



Algiers Mission Band
Journal 1921

April 12

Our old gardeners wife quoted a local proverb this morning, when the clouds of an ominously dry spring gave at last a sprinkling. "A drop of April rain is worth a thousand drops of the early showers." It is true in the world of grace as well: any opening of the windows of heaven is unspeakably precious now, for the time is short before the harvest.

That sense of the value of earth's waning chances presses on us all, this springtime, & is driving us out of our usual round, in one station after another.

Algiers's neighbouring villoges have long been on our hearts, scattered out of reach over the plain & among the recesses of the hills. Now, at last, the war has done us a good turn by flooding the land with disused motor lorries; these have been converted into motor buses, & are opening up days of communication right & left of the one railway line that links the country from east to west with only a rare cross track. Their speed makes much new ground possible... Kathleen Butler wrote the other day of the soul first they found in a marabout village between them & the sea; - & in old days a marabout village always meant self-satisfaction of the dearest type. The women carried them off from one set of ghourbis to another & dragged forth listener after listener, saying "tell her" - "tell her" till at last they were landed in the marabout's house, & set down to talk in his prayer room - a true stronghold to have reached - then on again from gourbi to gourbi, the men listening as well as the women. "What am I to do with the anger in my heart against my neighbour?" asked one woman. "tell me how I can find rest - tell me how I can find rest" said another... surely it must be that God is drawing near them. It is not the self-reliant Moslem heart that sends out such cries as these.

Here round about Algiers a fresh spur is being given us through Mrs Mitchell's visit. She is first-rate in pioneering work, & is in her element off on a motor bus, & holding an impromptu bookshop in or near a native market, with an evangelistic meeting in the evening in the hotel for the French! It is the sort of work that some of our seniors love, but could not well initiate in a land like this, except under the shelter of a married woman who can hold her own with obstructive elements, through long experience & faith of a daring stamp. We feel she has "come... garsud

Beit of Bousaaba. from an
old sketchbook.



A Marabout.





A Bousaaba woman.


A corner of the town



At home as this: Mabel Grintoff is with her just now, down at Bousaaba - poor Bousaaba, there is no sign of response there yet. Mabel writes "I am looking out from my bakery on the oasis & desert. Beneath is a little sand house: in it dwells a dear old witch dressed in bright red with lovely white head-drapery. She is very bent, & creeps mysteriously in & out of her little den.. I should think that it is a very wicked town. We have been in our bookshop for 3 hours this morning & go to Arabs presumably to take coffee, & then to the shop again from 4 till 6 or 7 again to night." Alice Mc Troy too has had her turn with Mrs Mitchell at Golea, another hard little town on our coast. hills that has been long on her heart. It has at last, some months ago yielded its firstfruits to Christ in a young Spanish colon. ist named Lull - May he prove worthy of that name - the land's martyr missionary. He has a touch of fire about him, this young fellow, & he cares for the Arabs.


 The marriage prospects between Yamina of Beit Naama & this soldier cousin, Hamid, seem brightening - He has been staying with his family at Reghaia, a villoge on our Algiers list. There again, so Madge Farmer verified in a subsequent visit, there was the same eagerness to listen as we have noticed elsewhere this spring in the villoges, as distinguished from the towns. - The women made Yamina read to them & talk to them, evening after evening & far into the night till she was tired out & begged off. She is not a saint - just a lighthearted merry girl, overflowing with spirits & hard to hold or bind. The stand she took there, & the eagerness of the response, have sobered her these days.


 The Conference days have been blessed ones. The current of God's messages has been through the writings of the Minor Prophets with their story of failure in service + the patient grace of God that meets + restores + readjusts: and I think the "half night" with which we ended has started a stream of awakened prayer that will go on + on. And now a few more hours will see the Carans + Alice kerap off our shores, leaving us with a sense of very great enriching with their fellowship past + to come.

 Definite news has come of the proposed arrival next month, of the Willars. God has sent them, in answer to their faith, the needs be for passage + outfit as we + they feel clear that it is their next step. Whether he will be able to adjust himself to our slow-going pace we do not feel sure. If he does, he will be a good gift from heaven, for as energy + love of souls he evidently has plenty.

