The India Alliance

A BULLETIN OF THE INDIA MISSION OF THE
CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

THE GATEWAY OF INDIA

‘Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no
man can shut it.’—Rev. 3: 8.

April—July, 1942
"In Perils in the Sea"

R. H. Smith

From heaven did the Lord behold the earth . . . to loose those that are appointed to death.—Psalm 102: 19, 20.

We bear witness to the truth of the words of this Psalm as experienced in the past months on our journey to India. After postponements and cancellations of sailing, we finally embarked on a Dutch steamer from San Francisco, the first of December, 1941. There were about two dozen missionaries in the party headed for India, Mr. and Mrs. Gustafson and myself being the Alliance missionaries. Our boat was heavily loaded with cargo, with even deck space, fore and aft, utilized to hold boxed automobiles. The passenger accommodations were fully taken, and it was indeed remarkable that we were able to secure any space ourselves. The fact that we could so easily have been shut out and yet did get accommodation was a source of courage to us in hard places, for it seemed that the Lord arranged the trip for us, and wanted us to start for India. The boat provided us a good bill of fare, as steamer fare goes, but of the score of ocean liners I have sailed on in the past 25 years, this one was the most unsteady, and even in a light swell, it rolled and pitched. While we had much rough weather, fortunately, we did not have such terrific storms as sometimes come at sea.
Six days of sailing brought us to Honolulu on Sunday morning, December 7th. The blue of the sea, the white of the surf as it dashed against the rocky coast, the green of the abundant foliage and the red of the native rock as it rose to serrated peaks against the clear sky made a peaceful picture as we neared the beautiful city lying white in the Sabbath sunlight. The question that was in our minds was whether we would dock in time to get to church on shore. While having our eight o’clock breakfast, some one noticed some flecks of white in the sky, suggesting that there was parachute drill on. The pilot came on board non-chalantly while we watched the smoke patches increase and turn to black as they drifted away. Great pillars of pearl-gray smoke rose from the direction of Pearl Harbour and planes were visible darting here and there. The rattling of guns came across the glittering waves as the smoke rose in great billows. We all crowded the rail to watch what we thought were intensified manoeuvres, and a tremendous sight it was! As we passed through the narrow channel towards the docks, a shore battery opened up its anti-aircraft guns with tremendous blasts and flashes, while on the other side a naval vessel blazed away. Just outside the harbor a cruiser raced madly back and forth, turning quickly in its course, with white dashes of foam at prow and stern. On shore sirens were blowing madly as cars dashed hither and yon, although no panic was visible. Planes were diving over Pearl Harbour with an occasional formation flying over us. Several bombs dropped near our boat as it leisurely proceeded on its way. “Pretty good shooting,” someone said, “when they can get so close to us and yet miss us.” Later we realized that the Japs were attempting to bomb us in order to close the narrow harbour mouth. We were appointed to death that morning, but the Lord loosed us. While life and death played hide and seek, the surf broke on the outer reef in long white swells and nature lay serene in its glorious beauty.

After we had leisurely tied up to a dock near the famous
Aloha Tower, the ship’s agent came aboard and calling us all together, said, “The Japanese have started an undeclared war against the United States. You must leave the ship and proceed into the city away from the waterfront. Come back at five o’clock this afternoon and we will have further word for you.” As we started down the gang-plank the officers hurried us off, for the Jap planes were visible just overhead. We waited in the warehouse until they were gone, but while going along the road they again appeared, so we scooted into a store, poor protection if a bomb should fall, but at least protection from splinters. We knew not where to go, but had to go somewhere, in twos and threes, and we were challenged again and again as we went along. There was a Salvation Army nurse in our party, so someone suggested the Salvation Army and we headed for there. Outside their citadel they already had a picture of the shepherds and the angels singing “Peace on earth”. What a paradox it seemed. But as we entered the beautiful auditorium it indeed seemed a haven of refuge, a peaceful spot in the storm. With one accord we stood and sang the Doxology. The Lord had loosed those appointed to death. We understood how refugees felt when fleeing from the enemy, and how David felt when he said, “Thou art my rock and my fortress”.

Brigadier Brewer, the commanding officer of the Salvation Army soon came to give us a hearty welcome, and wonderful to us, was able to provide us with a good dinner. We had forgotten about eating, but it was now afternoon, and we found we were hungry. We were also promised some sort of accommodation for the night, so when toward evening we went back to the boat and were told to take things with us for a few days’ stay and to get away again, we were thankful for the Salvation Army. I shall never see the uniform again without being grateful all over again. Darkness had fallen by the time we returned to the citadel. A number of us crowded into a station wagon in the darkness, with everything
blacked-out along the way and only dim lights on the car, and started for the Girls’ School, about five miles away near the outskirts of the city. It was an eerie ride. The Japs had made another attack late in the afternoon, and we knew not what the night might hold. Arrived at the school we stumbled around in the darkness, as the only lights were flashlights covered with blue paper, and after a late supper, found ourselves in the school gym with camp cots to sleep on, but no bedding of any kind. The rain sprayed in on us in the night and the mosquitos made a blitz attack, but anything was better than lying at the bottom of Honolulu harbour. The next night we had some bedding, but my face bore for many days the marks the mosquitos had left that first strange night in Hawaii. The newspaper reports have given you an idea of the losses inflicted at Honolulu that day.

