

Algiers Mission Band



Journal No 2. (May-Aug) - 1915

ALGIERS MISSION BAND.
Stations in 1915.

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.
	1913.	Touzer.	

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Sec. for Prayer--helpers, Mr J. H. Smeeton, 2, Rue du Croissant, Algiers

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.

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Algerian Women's Mission Band. America.

Mrs T. A. Walker, S.S. Asso. 312 17th Street, Denver, Colorado. U.S.A.

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ALGIERS MISSION BANL.

Members on the Field - 2nd Quarter of 1915.

Date of arrival.

1888	I. Lilius Trotter.	1909	Alice McIlroy.
"	B. G. L. Haworth.	1911	Clare Kennell.
1890	F. Helen Freeman.	"	Ida Nash.
1906	Sascha Perkin.	"	Mary Freeman.
"	Alexandrine Gayral.	1912	J. H. Smeeton.
1907	Mabel Grautoff.	"	Nellie Smeeton.
"	May Ridley.	"	Laura Carr.
1909	F. K. Currie.	"	S. Soler.
"	Millicent Roche.	"	Grace Russell.
"	Alma Krebs.	1913	Fanny Hammon.) pro
"	Mary Watling.	1914	Ime. Arnaud. (tem
		"	A. M. Farmer.

Short Service Hostel.

Elsie Thorpe (1911) in Charge. Vera Stewart. Violet Barrow.
Beryl Handford.

Cairo, May 7th 1915.

A strange thing has happened. - We clearly felt we ought to take tomorrow's boat back to Algiers if possible, as our time is fully up, and the Henderson Line, the only one available, goes only once a fortnight. Yesterday we were through with our packing and had arranged for the inventory taking, when the news came that the boat would not put into Algiers.

We have been making all enquiries, even offering at Cook's to pay port dues if they would land us, but in vain. With it all, much as we are wanting to get back, there is an unaccountable sense of its being all right, so I suppose we shall see the sequel yet, as time goes on.

May 11th.

We are considering our ways, for via Marseilles by P. & O., the next alternative, comes to twice our fare straight, and that multiplied by four, is considerable. So it looks as if waiting for the next Henderson would be the only solution.

May 13th.

All seems pointing to giving the extra time to getting things ready for expansion regarding women and children's literature, rather than preparing more material now. We are getting specimens ready, illustrations without letterpress, and lists made out for sending to various Mission Presses in Moslem lands, who may like to

co-operate by translating them in those countries where Arabic is not understood.

Then we are getting sheets ready in the same way for taking back with us, to be filled in with letterpress, or rather autotyped handwriting, in Algerian Arabic, and we are leaving behind a small stock of those same 'blanks' in case, by reason of refugee missionaries from Turkey or Persia, editions can be got out ready for the time of advance that must come.

Other bits of grist keep coming into the mill. One is a possible Artist that Mr Swan tells us of, who might be able to come out next winter here, and undertake that side of production, - one with some knowledge of Eastern life, and a great gift for drawing children. 'Short Service' may be able to help this on.

May 18th.

Then too the subject of writing for Mystics seems evolving, for Mr Swan, one of the chief authorities here on the subject, feels that simple tracts for them would have an immense, and hitherto untouched field. Sheikh Abdullah, who is employed at the Mission Press, and passed through the stage of mysticism in his search for the light, was delighted with a story for them by B.G.L.H. By all that Mr Swan says, the whole religious life of the Moslems here, and specially that of the uneducated, is permeated with the mystic teachings, and ordinary Moslem controversy

does not appeal to them. It opens a whole new range in using for them the true mysticism of the Bible.

Canon Gairdner, the other chief authority here, has given us a pamphlet of his which is wonderfully lucid, raining light on the whole question of Moslem Mysticism.

The resume, in a sentence or two, of their teaching, is that every human spirit comes into the world separated from God by 35 thousand veils of darkness and 35 thousand veils of light. These must be got rid of by ascetic practices to begin with, and then by an unceasing repetition of the Names of God and other means for inducing the ecstatic state which leads out into union with Him. But all this is organised with an unconceivable amount of minutiae, and mixed with magic and other occult science. It has a whole phraseology of its own, a phraseology which lends itself far better to Christian uses than that of the cold and formal religious language of Islam proper.

