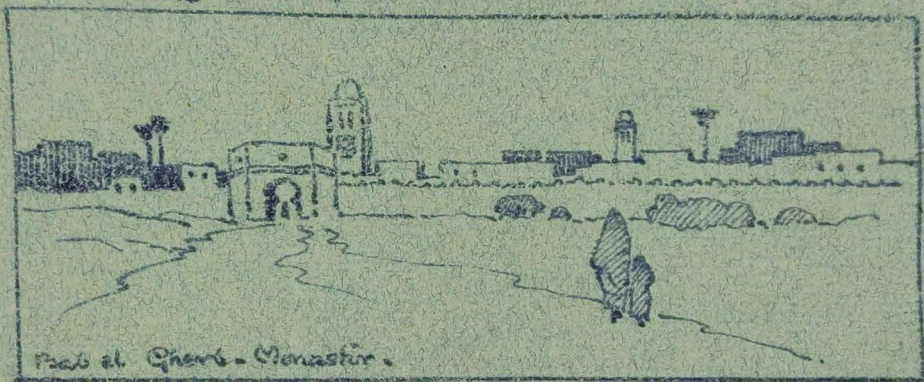


14

Algiers Mission Band.



Med el Ghreb - Monastir.

Journal. Summer Number. 1917.

ALGIERS MISSION BAND.
Stations, Summer 1917.

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.	Teuzor.	

* * * * *

Sec. for Prayerhelpers, Mr J. H. Smeeton, 2, Rue du Croissant, Algiers.

Council of Reference. London.

Mr & Mrs Stuart Trotter.	Broomfield Lodge, Chelmsford.
Sir H. & Lady Procter.	High House, Brentwood.
Rev. S. W. & Mrs Howe.	St. Lukes Vicarage, C. E. Finchley.

* * * * *

Algerian Women's Mission Band. America.

Mrs T. A. Walker, S.S.Asso. 2300 Dexter Street. Denver, Colorado. U.S.A.

* * * * *

ALGIERS MISSION BAND.

Members on the Field - Summer 1917.

Date of arrival.

1888	I. Lillias Trotter.	1909	Alice McIlroy.
"	B. G. L. Haworth.	1911	Ida Nash.
1890	F. Helen Freeman.	"	*Mary Freeman.
1906	Sascha Perkin.	1912	J. H. Smeeton.
"	Alexandrine Gayral.	"	Nellie Smeeton.
1907	Mabel Grautoff.	"	S. Soler.
"	May Ridley.		*Grace Russell.
1909	F. K. Currie.	1914	Mme. Arnaud.
"	Millicent Roche.	"	A. M. Farmer.
"	*Mary Watling.	1916	Kathleen Butler.
		"	Mme. Pelicier. (pro tem)

*on long furlough.

* * * * *

Short Service Hostel.

Kathleen Butler (1916) in charge. Frances Brittle.

* * * * *



The minaret of the singer



The backs of small boys



woman + girl . baby



a winter coat



a street in the suburbs.

Scraps of Monastier + its people

Monastir, Tunisia, April.7.

Is the sequel already beginning to follow the sudden closing of the lovely Tozeur chapter? That was barely a week ago, and there is the feeling that we are on the threshold of new things.

By a series of purposes & cross-purposes, working together even by missed telegrams, Alma Krebs met us on Monday at Sousse, &, finding the hotel there was of too grand an order to please us, we came on together next day to this seaside town, 20 kil. off, a primitive place, with an inn that our Sousse landlord told us was "plus que modeste". We thought we might find lodgings where she could stay for the summer weeks, when Kairouan is broiling.

As the 3 days we had planned together passed, the sense of God's purpose in them grew & unfolded.

The place attracted us from the first. It is undilutedly native, & not too far north to be bereft of camels & palm trees. Our windows overlook great stretches of dazzling white roofs & ultra marine sea, broken only by the cream & ochre tinted minaret over the way, where a mueddhim with a wonderful voice calls the hours, & breaks, specially at night & before the dawn, into a rhythmic chant of such rich wild beauty, that we can do nothing but listen till it is over. The sturdy handsome children take us greatly: the boys all dress in short, coffee coloured woollen jerkins embroidered with cream braid; the girls in parti coloured garments, divided vertically into indigo & crimson, half & half. We see, as we explore the streets, the 3 of us, that it may mean something beyond a provision for the next hot season. We have felt for a long time that we shall need in the end a second station in Tunisia, to be worked during the months when Tozeur is impossible: the thought has never yet crystallized, so to speak. This may be the place.

