324 North Normal Parkway. Chicago.
	U. S. A.

* * * * *

Tomorrow is our silver wedding day to Africa. On March 9th 1988, we steamed into the Bay of Algiers, the water below shimmering with phosphorescence, the crescent of the shore set with gleaming lights, and the glistening southern sky above full of its quiet stars. Next morning seen from the deck, the Arab town rose in a creamy mass in the sunrise against the dead deep blue. Three of us stood there, looking at our battle-field, none of us fit to pass a doctor for any society, not knowing a soul in the place, or a sentence of Arabic, or a clue for beginning work on untouched ground: we only knew we had to come. Truly if God needed weakness, He had it! And it is just because He may win a ray of glory out of that fact, that I am setting down the story of His ways with us.

All unseen those ways were taking shape by the time we had spent our first night in the Pension on the outskirts. Three sisters and their mother came in there from a villa near by for their meals, and we foregathered. One of them specially took us on her heart, and year by year since then a lavish gift from her has been the backbone of the little mission fund, which has met our growing needs without ever a penny asked from man - I had almost said from God or man. I think it is true as far as I am concerned, that the supply has always forestalled the want, as is the wont of an earthly father whose wealth is boundless. It has been as if He knew how hard the battle would be in other

ways, and has never let that weight press, glory to His name!

The story of those early years might be summed up in apparently "knocking our heads against stone walls." The first stone wall was the language, with no one to advise us as to masters or methods - The next was access, with no one to help us into a single native house or to tell us what to do when we got there. In despair with our dumbness we got our Arabic teacher to translate for us bits of Scripture passages into the colloquial, wrote them out as best we could with a cyclostyle, and with one of our few sentences "Canst thou read?" distributed them in the native streets and shops, a small friendly boy brandishing a stick before us to keep off crowding. In between we had French meetings for our neighbours (for we had a flat by now) that became bigger and rowdier until we could only hold them with help from the police. As they finally outgrew our powers, we gave them over to a Swedish missionary and went our ways among natives alone.

Sunday classes for market and shoe-black boys were our first venture, with infinite toil over preparation, resulting in each being able to speak for about five minutes. Yet one of the boys of those earliest and feeblest days (who gave his name as "Son of a Dog", hoping we should not understand and that he would have the wicked joy of seeing it go down on the register) passed

18 months ago into the Church Militant, and thence into the Church Triumphant, recalling as the first seed in his heart those lessons and hymns - hymns strung together out of our tiny vocabulary in blissful ignorance of any rule of Arabic versification.

Entrance came to the houses as our tongues got freer: it was mostly won by making friends with the children on the door steps. Three or four men and lads came out on Christ's side and were baptized. A poor set they were as it proved: we comforted ourselves often over the fact that paper and sticks are needed to set light to the coal which will be the real fire.

And with all the outward disappointments, the hardest ones of those first years were, I think, in ourselves. - The testings on the battle-field where the inner life failed, the nerve strain of the climate, the pressure on our spirits of the Satanic forces with which all teems out here, - the lessons which we thought we knew and which we had "turned back" again and again to be learnt afresh. - All these were the dark background against which God's mercy has shone out. These early years seemed taken up in the learning of the meaning of one word. "Grace."

Meanwhile our numbers were gradually increasing, and the horizon was widening with the sight of the villages on the mountains and the great South lands beyond; and we began taking winter journeys outwards. I remember the first one, - we wondered

whether it was the first sight or the last of those marvellous
oases: for the national relations were getting strained, and
just before we started came the fiat that all the missionaries
were to withdraw. That fiat lies still among my papers, and af-
ter twenty years here we remain!

Wonderful journeys those were, with their groups of eager
men listeners, - (the women were too overwhelmed with the curiosity
of Arabic speaking strangers to be brought to stillness). But
each itineration became more difficult than the last on the side
of the authorities, till the final one in 1902 ended in an order
not to set foot in the military regions again, and boycotting
followed us to the mountains above where entrance could not be
forbidden; the men being prohibited under pain of fine and im-
prisonment from going near us, or taking our books.

