

But in the face of both—in the face of the hosts of darkness who take up the words and fling them at us with a stinging taunt—we affirm in faith:

“No, it is not dead. It is only dry.”

Dry: that we know sorrowfully well; it cannot be otherwise. It is dry soil because Islam has come nearer doing “despite to the Spirit of grace” than any other religion; it is, as has been truly said, the one anti-Christian faith, the one of openly avowed enmity to the Cross of Christ, the one that deliberately tramples under foot the Son of God.

It is dry also because in the religion itself there is something searing, blighting, as with a subtle breath of hell. This is true of the lands where it has laid hold, and true of the hearts,—it is dry.

Dry soil, NOT dead soil. If you were out here in Algiers and could see and know the people, you would say so too. The next best thing is to bring you some of their faces to look at that you may judge whether the possibilities have gone out of them yet or not: women faces and girl faces, for it is of these that I write. Will you spend five minutes of your hours to-day in looking—just looking—at them, till they have sunk down into your heart? ARE they the faces of a dead people? Do you see no material for Christ if they had a chance of the Water of Life? These are real living women, living to-day, unmet by Him.

To begin with, the first glance will show their in-