Our Dear Friends and Prayer Helpers

We have so often been reminded of the words "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" as we have waited for Miss Asbery and Miss Fletcher, especially after hearing that Miss Fletcher was to sail on the first boat after March 10th, until she actually arrived at Mukti on May 27th, during which time—our hot season time—our hopes were raised high on more than one occasion by false information, only to be disappointed again. This is the reason why this Prayer Bell is so long overdue, and we are sorry to have kept you waiting for such a long time. We knew that some of you at least, were wanting to hear about Miss Fletcher's Deputation Work, but did not anticipate the waiting time would be so long, or would have left it until a later issue. What excitement there was when finally we got word of the time of arrival and we welcomed her back again with much joy and thanksgiving. We know you will be glad to have Miss Fletcher's letter, and also word from Miss Asbery, our new nurse from Yorkshire, who had to wait many months for a passage out. What a joy it was to meet her and to welcome her to Mukti, where she is settled in happily, already learning many things besides the difficult Marathi language.

'So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.
Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness
and for His wonderful works to the children of men'.
Rev. R. E. Simpson was Padre at the camp here for some time, and first came to conduct a Service for us on V-E. day. He is from a Church in London, and has had considerable experience with young people. He has conducted other Services since, and often came for Praise and Worship on Sunday evenings, brought groups of men along to see the work, and really became quite a familiar figure, so that our women and girls affectionately called him “Our Padre”. We were amazed at the way he remembered the names of the little children and older ones, and any for whom special prayer was requested in case of sickness. All were sad to say “good-bye” and now that he has been transferred further North it is not likely that he will be able to visit us again.

We thought you would like to have the Padre’s account of the “School Birthday”, so we give it here.

MUKTI RE-VISITED

“I first came to visit Mukti when my regiment moved into Kedgaon Camp as long ago as last July (1945), and by the time we moved away in February of this year I had made such a strong link of friendship with so many there, that it was a pity to be saying good-bye—maybe for good, or maybe for just a while. As it happened, it was for ‘just a while’, because on March 11th I was able to come from near Poona to revisit Mukti for the Sharada Sadan Anniversary.

Unfortunately I did not arrive in time to see all the sports which began the day. Naturally they start at an early hour—before the burden and heat of the day. But it was good fun to see the Obstacle Race where girls were scrambling gleefully through hoops, and underneath mats stretched tightly across the ground. It was stony ground too, but that did not seem to worry them!

Best fun of all was the Tug of War—a grand finale—in which the old ladies to their tremendous satisfaction defeated the younger generation of Mukti in one big pull. How proud they were in their triumph! The Army—in the person of the writer—did its best to prevent this surrender of youth to age, but found it difficult to dig in its booted heels without treading on the unguarded toes of dozens of little brown feet swarming at the rope! And
in my case there was the R.A.F., to contend with, on the other side, in the solid person of Jim Brown, another visitor to Mukti!

The next item was the distribution of prizes and innumerable sweets. The visitors, of course, were ‘roped in’ for this, and we were hard put to in sorting out green sweets, red sweets and yellow sweets, all to match the particular house colours of the young conquerors.

Later in the day we saw a presentation of the Life Story of Pandita Ramabai by the children and young people. Vimalbai Dongre had done good work during her recent convalescent period in translating the story from the English in which it was written, into Marathi. It was very fitting on this Anniversary to hear the Story of Ramabai’s search for the Living God, how she found Him in Jesus Christ, and then began her great work for Him at Mukti.

Many of you who are reading this report have probably never had the opportunity of actually seeing Mukti, so I feel that, as one whom the fortunes of war have brought to India I owe it you to tell you how richly your prayers and gifts for this work are rewarded. If you could only see the little scraps of helpless humanity which come into the Home of the Buds; if you could see the strong Blossoms into which they grow; if you could see the radiant happiness of the girls here, living as they do in perfect Christian surroundings of love, kindness, wise discipline; if you could see the whole family at worship in the House of God, you would appreciate more the value of your support in terms of precious young human lives which are so dear to the Master. ‘Whoso receiveth one such little child in My Name receiveth Me.’ So, go on praying for the children, the young people, and for those who look after them and point them to Jesus, and one day we shall all see how each prayer was answered, marvelling at God’s good providence, and our own failure sometimes to lay hold of His highest willingness.”

