

Algiers Mission Band



Journal No. 1

"They that dwell in the wilderness



shall bow before Him."

No: 2 .
March & April
1907 .

March 1st

That "Whitechapel house" as we call it, down the crooked little Kleber Dupasse, bids fair to be a battle ground this spring: so we want to help in holding it for God. I will go backwards two or three weeks to gather up the threads -

For a fortnight or so Ourida & Joushira ("Little Rose" & "Pearl" - their names mean, will these be easier to remember than their Arabic equivalents)? held together & went on up to their light.

Then Ourida was sent off by her husband & returned in evening to her mother with her baby girl: alas,

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not for righteousness's sake, but because he has brought in a pound of haricot beans, and, being hungry, she had eaten them all! We have been several times to see her in hopes of bringing about a reconciliation, as yet in vain; + the new-born light in her soul has grown dim.

Touhera, "the Pearl" has been visited every few days - always eager to hear, only getting us further. She had come to the Lord - that she was clear about: but whether He had taken her remained hazy, "I know not - I have not seen Him", was always the reply, with a wistful ring in her voice.

Meanwhile, last week, on my coming in to see a consumption man from the Tablat mountains, who lives in an upper room of the rabbit warren, I was called by another of these strong faced Kabyle women. "Come and tell me of Jesus." She was one of those, who has up till now, been foremost in opposition. "You have Jesus & we have Mohammed," was always her refrain. and at first I thought she might be mocking. She was not. To her, too something had come. "In a dream in a vision of the night - then He openeth the ears, & sealeth their instruction." It is always in some form, a dream of Jesus saving. never two alike. It had come the

night before, their heart was all soft, & awake. Even at the crux question "which is it to be now, Jesus or Luohammed" she did not wince.

Two or three days ago I took May there, & went in to the sick man, while she talked to this Fatima. I came out for some tracts for his brother & friend, & found them at close quarters. "Jesus is like the sun," May was saying in the morning the sun cannot get into your room, unless you open the door" - (the native rooms are for the most part practically window-less) "will you shut your eyes & tell Jesus you will let him in?" "No, I will not shut my eyes here, I will come & do it in your house" - "Why will you not do it here? shutting

your eyes is only that you may not be disturbed by seeing all that is going on - "ho the neighbours would see me, & tell my husband - I am afraid" - well we will sing the words & you can sing them with us - & we sang a chorus.

"O Lord Jesus

I open to Thee, I open to Thee

O Lord Jesus

Enter today & dwell in my heart."

The first time of singing she was silent, the second time she said at the end - "I have said it in my heart," the third time she sang it with us. I went back with my tracts, leaving May to go upstairs to Touhera - my visit over, I crossed the gallery.

to the group that was gathered, the Fatima from downstairs among them. "Tell Lili" said way to Torkera - she did not wait a second bidding - her face was aglow. "I have received Him" - she said, " & my heart is as big as this". & she stretched out her arms wide. "Oh sing it again, I have received Him," & we sang an improvised revision of the chorus.

"Oh Lord Jesus

I have received Thee, I have received Thee

Oh Lord Jesus

Thou hast come today to dwell in my heart"

"I have received Him - I have received Him, elhamdulillah"
- i.e. "Praise God" - & the reflex of her gladness seemed to

swamp around the little group as she added "They must all come now." I don't think I ever saw out here such a clear sudden unbreaking of the sunlight on a soul. O may God keep it from a shadowing!

March 23rd

The men are back from their tour down south - very happy. Their sales have beaten the record; in one place Djemaa (a village of the Oued Ghrih district, that we had reckoned hard ground) they sold 185 volumes in two hours, standing back against a wall, helped by the Sheikh in his scarlet burnous of office, & a Soufi from Kouinine -
And to sell at that rate means more real desire for the

books than it would mean in Europe; for the Arabs set about their buying as a rule with an Oriental's sense of boundless leisure, & an Oriental's desire to make a good bargain - weighing the gospels in each hand to see which is the heaviest & measuring them with out spanned fingers to verify their comparative sizes, that they may be sure to have their best money's worth! All this must have gone to the winds on that occasion.