That little C.M.S. Church within a stone 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 among the Moslems, instead of looking for a leverage among the Copts as is the usual method in Egypt. But the little crypt-like church is full, for all that, and the atmosphere spiritually, is scin-

tillating with light and life. To hear the burst of praise in the "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ,

Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father." in the midst of the strongest Moslem city in the world, is worth going there for.

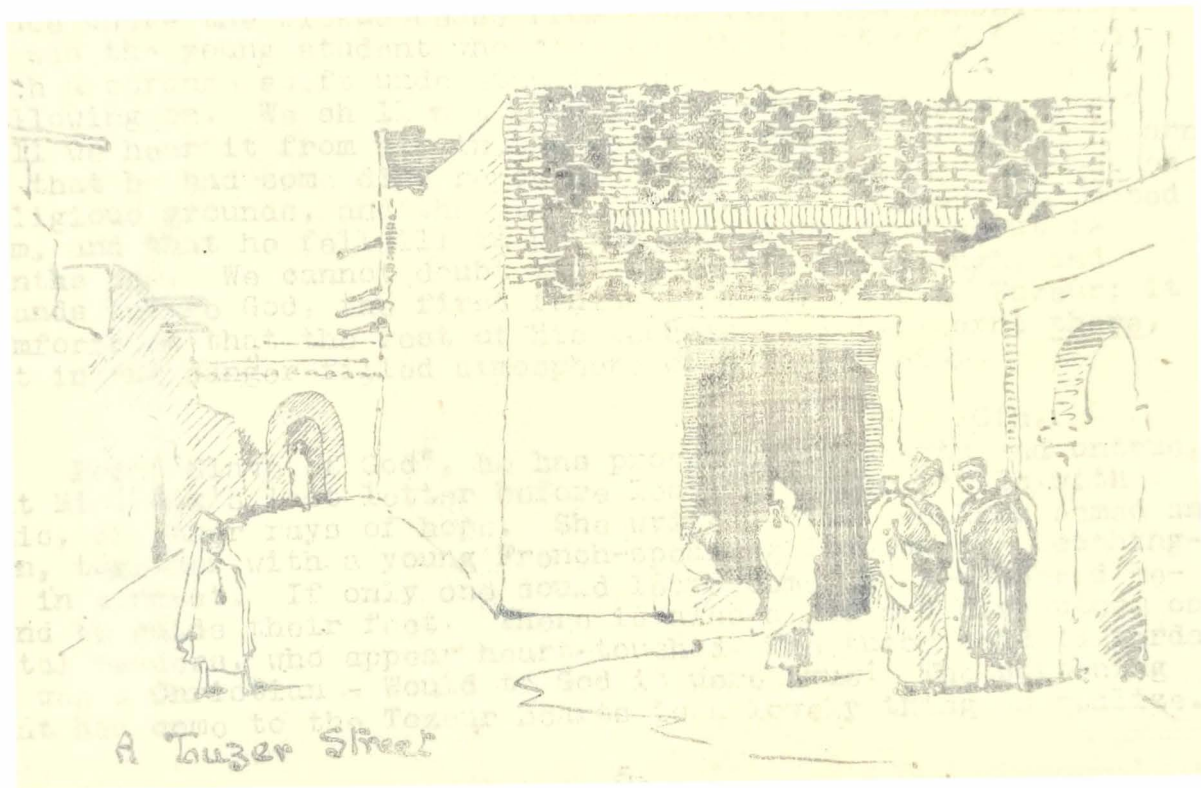
May 25th.

This month has brought but small news from Algiers, only a belated letter or two that would have missed us if we had gone by the appointed boat, after that of course, silence, thinking we were on the way.

But news has come through that is very joyful, i.e. that A. Cox of Tebessa has gone down, in spite of its being a risky place for any one of malarial tendencies, so late in the season, for a fortnight in Tozeur. It is such a great relief that it will have this one ray in the long silent darkness.

She writes on May 6th after two days of classes with the small boys, a set of young men who wanted to "read more", and an interview with "the Slave of God" who seemed to come into the light last spring and then became unsatisfactory. She speaks hopefully about him, but he is a plausible fellow, and only time can ~~xxx~~ show if the work has indeed deepened.