Relizane has had a great sorrow. May Ridley + Kathleen Butler got back these days to find that two of the outstanding souls in the tiny group of Christian women - Fisssha the mueddah's wife + her sister Fatima, had been swept off together by typhus a few days before.

Dear Fisssha, one can hardly believe that we shall not see her beaming motherly face again down here. We have longed + prayed for her freedom: it has come at last - she can go on all lengths with the Lord she loves, at last "no man forbidding".

 A letter has come from Coohammed Ali, Tazew's "Bible boy" in crabbled Arabic script + adorned with a multitude of uncompromising crosses, evidently meant as a witness to the faith that he hardly knows how to put into words. He is safe out of Tazew + been to get here. We await on God to shew the next step, for it does not seem very wise to send him his fare.

 I have come down on the spring round out west, starting with Miliana. Nibel Grautoff has succeeded in buying the little Mission House there, + has named it "El Menara" - "The Light house". . . . The first interview was with Mimoun: his stolid face was at first utterly irresponsive. . . . Then a momentary rift came in the clouds, + a radiant smile made him quite beautiful! I think in a simple boy-fashion he has grasped the death of Christ for his salvation. And there is a great growth of spiritual apprehension in the blind Hadj; it was touching to see his eagerness to grasp the answers to various theological puzzles that come up with his taleb friends - "that I may have where-with to answer them, + that they may not conquer me." Both he + Mimoun stand in the dawn, though the full vision of the Sun is not yet over the rim of their horizons.

The girls are much further on. Zuleiha's sister Zehour has blossomed into life since last year. She is a year or two younger, + I should think a stronger character. Another joyful bit of Williana is the sight of the designs for the illuminated gospel of St John, now well under weigh.

Mabel is busy specially over a couple of these poor divorced girls, stranded with their babies. I wonder if some day a home will be given us for them. Their need + distress is pitiful + they would be free to come out for God. If He would raise up a Ruth + Ramabai for them!

It is Mascara now, + again a lift in the atmosphere, + a sense that the bolts are giving... love as usual is the leverage, + it is a time when love takes a shape they can understand, for blacksmall pox + "the yellow wind" as they call typhus, are raging, + the chances of serving them are tangible.

Relizane - + the life current that is trending to the villages is strong here - + is taking the workers to recesses in the hills where European women have probably hardly been seen, for they were taken to be men the other day by the women inhabitants. How often from the railway line I have looked longingly at those prickly pear patches, lying like faint peacock tinted stains - along the masure + ochre tinted foothills, + wondered how they were ever to be reached. Now God's time has come, will it this way.

News has come from Alger of the passing away of Sidi el Yazid in the rapid consumption so prevalent here. Grieve though we must over his wasted years, we know it was a truly broken + contrite heart, that God will not despise, + by now the Father's hand will have wiped away all tears from his eyes, + their look of unpalatable sadness will have vanished for ever.

Mary Coakling writes from Blida - "we had a lovely Ramobhar party here two nights ago: it was perfectly delightful to see K. Curries delicious babies - some staggering in, looking fearfully important... women + girls were invited, but girls + big + small babies predominated, + piles of creatures of 10 years old




Blida Babies.

"danced up that steep path... There was the loveliest hush when the last picture, The Good Shepherd, being on the screen, they sang very soft.

"ly "Jesus tender Shepherd hear me" - the very sleepiest babies rubbed their eyes + roused up... How they do love K + C. - It's so good to know

"There are two out + out child-lovers here, out for soul-winning; one feels so absolutely sure of their harvest, whether they see much of it or not."

 Here too in Rahyane the Ramadan lanterns are in full swing. Last night it was for the boys - a dear carpet of them it looked, so closely were the red-frozen heads - 100 of them - packed on the floor, + crowds of late comers were still outside + vented their displeasure in howls.

In the morning come 4 days "kindergarten" children.