Another joyful vision for the future lies in the news of these last days,

that Grace Russell, (who is still detained in England by suppression of travelling permits), has Tozeur greatly on her heart, & is more than ready to be Alma Krebs' fellow-worker there as soon as all is free.

April 14.

Another week of developments. We meant to start north when Alma had left us for Kaireuan, but twice over the motor-bus failed us at the last, & each time that we thus missed getting off, came such a sense of rest in staying, that we were brought to the conclusion that this was the "legislating" of God's peace. At once appeared the tiny steps that are His wont in the times of His beginnings. The old native washer-woman of the inn was our first acquaintance, & in her huge delight at sharing our afternoon tea, she volunteered to take us for a walk & conducted us to make friends over their doorsteps, with her two married daughters. A day or two later she came to carry us off to see a native wedding, whence we have grown to be on smiling terms with one after another of the shrouded women whom we pass in the streets & lanes.

April 20.

Each week is bringing some fresh weaving. We do not feel any freedom to go aggressively to work as in old days when a stay in a new place often meant "now or never", & in war-time all has to move gently to move at all. So we look out for the bits of quiet guiding, & they never fail to come. At first in our daily scouting among the streets & the outlying suburbs, it was only shy smiles that came from among the brown swathings of the women, then they began stopping us when they met us in the lanes, for a few words of greeting & enquiry as to whence we came: they are freer, of course, outside the town, in the hamlets that lie buried in winding alleys of prickly pear. Today one asked us into her garden, & gave us handfuls of bean-pods, & a little group of boys attached themselves to us as we went through the cemetery, & listened to a parable

story & its meaning. "Yes, you understand Arabic," was the comment as I began: "all English understand Arabic because they are Maltese"!

One rencontre, better still, came 2 or 3 days ago. We were sitting for a few minutes on a bench by the sea, when a native came up & greeted us, & asked if we knew Mr Short. He proved to have been house-boy there years ago, & his memory lingered lovingly round one detail after another of those old days. He ended by taking us back to see his wife, making a faster link than with these other surface acquaintances. So again we rejoice in "God with us."

April 25.

More of the slow small footsteps whereby He leads, have appeared today, for Mabel Grautoff writes proposing coming to stay here with Alma Krebs for a month or so in July & August. This would all help in the germination of the seed-thought for the place:- we have found before now that the best way of getting a permanent foothold is to come & go again, till the people get used to the sight of us, & hardly notice when we stay for good. All the more with this hope for the summer, we feel at rest that this tiny bit here has fulfilled its purpose, not even entering the door, but setting it ajar for those who follow.

Another thing that points to some permanent work that may be unfolding, is that 12 or 14 months ago a sum, sufficient for the starting & opening years of a new station, came to me in a legacy, & was set aside for this purpose. Monastir may be the solution as to its bestowal. We are off tomorrow for Tunis with very thankful hearts. There is such a sense that we are - dark though all looked 3 or 4 weeks ago - in a time of beginning rather than of ending: & it explains the utter rest that came to us as the train took us off from Tozeur. All that was only "parts of His Ways."

A shower of rose petals.



(seen through
the class. room
window at
Miliana...
looking out
at the court
above.)

Alger. Whit Sunday. May 27.

Many a day without an entry, having had to lie low a bit at Dar Naama since returning, for I suppose we had been living at higher pressure than we knew, down south.

The women's side of the curtain at this morning's meeting was well filled: not so the men's. It appears that the idea has spread among them that if the enemy nations came to the land & found them frequenting us, they would be killed: so they stay away. Not very heroic, even if the matter were more probable!

Miliana. May 31.

Off with Helen Freeman for a round out west. Miliana is its first stage. Mabel Grautoff & Ida Nash have had a difficult spring, from the swirl of the cross-currents that are for ever beating round the rocks of opposition up here.

Children are to the fore as ever, on terms of great freedom & friendliness. This is the chance picture of a game of play as seen framed in by the classroom window on the court level.

The new opening for work of late has been among the native soldier-lads. They come in groups of 3 or 4, headed by a Kabyle convert N.C.O. several times a week; there was something pathetic in the way they listened - so soon they will be out in the furnace, & they know so little yet of the Son of God Who can walk with them there.

Relizane. June 5.

Here the new feature is a pretty one, besides its practical purpose, in the four elder girls who have now been trained to help with the Kindergarten crew - dear, slim, flower-like creatures, who go about their business through every detail in a quiet motherly way, never raising hand or voice in exacting obedience a feat out here for the feminine sex. There are various novelties in the teach-

ing, among them chanting the alphabet (to "Sicilian Mariners"), & a guessing game of oral spelling.

