

New Series. Number

4

Algiers Mission Band  
Journal

June  
to December 1921

Relizane. I am ending the spring's tournée with a sight of their new horizons here; curtailed by returning to El Biar for next week's weddings.



Zemmora's one point of contact with the unseen.

May Ridley's future outpost is Zemmora, a village crouched among the foot-hills. The native huts cluster round a marabout's tomb + the people were touching in their sense of darkness.

"We kiss our marabout's shoulder, but our hearts are black as our tents," said one strong-featured woman. "You are people of one word... we have ten" + she held up her ten fingers. "We have no-one to teach us".

"It profited me not". That is a great plea before God:


Does He not mark pitifully that marabout tomb + it's sacred tree which stand for all they know of Him? Is He not glad that they can hear at last!

Thence we went on to Kathleen Butler's fresh pied-à-terre at the top of the pass. We stood on that sky-line + looked at the roads branching east + west + running due south till they are lost in the desert. It is those great roads that are the chief attraction of Tiset, not only for where they lead, but for what they bring within reach - The first camel of the season swayed up today. Soon the caravans will bring the grain-crops + can take back our books to the unreached lands below. . . In both places the lodgings secured are mere footholds as yet.

Dar Naama. In the thick of our preparations Si Boualem + Chirra have suddenly

appeared, evidently with the thought of camping up here again. "By the end of the summer I shall be free" he says, + his face glows. "We are doing without all we can. There is only 200 francs left to pay out of the 700. That means a big fight won - for it is a rare thing if an Arab works off a debt. Their system is to borrow, + when too hard-pressed, to borrow from another to pay the first, + so ad infinitum.

The brothers have got their two rooms fitted up to their taste, with great labour, + now we have been getting guest-rooms + menus ready - (each meal has its proper dishes.) - Our great endeavour is to keep it both native + Christian: only those who know how every strand of the Moslem's social life is intertwined with his religion + primal superstitions will realize the difficulty.

 All is well over by God's grace. The two weddings could not, for social complications, be held together, so Si Ali's came first. This is his little closely veiled bride coming in at the door of the orange court + receiving from Louizette the customary piece of sugar, presage of the sweetness of the new home, amid shrill "you-you"s of joy around.

Ali centred in the wedding service of the afternoon, when bride + bridegroom came in from opposite doors of the central court + sat side by side in front of those gathered, to be married by Mons. Cook. That did bring down wrath from the Moslem relations from Cherchelle, + when 3 or 4 days later, Si Amar's pretty, plump



Zouhra arrived with a powerfully built mother, + a father + brother in an antagonistic frame of mind, we had to defer the Christian part of the ceremony till they were gone.

BUT now their compound is clear of obstructive relatives, + it is good to hear snatches of hymns coming up. — good also to get the plates of sweetmeats that are sent round by the bridegrooms if they are pleased with their brides!

6 Miliana. The long delayed days here have come at last. The special growing point seems in the soul of the old blind Hadj. He is one whom God has sought for long: 14 years ago, before he grew blind, someone by the wayside (he must, by the description, have been a "Père Blanc") shewed him a gospel, + from that day his soul thirsted for life, though he was warned on all sides against seeking for those books. Mabel Groutoff met him 3 years ago I think, just as blindness was settling on him, + in their almost daily readings came the quenching of the life-draught. He is definitely asking for baptism now.


It was good too to go with Ida Nash from home to home of her reading girls, + to see how that same quickening Word is bringing one + another into life.




(The panorama from the colndows of Dar er Rih. from Miliana's mountain on the left - to Colea - somewhat shortened -)

Here for 2 or 3 weeks breathing time while Sascha Perkin is still there to mother the Dar Naama household - a complicated matter in summer guest-time.

I am the more thankful for the quiet, because today brings wonderful news from Alma Krebs who is still at Tebessa. (The N.A.M. station on the way to Tazewt) - She tells that Si Amar the "4 hours man" has arrived there! ... Is it just a passing visit? or is it the first stir of the wings of the new life in its instinct for liberty?


 Another letter from Tebessa brings a joyful seal. A.K. says "It has all been so wonderful.. Si Amar seems to have made a clear cut. I wish I could tell you some of the things he has said. He seems steadfast + humble. I feel his training is a great problem: we need waiting upon God." . . . At present Mr. Smith will kindly house him + care for him in Constantine in the M.E.C. house.


 Another call for prayer in these quiet days - again in the direction of impossibilities. . . . In the spring Mary Watling began getting openings among Arab girls of the educated class, some of them at Belcourt, a hard aristocratic native suburb that for long has been strangely on her heart. She got temporary rooms there in May to follow up her clues, + now the little flat that she had been told could not be found, has fallen at her feet, so to speak, + though its owner categorically declines all our conditions, he seems to want to have us!