Skimming among the rafters. There was another lovely

They were being questioned on the use of their several



The youngest was a dear morsel whose attention was much distracted by a pair of swallows

skimming among the rafters. There was another lovely little creature of 8, with deepest copper-coloured hair + a creamy skin + chiselled features -

member. Her twin was to reply concerning the use of the mouth, - + she answered - "To eat su-




-gar plums with! - Kathleen Butler has struck out a fresh line this year with the elder girls - an embryo guild on the lines of Girlguides


Such a dear circle of them today, wearing their broad blue ribbon that forms their badge at their meetings, of the "Tajerine" i.e.

"Traders" as they are named. These meetings bring of all kinds - first aid - emergency help, + other things that grow out of that charity

that is "the bond of perfectness". Then came the "babies" playtime, when the garden was full of bunches of them, as bright as the flowers.

- The girl-babies had their dolls, + each has a furthum plant made a bower for one or two of these latter, with blaks for their little feasts: + in another section of the garden were the small boys, with wooden boxes fashioned into shops, + filled with toy scales, for the supply of materials for the dolls' dinners!

 Rahyane's Story for this time ends with another of its souls in port: so we hope + believe. Rouzian was his name... he was a simple country fellow, brown Christward through the first convent, Si Milaub. He has turned up from time to time, holding on in a twilight way. Yesterday Day Ridley met him, - he wanted a Testament having given his away. By the time his messenger had come for it, he needed it no more. In trying to protect a never-do-well nephew from an unfair assault in the street, he was wounded fatally. How lovely to go straight to the stillness of Paradise + the sight of the Lord!


 Talida's turn comes last. The chief joy is that taking her on her own testimony, which is clear + to the point; there seems every reason to hope that Fatima merit Said has "fled for refuge" as she saw in her dream of the great fire last autumn. It was evidently to her a real voice from God.


With her practical way of using things present for the furtherance of the Gospel, Millicent Roche is turning to account the weary afternoon


hours of the fast by letting those on whom they fall the hardest come + pass them at the Mission House, in work or sleep or play as best may pass the time. It is "the middle ages" as they call the girls between 10 + 14, to whom this is a great joy - the younger ones do not have to fast every day.


It is nearly over now + once more has brought the glad sense of wresting a weapon of the Enemy to his own hurt by the extra chances it gives for exalting Christ. Our Siger staff is quite exhausted with night after night of lantern meetings from which they do not get back till 11 for the sunset release from fasting still comes late this year. Belaïd escorts them to whatever house asks for them, carrying the little Church Army lantern.


Dear old Belaïd, he is really coming to his own this summer, for at last we have got our Book Depot re-opened up in the native town, + he is responsible for its working hours (limited as yet) with Fröns. Cook, Mr Smeeton, Mr Ricoud + Mr Buckenham turn about to help him.

 This evening in came the Millars - God bless them! "The promised land" they said one to another as the shore was sighted. For Africa has been her dream since childhood: + she has been laid hold of by that "passion for the impossible" that seals the true vocation to Islam.


 Mrs Michells last weeks are being passed in shepherding the Tebessa converts in Miss Cox's absence. There too, as in her last tournee of col-portage with Sacha Pertin, down Tablat way there has been a marked readiness to listen. We think her being at Tebessa may help forward Mohammed Ali's arrival, for his last letter comes from a place within easy reach, on the Tunisian side of the frontier. We have told him that if he will get himself there, she will help him on his way to us.


 "Then had thy righteousness been like the waves of the sea" comes freshly lit-up these days, in its beautiful picture of patient continuance - one wave spent to make way for the next, whether they are slow-gathered billows hurtling in their might, or the gentle wash of the summer shore. "Not weary in well-doing" marks them alike.

 Praise God Mohammed Ali is here - Ali, he wishes to be called now, having left the things of Mohammed away in the past. His flowing south land draperies are shorn away into a khaki suit; but the old-time stalwart figure + beaming face are unchanged. Looking back, it is a case of "the last shall be first" - for in thatique spring when we got to know him, he was the only one of those for whom we were specially hoping, who did not dare to come + say goodbye. It was a heavy shadow, for we had prayed over him more than any, I think. And now he is the first to come right out + away... it is wonderful - more wonderful than words can say, to have a bit of Tisaur really under our roof, free to learn + follow to his heart's content: I don't know anything that has ever called forth deeper praise to God.