The "middleaged" girls, who are undertaken by Mlle Gayral, are difficult to catch just now, for it is the season for gambling for celluloid rings! Those who come are very gentle & sweet, & patiently knit long strips of home-spun wool, to be transformed into vests for soldiers.

The fresh soul who seems really "illuminated" here is Miriam, mother of the Si Miloud who was Relizane's firstfruit unto Christ. For all that she had a gloomy old face, her levity was the distracting part of her, specially during the women's meetings: it was quite irrepressible. The others had gone when she arrived today - "I panted like a dog to get here," she said "but I was too late." - And then she told me, with shining eyes, the dream of our Lord that came to her while the station was closed last summer. She was very ill at the time, but at His dream-voice "Rise, be healed" the sickness fled away, & she awoke cured. Since then she has been really transformed, the others say, & the change in her expression bears it out.

Bou Hanefia - June 12.

Here too there is expansion, for the regular fortnightly meetings for the native farm hands & their wives, & the coming into residence of a brightly saved Spanish family in charge of all, has promoted the place this year to outpost rank. The wild little tent children come eagerly to be taught whenever they have the chance. Summer storms & locust flights have again sent us to God over the harvest, & once more the answer has been beautiful. We all but saw the angels last Sunday sweep away the hosts of "criquets" that seemed irrevocably threatening the orange plantation on Saturday night. F.H.F. & the new farmer settled to keep the rule of no Sunday work, & to trust for a deliverance. The invading army came to a standstill, without another step over the

few yards of intervening earth, & by midday it had vanished.

June 19.

Today's new moon brings in Ramadhan, with its expression of spiritual darkness. A shaft of sunlight through the shutters brought a message about that, this morning - Our colloquial Arabic version of St. John I.5 is "the darkness makes no wall about it:" - i.e. cannot surround or enclose it - "com-prehended" has of course the same thought. The light is indomitable: no power of darkness can invade its straight line by a hair's breadth - specially for those far away Tozeur souls one rejoices in this.

Blida. June 25.

The last stage of the summer's round. It has been delayed through F.H.F.'s having been ill for a few days, which has involved missing the breaking-up fetes, with their sight of the children & their handiwork in full force. - A few specimens of embroidered hoods for the baths & chalked picture books of the year's lessons on sin & its remedy, have been brought back for inspection: & quiet days instead of busy ones have given more leisure for talking over the work, & for going to some of the houses, where, even with Ramadhan begun, there was a marked spirit of thoughtful listening.

There is a new girl mistress here, a wonderful little person, Tata by name - these native girls shew real powers in this direction: responsibility & a bit of careful training transforms them.

Alger. June 28.

Back again, to find the Ramadhan battle going badly - Blind Aissa has settled to fast this year, unless he can get off to Blida, where Mr Smeeton has planned to receive him if he succeeds in getting his papers made out. Worse than that, Boualem senior, who ought by now to have escaped from his brother, Si Aissa's hold on him, has, possibly not wholly by his own fault, failed to

do so - i.e. that is the only interpretation we can put on his non-appearance, for he seemed gladly looking forward to his freedom last time I saw him. Fatima of Feit Naama and her girl Yamina, are being forced by Boujemaa, the former's husband, into keeping the fast. Both of them resisted at first: "It brings such darkness to do it" the child said - but he would have none of it. "What can I do?" asked the mother today - "I can as soon walk up this wall as oppose him" - & she looked up at the whitewashed plaster above her head. All we can tell her, & others in her case, is to make it clearly known around them that their hearts are not in it, but that they are forced to it by their husbands. This, if they will do it faithfully, annuls its witness of loyalty to Islam.

Any one newly come to the land would imagine a feast to be going on, rather than a fast. The street stalls are piled with eatables & brilliant fruits, arranged with the love of a colour scheme which the native evolves out of every thing: the empty eating houses are decked with greenery - the mosques fly flags by day & glitter with illuminations at night, & the men go about with a flower tucked behind the ear. One cannot but admire the jaunty absence of self-pity, for the abstinence from drink as well as food through the long daylight of July is no small matter. What they could be, these Moslems, once fired by the Spirit - mystics, devotees, soldiers of the Cross with powers of a passionate fervour of devotion to a Leader Who has gained unflinching obedience. The new strain that they would bring into the heritage of the Church would be worth her while to win, if she would but see it!

July 3.

A fresh epoch tomorrow, for Mabel Grautoff starts for Tunis, en route for Monastir, where she promises to spend two months with Alma Krebs. For these & all His mercies, the Lord's Name be praised!

July 6.

