Our Dear Prayer Helpers and Fellow Workers,

The last Prayer Bell was in the printer’s hands before Christmas, so I want to tell you what a jubilant Christmas Day we had. Even though all the older people of Mukti knew that the American boxes had not arrived and the gifts contained in them were not forthcoming, still all the young ones had presents and their joy seemed infectious, because every face was beaming. It was so good to see the little ones hug their new frocks and dollies up to their hearts. How pleased they were! And they showed it, too.

The older ones all had pretty coloured paper packages of Indian sweetmeats and they were a great pleasure.

These were all given in church after the service, and as we looked into the glad faces and heard them singing with all their hearts, ‘O come let us adore Him’ and, ‘Glory to the new-born King,’ we felt that any weariness and toil were as nothing to rescue such from the lives of hopelessness and misery which but for ‘Mukti’ would in all probability have been their lot.

From our hearts we thank all our friends in the different lands who sent parcels and boxes and money. We felt more closely linked up with you all than ever, and we sent up to the throne thanksgiving and praise for the willingness to labour and be His channels of help and blessing to India and to us.

On New Year’s Day we began our week of special prayer and meetings at which Mr. A. I. Garrison of the Alliance Mission was God’s messenger. The Lord was very present, and souls were blessed and quickened; some had a fresh vision of the Lord Jesus, and some yielded their hearts to Him and took their stand for Him.

Last, but not by any means least, we rejoice over the many dear ones who labour in prayer. We often wish you could see how burdens are lifted, needs supplied, weak ones strengthened by invisible Hands, and hearts filled afresh with His Holy Spirit in answer to your intercessions.

We ask that the Lord will keep you fresh in this service. Oh, for a mighty impetus from Himself to you and to us, to carry on in this blessed, enriching service! He is ever willing to teach us. May we be more teachable. ‘All my springs are in Thee’—Ps. 87: 7.

An important event was the arrival of our much longed for and prayed for doctor. God answers prayer. Delays are not denials, and Dr. Esbern comes to us sent by Him. Don’t settle on your lees and be at ease now, will you? She needs plenty of backing by prayer, for all the new conditions are very trying to an up-to-date medical person and there are unexpected and unimaginable difficulties for her to meet, so pray that she may win through and not be ousted by the great enemy who combats every new witness of the Cross.

I’m sure you’ll all feel that you know her better as you read what she has to say.—
A FEW SNAPSHOTS OF MY FIRST SIX WEEKS OF LIFE IN MUKTI

One day late in December the morning train from Poona stopped at the little provincial station of Kedgaon and two much-travelled, nearly frozen missionaries, from sunny California, alighted. ‘Is it so cold in India?’ you say. Yes, indeed, at that time of the year the temperature falls to about 60° and when you come from Southern California and have travelled for a month close to the Equator, from Manila to Colombo, 60° make you quite shiver. But a warm welcome was lined up along the platform in the shape of an excited company of Mukti missionaries, all anxious to take us right to their hearts and show us that the cold was only external. Their hearty welcome soon made us forget our fatigue and discomfort, and the pretty decorations made by the Mukti girls from coloured paper and fresh flowers beautified our entrance into Mukti.

Three days after my arrival a serious obstetrical case was brought to our dispensary, a little girl of 14 years, about to become a mother for the second time. She had suffered for days, her bony structure being too small for a normal delivery. After exhausting all means at hand we rushed off for further surgical help. God blessed the efforts and both mother and child are alive and well.

Then followed four or five days of the tedious, exasperating work of clearing our luggage through the customs at Bombay; books, instruments, drugs, everything was examined for the payment of duty and the exhausting work of carefully packing six big boxes had to be done over again. But the result was satisfactory; everything arrived safely at Mukti.

Just before Christmas a darling baby girl of seven months old was rescued from the very brink of a frightful death by one of our matrons and some small girls who were taking a stroll down the road. A group of people were sitting near a clump of large cactus, and were about to cast the baby into its thorny thickness, leaving her there to her awful fate of starving to death, while the long poisonous thorns were penetrating her tender flesh, or maybe to a fate more merciful though no less horrible, namely, to become food for some beast of prey. From this terrible fate she was saved by our faithful worker. But now a fight for her life lay ahead of us, as she had been so drugged with opium that her digestive system was completely wrecked. Every conceivable infant diet was tried until finally in desperation grape juice was resorted to. The baby took to it like a fish to water, and He Who turned water into wine, turned grape juice into life for the little emaciated body. She thrived on this food for about a week and then was able to digest barley water and milk in increasing amounts. She is a beautiful baby and is gaining in weight steadily; the very sight of her fills me with joy.

About two weeks after our arrival at Mukti an epidemic of influenza broke out among us. Nearly 200 of our girls were stricken during the ensuing ten days, after which trouble began to subside and only a few more cases were added to the list of our sick ones. Although the attack lasted only from 3 to 5 days in each case it left the girls fatigued. Sharp and short was the trial; God was good to us and quickly restored our family to normal health; tranquility rests again upon the recently troubled waters. Mukti is again the home of happy play, well balanced with healthy work and activities.

