Our Beloved Friends and Prayer Helpers

This Prayer Bell comes to you with sincere New Year greetings. May the coming days be filled with rich and enriching blessing. We have just been reading the words of the Apostle Paul, 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... That I may know Him.' And the more we get to know Him so the more we do long that others be led to know Him too. It is 'the people that do know their God who shall be strong and do exploits.'

How Can I Tell Them? Is. 6: 8

How can I tell them all Thou art to me?
Beloved I have seen Thy face so fair
Hast Thou not died their Saviour King to be?
And still they perish in the darkness there.

Eyes that are weeping, lone and sad and dreear
Eyes that are blind with sin and cannot see:
Hearts that are filled with hopeless pain of fear,
Yet few go to point them unto Thee.

Souls that are dead in trespasses and sin
Seeking and groping through the blackest night.
Lord Thou art waiting to receive them in,
And shed upon their hearts Thy Holy Light.

They do not know the meaning of Thy Love.
Love that has given of its very best,
Came to this earth down from the Heaven above
And bled and agonised at love's behest.

I am but one, dear Lord, but I am one
Send me I pray to those who know not Thee
To bear the news to men lost and undone
Of love that bled for them on Calvary.

Meantime, dear Father, teach me how to pray
As He who pleaded for the souls of men;
And all the cost of intercession pay,
To drive the powers of darkness back again.

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SHARADA SADAN SAMARAMBH

(A 'Samarambh' is the arrangement and management of a festivity.)

'School Programme!' What magic words these are, conjuring up pictures of frequent practising of drills, songs and recitations with each performer feeling the importance of being 'in' it, and excitement rising as the day draws near.

As there had been some cases of Bubonic Plague in the surrounding villages the children from these had been forbidden to come to school until permission was given, so they regrettfully had to be 'out' of the Programme. It also meant that the usual crowd of visitors from the nearby villages could not come to watch proceedings on the day, but as we wanted a good audience we decided to invite some of our friends from the Camp. Accordingly invitations were sent. These were written on used Christmas cards in English by the schoolgirls, and the result was that Padre Simpson brought down a group of over 20 officers and men including the Commanding Officer of the Camp.

The Padre opened with prayer, and then all were most interested in watching the children go through their parts, as it was something quite new to them, 'tho they found the kindergarteners especially attractive. One remarked that the teacher who trained them ought to have a prize.

A large green tree had been erected on a small platform and on and around this were put gifts for the children. When the Programme was over some of the officers helped in distributing these and each child received a gift, a card and a packet of Indian sweetmeats. When the recipients had all left, happy and tired, we were able to entertain our visitors to tea and a little time of making personal contacts. Before they left they surprised us by handing over a donation of over Rs. 200 and a large box full of chocolate and fruit bars saved from their own rations. We were touched by their generosity and have been cheered by the fact that many of them through visits here have come to realise the fact of God having a purpose to fulfil through individual lives.

Isabel Craddock.
CHRISTMAS EVE IN MUKTI

This year, Christmas Eve being a special day for celebration of victory it was indeed a happy and busy day in Mukti. In the early morning the flags were hoisted and at 9:30 the children's sports' programme commenced. Damle Master opened the Programme with prayer. Then all standing sang 'Oh God our Help in Ages Past.' The Kindergarteners began with the frog race. It was a source of much amusement to all spectators! Obstacle races, ball and spoon race, wheel-barrow and long distance races were all enjoyed by children and spectators. Then the climax came when the young working girls with matrons and some of the older women took part in a tug-of-war against Middle School children and teachers. The former won amidst great cheering from the older women. The Programme closed at 11 a.m., by all joining in the National Anthem. Then Indian sweetmeats were given out to all who had taken part.

From then on all were busy with preparations for Christmas Day.