 Yesterday saw Yamina's marriage to Hamid an accomplished fact - our first Christian wedding + joyful accordingly, even though the last act

of her liberation was a tragic one in the sudden death of Hamid's father, who had opposed it on the ground of Yamina being a Moslem girl + a Christian as well.

 Kacef has had a wonderful revitalizing by Divine power. All the spring his health has failed + failed until at times it seemed as if his life had come to a matter of days... + yet as far back as the Govans time with us, we all felt that his work was not over, + they + we prayed accordingly. Strength ebbed till one fainting fit after another seemed as if it must bring the end. Then the call came to the faith of Mr. Buckingham + Mr. Miller to go to the Hospital + obey the command of Jas 5 to "pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord." They obeyed, + already - it is more than a fortnight ago - the doctors are saying that it is an extraordinary case. Glory be to His Name!

 He is often up here now, + our sum total of native guests, including his people, averages 20 - not guests exactly, for they are all camping on their own + they do with their marabouts. The first to arrive of summer visitors were Boualem + Chrira - suddenly as is their wont - Mr. Buckingham has taken him much on his heart. He feels as I do that he is not really a backslider, but a weatherbound, frimmed soul, weakened through long yielding to the stronger natures around him, + that we should not at present seek to urge him to the step of breaking free from his brother Si Hissa, of which he feels incapable, but rather seek to build up his spiritual constitution that it may be equal to the strain when God's hour comes. And he responds to all fresh teaching with keen vivid appreciation, not with the dulled senses of a wandering soul -

The other guest on whom our prayers concentrate is the Arab lawyer who stayed with us 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 - + he sets his women-kind free to listen, not carelessly, but deliberately. It is a wonderful chance to have, + our outposters are helping by taking shifts through the summer, a fortnight each, that all, including Abi ben Salah, our Tozeur lad, may have to the full, all they can take in.

Mrs. Walker too is back from her spring round of visits to the outposts, + "sample" bits of touring + calpatage, in all of which her bear big heart + ready mind throw themselves untriflingly into the new need + evolve ever fresh plans of help. I think it is 366 picture reward cards that she has mounted on gay cardboard to make the little ones happy, + enable walk



in the Orange Court

+ playhours spring up wherever she passes. Just now she is giving us a series of classes on child psychology up here.

16 All is all eagerness to study - especially his Bible, which he is marking through its subjects, under Mary Watling's guidance, by illuminated borders of different designs + colours in the margin. "I have brought out a hymn" he said this evening - it has 8 chambers (lines) - I want you to read it! Such a quaint mixture it was of the spiritual + the practical - praying for the whole church that it may be one, + for himself that he may not think people or tell lies, + many other topics condensed into his 8 chambers, each with an elaborate double rhyme!


We are exercised in mind, + so is he, on the subject of his elder brother Amar, who came off with him from Tozair + greatly wishes to join him here. Will it be for help or hindrance? We are so unsure that we dare take no step to further it, + wait to see God's way unfold.

17 God's hand seems afresh on Lalla Fatouma, our lawyers wife. I told about her last summer - a lovely sabsouled woman, greatly gifted. We feared she had sheered off, but we believe she is now seeking intensely for light, + Suzette's soul, where we feared the fire was burning low, has glowed up again. He has used an unlooked for means for stirring the sleeping embers, - Mrs Islanquard, the old gardeners wife - "You never explained it to me properly," she said to us the other day. "You said He is the Son of God; I puzzled + puzzled, + accepted it because you said so. - now she tells me He is God, + I understand, + I am so full of joy - so full of joy!"


18 We have been feeling the need of a prayerwave to get under these souls + sweep them over the bar. Today, Friday, we kept "The hours of the Cross" for this, using the quiet of the drawing room for a chapel, + staying there in twos or threes or more "before the Lord" as the outward service of each allowed. ... Prayer focussed on Lala Fatouma - + before nightfall her soul was, we believe, anchored in Christ. Only those of us who know what the weary tossing of that soul has been, can realize what it meant to hear her say, out of that soul's depths - "Jesus I trust in Thee."