The sales all along have been the more remarkable, that in offering them, the men have told out their contents in unveiled terms - "this is the gospel of Jesus Christ the Crucified" - an expression that the ordinary Moslem resents with all his might.

Then again Si Tahar proved more than ever a perfect jewel of a camel driver, full of resource & helpfulness. They count him as very near the Kingdom this time, if not over the line a cautious stepping man, bent on being sure of the new light that gleams before him, but likely to be fearless when he is sure. He can read, though slowly, & means to study in the patient way that characterises a Soufi, the journey that he has taken back to his sand-dunes.

"I will read a sentence at a time," he said " & I will write it out, & learn it by heart, when I am working among the palms. Pray for him alone there with his book, without a known believer in Christ within hundreds of miles.

These are very like the Souf palms. They are in constant danger of being smothered with sand, + it needs a lifelong



struggle to keep them free - This struggle makes the Soufis what they are.

The bicycles have proved time saving in other ways than getting quickly over the ground; they collect a crowd in no time. "Oh, the butterflies, the butterflies!" sounds the cry, or instantly the people gather. "Oh woe that we may see" - Oh, for the sake of mercy on thy parents, blow the horn! - And as soon as the first excitement has subsided, the congregation is all gathered for an open-air meeting, ready to hand; no small matter when the hours are few and precious.

The dear Tolga villages got visited at last during the mornings of their stay there - afternoons & evenings their room, in Tolga itself, was besieged each day by groups of men & lads in such a constant stream that now & again the door had to be shut to give breathing time.

It was mostly to bring taleb after taleb to defend their cause - & again & again the confession was forced from them "Ye have the truth" - Villon & Olive's feel that Tolga, & Djemaa (the village of the Oued Ghir where there was such a run on the books) & some of the Oued Souf villages ought each to have a visit of months instead of days, for consecutive work - & as centres for

the districts round. It may be that the days reconnoitring are problem drawing to an end, & that something more solid can come soon, now that we know the points of vantage. Their dream, & ours, is of going south in a little caravan - men for the men - women for the women - & not tied for time, or any fixed itinerary.

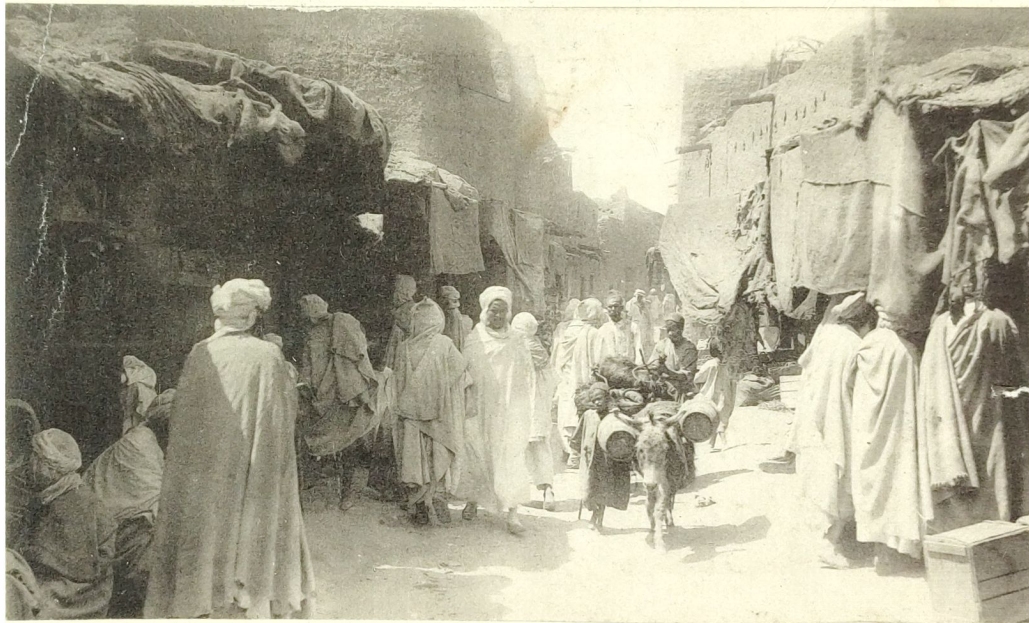
Will some at home take this on their hearts to pray for. Look at these desert villages till you begin to long over them - they look half ruined as seen from above - below they are full of glowing life & colour & their fair-like earthen houses are crowded with women & girls to whom no man missionary may ever speak.

