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Algiers Mission Band
Journal

edited by
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El Biar, Algiers.

FOREWORD.

June 1925.

This journal must begin by asking forgiveness from those who follow us in prayer, for seeming slackness. They have had to content themselves of late by gathering the trend of our story from the Report and from Prayer Appeals. For the last year and more, anything fuller has been postponed, first by much travelling, then by a good bit of weakness. But now Mr Buckenham is giving his help in the manual part of a résumé, and it shall be delayed no longer.

Except externally, it can hardly go into journal form, but must just be a picture here and there, set in the framing of the things you know.

A PICTURE OF HOPE DEFERRED.



The first picture is back in the autumn of 1923, and is a very sorrowful one - three whiterobed figures, with sad, suntanned faces, going out from this house to which they had come up, one by one, from the South, "leaving all for His dear sake", and hoping to prepare for His service.

The "4 hours" alias the "Touil" had been the last to arrive and was the first to have to go - alas under a heavy cloud of illdoing which needed drastic dealing.

Prayers have followed him with a strangely beautiful persistence, (specially in the Faith Mission), making us sure of a sequel yet to come - a sequel that will surely bring the true brokenness of spirit for which we long in him. He is living with his wife and babyboy in Miliana, gentle, dignified, holding aloof from Moslems and their offers of compromising work - expressing contrition to a degree that means a good deal from his proud nature - but in avowed fear for his life if he relinquished his present position

of "sitting on a fence"... Oh for fresh prayerpower to bring the matter through to victory!

The Tazeur brothers were in no wise implicated in his fall, but his influence on them had been strong for evil - and had resulted in an insubordinate spirit that obliged us to defer the thought of receiving them into the work. Of their own choice they went to Cherchelle, the seacoast town whence they had brought their wives. Life there has been uphill and not very brave, but the breaking away from the "in laws" who have held them back is in process of achievement.

Pray for God's solution for their next step, and praise Him that here too the prayer power around them has kept them true at heart to Christ.

We must have them too, walking worthily of the vocation wherewith they were called.

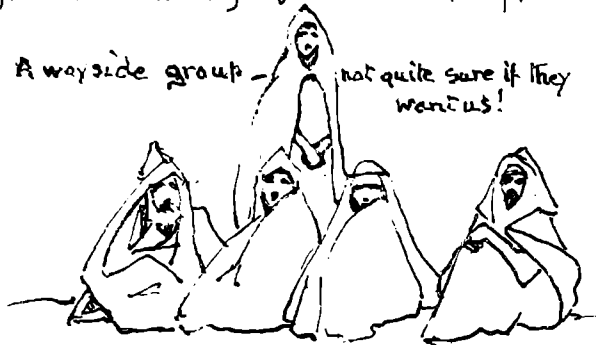


The next pictures in the picture book are bright once more, and they come in the winter 1923-24.

TWO PICTURES FROM THE SOUTH.

The first one is an interior: a great mud palace: it is on a scale that is worthy of the desert, where space is boundless - walls of ochre tinted clay, roofed with palmstalks and divided into aisles by rough pillars of palmtrunks. A group of women sit on the sand floor, in indigo and applegreen, black and flame colour, with heavy hanks of wool, dark red and blue, plaited with their hair and looped back with silver chains. They are rocking a baby mechanically in a goatskin cradle swung

on a tripod, but eyes and ears are rivetted on A. Krebs, who is sitting on the ground among them. At first she is dancing on her knee the next sized baby,



with all the repertoire of an Arab woman's terms of caress (among them "ja mouimeti" - "O my little mother"!), and then, when the outworks are won among the listeners, she is going straight up to the heart-citadel with God's word of power.

Time and strength were the only limits to such visits in those opening days of the Tolga station, and when it was re-opened in the autumn, the report form showed record numbers in all its homely contacts, owing greatly to V. Wood's ministries. The men's position may be summed up in their own words concerning us, "Their deeds are good, but it is their words, their religion, that is not good". ... - Yet love wins the day, and the welcome remains.

