



Algiers Mission Band
Journal




Foreword


It is time we should make a new beginning. The long lapse has not been for want of things to tell, but for want of time to write them down. So will you be patient, our dear prayer helpers, + we will take you over the background as fast as we can... if possible in a series of three bi-monthly Journals, to bring you up to date with the present outlook, which, as 1920 closes, shines with many a fresh hope.




Dar Naama - El Biar - Augt. 26. 1919

Good news comes through today's post. The Nile Mission Press has given Mabel Grautoff a piece of work after her own heart - the preparing an illuminated Gospel of St John. It is a wresting of Islam against itself, by using designs from the lovely old Koran missals of the 13th + 14th centuries, to make an edition that can win its way among a class to whom our commonplace looking modern volumes seem of small account. These art-loving natives catch eagerly even at the scraps of decorative work that any of us have put in spare moments into the margins of their Arabic Bibles.

 Alice Mc Ilroy is back with a story of God's faithfulness to tell: The supply of all funds for her long round of "deputation" journeys: a goodly gift, over + beyond, for the Mission Funds: new centres alight with caring, + best of all, hopes of recruits. First among these are a Mr Buckenham + his wife, willing, if God so guides, to sell up home + business + find their own way out.

 Here, in black + white comes their offer today, God bless them. It reaches us within a month of the time when the cry for new labourers took voice.

It sent us into our Rally Days with glad hearts. They are just over. To me God's special word in them has been in Is. 33. 21 - "No galley with oars" - that is "no servile work of bondage + weary ever renewed effort - "Neither ...gallant ship" with its trimming of sails to make God's wind fit our purposes like Jacob of old, but a content learned through much breaking up - a content to have our cordage loosed + our masts useless, + to "let His will enfold us" as the waters of the broad rivers + streams, + bear us just as fast + just as far as He will.

 Another of God's beautiful sequels. Our autumn Committee was just going to meet this morning with the Buckenham's offer on the agenda, when down from the skies, so to speak, there dropped the promise of £100 towards starting the Men's work. Could any "Go Forward" be clearer!

Oct 14

Down from the bright horizon to the foreground with its struggles. They have been many of late over the matter of Aissa's betrothal to Alamiya. Her brother has behaved outrageously as usual, and many have been the seeming deadlocks. However today they have been formally betrothed, without any Moslem rites, + the child given over into our keeping. We are placing her with Protestant Spanish people, in a farm in the country, + Aissa stays on here, going down daily to his work.

Oct 15

In came our Blida pair tonight from their furlough, bringing the firstfruits of Alice M: Troy's tour - a dear new Short Service Secretary, only daughter of the Govans, of the Faith Mission... such a great trust, for she is not long out of school days, + such a gift, not only in labour lightening, but in all that it means of prayer linking with that blessed band of people through her coming.



Oct 20

Their first Blida news has a stir of life in it. Willicent Roche writes - "There seems such a "fear" on the people - a great rain - an earthquake - the end of the world, " etc. The girls, some of them, are doing a 3 days fast, + altogether there seem to be "men's hearts failing them for fear". But of course so much of superstition + tales of Sidi "this + Sidi that mixed up in it all. Oh to know how to help them"!

It was only a few days ago that a Relizene letter from May Tidley told the same story of strange misgiving or alarm among the people, +, as in Blida, with no apparent cause. It is this absence of reason in it that gives hope that it comes from God as a "shaking" of these inert Moslem souls - "A great shaking" was the first prelude to resurrection in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. May it grow + multiply to that!

Oct 31

Mabel Grantoff writes again about Mimoun, the quiet shy mountain lad who wants to come up here + learn - He offers to pay his fare up + to work for his food if we will have him.



outskirts of Tozeur

Tozeur's best times have been centred round "The Bible Boy" as we used to call Mohammed Ali, + "Jacob's favorite son," as Alma names Yusef to veil his identity. She feels that the roots of these two are striking deeper this year. The former is the more fearless, + gets hard times accordingly, after which he sometimes stays away for many days together. And then there are the dear keen Jewish boys who have come day after day, headed by the twelve year old Mooshi, who would take no denial of an entrance last year.



The Miliana lad Mimoun has gone back to his mountains with his face to the dawn, + already, we think, catching its first gleam. He is a quaint fellow, with a good deal of grit in spite of his child face: a slowmoving nature + so taciturn that it is difficult to be sure how far the inward movement has advanced... only movement is there, + that means life.