Yours in His Glorious Service,

SIGRID A. ESBERN.

We have heard of Miss McGregor here and there in Australia and understand she has now gone to New Zealand. We trust she will get refreshed and rested. Her motor car is doing good service while she is away.
Miss Amstutz sends the following account of the Gospel work:

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," is the verse that impressed itself upon my mind while out in camp for a few days. I kept thinking that if we could only present Jesus the Crucified One to the people, and how He really came to save them from sin, how very precious that would be, and with what eagerness they would accept Him as their Saviour.

Our first day out was to a village where an Indian festival was going on. We found a good standing place at the entrance to the village, the public meeting place, which was an elevated spot under a big tree. Really we were enduring the blaze of the Indian sun, while the men and boys enjoyed what shade was to be had. But we didn't mind this for we had such a good opportunity of witnessing to these people. For two hours straight, the Bible-women kept testifying of the love of Jesus. Then I also told them of what Jesus wrought on Calvary's tree and how He is now at the right hand of God interceding for us, and how the angels are falling at His feet night and day, saying "Worthy is the Lamb."

One man who had heard the Gospel message two years ago asked us to sing a song about Christ's death and we sang two for him. He said he had been seeking the Lord for these two years, and had not received light yet, but we assured him that he had not yet sought Him with his whole heart, for he had not yet left off worshipping all these other heathen gods, and therefore the Lord could not hear him. Please pray for this man. He is near to the Kingdom and yet so far.

The next day found us in the same place, and the people, poor never-dying souls, were just as eager to listen as on the day before.

Next day, after 3½ hours' drive in a bullock cart over jolting roads and through fields, we reached Nerve at 9.30 a.m. What met our view just outside the village wall? Some eight or ten vultures were devouring the carcase of a dog. How terribly big they looked! I was reminded of Matthew 24: 23, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered." The sight of it all made me shiver for there, too, was the graveyard of the Muhammadans, and people going to worship and offer sacrifices. It seemed to me I could understand a very little bit of how terrible it was for Jesus to suffer "without the gate." These Eastern scenes make the Bible narratives more vivid to us. Our first reception in this village was in the village school-room. The master greeted us kindly, and of course was glad to exhibit to us his rigour and sternness with his pupils. He permitted us to speak to his children for half an hour. One of our women, a school-teacher, very ably told them the story of the "Lost Sheep," and we also sang "The Ninety and Nine" for them. The master said this was the very lesson they had been studying and told the boys to pay strict attention for he would ask them to write a composition on what we were telling them. So we hope that this message to them may bear much fruit. Pray for these village lads.

In the shoemaker's place a little boy of about eight years was quite ready to claim Jesus as his Saviour. The older folks said, "He does not understand, for he is too small," but we assured them that he was not too young to take his stand. His face lighted up as though a real change had taken place. Thank the Lord.

The rich grain merchant was not missed either but though he was very kind he let us know that he was too busy to sit down and listen. The low caste people are always the most ready to listen. They begged us to come to them, and we were sorry to miss them, but we had a long homeward journey before us, so had to leave. The road that led to our last village was the worst one of all. Just getting to the main road always took us an hour, then across the river, and our way led us through fields and rocky places.
But it was well worth the trip for the people were very receptive to the Gospel. They invited us to their town hall, and there we spoke to a mixed crowd of men and children, for two solid hours without a break. They wanted us to come to their houses, but there was no time for that. At noon we ate our meal under the scanty shade of a thorn tree, and went back to the low caste people for we wanted to be sure not to miss speaking to this class this day. When we asked who was ready to call Jesus their Lord they lamentably replied, "How can we understand your message when you only come here once a year? Send us a preacher and we will all become Christians and gladly listen to him, and do please send us someone to teach our children, for the other caste people will not let us send our children to the village school." Dear ones, is this not a real challenge to us? Our Krishnabai has it on her heart to establish some village schools as soon as possible.

'T One poor woman came with a terribly sore foot. She had a very bad sore a year and a half ago that seemed a long time in healing up. Some must have thought she was devil-possessed and suggested her putting a dead scorpion on the sore, which she did, and of course it got all the worse with such a terrible application. Since then she has tried many other things but all to no avail. We told her of the healing power of Jesus Christ, and that she should call upon His Name only. The poor woman prayed the Publican's prayer after us, and did all we told her to do. In the Name of Jesus we prayed for her. We also told her to come to our dispensary to have the wound treated for it was full of burned leaves and what not. Yesterday she came for the first time. Pray for her please.

' And please pray for my compound of children, I would so much like them all to be saved. One little Hindu girl came some three months ago and she still has a swollen back because of the ill-treatment she got from her step-mother.

E. AMSTUTZ.

So we go on seeking by every possible means to make known God's way of salvation for 'the night cometh when no man can work.'

I must tell you that eventually the American boxes did arrive, packed full of all kinds of useful things. How glad we are they came safely!

We very heartily thank every kind friend who contributed. The gifts meant lots of joy here. We thank those who did the packing too; it must have been some business; we hope that somehow that labour was lightened with the joy of the Lord.

Yours to all grateful,

EUNICE WELLS
M. LISSA HASTIE

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