Away 200 miles further south, for the lure of the desert was on Mrs Walker, who was with us; and the few days that she could spare before "making Christmas" for the Algiers folk out of her big boxes, would just give her a sight of Touggourt. I think the chain of untouched villages along the railway line, half-hidden in their palmgroves, meant more to her than Touggourt itself. ... we shall not soon forget the wistfulness in her face as the train drew up there.

Those few days before it took her north, brought a welcome touch with the grave-faced schoolmaster at the Brotherhood College, who had so welcomed our books, and A. Krebs had a long and close-dealing talk with him. He pointed to the Bible on his bookshelf, and our letters, carefully filed, alongside — Follow him in prayer.

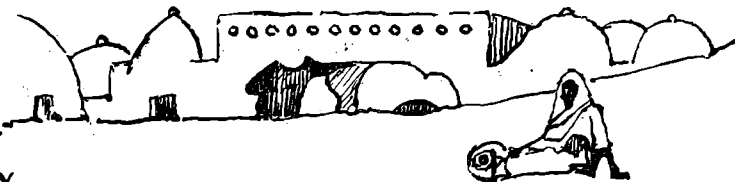
Then comes our second south-land picture — a land that I had hardly hoped to see again, for in the olden times it meant days of a slow swaying camel, to pay a visit to the Oued Souf. But trial communication had that very month been begun by Citroën cars, and in one of these we swung over the dunes for ten hours in great delight till the goal was reached.

All was still unchanged, for the Citroën was the first touch of European life, and only looked upon as a curious toy of the French. It is a district altogether unique, fashioned inwardly and outwardly by the sea of cream-coloured sand that shuts it in with many crested waves on every side.

The outward fashioning results in towns and villages like beehives clustered by the hundred, for the drifting sand would smother any other kind of roof. The houses are practically windowless and are built up with gypsum crystals that lie buried under that sand-drift. Everything is hung on the walls within, to keep it out of the sand's way. The palm-gardens are planted in deep pits, half an acre perhaps in extent, fenced in with dead palm fronds. The life-long battle of digging

these pits and shovelling out continually the encroaching sand, has put a strenuousness into the character of the men of the Souf all unknown in the easy-going cases of the rest of the desert, and its women and girls are among the dearest of all the dear south land people.

The fortnight we spent among them stands out among the beckoning hands of the future, for the first chance we see of sending workers with the needful training of spirit and soul and body to hold out there another winter-post for Christ.



A Village Gate of the Souf

The year, as we begin to put it down, seems made up of fresh outlooks. The next in order was in



A PICTURE OF PLANNINGS.

This was a far swing back into life and work of another kind, for Dr Mott's Near-East Conferences, planned out for the year the war broke out, were possible at last, and the first of the series was our North African one

at Constantine. Several of our Band were among the 60 or 70 delegates lined up round a deep oblong of tables in a hall of the new M.E. Church, threshing out questions near our hearts, under Dr. Mott's wonderful leadership.

It is impossible of course to sketch those days even in outline, so I will tell only of the main point that was allotted to the A.M.B. It was one that had been on our hearts for many months - a need, thrust on us by one pitiful story after another, that shelter work should be undertaken throughout the land. For from Morocco to Egypt there is no harbour available for keeping off the rocks, the girls in their teens who are cast adrift again and again by divorce, and are unwanted in their childhoods' homes.

Slowly since that Constantine week, we have begun to see the working of God's Hand, and we believe that His time is coming for some beginning, if only tentative. A sense is gathering all around that something must be done.

Setting aside this (our special focus point), the great inspiration of the Conference lay in the sudden revealing of the charge that God has given in calling us to this land. For not only has it been brought into line now, with the other Moslem fields, but it is being recognised as a strategic position for Christ, and the present hour as a strategic moment for advance.