After another night amid the beautiful surroundings of the school, where the attractive Island girls thrummed ukeleles and sang their grace before meals to the familiar tune of Aloha-ee, we were recalled to the steamer. Rumours were rife about another attack, about Jap planes and subs (the two-men subs were a reality) and sinkings of vessels, but as a group of us prayed together before leaving the quiet beauty of the school, we felt the Lord would have us keep moving towards India as long as we could. Our stay in harbour was almost two weeks, but finally one day we moved out into the perilous Pacific. We learned later that bombers were near us as we sailed, and a raider destroyed a steamer about 25 miles away from us, but providentially there was poor visibility at those times, and our boat was a fast one. After wandering in the Pacific, we knew not where, for the ships officers gave us no information at all, one morning we awoke to gaze again on beautiful mountains and green fields after almost three weeks with nothing to see but sea. When the pilot boat came alongside, we learned we were in New Zealand, and that it was one day later than we thought, as we had crossed the international Date Line.
After a few days in this decidedly English spot in a far corner of the earth, we were on the bounding main again, destination still unknown, but evidently we went far to the south of Australia, through rough and cold waters, until we entered tropic seas again and finally after two weeks of uncertainty, cast anchor in a port in Java. Java, a beautiful island with its towering mountain peaks and vivid green rice fields, but next to Singapore and the Philippines, the hot spot in the war.

One morning, while lying at anchor, we went ashore in the company's launch, landing at the main dock where a naval vessel was berthed. As we put foot on shore, they were bringing casket after casket from this boat. The flag was flying at half-mast, the sailors were standing at every vantage point on the ship, while several rows of them were drawn up as a guard of honour on the wharf. The ship's band was playing the old familiar and comforting hymns of the church such as “Jesus, Lover of My Soul”, “Nearer my God to Thee” and “Abide With Me”. As each casket was brought out from the ship and placed in trucks furnished by the Dutch government, everyone stood at attention. The pile of caskets grew and grew until it seemed it would never end. After the last one came, the chaplain of the cruiser read the Scriptures and offered a simple and comforting prayer, and an unsteady bugler played taps for his comrades. How our hearts ached for the men who were left as well as for the men who had gone. Some were in tears as they saluted their departed buddies, and we were not ashamed of the tears in our own eyes. Several of the women in our party were crying openly; so although far from home, those boys had a woman’s tears shed for them amid the rites of church and state.

As the funeral cortege moved away at the slow Dead March, we went around another way to the cemetery. Here the procession at last appeared, the band playing the sad, sweet strains of Chopin’s Funeral March. One after another the caskets were again handled and lowered into the hastily dug graves, the guards holding an American flag over each
grave until the funeral ceremonies were completed. The usual three volleys were fired over the graves and taps again played. Almost fifty of our lads lay at rest in a part of Java that will be forever America. There were wreaths from the Dutch authorities, and a guard of honour of their green-clad troops, Dutch and Javan, but I think that the three of us, the only other Americans there aside from the soldiers, were a guard of honour, too, to represent the sorrowing ones at home who would receive word of these casualties. They would have given much to stand where we stood that day to pay last respects to these American lads laid away on a foreign shore. The cemetery was beautifully green from the recent rains, with palms and pines growing amid the graves, and many-hued crotons adding their touch of colour; while tropical birds twittered in the trees and the moan of the surf, not far away, sounded a requiem for our noble dead. Formations were made again, and as the men marched away the band struck up the lively "Washington Post March". Some time later as we went back to the boat in a shower of rain, the flag was flying on the ship, no longer at half mast. The flag still flies!

"To Their Desired Haven"

C. A. GUSTAFSON

The following extracts from a letter written by Mr. C. A. Gustafson, after the end of their three-month voyage, give more sidelights on the difficult journey.

"When we were assured that it was God's will for us again to return to India we dared not give away to the pleadings and reasonings of friends and relatives to postpone our going; nor to the ache in our hearts at the thought of leaving our children. It was not easy, but God's grace and peace was sufficient. Sailing dates were changed several times, but finally we set sail December 1st. The passengers
aboard were people who had urgent reasons for travelling, and who understood the seriousness and dangers involved.