19 The spiritual atmosphere has seemed tingling with new life since that prayer day. The new wine in Suzette is bursting the bottles, with the new revelation of Christ that has come to her. "I love Him - I love Him + I love Him" she said today. "What am I to do? My mother says I may be a Christian if I will keep silent about it: How can I keep silent?" "She will die if we shut her up into a Moslem home" says Lala Fatouma - The only solution seems to lie in finding her a Christian husband! - but where? For herself + for the present, Lala Fatouma is free to follow on. "I have told my

husband that I am a Christian - & he says "Do as you will!"


 In quite another direction we see the heavenly forces at work. It seemed well, a few weeks ago, to use the chance given by the high exchange, for making once more an offer for the Tozeur house. For the first time during the 6 or 7 years that we have been making these offers, the landlord seemed disposed to listen, & our faithful friend, Mr. Leabelter of Sfax, has followed patiently the trail of possibilities through countless mazes where we should have lost our way till we are within sight of coming to terms, which is a joy past telling. It will be the second foothold secured for Christ this year.

Other bits of advance go alongside. We have fitted the main part of our big shed into an elementary gymnasium, & the bigger boys from the filger classes have been drawn up thereby. Alice & Ilroy & Pierre Nicolaï, to whom the classes belong, are away, but Mr. Miller with his army training, has been a first-rate help - & they are the very lads that one longs to hold & win.

 Lala Fatouma is off - summoned to a sick sister in Tunis. "It is peace through & through" were among her last words. Her husband left a few days ago for Paris - not ready yet, alas, for the plunge of committal to Christ.


 I am away for a fortnight with Helen Freeman  in this quiet place of fishing boats & pearly sea. Two breaks have come in its days. The first was a summons to the beach of our dear Aïda, Alanche Kaloort's wild little Kabyle oration of long ago. Her last storms of suffering have been part of this summer's prayerbattle; but there was the joy of seeing another of these indomitable native hearts answer in answer to the cry of years, broken & contrite to Christ's Feet. We long that her young husband should follow her there.

After those days of mingled sorrow & joy, has come a second break of pure gladness. The telegram has come to say that the owners dilatory mind is at last made up, & that for a sum just representing the legacy of Abeline Campbell, that had been kept for it. Back & back one's mind goes to the night 15 years ago, when we first camped under the palm-tree there, & watched the stars glittering through them, & felt the hush of the Spirit's power - that power that has brooded over the place ever since.


 Our coming back was tinged to the arrival of another very blessed visitor. - Miss de Crayer - whose soul almost consumes her frail body in its intensity of loving service - to the Moslems above all, in the most inaccessible places. She is here in the hope of getting through the press a manuscript in Serbi, for carrying God's message into Central Africa, until such time as she is allowed to return there.

Her coming seems to be in His plan for opening up the next step for the Millars. For they are coming to the conclusion that their collision

further, + that this was but a half way house. Miss de Mayer is the one of all others who can help them on their way. It will be sad to let them go, for our hearts have been closely drawn together. But if it is for further on, + for still harder + darker places, it cannot but be God's speed.

 Ali's brother Omar has arrived. He has brought himself here without any help from us, + is willing to work like Ali for his board + a small wage. He has a good honest face in spite of having only one eye, which generally gives an uncomfortable expression. Where his soul stands we cannot as yet be sure, Ali tells us that he has come over the line to Christ, + so he says himself, + gives us no reason for doubting it, only he is a graver, sadder soul than his brother, + "The joy of the Lord" does not seem there yet, + he has not Ali's quick apprehension of the spiritual side of things.

We had a little touch of that apprehension the other evening that made us glad, for gratitude - any way expressed gratitude - does not belong to the strab make-up. Mr Miller had taken the 3 lads their pipkins of supper (blind Missa is with them in the evenings) + was going off when Ali said "Attendez". So wait he did for nearly 5 minutes while Ali turned over page after page in a book of Hole's N.T. pictures. He arrived at last at the one which shewed the Lord washing the disciples feet. He pointed to the Lord's figure + then to Mr Miller, + said "Toi" - "Toi"! It was as far as his limited French would go, but it warmed all our hearts!