A Desert Village



Seen from above

The same village



seen from below.

And all around them lie the Howard camps, whose only hope is in some who can camp alongside, & patiently let in the dawn on their thick darkness. Will you pray some of us down there with leisure today, without dropping existing work?

Is Blida getting at last under the edge of a storm cloud ^{have} we ^{often} wondered at the peacefulness of the place - it used to be a real haven when every man's hand was against us in Algiers. Quietly the villages have opened, & quietly the souls have begun coming over the border-line, though it used to be years ago a fanatical town. When May & I were there

for a few days in January, we noticed a certain change in the atmosphere: and especially a kind of mystery over a certain Haoua (Anglicé "Eve") "whose heart the Lord opened" a year or two ago. We tried in vain to run her to earth, and a something evasive in the answers to our questions brought misgiving. Here is a clue in a letter from May who is down there with Annie -

"Just a line as I want you all to pray specially for Haoua - the weight of opposition we felt before is now quite explained - I went to look her up yesterday, & was greeted by her husband - "If you

"were an Arab I would slay you". I saw he was
"drunk, so thought this accounted for my reception, but
"then I saw her sitting inside without any welcome on
"her face, looking ill & spiritless. I was not a minute
"with her ^{when} she went to him & he staid away
"at her - she came back to me, and I asked her
"what was the matter - "I am ill". so I asked her
"what about Jesus?" - "Oh, I have forgotten all about
"Him, He is gone" - I then asked her to tell me
"everything, which she did in a lifeless way. She
"had spoken of Him as the only Saviour - her father said
"he would kill her if she kept to Him - so he got a "taleb".

" to come, & the tracts etc: were burnt with incantations, &
" she had to inhale the smoke from them. The "laleb" read
" from the smoke that she had become an infidel & would
" be burnt in hell hereafter. A "Ketiba" was written for her
" which she is wearing, & the husband, who has been blamed
" for his ignorance in allowing us to teach his wife, has
" been told not to allow us near her, & if she has anything
" to do with us she will be killed.

" I could not say all I longed to her, as he was saying
" about the court, and I did not want to make it too
" hard for her. She sent you her "salaams" & I had to
" leave her with the Good Shepherd, who can deliver

" the prey from the terrible " - Even while under this spell
" one felt the response in her to his name; although the
" oppression of darkness was very great, she knew it
" was because the light & life had come very definitely -
" She must have spoken out very clearly..... for her
" we must leave her alone with Him - but you will
" pray.

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Dear soul, our hearts long after her - He will pray
for her that her faith fail not.

Next day in a new village, where May & Annie had
gone on mule-back, came another messenger of the

storm. Generally at the first visit they are open-armed in their welcome from sheer ignorance & curiosity - here they stood aloof - "Yes - we know why you have come" - & they named a certain village where there had been a good time last year - "they have become infidels there - Chradidjah cannot stop talking of what they have told her."

Will those who have Blida on their hearts pray for it now that its crisis of choice is nearing.

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April 7th Blida
I came down here last week to be with Annie &

may, for the latter sprained her foot badly in that last antagonistic village, & has not yet been able to put it to the ground.

Our visits have proved that the dividing between the light & the darkness is beginning - the Bab Zaouia district where Haoua lives has to be left alone at present - in other districts all is for the most part wide open, except where there has been a link with Bab Zaouia.

One dear old woman stands out before me as I write. The old women are mostly so stiff-hearted & dense; this one's mind was all alert. She was

sitting in a barnlike room in the Beni Shebla village perched too high above Blida for anything but a rare visit, & she had heard nothing before. She was sorting barley in a great wooden platter, & we sat by her on the earthen floor. Her dark eyes had a light & depth about them as if thoughts lay behind. "It is all going" she said "the world plays with us & goes away" & we think it may be soon going from her, for paralysis seemed threatening her "my left arm is full of ants & thorns" she expressed it.