Even here in Algiers things became extremely trying. We had
moved some years before into an old fortress-like native house
in the Arab town, "The House of the Turk's Son, in the Street of
the Crescent" is its name by interpretation; a fit place in which
to "set up our banners" for Christ. Settled work had gone on
there from the first, among men, women and children, but now
meetings and classes were empty, spies watched the house, and the
newspaper talk concerning us completed the paralysis of fear on
the part of the men so that none came near us. There were weeks, -
I think it grew to months, - together, when our Sunday morning

meeting consisted of our native woman servant on the one side of the curtain that separated the sexes, and a faithful old negro Christian on the other. The women who had professed conversion were mostly unsatisfactory, and such as they were they got swept away with all the outer ring of adherents by a counter-move. We could not stir out of the place without the police being notified in the town to which our tickets were taken, that our doings might be watched and reported. It was depressing, - and yet somehow we could not get depressed, - there were star gleams through the clouds all the time.

One of the rays of outward hope came through the joining our ranks just at the darkest time, God bless them for it, of two French brothers-in-law as colporteur-evangelists, and they stood by us manfully, at the risk of loss of reputation and friends. They, as Frenchmen, could go to the south lands from which we were debarred. By winter in the south and by summer on the tablelands, they had in a few years scoured the whole country, selling scripture portions, giving the colloquial parable tracts that we had begun to issue and holding meetings by the score, - working in between whiles in the native cafes and shops of Algiers.

But even so the women and children in the far places were untouched, and they were kept away from us in Algiers; so we could only hold on doggedly and dumbly for the liberty which was so long delayed. We did not dare to ask other new-comers to join us, for

personally every door of service seemed shut. Even we ourselves wondered whether we could do better elsewhere along the coast. And at last we sent out a prayer call to those at home to help us, for we were at our wits end.

Suddenly, as is God's wont with His great deliverances, the answer came. On Easter morning the whole town was startled with the news that the Governor who had opposed us had resigned: no one to this day knows why, except that God's hour for freedom in His work had come. Straightway followed the visit of King Edward, which wrought wonders (though the natives were disappointed that he wore a felt hat instead of a crown), and that again, how we bless his memory for it, led on to the "Entente Cordiale", and an entire reversal of all the suspicions of the past as to our being political spies. The solution of the questions of Morocco and Egypt set that at rest for ever. It was marvellous to see the clouds swept back till they sank below the horizon.

Meantime on the side of Life Eternal the years had not been wholly barren.

In a neighbouring mission during the hardest bit of the opposition from the authorities the Power of the Holy Ghost had come, and the first band of lad converts was gathered out.

With us, though there was no such open vision of His blessing God did not leave Himself without witness; and through those dark years we saw men and women root their souls in Christ, only to be

transplanted, one after another, into His Heavenly Kingdom above. It was as if He knew there was not enough oxygen in the spiritual atmosphere to keep them alive on earth. Realizing that, we were glad to let them go. One needs to live in a Moslem land to know the meaning of those words "He was comforted concerning "him" knowing that he was dead." One draws a breath of relief when they get safe home.

There had been one "winter bud" swelling even through the stormy days of cold, - our first little out-station in a town 30 miles off, at the foot of the mountains that bound our plain. In those days it consisted of two rooms in the back yard of a friendly Protestant widow, - friendly, though at first she too firmly believed us to be spies. We used to visit as best we could, amid much suspicion, rejoicing when we could creep into the shelter of these two rooms again. Yet even so the doors had opened till our tally of villages around now mounted to seventy or eighty, each of them meaning scores of women and girls red robed in the hill country dress, ready to welcome us any day, watching in vain for our return when we delayed, for hitherto we had only been down in couples for a few weeks together.

Now in the spring time of liberty all could go forward, and the French pastor who had backed us through the dark days found us a field just outside the town, with a cottage looking out on the wide parish of white roofed houses below and little groups of hamlets

above. Of this we were able to take possession, the purchase money coming as God's gift, and there work grew apace.