And even here come little wafts of hope. F.H.F. writes of a woman who said to her "Mohammed is hard upon us." And another told one of us the other day - (Alice McIlroy I think it was, in a village visit) - "Our way is difficult - difficult: we fast, & we pray & we labour, & we hope our Prophet will intercede for us. Your Lord is better than our Lord." And today Sascha Perkin's teacher announced "I cannot come to read again till the autumn - the fast brutalizes us."

July 13.

Another glint of God's ways! for years one of our problems has been a great hulking handsome lad named Ben Aissa, sometimes plausible, sometimes half drunk, always more or less a tormentor, & yet, we felt, never able to shake off the Divine touch that came to him when he was a little fellow in the classes of long ago. His house - they are well-to-do people - lies in an Impasse not far off. One of us happened to call this week, & found him far gone in consumption, & the Good Shepherd close on his tracks.

Another way in which we are cheered is, that by the revolving cycle of lunar months whereon the Moslem calendar is based, Ramadhan is coming back into the working time of the year, & can have increasingly once more its own special means of reaching the people.

Foremost among these are evening meetings, made possible by the night customs that prevail: - feast & vigil & feast succeed each other till the small hours. Magic lantern meetings, which are the great attraction, are too hot now except out of doors. At Elida, the Olivès have had large crowds in their court yard - Beit Naama a small crowd on its roof, with eyes & ears attent from the roof-windows around. We are glad that we can begin again to answer challenge by challenge.

July 24.

Beit Naama Fatima has walked up her wall after all! It is true that her husband had a pretext for consenting that she should break the fast, in the fact that she has been a little ill: "My heart dangles" as she graphically expresses it - but it must have been God's Hand that caused him to withdraw his opposition on so slight a plea, for many fast on even with death's hand on them. Little Yamina also has been let off 18 days out of the 30. It all helps to break the spell for another year.

Aug. 5.

Ben Aissa is failing quickly: consumption mows down the Arab lads like summer grass. He sits crouched on his mattress, his face getting more & more transparent. It shines with a spirit-light, sometimes till it is really beautiful, though he does not say much except in grave assent. His great longing is to come to the native guest-rooms of Dar Naama, or to those of the Short Service Hostel, where the Olives have arrived to pass the summer with their children. His first teaching came through them, in the far-back days before their marriage, & he longs to see them. We hope to arrange for him one way or the other when M. Olives settles in: that he should insistently choose this, instead of the country Marabouts to whom the sick usually go, shows that heart & will have swayed back to the magnet of the Truth that laid hold of his soul's compass as a boy, though many & violent have been the Moslem swerves since then.

Another who has been needing what help we can give through the valley of the shadow of death, is a Kabyle woman of the Beit Naama set, mother to the little lad Rabbak who was gathered, we believe, in the Good Shepherd's arms as he went the same road last summer. - Whether too, it is consumption, & each time she seems to have less power of utterance: "Yes - I knew - she"

(meaning A. McIlroy) "told me," is usually the answer gasped out. Last time, a day or two ago, it was only by a pressure of my hand at the name of Jesus that I could tell that she understood. Dear dim souls, how good that as they pass out in the twilight they will meet the High Priest Who can have compassion on the ignorant, & on these that are out of the way.

Aug. 9.

I went down to see her today, & found only the poor wisp of a body there: she had left it in the night. Then over the way to Ben Aissa, with a message from B.G.L.H. that he & his mother could come up any day they liked. He was looking very happy, for M. & Mme. Olive's had been to see him an hour or two before, & had also invited him, arranging that the mother should come & prepare all for an early day next week. "See, they ask me to both houses" he said to her, with a glad ring in his voice.

Aug. 13.

"No soldiers' committees" is a head-line in one of the speeches of a paper today. True for the heavenly road to victory as well as the earthly: it is not the souls that palaver & argue as to how far they are going to obey, that can follow Christ on the white horse of conquest, among the armies that are in heaven.

Aug. 15.

This morning brings the news that Ben Aissa has suddenly crossed the bar. May Olive's writes that she & her husband went to see him yesterday, & found that he had passed away the night before. He told his mother in the evening that he would not sleep in his room tonight, but was going to them, & she had promised to get all ready. But interwoven with this certainty came interjections that there was to be no weeping or tearing their faces for him. Then he settled himself into his mother's arms & seemed to sleep - after a

time they thought he had passed away, but he said quietly, "No, I am still here,"... & the end came without a struggle: the neighbours watching said they had never seen such peace. Dear black sheep, we cannot doubt that he is safely folded now.

Aug. 17.