Yet a third prayer-call, again against all human chances, intertwines with the other two. It is this - that our native lawyer-friend seems disposed to give his niece Felina

(Luizette's cousin, who entered Christ's kingdom with her 2 years ago) to a young Constantine convert, in training as an evangelist. -- All these focal points have to be fought through these days, + specially the last, as another suitor presses for his reply.

But behind all these foreground needs the inmost cry at this time I think, is for some leader to be sent to the help of these Djerid men who are being brought to us. They are out of Mons. Cooks scope, for they are pure Arabs + understand no other tongue, + to train them as they should be trained needs gifts not among us as yet.

 Another point of this summer's advance is in view, literally speaking, here in Blida. Nearly opposite, on the coast hills (see p. 4) lies the tough little town of Colea. Alice M<sup>rs</sup> Ilroy has several times spent some days there, + always with longings that more could be done, + our Blida pair have links there. Now M<sup>rs</sup> Smeeton has taken a cottage there for a year, + the Buckenham's will make use of it this autumn, so it looks as if its day may be dawning soon.

 Dar Naama again. -- + Si Abd el Krim, the Constantine convert-lad is here to win his bride. He has found favour with her people + all seems clenched. Also as far as we can tell, the Belcourt flat has passed into our hands as a post for Mary Watling to hold in the midst of Christ's foes. Likewise as far as the present goes, Si Amar "the 4 hours" has settled down at Constantine. Our trouble with him will be the lazy luxurious habits of a well-to-do home. We can only aim at keeping his days full, + pray that the Spirit of Him who for ever

Sakes became poor" may enter + possess him.

20 It is a happy summer with the dear bunches of natives all about the place. We used to wonder "what can God mean to do with all these rooms"? now it is plain - 4 or 5 native families can lodge alongside with the needful apartness, + this brings endless chances of access. . . . Among these chances, precious because soon to end, have been those with Luizette. Her brother betrothed her to a Moslem cousin, but left her with us till the wedding. She was helpless of course - helpless even to tell him her faith till they were married: then she told him straight out. "Do you mean that you have given up Mohammed?" "Yes, I have given up Mohammed": He looked disturbed + remained thinking: then he said. "I give you leave to follow whatever religion you please. I set you free! So God's Hand has been stretched out once more. . . . They have asked us still to keep, no. fem. her cousin Fatima. . . as I write she is picking out hymn. tunes with one finger, in preparation, she says, for learning to play at meetings in Constantine, + Si Ali + Titani are singing another Feme below, answering each other in treble + bass!

Another thing for which we thank God is the spirit of real fellowship among them. - in old days the Christians used to be like little dust-coated balls of quicksilver, always shying off each other - now they run together, though the men + the women still keep their apartness. "All one in Christ Jesus" has not dawned here yet. . . . Aissa is still waiting for Alamiya to get a little older + more sedate before his turn comes for setting up house. . . waiting with what patience he can muster!

Another intervention of God's hand must be chronicled. Mr. Olley writes that the tobacconist who clung like a limpet to the future bookshop of our Tozeur house has suddenly taken himself off. Eviction would have been difficult as well as unwise, + we felt that behind his resistance lay the resistance of the powers of darkness for all the bookshop may mean. So this quiet slipping means a fresh breath of promise.

The land is the poorer for one more of its few fighters gone to his rest. - we hear that Kacete has suddenly passed away. At the Kabyle conference he spoke as a dying man to his native brothers, urging them to be faithful + fearless - then he vanished again to his distant school in the west, + there he finished his course, refusing the presence of Moslem talbas.

New gifts for the autumn are coming into sight. I have told before I think of Mr. + Mrs. Theobald, friends of the Buckenham's, who have been waiting for more than a year to see their path clear. Now all is plain + they are selling up home + business, with a view to being with us before the year ends. He has a special love for boys which will stand us in good stead.

Two more gifts are in store - one from the Home Staff of the C.M.S. - Miss McInery, who comes for secretarial work, the other Miss Drysdale from a Scotch Y.W.C.A. through Mrs. Goran. Both may be on "Short Service" only - even so exceedingly welcome, the more as two "Short Servicemen" Frances Brittle + Mary Taylor will not



this autumn, + Mrs Walker has gone back to her "long service" in America, leaving a missing in each station.

Things have come to a crisis over Si Amar the "4 hours". He dared stay no longer in Constantine, for he must put greater distance between himself + his home. His father, whom he loves intensely was on his track, + he begged earnestly to get away before he arrived. There was nothing for it but to let him come here pro. tem. It was a moment to be remembered when his tall figure appeared between those of the Tzjeur brothers who had gone to meet him. So many prayers lay behind it!

The 4  
hours



What to do next we do not see. There is nowhere within reach a training place for converts, + he is not the make for land work.

Even the brothers are a puzzle now that their year at that work is over, for Alger openings are nil. They are keen to try Biskra for the winter, + we may let <sup>them</sup> them.