 The others of those whose rest-weeks have been out here, have galloped back now - Isabel Grautoff + Ida Nath began theirs by a stiff month at Tenet, with a little bookshop of a humbledown description where they spent most of their time with daily classes of boys + girls + neighbour women. It was a trying time for body + spirit, for a general spirit of depression was about: the harvest was bad + the strabs were discontented.

Alice Mc Troy + Madge Farmer ended their holiday by a visit to their beloved Dellys. There too the sense of the utter ignorance brought much soul burden, though underneath lay the assurance that the Lord is "building the house" there. It was a good sign when they found, as they bid, the people more eager to listen in the second visit than at the first.

Rally-time has brought us new reinforcements, praise God - Violet Wood + Mary Taylor by name - both sent us through Elsie Thorpe from her C. M. S. circle. We have hopes that Violet Wood will be able to take Grace Russells place as second at Tazew - a most pressing need - and Mary Taylor is trained in brought-manship, + with us that is an invaluable asset, for to get pictures for lessons, + designs for hand work + for literature + magic lantern slides all "to order" is a chance we have not had till now.

10 The chief blessing of our Rally days lingers I think round Miss de Mayer's story of God's wonderful guiding + providing in her pioneer journeys. They show once more that a path of obedience to the Spirit leads away to what the Lambeth Conference describes as "the adventure of a new discovery of the creative resources of God".

The point of advance that lies before us now in that quest, is I believe in the holding on to that quiet day of prayer on Fridays. It has come as the clue to the long-
ing of years for unhurried time for waiting on God. We have kept it on almost without intermission since that first week that brought victory for Salla Fatouma, + a gain + again marked interventions of His grace have followed. The solution of the practical difficulties that have always stood in the way, is I believe in "the law of liberty" as to staying or going, silence or speech - sharing or not sharing the midday meal as each one wills.


10 The first outward step of the winter lies in starting Helen Freemans van on its first mission journey. Two years or more before the war she bought it of an ex lion-tamer with a view to getting to unreached + unreachable places! But just after, we were left with no man-worker available, + then came the war restrictions. Now all hindrances are over; two days ago its great red form appeared for the first time at the door of the shed which it had been housed so long, + was dragged into the yard to be stocked with all things needful for camping, + yesterday Mr Robb (an Etgiers missionary) set off with Mr Miller + our small house boy, for a neighbouring village, where the presence of a friendly pastor makes favourable conditions for a first experiment. Our thought for this season is that it may be worked in relays of our own number + those of other bands, carrying it on + on through the plain that stretches from Etgiers to Morocco - getting a pair of horses or mules for a day or two to take it on when a move is needed.


Meanwhile here, Mafizhatling has set to work with a will in giving the Tajar brothers systematic Bible teaching on the one hand, + on the other training them to help the newcomers in language study. Their crisp delicate Tunisian Arabic makes them invaluable in this direction. She feels the intense importance of the gift entrusted to us in having the two under our roof, with all it may mean for the future.

22 Miss de Mayer's dear pilgrim heart hears already the call of the dark places around, + she + Sascha Perkin are already planning colportage journeys to near-by centres with hopes of far away ones later on.

24 We are heavy at heart these days over Kacete. His 1/2 pay from the school is drawing to a close, + he is not strong enough to take school work again, + nothing else has opened. Now, just as he seems to have come to a turn of the way, comes an entanglement with his wife's relations. They are urging him to go into partnership


in an hotel business (+ naive "hotels" are very questionable places) with a spirit-drift young brother in law of hers, + so secure an easy livelihood, + a future for his women folk than his life prove a short one. He is strongly drawn by this last consideration, + yet he knows full well that his whole inner being would be blighted there, + his power for God.