So once more, pray for us for "grace to be faithful", and specially along the line that He seems working out more and more clearly for our Band among "the ignorant and them that are out of the way" in the inland districts.

Then came the still more indescribable five days of the Jerusalem Conference on Mount Olivet, with its rally of missionaries from the chief battlefields of Christ's cause in the Moslem lands, far and near, to this most wonderful of rallying grounds. Thence a few full days in Cairo, and off to Marseilles to link up again with those of us who had been invited to the Glasgow S. S. Convention. Dear American fellow-helpers, how, from Dr and Mrs Mott onward, they showered their generous love on us through this last year!

It was somewhere between Tolga and Glasgow that another "concern" as the old Quakers would have called it, began to reach several of us with a sense that it was a matter that we should take on our hearts — the cause of the Brotherhoods of Mystics who hold a wide spiritual sway in the interior, interwoven outwardly with Islam, yet far apart from it in their spirit. It is too wide a subject for more than a paragraph now, for this Journal has to be condensed in every direction, but we feel that an unworked mine lies here for the Church of Christ, that may yield jewels for His gathering. If there are those who would like more details for prayer helping, we will thankfully send them.

June
July

After the Glasgow Convention some of us went on to the joy of fresh knitting in with the Faith Mission through their Convention at St Andrews, and the links of many years were rivetted finally at Keswick. So it was a wonderful sequence of "compacting" from February to July.

But now we must get to Algiers news again and trace the "making increase" that is the result of ^{this} Compacting.

A PICTURE FROM COLEA.

Our two there had given 10 weeks of the spring to holding things together at Relizane while the Relizane pair were down south, at Figuig and away west at Tlemcen. They came back to the joy of one of God's "new things": the longed-for gift of expansion into extra rooms in the house of which hitherto only part had been rented. Mr Buckenham writes "It was a welcome change for the girls from the cellar where they had been accustomed to meet & work & sing, up through the garden to the room now to be reckoned their very own. Their introduction to it was accompanied by shouts & cries of joy. They sang more lustily, & their knitting-needles rattled faster, and the gaily-decorated walls were as a feast to them. The boys thus coming into exclusive possession of the cellar for their purposes, were also filled with content. ... Our absence of 10 weeks has



A main street of Colea -
the cypress-trees in background are in Mission Garden.


shown also how we stand with the families of the place. They have had time to realize our purpose and hostility might have awakened - but no, they have taken us back as the messengers of Christ specially to them. If our return had been heralded there could not have been a more demonstrative reception. As we walked up from the station thro' the crowded café centres, men vied with little children to get first at us with their word of welcome, and for days our doorstep was besieged - now with a group of tiny tots, then a band of lads of awkward age, wanting to tell us what we knew was in their hearts, while young women newly veiled watched for their opportunity to wedge in a word. All wanted to know when they might come again to class or work as the case might be."

Miss Freeman sends

A PICTURE FROM MASCARA:-

"Right up in the mountains round Mascara the same spirit is visible. The people there are a wild set and had been hitherto unvisited - indeed it was not always safe to pass through those forests. However, rumours went round of a somebody who had Arabic books and could tell them new things. A leading family sent to fetch our mission helper that they might hear. She was received with true Arab hospitality and had every opportunity of giving her message and distributing her books. When she left it was under promise to return some near future day."


Even in tough old Algiers, the hearts of the women and children shewed the quick response that betokens the stirring of life. Mrs Walker poured out over them her loving care, month after month, and left a big bit of her heart behind her when America summoned her once more. We miss her sorely.

 The next happenings began with the Rally-time, through the joining, on probation, of a new young Spanish Colporteur bearing the honoured name of Lull.

This was all the more welcome because Mr Theobald has much on his mind a fuller system of Colportage - evangelist work, with an organised method in following up districts that seem to be good ground. For this, Algiers seems a better centre than Monastir, and he will therefore in the future seek to develop on these lines from this side.

A hopeful beginning was made in a tournée taken by him and Mr Buckenham in November.