Things have moved apace. The blind Hadj has come from Miliana on a visit, + it seemed the time for his oft-repeated petition for baptism to be granted.

Then a few days ago came a small sheet of paper in the writing of the "4 hours" saying how light + joy had entered his soul, + that he too longed for baptism — Never a word had passed with him as yet on that point. We asked how long he had wished it. He answered "For long I have said in myself 'Can I or can

I not? Even a few days ago I should have said "not yet." I felt I had to wait till there came a thread between my soul + God about it, saying it is the time. - now that thread has come:

We felt there was no need to wait - that where there is the Spirit's work we can go back to His ways of the early times "if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" or Mons Cook on examining them both, fully agreed. So today has seen them joined in outward confession to the Church Militant. "Thank you, thank you for being glad," said the "4 hours" when we told him our joy. . . . The Hadji is full of visions as to the developments that we should look for - foremost a Zaouia in Miliana + every Mission centre, where men could come + stay a few weeks + learn.





14 He is off today, the dear old Hadji; this was his farewell. "I know not what has befallen my heart: it laughs + it cries: I am as one that has eaten honey + is not satisfied + has drunk milk + is still athirst."


18 Si Amar "the 4 hours" gave the address today at the Sunday morning meeting; he went on for 20 minutes or so, all lucid + well thought out. Oh that God will shew us how to train the powers He has given him, + that they may be vitalised by the breath of His Spirit! Just now he is going through the hard bit that so often follows baptism. "I have fought - fought," he said the other

day, + he clenched his fist: "Satan comes at one door + I shut that, + then at another door + I shut that, till I get tired - tired."

The only opening that we see for his training lies in Tangier, where they have plenty of men's work going on, + a young Tunisian helper who is doing well. We have written to ask if they will receive him.


 Yes, after many complications as to papers + permits he is safely off, + now our remaining problem is over the other Firm + the Biskra plan that they are trying to evolve. Meantime they are giving Arabic lessons + helping with a new development among the boys in Foun, i.e. painting classes after school-hours. We are working this in with the Colportage stock by getting them to colour the designs on the tract covers. It has made a good start, + they are getting just the kind of lads we wanted. Si Ali has at last retrieved the failure of last winter, when he was seized with a panic about speaking to them. - + he stood up the other day pale + nearly dumb, + could only go on for a few minutes. Still it has broken the spell, thank God.


 They have started for Biskra, leaving their wives with their own families in Chen-chelle, + purposing to be back in 3 months. It is, we feel, the masterful will of Si Amar junior that has swept them off, rather against Si Ali's wishes, + certainly against those of his little wife.


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They are doing their level best for him. It is the other extremity of the land from his, + dialect, climate, people, coinage even, are so different as to make it seem a foreign country. How long he will hold out among these small difficulties remains to be proved - for easy-going-ness is his weak point.

 Mimoun is up again from Miliana for garden work. He has developed a good deal since last winter. We were touched at his solution for his Ramadhan path: he did not want to dishonour his father by breaking the fast at home, so he went off by himself + lived in a cave, where he could be free to follow his light. Now work is scarce there except mining for which he has not strength. So we welcome him back to his little room + Sascha Perkin's faithful teaching + his turn on the land.

 Aissa welcomes him too, fervently, for they have much in common, + their bachelor estate throws them together. - not for long, this last, for Aissa's wedding is fixed for the first week in January. He is deeply interested in the matter of his plenshings, quite as much as if he could see them as well as feel them over with his long fingers. - + he is also deeply interested in the upbringing of his wayward little bride-elect, with whom, unlike other Arab fiancés, he is allowed an interview every Sunday afternoon, during which he gives her long lectures. There is something very touching in the protecting love he has shewn her ever since he brought her, an unsheltered waif, to Sascha Perkin's

care. How we hope that she will not disappoint him!

21 The year's last visit was a week end at Blida, to see the last improvement that its workers have achieved. One of this year's fresh growing points is that the outposts are taking increasingly the initiative as to onward steps, submitting them for approbation, but shouldering the responsibility.

The open court of the Blida Mission House had in old days a little garden plot in the centre, where grew an orange tree. This was so kind as to die, so could be rightfully abolished to make way for a children's playground. Now the two there have had the worn cement pavement replaced by white tiles, giving the little ones a lovely dry space for the scampering games that are such an attraction.

It is hard to find room for the ever increasing numbers, + as for "grading" what can be done with two workers to an attendance ranging from 60 to nearly 80. The

lord of the harvest must be sought for all this.

22 Our Christmas gift from heaven this year has taken shape in the arrival today for the winter <sup>of Alice Kemp</sup> bringing along with her Mr + Mrs Theobald, with all that this means for the beyond. And already Miss McKinney is lifting my writing burdens by the dozen, + Miss Drysdale doing the same by other burdens in Miliana. Likewise in our Christmas gathering we have our Tozeur house.