The younger woman alongside was of the self-righteous type, & after a bit we showed them the picture of the Pharisee and the Publican, and told them

the story of their two prayers - "which of the two was accepted before God?" I asked. Almost invariably the Pharisee is pointed out. He was quite ideal in his fitness for heaven to a Moslem's mind. But this old Fatima's finger passed him by, & shewed the publican & the story of Jesus the Sin Bearer seemed to come to her like the dew. "Yes, I will speak to him about my sins" she said "I will speak to him today" - Blessed Lamb of God! We have His word for such as she is - "him that is on the way I will in no wise cast out" - Hallelujah!

The village for which we want a special battery

of prayer these days is a tiny one. hardly more than a hamlet, Zwarnia by name. It is one of a nest of other hamlets, within a few minutes walk of each other - in a valley among the first folds of the hills, a bit to the east of Blida. The hamlets around are ignorant & unresponsive. The valley to the right, & that to the left are opposed: this one tiny cluster of houses has had a breath of the Spirit, that bloweth where He listeth. It is one that the people of Relai referred to the other day, saying that its inhabitants had become infidels.

Three years ago they had a sight of the groups of

roofs from the hillside above, it was the end of a long day & impossible to get down to them.

The next spring she & Annie got there, & this special haulet was chiefly marked in their minds because of a quarrel that had been going on there. Annie, whose Arabic was nil then, & who could not follow the conversation, was surprised to see two of the great strong mountain women suddenly get up & kiss each other - it was because they had told them that Jesus could not come to live where there was anger & quarrelling. "We want Him to come, & we will be friends" they said.

And He did come. When they got back again early last summer they found that His miracle working power had been busy on the tiny seed. I quote from Annie's story of that day - dated June 14th 1906.

"We were warmly welcomed - and on our referring to the quarrel, they replied they had not had one since -

"The seed sown there last year did indeed seem to have fallen on good ground - for many & earnest were the questions asked by one & another of them - such as "Sidua Aissa is quite different to any one else, is He not? Above all?" - "What about

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"Muhammed & the sheheda, and the men who go
"to the mosques to read & pray?"
"How they listened & seemed to understand as
"they explained - "we shall only mention His name
"now, no other is any good" - & then, earnest, telling
"and forceful came the question - "what about
"poor Baiya who died this winter, having only
"heard a little last year, & not knowing the
"sheheda was no good at all?" -
"Many were the gifts of eggs pressed upon us, and
"when we said we should think of them when we
"eat those eggs, one of them answered so touchingly -

" Yes, when you eat this egg, think of the creature
" who has given her heart to Tidea Aisoa".

" On our way home we passed such harvest-fields
" show they spoke to us! Literally "white unto
" harvest" looked the stretches of ripe corn waving in
" the air. So ripe, that if not garnered quickly how
" much of the precious grain will be lost.
" What about the other harvest for which the Lord
" stands waiting? & what of the grain now ready
" to fall? - - - - - Is there no message for us in the
" appealing question of that woman whose heart the

" Lord had touched - " And what of poor Baiya who
" died this winter, having only heard a little last
" year not knowing the sheheda was no good at all?"

That was last year's visit. Since then it is
getting on to a year more - a year of silence - and
now again an hour's talk or less - would any
life subsist under such conditions unless it had
its spring in the Eternal hills?

We wondered how it would be with them
this time - for now that a rumour had spread
concerning them - & spread in an unfriendly neighbourhood

it might well fare badly.

As yet the fragile sprout has been sheltered - opposition there has been, but none of that deliberate calling in of the powers of hell to crush out this life spark; that is what we have learnt to dread. And they were full of questions again. Not doubts only questions - "Shall we be able to go with you into heaven?" was one of them - "we cannot be with the Muslims - can we be with you, or must we all be alone?" I only came in at the end when the puzzles of the year had been talked out, for Annie & I had left way with them, & gone on

to the hamlet beyond, Drabblia by name.