The saddest, and withal, the best bit of her letter tells that Si Tahar, we can give his real name now that he is in the



A Touzer Street

And with that ends the Cairo chapter. - To-day finds us steaming with lights low, and lifeboats swung out, and hasty interviews between the inscrutable looking head of the "Wireless" room and the Captain - rumour tells of a batch of submarines in these waters on their way to the Dardanelles, which accounts for a little excitement!

June 6th.

Two busy days of settling back into the old runnings and of hearing the interim news. Sascha's boy Ali and her mountain family have taken themselves home for the summer and she is waiting to see whether to follow them at their warm invitation. Inland travelling is not very "bion vue" on the side of authorities, who I suppose have a good many spies to run to earth. So we have to be very clear before making for out of the way places, as that is *per se*. Meanwhile she has as usual, a few chickens under her motherly wings. Fatima Zourha of Miliana is still a "paying guest"! for she earns by house-work at Dar el Fedjr and brings the proceeds here for her board. A girl cousin of hers is likewise staying here, and a dear chubby brown faced niece. Between them they make a truly native dwelling-place of the Arab room. In a corner of the court sleeps the blind boy Aissa, and curled up by him a dilapidated kitten, just rescued from the street - they all have alike a loving welcome.

I feel that all we have learnt afresh in Egypt about the strong mystic element that lies secretly all around us, may account for some of the problems of the work in the person of souls who seem naturally spiritual, so to speak, those who drink in with full response all we tell them, and read the New Testament with alacrity, and never get any further.

May it not be that instead of proving as has seemed, an arrested work of God's Spirit, it has never emanated from Him at all. The truth may be that we have unknowingly struck the vein of mysticism and that they reconcile, or quietly leave unreconciled, their position with regard to Christianity in the same way as they do towards Islam. They need just as much, though at a different angle from the bigoted Moslem, the plough of conviction driven through their fallow souls.

June 10th.

E. Thorpe has been hoping that my return would bring the "Yemma" and Chrira, Si Boualem's wife, to the point again over baptism. It seemed best to set him on to find out their standpoint rather than to do so personally.

He has interviewed them both, and finds no "rise" towards it with either, though he thinks that if her mother led the way, Chrira would follow.

"They look all round too much" he said, "I could never have

been baptized that way, I had to jump with both feet." He has gained a good bit, I think, in quiet power, one could trace it in his account of his dealings with Mustapha who struck at sleeping in the shop without extra pay. "I saw I must be king or he would be king, so I let him go," was his conclusion of the matter.

It has resulted for the time being in Mustapha staying away. Omar also is unable to get to the meetings through pressure of work on the short-handed Post Office Staff, and is low spirited and weary. Poor Mahfoud has been still with that bad thieving set - so our poor "first line trench" is in rather a bad way.

So often have we seen it before, that thickening of troubles in "the battle that is against us." We seem to have its outward picturing in the 'trombe' formation, as the French call it, of the German onsets, a small beginning, and a steady widening out of the on-coming mass. A wedge - an arrowhead - those seem the English description of the same.

It brings in simile likewise, the fact that we have often seen in the corresponding strategic movements of the unseen enemy - he deploys his forces more and more, right and left, and then there comes a moment when the 'trombe' - the wedge - the arrowhead is spent and instead of more yet to come, the at-

tack is finished, and if the ground has been held we have won!

June 16th.

The breaking up party at Shushan to-day marked the close of Short Service work for the summer - with very thankful hearts for having been able to keep it open in this year of years - and that once more, in spite of its few numbers, it has fought through on self supporting lines.

This winding up day is a pretty sight, the children like bunches of flowers in their feast day clothes round one half of the court, their white draped mothers round the other half, the darling brown babies scrambling backwards and forwards between the two. The numbers showed how all has been more than kept together, the row of mothers specially. That is where the year's advance has been the most marked on the one side. The other side of the advance showed in the last five minutes before the end. A doll-giving has always been the feature then, they are beloved even of the girls who have left us to be married. This year of their own choice, the crowning joy was, that those who could read with understanding should have a gospel each of their own. How much it meant to see the little blue books pass into their hands, and to know that they would stand for a light in each home!

Relizane. June 16th.