A corner of the Casbah

holds back. Si Amar junior + his brother suddenly returned the other day - a bit crest-fallen, as was good for them, in finding that their hopes of carrying their way in Biekra came to nothing. So they brought back their wives + settled in again. The next step remains to be settled by the January Committee.



This is Mimoun's Christmas tree! It was fabricated in private with canes + palm fronds, + decorated with candles + mandarines + the first winter jonquils, in imitation of those used to celebrate the birthday of Mohammed. He brought it triumphantly to our joint house-party in the court, + was so delighted with our appreciation that he said "next Christmas I will make a car instead + drag it through the village!"

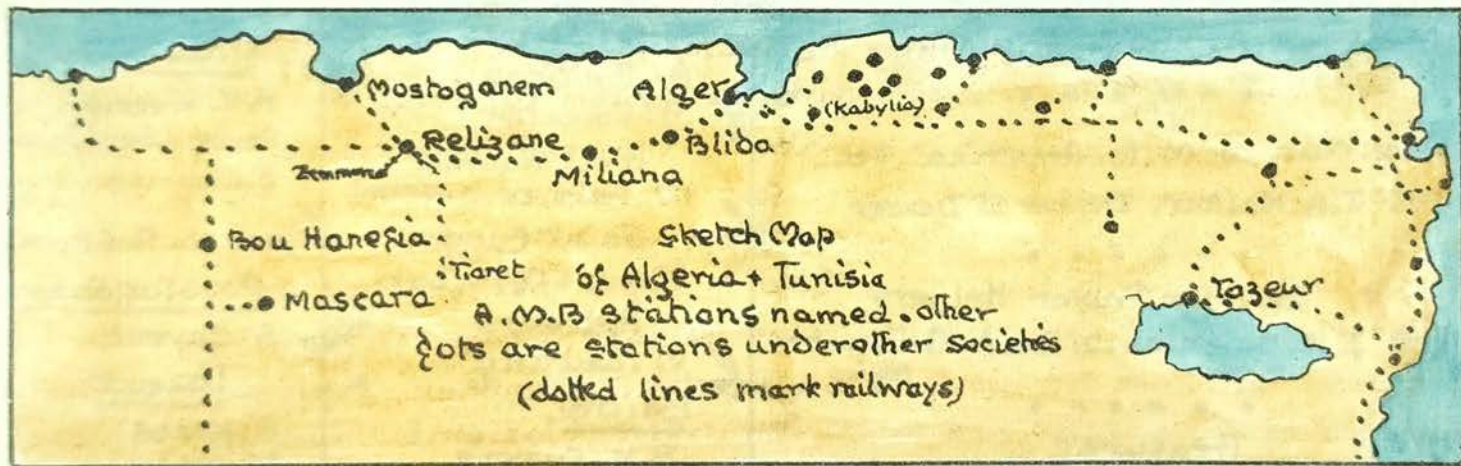


Happy letters have come from Miliana, where the Hadj had come to his first communion service - + from Tazeur where Violet Wood has arrived with Miss Ruff's "short service" help to get things ready for the winter's work. She writes with great joy - (i.e. v.w.) of the welcome that she is getting in the houses, + of God's help in making her year-old Arabic understood. This is all the better news because Tazeur visiting has been the toughest part of the work down there - the women, even apart from their shyness of Europeans are more tenacious Moslems than the men.

So this is the last of the "new things" of this year. Will every one

please remember <sup>that this</sup> chronicles only the new happenings + the new hopes - not the old + continuous things that, as in the world around us, go to make the new. And in your prayers for the new things do not forget these old things which are always going on - the patient work among the blind + the sick, the visiting + the classes + the language - study, + those who are helping in the "outward" matters without which the "inward" would have a poor chance of getting done. We need you behind us in all - God bless you!

Here ends AD. 1921





# Algiers Mission Band.

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 Mr + Mrs Stuart Trotter. Chelmsford

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## Sec. for Prayer Helpers

Mr J. H. Smeeton. 2 Rue du Craissant  
 Algiers

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## Treasurer

Miss Currie. Dar Naama El Biar Algiers

## Location of workers. Autumn. 1921

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A. Mrs Troy

A. Buttiaz

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Saint Eugene

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F. K. Currie

M. Roche

### Milliana

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I. Nash

M. H. Drysdale. S. Sen

-vice

### Relizane

M. Ridley

K. Butler.

(sub-stations Tjaret

+ Zemmora)

### Mascara

F. H. Freeman

Senior + Sen. Saker

F. Hammon. Mission

Helper

(sub-sta. Bouhaneftal)

### Mostaganem

A. Gayral.

### Tozeur

A. Krebs

V. Wood

M. Ruff. S. Service