“What rejoicings there were when we sighted India! On board the ships in our convoy were men and women who had been through the Singapore bombings. Some had been shipwrecked twice between Singapore and Batavia, losing everything they possessed except what they were wearing. Some had suffered so much they had given up all hopes of ever reaching India. Many had not had proper food or rest for days. On one ship, alone, there were over one thousand such evacuees. Every ship in the convoy seemed to have as many passengers as it could possibly carry. Our ship had been bombed twice between Singapore and Batavia. Despite much damage to the ship it was able to sail back under its own power to an Indian port where it would be repaired and made fit for transport duty. Most of the passengers left the ship at the first post.

“The last of our journey was by rail. It was a long, hot and dusty ride to Gujarat, which took six days, and would have taken longer were we less familiar with train travel in Hindustan. But the joy of being at last on terra firma much relieved the tedium of the end of the journey.

“Our Dholka friends, the girls and boys of our schools, welcomed us with tears of joy, warm handclasps, garlands of flowers and song. We were speechless, hearts too full for words. God had answered prayer on our behalf, and we appreciated their loving concern, and yours for us.”

“In the words of Psalm 124: 8, ‘Our help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth.’ Had it not been for the Lord who was on our side, ‘The waters had overwhelmed us’. Nothing short of a miracle of divine guidance can account for our safe journey over so long a distance and through war areas.”

‘God will not look you over for medals or diplomas, but for scars.’
A War-time Railway Journey

"... I wrote you last from Surat. From there on the trip was one of the worst in my thirty-one years in India. When the train came in there was no possible chance of getting in. It was full. We learned that they were taking off a diner and putting on a third class bogie in its place. I slipped across the tracks and got in while it was on the siding. In the dark I found it half full of Indians who had already done the same thing.

This gave me the advantage of being in instead of trying to get in when the bogie was attached to the train. I got a seat and sat tight, and B. passed our luggage in. Because I was already in, a Congressman helped to pass the luggage to me, and fought furiously to keep others out. An old Mohammedan merchant brought his women folk in, put them and his huge pile of boxes around me, and then fought all others who tried to push in. Thus, without our struggling, we were able to stay in, with others doing the fighting for us.

I sat up all night without even a board against which to lean my head. Another man sat on my bedding roll in the aisle. B. sat on his bedding roll in the corner of the aisle. He slept some, but he had no coat, and toward morning it was cold. I had a coat, but nothing to sit on but the hard board, with my feet wedged between trunks, so could not turn to get any different position. The board seat got terribly hard during the night, and the corners of the trunks cut my legs. By holding my head in my hands, elbows on knees, I managed a number of cat naps. The veiled Mohammedan woman across from me kept her face covered, but had her feet in the same small place that mine were in, but she did very well at keeping them off my feet. She was really a modest woman, and had two pretty, but dirty, babies both of which were a nuisance in such close quarters. Changing the infant's rags was some trouble to her. She
kept her bundle of rags just under my feet, and beside my drinking water-bottle!

As B. sat in the aisle, he, like every other man in the aisle, had to get up every time the women went to the booth at the far end of the car. There were all sorts of men there, and the embarrassed women had to crawl over or around all of them, but I took notice that no man looked at them evilly or made remarks. There really was a fine family feeling in the whole crowded place. After all were settled, those who had quarrelled bitterly for a place fraternized happily. The women were respectable, and were respected.

The old Mohammedan remarked, "If it were not for getting in and out this place is not so bad"—meaning he was comfortable. I did not agree, but felt more like another Mohammedan who, in a moment of bitterness, looked around and said, "This is called happy India!" But he too was deferential to the women. Some men slept standing up! I do not know how. One does not really get near to the people until he shares not only their third class, but a crowded third class.

After we arrived and had a clean up and some breakfast I went to sleep, and slept right through to dark in the evening. And after supper had a good night's sleep. This morning E. and Miss S. arrived. They had almost as bad a time. Someone spat red beetle juice on E.'s hat, and Miss S. had her travel cushion stolen during the night. . . ."

The above is an extract from a private letter. It permits a side-light in railway travel these days when railway timetables are upset, and trains withdrawn from public use to accommodate troop movements.

It means a little more "wear and tear" on those who must carry on business for the Lord, and a little more upholding in prayer of the soldiers of the Cross, if you please!
With sorrowing hearts, we record that early on Sunday morning, March 22, 1942, our brother Olen G. Schlatter left us, to be forever with the Lord.