A PICTURE FROM BIR RABALOU.

 A chief feature of this tournée was the discovery among these dwellers in mountain and plain of a strong religious consciousness and a real sense of sin.

Said a Fezzan potter to us as he stood at his rude bench working his clay for its mould and sun-bake "This world is dead and will not live till the things of God come first!" A young farmer turning over his soil with ox-team + plough said after an intent hearing of Christ's message, "We live in two worlds, a good

and an evil, and the evil world is the greater, but to-day, Praise God, we have lived in heaven!" Another - an old man tottering with age - said "I had an awful dream last night, which to-day has haunted me with misery. The Most High said to me 'O sheikh, you are near the gates of heaven, but because of your sins you cannot enter in.' God has now sent you to me to tell me the way of hope! When I get home, I shall go to a secret place I know of, & say 'O God, I have sinned against thee!' I shall 'return' like that wayward boy in your parable.

- We cherish the hope of returning to these dear simple souls, next time to gather them in the evenings, with lantern help, in their wayside cafés.

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Meantime in Algiers the chief development was in Mr Smeeton's work among the blind. - He shall tell his own story.

BLIND WORK, with a LITERAL PORTRAIT.

"The work among the Blind during 1924 has been marked by considerable progress; having the help of Miss Jolliffe our attendance increased from 4 or 5 onward. Upon her return to deputation work for the L.M.S. I had the help of a native Arab, and of Miss McIlroy who conducted the first half hour service of prayer, singing, and the learning of passages of Scripture.

The year closed with a regular attendance of from 10 to 12.

The work becoming more than I could cope with, it was decided that Mr Buckenham should assist me in the New Year. We are able to enclose herewith a print of a photo taken early in 1925 of ₁₂ those present at our morning school."

The year must end with two more contributions to its story from out west.
M. Gravtloff sends

A MILIANA COLOUR-SKETCH

"Each year of a Mission Station has its own colouring, one will be strong contrasts of black + white, another grey with dashes of bright colour + smudges of black.

This one in Miliana has been heavy grey because the station was undermanned, classes had to ^{be} shut, and visits paid against time. True visiting requires time + quiet of mind to sit by + study the need + sympathize with the sorrow.

The blacks were cruel wrongs to women + girls we love, yet we were powerless to save. The rosy dawn-colours were a daily inner circle of about 8 women who came to morning prayers, one or two of them taking part in giving out the hymns; and often a quiet sigh or fervent Amen told God's Word was speaking.

A widening sunset colouring came from times with the Christian Hadj, as we listened to him preaching to relatives + friends at his bedside. He speaks a great truth when he says 'There are secret believers waiting to come out when there is a community to join.' We need a room where the men can meet regularly with this Christian from Islam, + read + pray."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~
Lastly comes through K. Butler

AN OUTLINE FROM RELIZANE

"The outstanding memories of 1924 not yet told are as follows:
Firstly, that of God's calling ₁₃ to a deeper recognition of Prayer as our