At 5 p.m., an old man came to the gate with three children. They were dressed in boys' old ragged shirts and had shaven heads. Two looked definitely alike and the other was about three years younger. He said, 'I have come to give these children to you.' The answer was, 'But we don't take boys here.' 'These are not boys,' he said, 'These are twin girls of 5 years, and this little girl is 2½ years old. Their mother died one year ago when another baby was born. That baby died, too. I have tried to care for them; but I cannot do so any longer. Let me sleep here somewhere with them tonight and tomorrow morning I will go away quietly and leave them with you.' Food was given to them and bedding for the night. On Christmas morning we took out a new dress each and a woolly vest. The twins quickly discarded their old shirts for these lovely things and the little one was dressed too. Then we took them with the father up to Kalika Bhuvan, to see the Christmas tree and gifts telling the father about the greatest gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ Whose birthday we were celebrating. He saw them happy over the lovely card, ribbon, dress and sweets which they received with the other children and he quietly slipped away, sad because he had to leave his little ones, but glad to know that they were in good keeping.
The twins were given the names Sumati and Suniti and the little sister, ‘Natalie,’ which means Christmas.

Barely had the twins and their sister arrived on Christmas Eve than a bell rang calling us to see and listen to the Christian young men telling in word and song in true Indian style the story of the Prodigal Son with its spiritual application. It was thoroughly enjoyed by our children and women; and many of the Hindu workmen came and heard this Gospel message given in a way which would make it more real to them.

We praise God for His blessing on these and all the activities in Mukti. We are often reminded of His Word, ‘Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build,’ so we ask for prayer that the Lord may be our Master Builder in the lives in Mukti.

Thanking you, yours in His glad service,

JANET CALLAN.

One of our own boys returned at Christmastime; this time to fetch his bride. Wasant’s mother was with us for a time some years ago, but decided to find employment outside, and leaving her little boy here, went out and was later married again. As the boy grew up he was sent to a boy’s orphanage and school at Dhond, but after leaving school came back to Mukti for employment, and has been working for two or three years here. He was with us when Mr. and Mrs. Eicker returned from America and went with them to act as cook and general odd job man. But before leaving Mukti again, he became engaged to one of our girls. Mamata has been with us since babyhood, when she came as a little orphan. Since leaving school she has served her apprenticeship in the various departments and should be a real help to Wasant in his work for Mr. and Mrs. Eicker. They were married during the Christmas holidays. It was a very happy affair, and we were glad to see them set out later for Berar, filled with determination to establish a Christian home and to help in the work of the Lord there.

Florence Penny.

(Continued from page 1)

And so together, may we labour on,
From Satan’s grasp the souls of men to free;
Until the Spirit’s work on earth is done
When Thou the travail of Thy soul shall see.

MURIEL M. ASBERY.
CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas Day is a day of great joy to our Mukti family. Preparations were being made two months beforehand. Materials and toys, etc., were bought in. Before the war we received many parcels of clothes and toys from the homelands, which gave much pleasure to the missionaries as well as the children. We praise the Lord for those who have made it possible for us to buy the necessary things again this year.

The first item on this joyful day was the carol singing early in the morning. All were so happy and full of joy. At 10 a.m., our Church Service was held. The children put on their new dresses and lovely hair ribbons that had been sent from America for each of them. How proud they were! They would first stroke their dress then touch their ribbon, and look at each other, feeling very pleased with themselves. As we entered the Church it looked very pretty with the decorations and texts hanging all around reminding us as we gathered on Christmas morning of God's great Gift of love. All faces were aglow with joy. After prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, the Christmas programme began, with a song from the little tots from the Rescue Home. Then another message in song from the buds from Kalika Bhuvan, and then almost every compound took turn in the Christmas Service. Lastly our boys from the Christian families sang to us and played their musical instruments.

The Service was then brought to a close, after which we had the pleasant task of giving out the gifts to about 800 people. The Hindu men who work for us with their families came first. The men received a Dhota (worn by Indian men) and their wives a piece of jacket material, and each child a toy. The Christian families came next and the men received shirt material, their wives a blouse piece, and the children toys.

We afterwards started on our own, inside family. The children had waited patiently for their turn to come with wide open eyes. The smallest of them were given a toy and sweets. Those who were a little bigger received perfumed soap and a handkerchief. Then the women came for blouse material and soap or cotton. Everybody received a packet of Indian sweetmeats. All were happy and contented. To God be all the glory.