Rev. R. E. Simpson. C.F.

Teach us to pray; O Thou who didst not spare
Thine Own Beloved, lead us on in prayer,
Purge from the earthly, give us love Divine,
Father, like Thine, like Thine.

'A. C.'
Lord, make my life a garden, fragrant, fair,
In which Thou mayest walk; still, green and cool;
And may it be as calm and peaceful there,
Refreshing, crystal clear as some deep pool.

M. Asbery.

MUKTI REALISED

DEAR PRAYING FRIENDS

Loving greetings to you all in the precious, worthy Name of Jesus!

At last I have arrived in the land of God’s choice for me and I do praise Him for the way in which I have been so wonderfully led and helped every step of the way. Many, many thanks for all your loving, prayerful interest and material gifts. May the dear Lord bless you all.

Such a warm welcome greeted my arrival at Mukti. I was garlanded with flowers according to the pretty Indian custom observed here, and the children sang a song of welcome in Marathi and English.

The dear Lord so beautifully timed my arrival, that the day following I was able to be present at the Baptismal Service when twelve dear young girls confessed Christ in baptism, and the day following (Easter Sunday) were received into Church membership. I could not understand a word of the service, but could feel the atmosphere, and Jesus drew very near.

I could not help but notice the difference between the bright faces of these girls, and many of the dark, sad faces of the heathen girls. May the dear Lord enable us to present His joyful salvation to many of these who are without God and without hope in the world.

Since arriving at Mukti I have been absolutely surrounded by love and kindness, and everything has been done by all—Indian, American and English workers—to smooth the way for me.

At the moment I am at the Language School in Mahabaleshwar, getting down to language study. Please pray that God will enable me to learn quickly and in all things keep me true to Himself. Muriel Asbery.

As one who loves his life not unto death:
Thine own Epaphroditus I would be.
Serve to the utmost with each pulse and breath:
True fellow-soldier, faithful unto Thee.

M. Asbery.
MUKTI RE-ENTERED

DEAR FRIENDS

It is such a joy to be back in Mukti again and I would like to join with the Psalmist of old and say how true has been that verse, “The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore.” Ps. 121: 8.

Just over two years ago I stepped out over Mukti’s threshold to go home to Australia and the world was still at war. The sea and air held many dangers, but God in His love took me safely home. Deputation work followed throughout Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. Again, I was in travelling oft, telling of what God had done for Mukti and was doing. Here I would like to thank friends for opening their hearts and homes to me, and for prayer interest and help. We need them more than ever these days. While home I travelled through all the States and Tasmania, except W. Australia, telling of Mukti and encouraging prayer partners to hold Mukti more than ever before the Lord, and also to give. In South Australia a C.E. Society collected a lot of tinned milk and dried fruit. How it was appreciated here! If people at home could only see these weak babies getting strong on it, their hearts would rejoice.

From many of the States knitted garments and frocks, food stuffs, school requisites have been sent. I wish that the dear friends at home could see with what anticipation we gather round the boxes and happily exclaim as each article is brought forth. “Won’t the Buds look cute in those frocks!” “My the school will be glad of those pencils, pens and books!” etc.

I flew to New Zealand and spent five months in that lovely Dominion. Everywhere I received a welcome. Prayer interest was revived and new prayer groups formed. A new Council has been formed in Auckland: all are very keen to work for Mukti and the furtherance of the Lord’s kingdom. They, too, have sent boxes to Mukti, and we do thank the friends very much. They also will share the reward with us when He comes to “make up His Jewels.” With regret, yet joy in my heart for the way God had undertaken, I said good-bye to many newly-made
friends, and flew back to Sydney and so home to Melbourne.

Once more it was time to leave home, but my beloved father was very ill and according to the doctor’s reports there was no hope. One day when father was so low I took out a promise for him from the Promise Box, and it was from Isaiah 43: 2, 3: “When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.” Times without number we have pleaded it before God when there seemed no hope. Prayer went up almost continually in our home and many friends were holding on to God too, for healing for father. The Mukti Council very graciously allowed me to fly and so join the ship in the West, thus having a week longer at home.