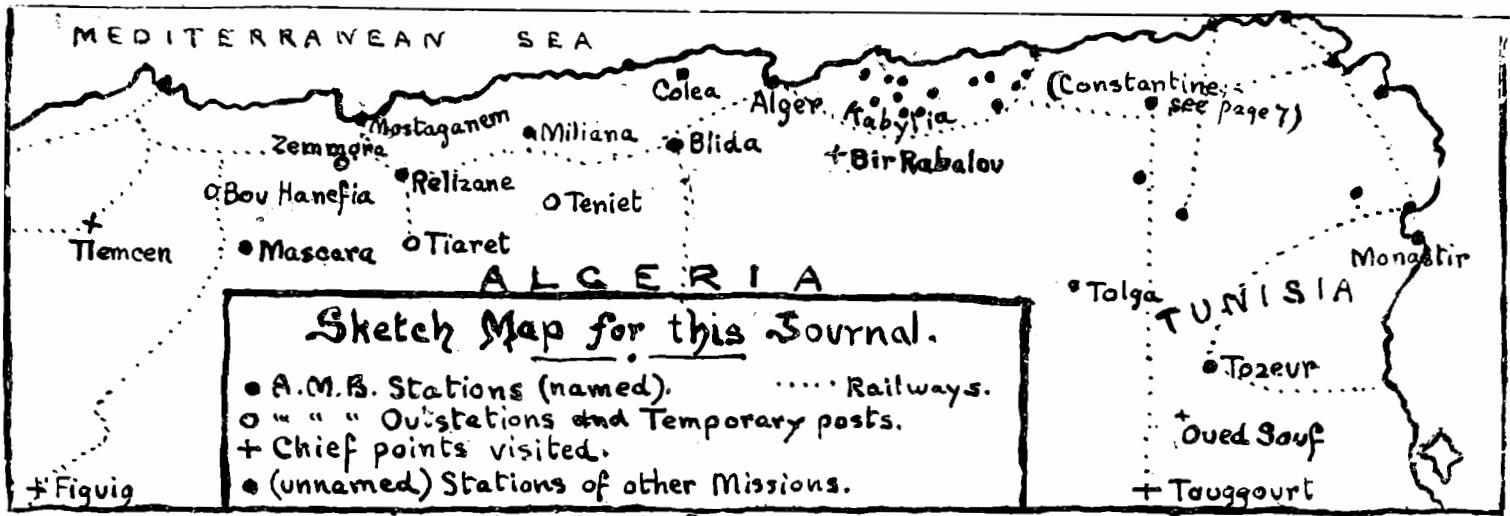


first work and of the blessing that He gave as we tried to put this into practice. His promise came definitely that the Mission House should be known as an "house of prayer," and from that time forward we saw His touch on the people in a new way, ^{on} both natives & Europeans.

Secondly. After that call to prayer came an equally definite call to 'go out into a place which we should after receive for an inheritance' - i.e. to seek a place for God's feet' in the hard, fanatical city of Tlemcen.

Thirdly. A memory of 1924 which must be told, is a sorrowful one - of a native girl who had been many years in touch with the Mission, but led astray by bad companions. We found she was living a life that made it impossible to continue to receive her in the Mission house or visit her home. May God provide a shelter for such tempted & storm-tossed souls, of whom, alas! there are so many."

We have shewn you a few more pictures of this "south land" that God has given for our tillage. Help us to win through by prayer to the "springs of water" that are its one hope - the "lower springs" of His enduement with love and courage and faithfulness to His voice; the "upper springs" of the Promise of the Father, shed from Christ's Throne. And help us to win through quickly, for the time is short.



LOCATION OF WORKERS, Jan 1, 1924.

Algiers: Dar Naama, El Biar,	I. L. Trotter	Blida.	F. K. Currie
" " "	S. E. Perkin	" " " "	M. Roche
" " "	A. Kemp	Colea.	Mr & Mrs Buckenham.
" " "	M ^{rs} Pierre Nicoud	Miliana.	M. D. Grautoff
" " "	M. L. Mc Inery (S. Service)	" " " "	I. Nash
" 2, Rue du Croissant,	A. Mc Ilroy	Relizane.	E. R. M. Ridley
" " "	A. Butticaç	(Sub Stations (Zemmora)	K. Butler
" " "	Mr Smeeton	(Sub Stations (Tiaret.)	
" " "	I. Sheach (S. Service)	Mascara "	F. H. Freeman
" " "	S. Joliffe (S. Service)	(Sub Station, Bou Hanifia)	Sr. & Sra. Soler
" Beit Naama. ...	A. M. Farmer	" " " "	F. Hammon (Mission Heiper)
" " " "	J. Gray	Mostaganem.	A. Gayral
" Belcourt ...	M. M. Watling	Tozeur; Monastir.	Mr & Mrs Theobald
		Tolga.	A. Krebs
			V. Wood

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