No people gathered together in a roomful & for the most part set themselves not to understand. Only one

looked as if she were taking in more than the others, & as if she did not welcome the constant interruptions of troublesome children, & women coming in & going out. When we left she slipped away, & stood watching us, her arms crossed on the wind roof of the hut we had been in, for her own courtyard



was on a higher level of the hillside. We turned for one more word with her; she listened furtively, looking to see who was watching.

When we came back to Zvarnia, we found from description that she must have been a girl married there this year from Zvarnia, carrying with her into the darkness, more than she cared to show. She had not meant us to discover her identity, for she gave a false name - "Fatima", given with a moment's hesitation always means that it is not the true one

Our uncle man was getting very restive in his hiding

place below Zwarenna prickly pears. One more the souls there had to be left in the Hands of the Lord & Giver of Life". The last sight of them was a pair of children on



the hillside - (A silver sheet of daisies that hillside was) watching out of sight the strange apparition of Europeans.

Dear Shepherdless lambs of Islam - - - - -

When will they have a chance ?

April 24th

I have put nothing down about Sherifa Calily, for since she moved at the "Aid" into a less antagonistic house she has been let go her own way. We knew that another crisis would be coming, for this month her boy reaches the age of 7. (as far as these birthday-less Arabs can reckon time - the counting by lunar months complicates this) & as soon as 7 is reached Abd El Salaam has the right to carry him off. He has come up already for the purpose, & will probably make some great effort to carry her off too, to be his wife. Her great fear is their repeating the sorceries, that they tried in the winter. & we know too well

she has reason to fear them, & the collapse of will power that they can bring. She has taken refuge again with friends of her friend, Doudja - out towards the Koubba, for the man comes now & again to bring presents of food to her mother, & she dares not eat at home, not knowing what her portion may contain. Will those who are praying for her help, pray her through now?

And pray for us too, that heavenly light may come as we have to deal with the tangles round her path, that we may take no false step.

April 29th - - - - -

And lastly, those who have been helping fight the

prayer batele for the big lads, will want their news. Poor fellows they have suffered from our shorthandedness. You in England who can always find a stop-gap somewhere, cannot realise what it means to be able to do nothing, except at the cost of leaving something equally important undone. Desire' Euiot tried his best to keep in touch with them, while the others were down south but his 4 months Arabic did not go far. Si' Moхамmed hold on, praise the Lord, & others come every night that their room is open. The block in the battle is still Omar, who twists poor Amar round his little finger! it seems some kind of mesmeric force that

he exerts. When alone with us Omar affirms that his heart is true to Christ & affirms it in a simple earnest way that has the right ring in it. When Omar is present he cannot open his lips without a glance round to see how he will take it, & his words are shaped to please him, till he ends in taking the Moslem standpoint alongside. Will the prayer fighters bring the power of God to bear on this spell? If it were broken either by Omar getting saved or Omar getting free, it would mean a sweep forward.

"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth"

J. J. Foster
2nd Floor, Boston
1/20/1914

Copy
No 4

List for forwarding

~~Miss Bewley. 22 Calverley Park. Tunbridge Wells~~

~~Miss Butler.~~

~~Miss E DiFmas. 42 Upper Grosvenor Road. Tunbridge Wells.~~

~~Miss Whistler. 19 Richmond Terrace. Blackburn.~~

~~Mrs Maxwell. Broomholme Langdon. N.B.~~

~~Miss Clifford. 152 Redland Road. Bristol.~~

~~Mrs S. Trotter. Maxwell Farm. Raines.~~

~~Miss Julia Adams. Well House. Neopham. Kent.~~

~~Miss Agnes Clifton. Ballystown House. near Drogheda. Ireland~~ I have seen it.

~~Edward Henry Esq. 8. Savills. Aldersbrook Road. Manor Park. Inds. E.~~

~~Miss S. Nugent. 29 Park Terrace. Gordon. S. W.~~

~~Mrs Deacon. Mableton. Tonbridge. Kent. (unless you know her to beat Putney)~~

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back to I. L. Trotter

2 Rue du Croissant. Algiers

~~to Miss E.C.~~

~~Cologny Geneva~~

to

Miss A. Wilson Carmichael

Dharmour, Tinnevely S. India

to J. L. Trotter. 2 Rue du Croissant. Algiers