Arrived on the first stage of the long deferred round of station visits - timed with their breaking up prize-giving days. These began this morning with M. Ridley's kindergarten class in the hired room of a native house - tiny beings of both sexes - the youngest a fascinating girl baby of about two, with almond eyes and a long crimson white flowered robe, who curled herself up like a kitten on any available lap in lovely attitudes, with interludes of turning somersaults! Much hand-washing at the pump came first in order of the day, the rest was put out of gear by being a feast, but enough was left to show that glints from the other world were beginning to dawn in the little dark hearts. Then came the prizes - penny birds and beasts of celluloid, two small biscuits each and a scramble for sweets. Someone gave me a sprig of scented geranium from a hanging basket to smell, upon which one after another the toddlers held up their biscuits and sugar-plums to be sampled in like manner as their offering of fellowship!

June 19th.

To-day it has been the Arab boys' turn - .60 or more, making me envious for poor Algiers, for they had had no "fete" for a year and none had been given out for to-day. They came in gravely after the class in groups of ten, and fished in an inverted

table filled with straw, draped and beflagged with all the flags of the Allies, for handkerchiefs and tops and marbles.

We went this morning to see . Ridley's teacher, the mued-din of the mosque across the road. He and his wife are a curious mingling of light and darkness - more like Jews of Old Testament days "walking in the fear of the Lord" than anything else, I think. It was Lay's last lesson, and their farewell was touching - a great handkerchief full of ring shaped cakes, and four metres of new printed calico to make her an "abbia" - the long sleeveless robe worn by the women here. They stood there looking after us, the man's white drapery outlined in sunlight in the doorway of their court, the wife dark-draped, flecked with the beams that struggled through the vine-trellis. Surely the heavenly promise to those that receive us, will find its way to such as these! -

Sunday brought the filling up of the barn-like entrance shed of this house, which was one of F.H.F.'s great inducements to taking it, with a crowd of small Jews and Jewesses who take the place, in great measure, of the Spanish children of former days, who are just now being kept away. There is one Jewish lad, 16 perhaps, with an earnest boy-face, who comes to read with Mlle. Gayral in the evenings and seems to have his heart set Christward.

June 25th.

Two and a half full days at Miliana on the way back and a great sense of lightening and softening in the spiritual atmosphere there - something like the February days at home, when no sign of spring is but the glow of the rising sap in the twigs, and yet there is the sense that the worst of the winter is over, and that the June roses are on the way.

And there is a consciousness too, in all the constant comings and goings of the busy days, of the growing confidence that has been won, with no money-gifts, but only an outflowing of personal service from morning till night. A fresh wave of this confidence arose this spring through their care of that dying baby, and their sympathy through the days that followed its passing away. The girl-mother was one of the many visitors to-day, escorted by her ten year old sister, one of the loveliest children that I have ever seen.

June 29th.

A great blow has come to the Algiers work, and to Dar El Fedjr especially, in a letter from E. Thorpe saying that the English doctor does not give the shadow of a hope for her return here, or to any other malarial climate. Ill though she was in the spring, this verdict was wholly unexpected by her or by us, and it is difficult still to realize it.

June 30th.