Letters come every few days from Monastir, with glad developments: they began by boys coming round as our two sat reading Arabic aloud together on the shore: then men started coming for books & tracts & bits of talk - then invitations to one or two of the houses where the girls wanted to see them. And now comes the query "what next?" for their rooms are engaged for another month only & after that, so far as was originally planned, Mabel Grautoff returns West. - Now we have put it to her, would she be willing to stay on another 3 or 4 months to help Alma Krebs in opening up work, if we sent Alice McIlroy to hold the Miliana post alongside Ida Nash, who has now had a year's experience there. The answer has come, & it is "Yes," so the next stage is clearing, thank God. The succeeding question is whether straightway to look out for a little house & settle down in it, or to disappear for a bit, & use the time in seeing how the land lies elsewhere among the unoccupied towns of Tunisia. The yearly period of "flitting" is coming near, so it seems best, anyway, to be on the lookout for a roof over their heads.

Dar er Rih. Blida. Sep.7.

The last 3 or 4 weeks of rest-time are being spent here, in the little cottage above the Mission House, with a blessed sense of quietness & ever changing beauty of mountain & plain & sky, framed in by the twists of the old vine that trails over the terrace. Already Rally Days are coming into sight: it will be a small Rally, let alone the absence of our Tunisians, for, though none went home this summer, those who left us earlier are "held up" as yet. One of them,



"Give me Fire!"

Laura Carr, who went back for family reasons last spring, has not much hope of ultimate return: we miss her faithful help. All the more do we need the concentration of God's power on those of us who remain: "Give us fire" was the petition at the door this morning - two little upturned faces were there, & an outstretched potsherd - a request that no Arab would refuse, even if she had but a crumb of live coal left her wherewith to kindle her neighbour's. "Give us Fire" our hearts echo back to Him who sees our need as the working days draw near again.

F.H.F. has come back to us en route for the West to see things started. We have been comforted together over the last news of her Chrira: There was an anxious time over her in the spring, during the first few months after her unwilling marriage with the native serjeant, for when he came home wounded, he made much of her with gifts of jewellery etc., & handsome high-spirited creature that she is, we feared she would be swung off her balance. But he has tired already of his new toy, & leaves her to pawn everything & then to find her food as best she may, while he spends his pay on excesses. Mme. Arnaud has been trying to show her the meaning of God's dealings with her, & now has come the heart acceptance of them, with a "yes, He has done well by me - I should have forgotten Him in an easier path."

Sep. 17.

Monastir & its dénouement has been the intense interest of these days. First on the scene was a quaint little native house in a back street, which it partly overhung - finally the landlord wanted it for himself: & meantime days were at an end & nothing in view but another which was uselessly large. It seemed risky to refuse it, & yet neither they or we felt any divine "yes" about it. - Then, - so like God's Ways with us, when all prospects seemed closed down, came the offer of the most absolutely right place - so right that they wisely

closed with it then & there, & signed the contract for a year... such a true gift from heaven, specially in this wartime, when any opening of a fresh station seemed far below the horizon. It is in a respectable Arab street, with a glorific view from the roof, of low white houses & blue sea & olive groves stretching into the far distance. It is ours from Oct. 17, a gift that crowns the year with God's goodness.

The central court will be all that is needed for receiving native women & children: a place where the men can come to read & talk has still to be found: they ask for it themselves - "Get us a sitting place" - the urgency of this appeal from two or three in one day came as a seal to the matter of going forward here. Details have not arrived yet, but there are several whom we know already by their veiled names, which describe their standpoint spiritually - "Nathanael," "Philip," "Gamaliel," tell enough to enable us to pray for them intelligently, &, like Tozeur, there are "reader" boys eager to hear & to get tracts & books.

As there, houses open but slowly, & one "the house of Caiphas" opened hopefully & closed again: a long habits of seclusion have to be overcome in these outlying places, & Eastern minds move at a creeping pace towards anything new.

I have often felt that there is a danger that this spirit of lethargy around us should steal into our own souls. How frequently in the earthly war-news comes the short sentence with all it means of uttermost strenuousness - "They reached the objective assigned them by the given time." Have we? The reaching a given point in the heavenly warfare by a given time must come as surely into the plans of the Captain of the Host of the Lord as into the plans of the human commanders, & yet we let ourselves go slack, as if anything, any time, will do, so long as we are fairly faithful to the outline of our orders. As never before, for this winter's work, with "the last hour" closing in, we need the grace of intensity. Pray for us that it may be ours.

1. Mrs Hugh Egerton . 12 St Giles . Oxford .
Mrs F. Bishop . Welwyn . Northwood . Middlesex
Mrs Edward Trotter , Waxwell . Pinner . Middlesex
Miss Mildred Duff , 10 Gunton Rd , Clapton . N .
Mrs Horace Beck , 47 King Henry's Rd , S Hampstead .
N .