 The fight is through, thank God... On Thursday he was almost over the brink - he had written a letter marked "urgent" telling a cousin to sell up his little property in Kabylia that he might invest the proceeds in this partnership. He was only stopped just in time before posting it. Then I reminded him of £5 that had come a few days before from one of our dear Scotch visitors of the spring, to be given him if he needed it. Next day would be our prayer day - would he wait that one day more, + see whether God did not call him to walk by faith, not by sight, it consented, + we prayed. Next evening we learned the result. "I have been in misery" he said. "It seems as if I were in a balloon of trouble + temptation + perplexity, + look where I would I could see no way out. Then it seemed to me that the love of that sister in Christ who thought of me so far away, pricked the balloon + it vanished." So by God's grace he stands once more a free man.


 The van's first "mission" is over, + its workers are back overflowing with joy over the times they have had - Gospel services, lantern meetings, children's gatherings daily, colportage in the villages round - mostly of course among Europeans, as neither of them has an Arabic tongue. It is housed out there till Mons. Gook + Mons. Ricard can take it further. We hope to see it no more till the summer heat makes it uninhabitable!

Today sees Ouma Sirabs safely back from Denmark, full of deep joy + thanksgiving at finding two bits of Tozeur here to greet her. It is so good that they will be able to get a bit of her teaching before she goes on to Tzibessa, for the present plan is that she should have a tiny pied à terre there as an adjunct to Tozeur - a 1/2 way house.

They are wonderfully good, the Tozeris, we hardly dare to say it, only that it is in manifest answer to prayer. It is not work for south country men whose own sandy soil can be tamed "with the foot" - + here an abnormally hot summer has craked the earth into rocky hardness, + it is no light matter to bring more of the steepest grass slopes under cultivation, as we need to do with more hands to employ + more mouths to feed.

 Another welcome incoming! Miss Pollard, a dearly loved housemother here in olden times, has returned to the post; we earnestly hope for good! She has brought with her her niece Margaret - a student girl keen to reach other girls for Christ - fellow students + small Girl Guides are gathering already.

 And now come partings in their turn. Our well beloved Miss de Mayer left us yesterday for Biskra, where Sascha Perkin is to join her shortly, + the Villars today for Egypt, en route they have, for Arabia later on. Such a deep sense of union + spirit fellowship abides with them all wherever they go.

 Tonight begins the yearly challenge of Islam to the Lord - of all Moslem feasts the most Moslem. We have been asking that in some way Christ will manifest His glory in it!

21 We have not had long to wait. Praise be to God! With a lifetime of howls behind the loins, it might seem hard to work all day: so we sent them in the afternoon to the Museum to see the effigy of Geronimo, the martyr Arab of the Middle Ages, in hopes it might bring a touch of fresh fire, for we knew they were talking among themselves of baptism, + shinking a bit, + that we could help them by prayer alone. In the evening Amar was spokesman for the three, saying spontaneously that they all wished it, + wanted it to be together, + without delay. So ended the first day.

The fight still surged around Stissa. He knew that the step might probably mean the cancelling of his engagement to Elamiya... "She can be taken from me + persecuted - that is the heavy thing". And those of us who were present when we rose from our knees + he said "sellent" - "I have yielded up", will not forget it: for though to us she is a troublesome little monkey sometimes, to him in his blindness, she's his all. So ended the third day.

22 That night, I think it must have been, a dream came to Oimoun, the enquirer lad at Williana. The Lord appeared to him, sitting on a mountain, + called to him to follow him. He had already been wanting to come back here, + this dream clinched it. He wants to get right off to us. How thankful we are that work on the land gives scope enough, + that we can say "Come"!

The next day, Saturday, away in Tozeur, came a fresh answer to our cry that Jesus should be exalted above Mohammed. For in the very middle of this howl week, the Jewish landlord signed the contract of sale, + the Lord gained his first house down there in the desert. So ended the fourth day.