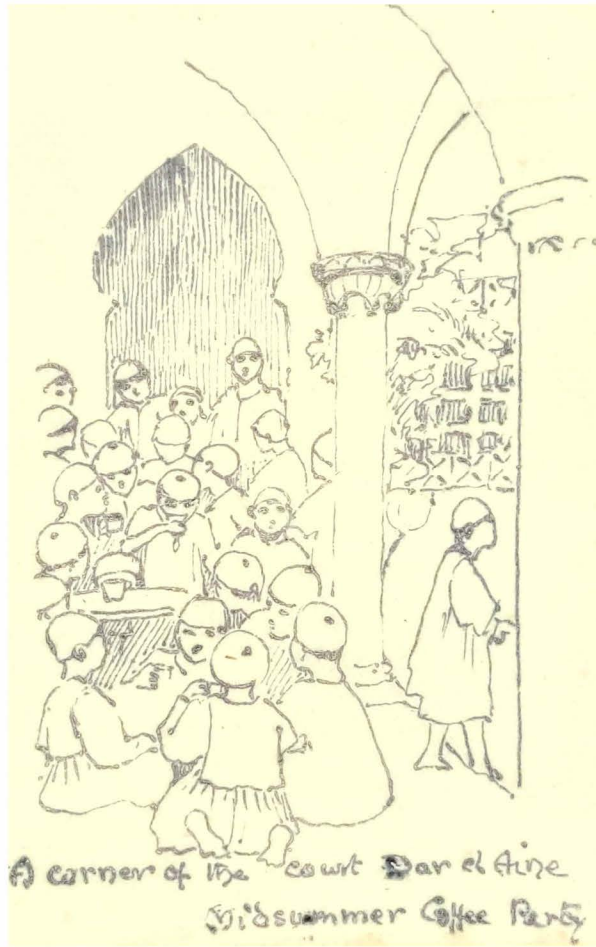
This afternoon has brought the best prayer-meeting that we have had for many a day - the 6th centenary of Raymond Lull was what brought us together - and it seemed as if the passion of love and sacrifice whereby he gained his knightly guerdon all those centuries ago had its echo even now. There was, as it were a new breath among us.

July 1st.

S. Perkin has collected a fresh detachment from her mountain parish as guests in the Headquarters guest room. It is lovely how we are getting by degrees a guest room attached to each station, and willing guest families now and then. In this case they can hardly be called by that name, as they provide for themselves. They are a very brown-faced father and two equally tanned, tall, bright-eyed boys. The third boy is paler tinted and less manly looking, and there is a picturesque mother in hill-garb. They came in to-night after the prayer-meeting, which stayed to coalesce with them, the mother being safely hidden in the kitchen, and Si Boualem spoke to them well and simply when once the string of his tongue got loose.

July 4th.

Omar has been very tiresome again over a debt he wanted



A corner of the court Dan el Aine
Widsummer Coffee Party

us to help him pay, and finally a month ago flounced out of the house, saying that "on the word of an Arab" he would never come to it again. "The word of an Arab" is not so binding as it sounds, and he is back, having himself found a partial solution of his difficulties. He has likewise learnt a lesson or two in the school of "meekness and gentleness" which enables us to lend him a hand by lessons paid one at a time. The Love that will not let him go is conquering once more in his self-assertive spirit.

July 6th.

Blida has been the last of the round of summer visits, and a glad one too, with its ever-widening arms to gather the children in, and ever new plans for keeping them in touch. Small boys have been the new feature this spring, some of them having grown up out of the "its" of kindergarten and brought their comrades with them.

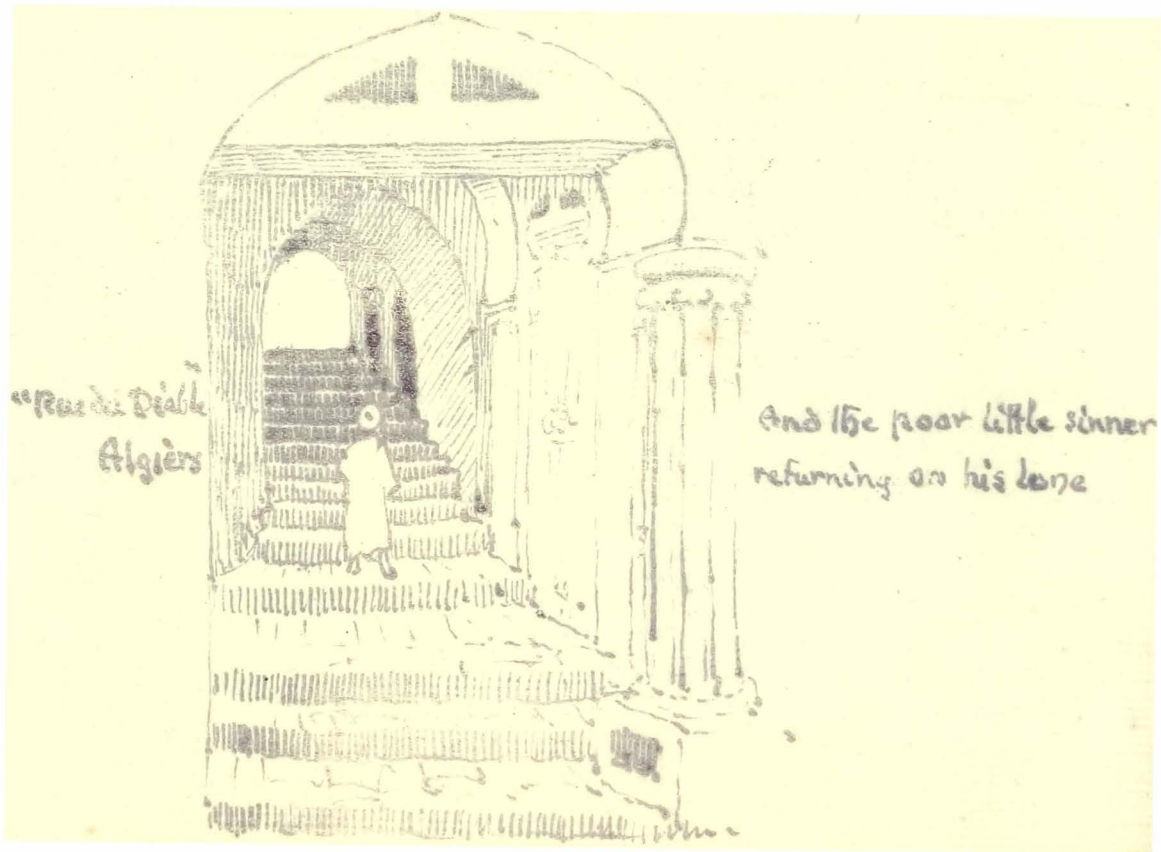
July 9th.