These have been busy days getting ready for new incomers, + this evening has seen them safely landed... out of the shadows of the garden into the light of the skiffa appeared M^r + M^{rs} Govan; come, to our great joy, for some weeks rest. With them Moggie Smith, their nurse of former days, a dear Highlander, who had had a strange certainty that she was to see Africa someday - then a girl friend who wanted to get into touch with Missionary work, Edith Lamb by name. And the group ended with the Buckenhams, + their fluxenhaired Kenneth, looking at the fresh scenes with his wondering two year old eyes.

From this first evening with them all, I feel that a new joyous note of faith has been sounded, which must toll on the walls of our Tericho... And our dear Rosie Govan is brimming over with delight at having home + Africa together.



Alma Krebs + Alice Mc Ilroy are back, with more news than could be given in the carefully worded letters from Tozeur.

I am specially glad over the fresh signs of vitality in that curious anomaly, Sabuc the negro. They came out in unexpected ways. For instance when she asked him one day about his little son - whether he had begun to read, he answered quite simply "No, I do not want him to get the teaching they get in the Mosque school". It came out with a natural ring of truth in it. He has still the old business like way of talking, only with more of a spirit, touch. His great delight is in hymns. He still holds on to the assertion that he wants to be baptized, + we believe the day will come.


Yusuf is the same sad soul as ever, + holding fast in the same grim fashion, longing all the time to get a-way from Tozeur. "When you come back you will not find me any more, he said at the last. Alma feels it is probably true, but that it will be to the heavenly country that he will have gone, for he looks dying.


And lastly there is good news of Mohammed Ali, our sunny faced "Bible Boy". He has been coming out of the shell of his home surroundings, that seemed so to cramp his movements last year. The eldest brother who opposed him (the father is dead) has at last given him leave to do as he will, + the intermediate brother has been with him to hear, + seems open minded.


In their last talk, Alma asked him, would he like to become a teacher to his people. He answered in a very decided + straight way "Yes". He has a marked gift for teaching + a turn for music + poetry, + a winning way with him.

They talked together of what it meant, + there was no sign of seeking an easy path. He is planning to go off to find work in company with this second brother, + thence may come the break with his old life which would set him free to come to us here. If he accepts a part days study, + a part days garden work for his board as usual

wage, it may be the next step for him.

 Two more rallyings have come to the prayer forces that God is gathering round us this spring. Last Friday week in came our dear Alice Kemp. She was the first of all the helpers that He has prepared for us out here, for we found her in the "Pension" where we landed 32 years ago. All these years she has poured out her intercession + her furthering without ever setting foot on these shores again. Now at last she is back on a long visit + a few days after her arrival Mr. Mitchell, whose heart has longed unceasingly over this land since the 14 years of God's service out here in her younger days. With both of them the sight of it all face to face once more, will be heaping fuel on an already brightly burning fire.

 Yesterday arrived some unexpected guests. It was toward nightfall when they appeared. — Kacete, the Kabyle schoolmaster who has stayed with us a few days now + then, + with him a gaunt, bear-eyed sister, + a pretty, birdlike little wife of 16. He has come up for hospital treatment, + has no place where he can safely deposit these two. He tried in vain for a room in Fawn, + finally came here to see if we can lodge them, as we gladly will. He is in an advanced stage of consumption, a mystic looking man — his face like a cameo in its transparent chiselling. He is only happy to lie quietly today under the amethyst buds of the Judas tree, waiting to see what evolves as to his admission to the Hospital.

 A lot of 20 or so came to the Sunday service this morning, on whom we think God's hand must be laid for salvation. Hamid is his name. He is a cousin of little Yamina of Beit Naama, + is the one who wanted to marry her in days gone-by. They really cared for each other, but his father objected + still objects. We gave up hope + so did he — but Yamina is free again now, for they have succeeded in divorcing her



from the wretched scamp to whom Boujemaa married her two years ago. This lad Hamid has been serving in France on a labour gang + was in despair one day, the last of a contract, over the hopeless laziness of those under him. At last he prayed that God would make them work, + work they did with such a will that all was completed up to time. That night he had a dream. One appeared to him with brow + hands scarred. He said to the lad "Thou seest My Forehead + My Hands: the scars are healed now, but the blood that I shed I shed it for thee: go as quickly as thou canst to Algiers. He woke with a strange joy in his heart, + a fortnight later was demobilised + came to Bizit Naama, where Yamina + her mother explained his dream. He is a slow-witted fellow - we talked to him simply as to a child - at the end he said "I think if you talked to me for about 3 hours I should begin to understand!"