The trip in the Skymaster was lovely. How the country changed below us; from green to desert and back again to green. My stay in Perth was a happy one, at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Carter. The Mulbera finally sailed. The sea was anything but kind, and the ship simply loved to roll. I discovered later that it always did that. Of course, it is only 10,000 tons and must have passed the quarter century! It certainly took its time—a fortnight to Colombo, where it stayed ten days, unloading and loading cargo! Somebody suggested that it should be called Noah’s Ark, for we had horses, dogs, cats and fowls on board, and it certainly did not travel much faster! The roosters always sounded the morning reveille.

Having to wait so long in Colombo some of us thought we would visit Galle—an old Dutch port and fort—by train. Unfortunately we chose Buddha’s birthday and therefore a public holiday. It was a beautiful ride down in the train—the sea on one side and palm tree surrounded villages on the other, all decorated in memory of Buddha. Thousands thronged the temples, washing, adoring, worshipping, giving money, in a search for salvation and heart peace. O that they knew the Saviour of men: the Prince of peace!

A lovely harbour, surf pounding on the beaches, the old fort with its battlements standing in the fore-
ground, it was all very interesting and lovely; but the journey home was terrible. Our compartment had a sign up “To Seat 8” but thirty pushed in, and those who could not get inside stood on the running board! The door could not be closed and crossing a bridge it struck the side, but nobody was hurt. The weather was hot and humid. The Mulbena seemed to be a palace after that crush!

On Sunday 26th we docked at Bombay. Miss Morris—though very busy—was down to meet me. What a thrill it was to be back in India. Monday at 1.30 our train drew into Kedgaon Station, and a few minutes later we were at Mukti where I received a great welcome. So after two years I again stepped in over the threshold with a prayer in my heart that God would use me for His glory and for the furtherance of His kingdom.

Until our Annual meeting in July I have been given the Evangelistic Work, the Needlework, and Anandi Sadan or “House of Joy” with 31 girls from 12 to 16 years of age to help and look after. How I will appreciate your prayers in the coming days. Also the Primary Sunday School will be in my care.

The much needed rain to help fill our empty wells has begun to fall. Pray that this year there may be an abundant harvest. And just as the rain falls upon the dry and thirsty land and it springs into life, so may the Holy Spirit come and revive Mukti, that the Word may go forth with power into the surrounding districts.

Gladys Fletcher.

Many hearts here were grieved when we received word that Mrs. Hahn, who became ill soon after returning to America in 1942, is now “At rest”. While we rejoice that she is now “With Christ which is far better” our heartfelt sympathy is with Mr. Hahn and little Neil, and we would ask you to join with us in prayer to the God of all comfort for them. We were so glad to hear from Miss Woodward and others who have visited them recently of the beautiful spirit manifested by Mr. & Mrs. Hahn in spite of disappointment and many difficulties. They had hoped that God would heal and enable them to return to India. His ways are not our ways, but we know that As for God His way is perfect, and He it is that maketh our way perfect.
"Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare." Ps. 75: 1.

For bringing Miss Asbery out and Miss Fletcher back to us, let us give thanks and praise to God, and let us continue to pray that the way may open for Misses Amstutz and Terry, and others, to come out to us soon.

We do thank God for so graciously answering prayer for Miss Fletcher in her Deputation Work in Australia and New Zealand, and would continue to ask for prayer for Misses Amstutz, Terry, and Woodward in the States, and Miss Callan in the British Isles. We praise God for all He has done and is doing.

Let us give grateful thanks to God for all the boxes and parcels that have reached us recently from dear friends in the homelands, containing clothing, foodstuffs, dried milk, soap, and many, many other useful things.

We do rejoice with Miss Fletcher that God has graciously touched and so far restored her dear father that she has already received a long letter written by him. His touch has still its ancient power. Hallelujah!

We continue to ask your prayers for our girls who have gone out into homes of their own, and all those in training, at High School and in Hospitals, including three who have just started Teachers' Training and one for Kindergarten. And for His mighty blessing on us all.

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