Another bud that had begun to shew signs of life was the subject of colloquial translation. All we had had till now for a native Bible, was the splendid literary one, far above the heads of the bulk of the people; eked out with such scraps of colloquial as we had put together for ourselves.

Now came the last days of the Swedish missionary who had taken over our hall, - a scholar who had chosen to live and die unknown for the sake of the Arabs. His life work had been a translation of the New Testament into Algerian Arabic; his standard being that it should be simple enough for the mothers to read to their children. Crippled with arthritis, and nearly fainting over his labour through pain and weakness, he had wrestled through till he wrote the final "Come Lord Jesus" with fingers that could hardly creep over the paper. Two days after he was unable to sign his name, and a week or two later he had gone to receive his "well done". He had given the impetus: and soon a Gospel of St. Luke was being prepared by a fellow missionary in strong idiomatic colloquial.

But here our stories begin to overlap. One of the next bits of expansion, when we were clear of our winter storms, was the sudden coming into the hands of one of the earliest workers of a house just outside the town. - She was looking for a cottage where

we could go for rest when Algiers days were too hot and heavy, but nothing was to be found. - Then came the chance, almost unsought, and for a sum little greater than her cottage would have been, of a great rambling old native house, in a shady garden, crowning a hillside of vineyard and firwood and wild olive. The very week the workmen were out of it we had our first Conference there, with missionaries from east and west, and then a Revision Committee for colloquial versions, afterwards to be lithographed in their own beautiful script. We were asked if we would guarantee that seven thousand of St. Luke should be sold in five years, and we gladly assented. They were sold in two, and the St. John that has followed has gone a double that rate. At last there is a chance for the land, with the living seed given in a form in which it can be received and held. Since those days "The House of Grace", for such is its name by interpretation, has become the centre for our Rallies, a house of rest for tired days, the starting point for village work along the plateau, and a training place for the "mission helper" staff that is growing up around us.

For now that the block of political opposition had vanished, God began at once to prepare our way of advance by bringing in fresh recruits, many of them honorary or supported outside our ranks. Two of the latter are the outcome of the American S.S. Delegation to Rome; in 1907; which touched on our shores, and issued further in starting the work of an organized Church in the land.

The year 1909 brought us several, Danish and English; with the fresh labourers came the new fields for ploughing. That same year, seeing that re-inforcements were coming at headquarters, another of our earliest workers felt the call to push on outside. There was a whole province to the west unreached, stations of another mission having been closed down many years before through want of workers, and political difficulties.

Suspicion still lingered around and all the new steps had to be taken slowly and carefully in the new station, "The Hill of Flies" so the name of the town means. But before a year was out, two souls, a well educated Arab and his wife, had been "added to the Lord" there. The man lived long enough to bear a good witness to Christ, though consumption was on him from the outset. He would gather his friends round on market days to read and talk to them, even when he could scarcely speak for coughing. His baptism had just been arranged for when he suddenly passed away. His widow was baptized at her earnest desire shortly after and is now training for the post of Bible-woman.

The next new move was the opening of another mountain station halfway between this last and Algiers, where a pair of "out-posters" have fought on against much aloofness and hardness. It has broken now in such an avalanche of visitors morning, noon and night that they can hardly keep pace with the calls on time and strength.

Out beyond "The Hill of Flies" came the next advance. From

one of God's far back beginnings grew the unfolding to its worker of the possibility of buying a tract of land, - lignum vitae forest, corn fields, and a river bed full of oleanders, which had wonderful facilities, given the needful irrigation, for orange growing. With some heart quavers at the responsibilities involved, yet with the sense of "Deus vult" that carries heart quavers before it, the worker made the plunge, with the aim of its becoming an industrial farm of the future where enquirers and converts could find a living. All is speedily preparing for its start, and the nearest market town is now in its early stage as another new centre of work.