ELIZABETH MORRIS.
TALENTS and TALENT

Visitors invariably remark about the happy atmosphere Mukti offers. Strangely enough there is no happier group in Mukti than out blind girls and women. It is always a joy to be with them, so I was more than delighted when on December 26, the Bartimi Sadan girls and women invited me to come with Miss Craddock to see their Christmas Programme. For weeks they had been preparing with a great degree of secrecy, practising their parts. The Programme had been well arranged and carefully thought out and revealed how very well these blind girls and women have not only accepted their 'mild yoke' but have adjusted to their circumstances in a really wonderful way. First there was a new Christmas song, followed by a short dialogue on Christmas and its joys. The Story of the Talents was presented next. It was well worked out, making the Bible Story very real. It was amazing to see how well each of the blind girls took her place with no apparent difficulty and spoke her part with much meaning and understanding. Helpful, faithful Divalibai, their matron, had made little banners and hats out of bright paper, and these they donned for the grand finale—a march to the accompaniment of ‘Hold the Fort’ which they sang very lustily.

Three of the young women, Indu, Priti and Suddha teach in the Junior Department of the Sunday School. The Sunday following their programme, at the request of the other teachers in the department, they presented their programme again for the Juniors in the Sunday School hour. The children were most impressed by the splendid presentation, and by the spiritual application of the different numbers.

Our hearts rejoice to see how happily the young people in Bartimi Sadan have accepted their handicap and triumphing in it are bringing glory to the Lord.

NULAH PHILLIPS.

He said, ‘I will accept the breaking sorrow
Which God tomorrow
Will to His son explain.’
Then did the turmoil deep within Him cease.
Not vain the word, not vain;
For in Acceptance lieth peace.

A. CARMICHAEL.
NEW YEAR NARRATIVES

The girls always look forward to the Watch Night Service which marks the beginning of the Special Meetings. These meetings were preceded this year by times of special prayer for the Lord’s blessing in our midst.

The Watch Night Service opened with a time of singing, then the evangelist, Mr. Panhalkar, gave a short message. The meeting was then open for testimony and many testified of the Lord’s goodness during the year. The time passed very quickly and before we realized it the bell was rung marking the passing of the old year and the beginning of the new.

The messages brought during the week by Evangelist Panhalkar were very simple. He used the example of the fig tree, of the village well, and other common things to bring a deep spiritual message. The children were very much touched with his messages. When they returned from one of the services they were bubbling over with what they had heard. They remarked that on the Great Day, the Lord is going to put us all in a sieve and all those who tell lies or use bad language or steal, will be thrown into the pile of chaff and those who are saved Jesus will take into Heaven. They said, ‘We want to go with Jesus.’ Our children love to learn new songs. Mr. Panhalkar taught them several new songs which of course were greatly appreciated and are still being sung. We do praise the Lord for this consecrated servant and for the spiritual help he brought to all, even the small children.

MARIE SCHRAG.

Bhimabai writes, ‘Just as it was said about St. Paul “Frail in body but strong in spirit,” so it is true of Mr. Panhalkar, who very kindly accepted our invitation to the New Year meetings. Although worn out by touring hilly places to give forth the Gospel to villages around his district, he brought fresh New Year messages to us. His illustrations were so real from everyday life that even little children would not take their eyes off him when he began to preach.

These meetings were a great blessing to us. May God enrich the young lives to stand firm in the coming difficult days. Mukti enjoys many privileges. May our “home” be a channel of blessing to many.

BHIMABAI HARISHCHANDRA.
How good is the God we adore,
Our Faithful, Unchangeable Friend,

* * *
We'll praise Him for all that is past
And trust Him for all that’s to come.

We do call upon all that is within us to bless and magnify His holy Name, for the many blessings manifested toward us during the past year; for all the love shown us through you His children; for all His great faithfulness. May Jesus Christ be praised!

We are hoping we may soon be welcoming Miss Fletcher and Miss Asbery. Please continue in prayer for them.

We are so glad to know that prayer is being answered for Miss Woodward. Please pray for her as she is on Deputation Work now. And for Misses Amstutz and Terry.

By the time you receive this, Miss Callan will in all probability be in Scotland on furlough after seven years' strenuous service here. Please do pray that she may have the needed rest and refreshing, and that our Lord will open up the way before her for Deputation Work when the time comes.

You will be sorry to hear that Vimal Dongre has had a breakdown, but God graciously answered prayer and granted a remarkable recovery so that she has been able to return to College to make the attendances necessary to enable her to take her examination this year. We ask your prayers for her, and also for the girls in Teacher's Training, at High School and those in Hospital Training, including Champa Joseph and Watsala Zadhav who left us this month to commence Nursing Training.

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