We have had a pretty parable-story enacted under our eyes among Fatima's tribe of little sons. They are all delightfully pretty and naughty, and as soon as they reach five or six years of age get seized with a desire to run away. The last culprit is Dahman who disappeared for more than a fortnight and all went distractedly on the hunt through all the market-

towns around. At last a distant relation found him and set him down at the bottom of his steep street ("The street of the Devil" is its name) telling him to go up home. The rogue ran up past his door and around and away by another turning. Boualem, the eldest brother, never wearied in the hunt, and one day told his father: "Today I shall go in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and I believe I shall bring him back." And so he did, having found him, disguised, at the door of a man fifteen miles away who had adopted him. The brother-love did not leave him to the hardship of going in alone, but brought him to his mother's arms with a laconic: "I told you the Lord would help me to-day, and He did."

July 11th.

To-day was the last Sunday morning meeting before the summer dispersing, so we gave over the guest-house key again to Boualem senior, and settled with him and Belaid about their meeting again over there on Sundays and Thursdays as last year; only not under such difficult circumstances, as Mr Smeeton's presence at the house above and consequent power of being with them, comes this year as a great support. They seemed in good heart about it, and proposed of their own accord to see whether they could collect in some men on Sunday evenings, as well as meeting themselves in the mornings. This would be a real step forward if it can be.



"Paradise Diab
Algiers

And the poor little sinner
returning on his lone

July 14th.

A letter from Mascara to Miss Freeman tells her of the tiny meeting that kept Raymond Lull's anniversary there. It says "Sahraoui prayed so earnestly that the Lord Jesus who died for their sins might be revealed to the Arabs, that Kons. Soler cried for joy at hearing him pray like a real Christian. The schoolmaster, Abdelkader, witnesses also for Jesus... The Lord will have His witnesses in Bab-Ali."

Dar Naama, July 20th.

We are getting troubled over the course of the Ramadan weeks down below in the town. Si Boualem did not come last Sunday to the tiny meeting at the Guest-house, and we hear that Si Aissa and his wife have settled down at his mother's home with the intention of staying solidly till the month is over, blocking effectively any hope of breaking the fast among those under the roof, blocking also the pursuance of last Ramadan's plan of Si Boualem's holding a meeting with his family there on Sunday evenings. Si Aissa has scored successfully in this.

August 11th.