A corner of Mostaganem.


15 March.


Mlle Gayrai writes thence "I am much cheered - since my return I have had
"Entrance into from 20 to 25 new houses. On Friday it was a rich house
"whose master was a much decorated officer - his wife was much struck.
"Then, next an indescribably dirty house - it was all I could do to stay
"in it - but oh how they listened, holding their breath: when I left two men who had also listened eagerly
"wanted me to take some coppers, + a woman unwound her head handkerchief to produce some other coins hidden
"there to add to the others. It was touching for they were very very poor"


Up at Mascara things are much more difficult: the powers of evil seem so rife there. Helen Freeman tells of a man, a victim of jealousy who left his house well + strong + was carried back in 3 or 4 hours a paralysed idiot, dreadful to behold. The wife sent for his brother who was in the hills, - he had hardly passed the city gates when he was set upon, + so knocked about that it is very uncertain whether he will live.

Miliana is in full swing with 14 classes a week besides daily reading lessons. The native soldier

kids still come in little groups + spend quiet hours under the care of the Spanish evangelist, reading, painting, practising the autoharp; and end with a Bible reading. Mimoun seems holding on to his ray of dawn - + to be trying to help with the Arab boys as doorkeeper.

 Another sign came yesterday to show that God is at work. Sidi el Yazid came up for a few hours to get a breath of fresh air: he looks haggard + has a bad cough. He had a talk out in the garden with Kacéfe: then he came up on the roof to see Alice Kemp, who has often interceded for him. In the end we had prayer, + then came an utter breaking down "O God I have wasted my life - I am as salt that has lost its savour + is nothing worth but to be cast out + trodden under foot." + he sobbed with those deep dry sobs that only come out of the depths of a man's heart. In all the years out here I have never seen a native moved like this... + of all souls this one would have seemed the unlikeliest for such a breaking down - in his imperturbable satisfaction with himself + his knowledge of the things of God.

 It is Easter Sunday, + we have made a new departure... i.e. incorporating the Communion service with the Sunday morning meeting instead of holding it at the end as heretofore. Mons Cook holds, + I think he is right, that it should not be a secret mystery for a few, but the outspoken shewing forth the Lord's death in the presence of all who choose to witness it - + that this spur to a definite stand on His side is needed by those who are Christians at heart, but have never yet asked for baptism.

 Among our spring visitors has come yet another very dear to all our hearts, Mrs Walker of Denver, U.S.A. She has been forty years, as all will know from our title pages, the secretary for the American Auxiliary that has given us such faithful help ever since the spring of 1907. But how

she has laboured for us, not even we ourselves have ever known, + that in the midst of an intensely busy life, with 1200 Sunday Schools under her care. After long waiting for the way to open, she has got here for a year's stay, in which she is already doing "Short Service" personified in many new directions, with true American wide-awakeness to all the possibilities in the child-life around us which is her special study.

The Govans are giving us strong prayer-help, + many illuminating bits of talk on the best way of training workers. And at our present stage of starting out in faith on the financial side, their own story of a gay child-like trust in God in that direction, + its result in power set free, brings its message for us.

Their time with us is nearly over: they are due to leave at the end of this month, + Alice Kemp with them. Through a series of unlooked for unfoldings, it seems as if their ministry among us may close in their taking the lead in the spring Conference for Missionaries from Algiers + around which has been in abeyance since the war broke out. It will be a beautiful solution if it so comes, for it will mean an intensifying of the prayer current for the land.

And in this gathering around us + behind us of fresh prayer forces, through all our newcomers of the spring we catch the echo of the Feet of God drawing near in blessing: for "prayer is revival in its first stage".

Algiers Mission Band

Advisory Councils

Rev. S. + M^{rs} Howe
 St. Luke's Vicarage Finchley, N.
 Sir H. + Lady Proctor
 Ware Hill, C^o Anwell, Herts
 M^r + M^{rs} Stuart Trotter
 Bramfield Lodge, Chelmsford.