23 Yesterday, the 6th day, his Hand was stretched out again here. We had fixed the baptism for today. I went down to the Orange court to tell Kar-cet, + to talk to him about a temporary solution that had come to us for his difficulties, for he had drawn the last of his half-pay, + nothing had opened for him. "Three nights ago I had a dream" he said - (it must have been the same night that the Lord visited Oimoun) - "I was nearly in despair: I cried to God 'have I mistaken the way - if I am in Thy way seal it to me'" - + he went on to tell how he thought he was standing in his village in front of an immense crowd, mostly of native student lads, singing a hymn to Christ with a loud voice, + 4000 of the lads joined him, + he awoke for very joy of heart. He went on to say how he felt it to be God seal, calling him to work - + that if we could adapt a certain shed into a meeting room, + our three would help, he believed that God would give them many souls... it is another daydream coming true... How often I have longed over the stream of country men that passes our doors! Thus closed the sixth day.

And the seventh day brought its beautiful climax. Those present were just the 20 or so of us who had been through the fight, two visitors staying with us, + Belaid from below. I think there were not many of us who did not feel something of an inward sob of joy when the three came in, one after the other, erect + steady looking,

in their burnouses + long white ganbouras — we wondered how they could get through their testimonies! Aissa began, in his strong mountain guttural — that his trust was in the blood of Christ for salvation, that he had resisted God's voice about baptism, but that now — free nature inconsequence — God had blessed his waiting by bringing two others to join him / Amar came next, in his pure Tunisian Arabic, filling how all the prophets were sinners, that now he had found the fitness one to bear his sin. All came last, with his face aglow, he told how he wanted to go into the grave with the Lord, + come up to walk in newness of life till his return — + the glow on his face brightened into radiance as he stepped down into the water. And so closed, to the glory of his grace, the seventh day of the Mouloud.

The last page has come, + December's story must be condensed accordingly. It began with straightway starting on the preparation of the new little Mission room, but that will belong more to the January continuation, as will Miliana's struggle to meet the awful need brought on by a harvest that was almost nil — for this only began with the ebbing of the year. Meantime it set us up Mimoun, his funny round face screwed up with pleasure at finding himself here again.

So I will keep to the ebbing of the last victory of this Anno Domini. . . . It is such ancient history, that few will remember the defeat that is now retrieved. It was in 1902, when all was dark around us politically, that Talarche Hawthorn + I were in Tolga, chief village of a group of oases west of Biskra, + having a time of intense interest with groups of robbing men — brother-hoods from afar, on pilgrimage to a neighbouring shrine. Suddenly the order came, courteous + firm — we must leave the place in 3 days + set foot in the parts no more. We brought away a bit of palm that last sad day in pledge of victory + it is still above the great mat in my Alger room, + victory is within sight with the dying year.



Tolga Scraps



For early in the month Satcha Pettin joined Miss de Mayer at Biskra + after 14 years silence Tolga got once more the Lord's call. How Satcha loved it too — "the vast expanses, the pink mountains, the dunes, the palms, the strangabim dark streets, the crowds of white burnoused men, with occasional touches of dull orange, crimson or mauve on small boys + girls" — But all was at a dead lock at first — the literature was not welcome, + Si Ibrahim, the blind taleb who had listened so eagerly, + stood by us so staunchly in both our former visits, (the first time with Helen Freeman) shrewd off now, + was evidently shy of having anything to do with them.

So they went the round of the outlying villages, + in the last the tide began to turn: The sheikh's brother sat them down on a mat outside the town + ordered coffee for them, + began. And when they got back to Tolga for the last day or two, the whole current had swept round absolutely. The blind taleb received them in his bureau, keen in his interest as of old, + they were just besieged for books + tracts by men + student lads, + schoolboys, till all the colloquial gospels + literary "portions" of OT.

the N.T. were sold out - - + even in the train the chances went on, + outstretched hands from the platform to the carriage window bore off the last tracks as the land was left to silence once more. When will that silence be broken again? The cry in ones heart over the place those days that we knew the two to be there, seemed to speak of more to come.

The last days of the year found them at Tougourt, the southern extremity of the line, + its neighbouring villages - + back through that great chasm of "The Gate of the Desert" at El Karhara, they came back with all that desert stretch open behind them. When last we passed it, long ago, it seemed closed to all but the promises of God. "He open it + no man shall shut it" was the word on which He caused us to hope men, + He has brought it into fact!

Here ends A.D. 1910