In the meantime there had been a strengthening of our stakes in Algiers, again through another of God's unlooked for gifts. One day we saw posted opposite our door the pink advertisement of a small Arab house for sale in the thick of the slums. A strange impulse came to go and look at it, and finally it was bought by the head of "The House of Grace" as a link between the people below and those in training. Their last year of preparation for the fight is now passed in this post, "The Room of Grace", in the very heart of the need.

"Houses and lands" they were falling to us one after another, & we gave God thanks; but a great longing awoke with the remembrance of the rest of the promise that was being so abundantly fulfilled. Could not He who was giving us such lavish "hundredfold" over its first clause and its last, grant us the same over the promised brethren & sisters and mothers that lay between!

Another recoil of the wave had to come first. Typhus broke out in Algiers and laid low one of our workers and balked much of budding work by the risks in bringing together children from infected houses. Other louses from our ranks by health breakdown or transference to other missions took from us one after another of our best equipped helpers till the poor thin fighting line was strained to its very utmost. "Where will the next blow fall" was all we could ask for nearly two years. And the heaviest blows were those that fell not on us, but on the little band of converts and enquirers who had begun to gather again. The attacks of the powers of darkness on them were more subtle now, and more terrible. As one and another made an avowal of their new found faith we saw dulness and misery gather over them and they would stay aloof from us for months. We grew to know the symptoms sadly well, - they had fallen under the brain drugs by which half the intrigues that are rife among the natives are carried on, - drugs that can be given unnoticed in food or drink, and produce a paralysis of mind and will which lays them open to hypnotism as the means of coercing them back into the old paths. Long were the prayer fights to keep hold for God against this satanic counter-pull, and even when light crept back to the victims it was dimmed and pale. These triumphs of the enemy were the saddest of that time of the "north wind" which broke so many boughs where we thought buds were growing.

At last the wind began to veer again to the south with another breath of spring; I think its first sign was yet one more gift on the

old line of houses and lands. The hour struck in a way past doubt for taking yet another old moorish dwelling in Algiers, - this time for a "Short Service" hostel, with the conviction that there must be many educated girls who can come on a self-supporting basis for a term of service, in all the countless ways in which such can be rendered with small knowledge of language, if hands and hearts are ready. God's seal was on every step of it and in the native guest room of that hostel, the brothers and sisters for whom we had looked began last winter to be born into the Kingdom.

Their forerunner was we think, the last of the former race who were only born into it to be transplanted into the heavenly soil. He was the boy spoken of as belonging to that Sunday class of our earliest days. We found him far gone in consumption and he came to the "Good Shepherd" who had followed him so long, with a brightness and clearness that was something new to see among the Arabs, though Kabyle converts had shewn it before. His sister and her husband and several of the family were those whose souls were quickened in a sudden breath of the Spirit that swept down on that guest room where they were staying. They were followed by the whole hearted yielding to Christ of another of the boy leaders of later years. In his train are others of the lads of the past, young married men now, who are feeling the pull of the heavenly "attract", foremost among them a mate of his who had been dragged back by him into Islam when he had his call to Christ long ago, and is now fulfilling the hopes that seemed chill-

ed to death then.

Last summer was a hard fighting time with many a blow and counter blow over the new-born souls here and in "The Hill of Flies". We need yet to learn how to stand in the battle over them as they win their way inch by inch against the power of darkness and yet we feel that all is on a new level: more than one of them has received the Holy Ghost in a way unknown among the faltering and falling converts of past years and their spiritual understanding is awake. Two of them this silver wedding week have confessed Christ in baptism, - with three unexpected days between, in which number two was thrust into the Cadi's prison by his elder brother, to keep him out of harm's way! He returned straight to us when let out, and was baptized that evening.

"Thus hath God finished all things" was the exclamation of the first as he came in, hastily summoned to the service, and saw the other sitting there in his baptismal white.

He was right and he was wrong. God's endings are always fresh beginnings and He has kept our silver wedding to the land with the best gift He could bestow, - a now little streak of silver dawn.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

I. Lillias Trotter.
Algiers. 1913.