He had been systematically visiting the many inquirers scattered through his district, and dealing personally with them, but returned from the jungle to take his children back to South India, where they attend school. He was not feeling very well, but paid little heed to this, and undertook the long railway journey with the children. At Ootacamund he went to bed with fever which later proved to be typhoid. For a time he seemed to be recovering nicely, but an unaccountable relapse proved severe and caused complications. The best of medical facilities were available, and every care that was humanly possible was obtained. Toward the end he realized that he was not to recover, but his passing was with peace and rest of heart.

Olen G. Schlatter was born January 15, 1900. He was brought up in the wholesome surroundings of a thrifty farming community just outside of the town of Archbold, Ohio. He went to high school in Archbold, and attended the Missionary Church there. Having early turned to the Lord, the first in his family to be converted, he became a member of the Sunday school class taught by Mrs. Peter Eicher, formerly an Alliance missionary to India, and through her influence received his call to missionary service in this land. After graduating from high school, the Fort Wayne Bible Institute, and the Missionary Training Institute, Nyack, New York, he was en route to India on his twenty-third birthday.

He must have been greatly missed by his family when he went away to school, for Olen was always busy fixing things around the farm, cheerily, thoughtfully using tools to add some comfort to the home, always industrious, helpful and kind. And into his missionary life he carried these same
qualities. He was orderly in his business, and systematic in his missionary endeavours. He was merry and sociable, but often inarticulate about the things which touched him deeply. He was sensitive about spiritual things, endeavouring always to keep everything in his heart "put right" as he went along.

To the last we were all hopeful of his recovery. The Marathi convention was in session at the time, and when the news of our brother's illness was made known much earnest prayer was offered. Many of the Indian Christians wept as they pleaded for his deliverance. Afterward one after another of the city and village Christians spoke of his kindness. "He really loved us," they said.

Brother Schlatter's faith did not waver. During the days of suffering, looking into the face of his loved one, he saw anxiety in her eyes, and encouraging her, said, "You must put your trust fully in the Lord. I wish you had faith as I have," and he would quote, "The trial of your faith being more precious than of gold that perisheth". When, after long watching, his loved one was about to go to rest, he said, "Before you go, please push back the black-out curtains, so that I can see the morning star. 'My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.'"

And it was just as the morning star began to dim in the light of a new day that his soul slipped peacefully away to the eternal home. Many kind English and American friends attended the funeral, when the once eager, active young soldier of the Cross was laid to rest on a hilltop in the lovely English cemetery, to await the coming of Our Lord.

Beyond the dark curtains of the black-out of the present time, shines the Morning Star of God's eternal purpose, and the glow of the glad millenial morning even now begins to tinge the sky.
News and Notes

There was general rejoicing throughout the mission when Mr. and Mrs. Gustafson and Mr. Smith arrived safely. The Gustafsons went through Mehdedabad while the annual Gujarati Mela was meeting there, and the missionaries all went to the railway station at three in the morning to welcome them.

Our friends arrived with little more than a suitcase each. All else that they had brought with them was among the one hundred and fifty pieces of passengers' luggage that missed connections at Batavia, and were lost. But, as Mr Smith said, they were “thankful for a whole skin and a little to put on said skin”. And Mr. Gustafson wrote: “Despite difficulties and losses we rejoice that we came through safely. He who hath led will lead until our India service for Him is finished”.

Mrs. Brabazon's furlough is due, and she and her daughter are expecting to sail soon for America.

We commend to your prayers Mrs. Schlatter and her five children, of whom a picture will be found in this number. They have all been wonderfully sustained in their sorrow.

The various district conventions, Marathi and Gujarathi, are just closing as we go to press. There has again been much blessing, and a spirit of revival, of which we hope to tell you more in our next number.

Praise God with us that letters and remittances are reaching us regularly. So far as we can learn, only one small
check has been lost on the way, and it, being a check, can be replaced. The Treasurer of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, 260 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y. will gladly forward your personal gifts to friends in India. And we also have an arrangement with the American Express Company, New York, to forward them to us by cable.

Peace with Adventures,
Labour and a light heart,
A Sense of Vocation
and a Sense of Humour.
A Mind girded but not tense,
Alert, but not anxious.
Employed, but not busy,
Strenuous, but well rested.
In a word,
Grace to you and Peace
from God our Father
And the Lord Jesus Christ.

W.R.M.

*     *     *

‘And we shall hear Thy footfall Oh, Beloved
And starry ways will open and the night
Will call her candles from their distant stations
And winds shall sing Thee, noon and mingled night
Of rose red evening, thrill with lovely welcome,
And we, caught up in air
Shall see Thee, Oh Beloved, we shall see Thee,
On the hush of adoration, see Thee there.’

A. C.

*     *     *

‘Give me, O Lord, the inward peace
That calms the soul and brings release
From grim anxiety.
When trials come and trouble falls
And hearts are frail—grant through it all
That peace that comes from Thee.’
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