 M^r J. W. Kinear
 1112 N. Mealey Av. Pittsburgh
 U.S.A.
 M^r Paul Warren
 Three Oaks, Michigan, U.S.A.
 M^r Fred. A. Wells.
 2306 Orrington Av. Evanston
 U.S.A.

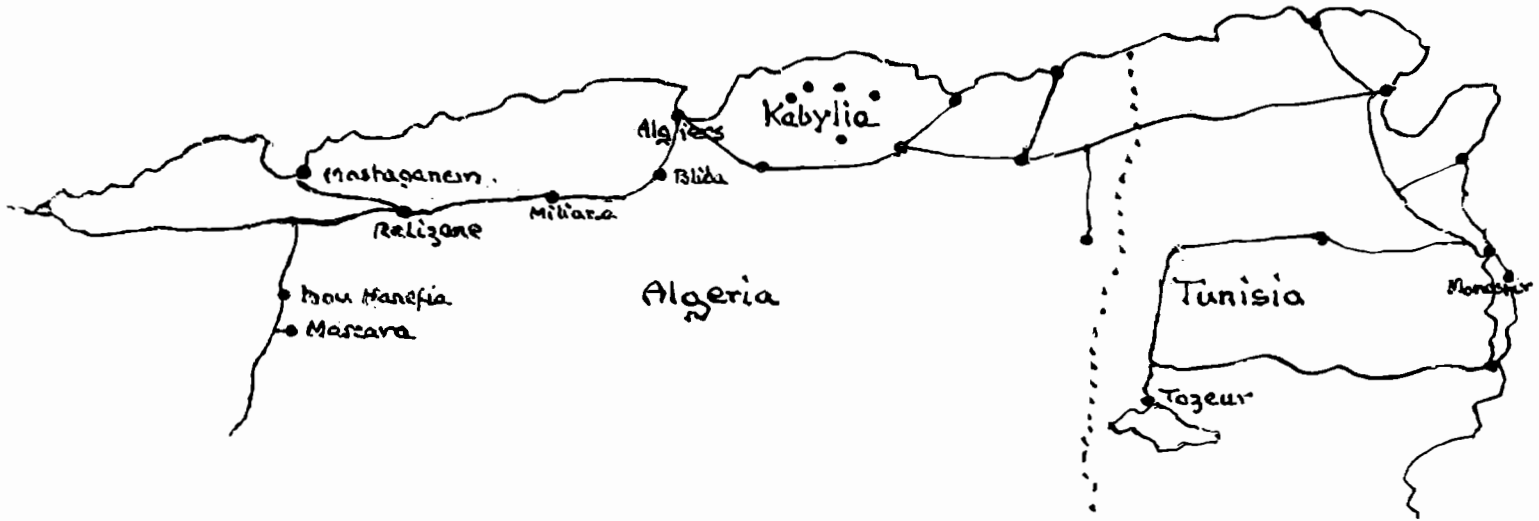
Algerian W. M. B. America.
 Sec. M^r J. A. Walker
 Dan Naama El Biar, p.m. Fern.
Sec for Prayer Helpers
 M^r J. H. Smeeton - 2 R. du Croissant.

Location of Workers, Winter 1919-20.

Dan Naama, El Biar.
 I. L. Trotter
 M^r + M^{rs} Buckenham
 Mons. Pierre Nicoud
 R. Gavan, Short Service
 2 R. du Croissant Algiers
 S. Perkin
 M. Watling
 M^r Smeeton
 F. Bittle Short Service.
 Belk Naama, Algiers
 M. Farmer
 A. Butticaz
 Saint Eugene Algiers
 Mons le Pasteur T. P. Cook
 Madame Cook

Blida
 F. Currie.
 M. Roche
 Miliana.
 M. Gractoff.
 I. Nash
 Relizane
 M. Ridley
 K. Butler
 Mascara
 F. H. Freeman
 M. + M^{rs} Saler
 F. Hamman, Mission
 Helper.
 Mostaganem
 A. Gayral
 Tazewr
 A. Krebs
 A. M. S. Ilroy.

For the positions of stations see map at end, overleaf.
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Sketch Map of Algeria + Tunisia

A.M.B. stations named: other dots show stations under other societies.