Among the advances of this year has been the evolving of fresh writing powers among us. The fact of several being kept back by war conditions from crossing to England for the rest-

weeks in helping this on - "Miliana" and "Blida" are spending some of them together, and M. Roche is adding her contribution of stores to those of S. Perkin, M. Grautoff and M. Watling. The remaining one of the quartette, K. Currie, aptly calls it "tractitis"! B.G.L.H. has also got a sheaf ready since Egypt, and is busy too over French and Italian editions of her Soldiers' Cards, with A. Kemp's co-operation; and the English ones seem going far and wide. So all this helps to retrieve the hampering of this war year in other outlets shut off month after month.

August 13th.

Ramadan has come to its close, but has brought no sign of Si Boualem - we are beginning to fear the worst - that he may have been drugged - for if Si Aissa and his wife tried this with his mother in the spring, they are quite capable of repeating the attempt.

It may be only that the dead load of oppression in the terrible weight of this year's spirit-atmosphere has fallen on him - one cannot but be conscious of it - the wonder is that it is not greater, with all the influences from the lower pit that are abroad on the earth, unchained it may be as never before since the days that preceded the first manifestation of the Son of Man.

May it not be as then, the darkness of the last hour be-

fore the dawn? - - - - I read the other day that the starless gaps in the night sky are held now to be the passage ways out to further galaxies of solar systems out of sight. The God of those dark galleries is our God too, - there may be marvellous constellations of light out beyond, that can only thus be reached. If so they hold more possibilities of radiance than the starstrewn reaches of the other times that seem so far away now.

August 20th.

We are anxious about Boualem - very anxious. He has not been to Dar el Fedjr for three weeks or more, and when Mr Smeeton passes his shop he still gets a black frown instead of the old welcome, and an unprepossessing looking man works with him.

The best way seemed to me to find the 'Iemma', who cleans the Guest-house once a week, and send her to get hold of him. So I came down for the day for this end. She returned saying, "I could not do much, the shop was full of people - however I told him the people of Eternity wanted to see him in the dinner-hour, he will know what that means."

This very nice new name for us was not a bad incentive to patience, and not a bad reminder of the unseen powers behind us in the matter. The interim of several hours was likely to be well filled in by a search in this 'mobilised' town for one of the few remaining & overworked doctors, for Rabbah's precious baby girl, Jamila. "There is as a coffee mill on her chest. Her

eyes are shut, with black rings under them, and she burns our knees as she lies upon them." - Such was her grandmother's diagnosis! At last a woman doctor was found and brought to the rescue, and just as that was settled, and Dar el Fedj reached again, in walked Si Boualem, with the jaunty air that he puts on when he tries to brazen things out - "All is flourishing" he said. "Then why do you not come to us?"

"Oh it was Ramadan - I was working late"

"But why do you frown at us as we pass if all is well?"

A gleam of fun crossed his face - "I had fear." But with that he softened, and bit by bit the story came out - that he was on the verge of entering into partnership with a former workman of Si Aissa's, and (after some questioning this appeared, for he does not fling himself and his troubles upon us now) - he is in debt to him to the amount of 70 francs or so, for fresh stock.

We had a long and straight talk, and it ended, we hope, in his surrender to God of this partnership with all the danger that such compromise would mean. "It is laid down" he said, when we asked his decision as he left - and he seemed to have purpose of heart about coming up to Dar Naama next week to work at the tract translation for which I had been trying to get him in vain.

August 28th.

A great comforting has come in his having been up here

for a total of 18 hours this week over these tracts - and that means a start made in paying off his debt to his workman, and his spirit seemed right again, though there is still a sense of some underlying trouble that has not yet been retrieved.

And now that August is closing, the as yet unfulfilled part of the summer's programme comes on, in taking a bit - (a month if possible) at an out of the way place for the steady work at 'literature' matters which is not possible with the discursive elements brought into life when one is barely $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour from Algiers and its people. We had thought of Dax er Rih at Blida, but it would be as prone to interruptions as this, with its staff away - So we shall try a dull little village on the spur that bounds the bay to the east, Ain Taya by name, and see what it brings.

It is sad to leave Algiers with the sense that the victory of last summer has not been maintained - that the tiny "four-square" has been broken into by the power of the enemy - that once more the initiative has passed to his side, and that we can only stand on the defensive.

But a letter in the papers this month from the hard-pressed Russian front has come as a true message of hope - "It does not matter on which side, for the moment, lies victory or defeat - what matters is, on which side lies the inexhaustible resources!" Amen!