First Impressions
By PAUL C. HAAGEN, Gujerat

For twenty long weeks we had been on our way to India. Finally on the evening of 9 August, 1945, we saw the long looked for lights of Bombay. Without any pre-arrangement the "corps" of missionaries aboard our vessel gathered on the forward deck to witness the welcome sight and to offer their praise in spontaneous song to Him who had led us all the way. The following day, after many delays, we eventually set foot on the soil of India and began registering our first impressions of this land that was to be our adopted home and sphere of service.

Months of travel had made common the slower pace of the east. Our contact and friendship with Indian Christians in Durban had introduced us to Indian customs, dress, food and languages. Nevertheless, we were immediately fascinated by the colour and picturesqueness of the surging mass of humanity that streamed by on every side. Novelty, variety and contrast held our interest at every turn in this extraordinarily cosmopolitan city of Bombay.

The human population was not the only one to greet our gazing eyes. Everywhere animals of various types, species, colours, sizes and shapes were to be seen. People and animals seemed to live together in a proximity and intimacy unknown in the west. Every animal appeared to be a pet; fear of man being nowhere apparent. These ubiquitous creatures were so much in evidence as to cause the newcomer to cogitate on their seeming threat to the sovereignty of man. No place seemed to be spared the treading of the cloven hoof.

The bird life of the country also intruded itself upon us. Without searching for them, these feathered creatures captured our attention everywhere we went. The western ornithologist recognizes family characteristics in the various species but must seek introductions to the individual birds. The bird circling overhead is unmistakably a vulture, but he appears to have changed into a white tropical suit for comfort in the heat of India. Even the crow whose familiar "caw" betrays his identity appears quite different in his high, white, formal collar. He comes right up to your screen door as though fulfilling a dinner date and remonstrates with you for being so inhospitable. Unlike his western brother he prefers city life, and seems bent on crowding you out of your quarters by his incessant irritating noise.
Similarly, as we look out of the train window on the passing panorama of trees, shrubs, climbers, ferns and flowers, we search long for old friends we can recognize. Flora, fauna, and avifauna combine to impress us with the fact that we are strangers in a strange land.

This impression of strangeness was carried home even more effectively by the weather. We dashed about from place to place consummating our business arrangements as ten inches of rain poured down upon us in one day. Our leather goods grew a luxuriant coat of green mold. Our spotlessly clean bedding held a pungent musty odor that all but asphyxiated the hopeful sleeper. Our umbrella handles swelled with the dampness until it could no longer be raised in protection against the deluge. Mr. and Mrs. Newcomer felt that the monsoon (which up to then had been merely a word in their vocabularies) was altogether too much of a good thing. With all this rain it was still disgustingly hot. Again we felt the proper comment was “too much”.

Our general impression has been that India is a land of extreme contrasts—a land of “too much”. When the sun shines its too hot; when the monsoon strikes its too wet. Most of the people you see are too poor and many you hear about are entirely too rich. On every hand you contact folks too engrossed in religion to recognize the common verities of hygienic living; yet these same benighted souls are too enthralled by Satan to accept the freedom and peace that Christ proffers.

Our most vivid first impression has been that of the contrast between Christian and non-Christian. The transforming power of Christ causes the Christian life to stand out vividly against the background of dark heathenism. As we observed the environment from which many of our workers have come, and then observed in them qualities entirely foreign to that environment, we have been caused to marvel anew at the great power of that Love which passing all understanding humbled itself to the complete salvation of all who will hear and believe. In this great land of contrasts the really significant contrast is the change wrought in human hearts by the grace of God.

There is one other impression which we need not strive to recall for it literally haunts us. It is the spectre of an empty house. Always a sad sight because of the unfulfilled purpose it portrays, this empty house is doubly so, for it is a missionary bungalow. Not empty because the missionaries are no longer needed, but empty because there are no missionaries to occupy it—its purpose unfulfilled for lack of recruits.

Should you ask us, as many have done, “How do you like India?” we would reply, as we have done repeatedly; “Very much, thank you.” We like it not because everything pleases and appeals to us—it doesn’t; we like it not because of its picturesque and contrasting life; but we like it because we are confident that this is God’s place of service for us and that in this needy land He will accomplish through us a work in human lives that will stand for all eternity.
"Lo, I Am with You!"

"I do not envy the nations of the West their armies and navies, their cultural advance, nor the high state of civilization to which they have attained, but I do envy them their missionaries." In words to this effect a very highly placed Moslem official recently addressed one of our missionaries. Missionaries are not always thus highly esteemed by the rulers of the world; to the contrary, like the One who commissioned them, they are probably more often "despised and rejected of men." However, regardless of what the world thinks of them, they are definitely of the opinion that among all the sons of men there is no more enviable calling than their own. Their task, above all other Christian vocations, carries with it the special guarantee of the presence and help of the Risen Christ, "even unto the end of the world." This special assurance of our Lord's succouring Presence makes all the arduous toil, all the difficulties, all the dangers, all the loneliness and all the sacrifices of missionary service—if there are any—pale into insignificance. Through all the vicissitudes of life on the mission field there emerges the all-conquering fact: "Where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there!"

Our Home for Missionaries' Children

A Letter to the Editor from
A Boyhood Chum

MISSION HOUSE,
AKOLA, BERAR

September 2nd, 1945

DEAR LAUREN

Please pardon me for not writing this article in polished essay style, I would much prefer that you accept it as a letter of reminiscences of days we both enjoyed together as boys in the Children's Home with dear Aunty Lothian. Aunty is a second mother to me and my chief trouble in writing such a number as you ask is in knowing where to quit. It has been one of my great joys that our two older children have had some years under Aunty's kind influence. Now she is retired but the memory of her and the Children's Home is very vivid.

I can't make a catalogue of Aunty's characteristics, but I am jotting down some of the things that most deeply impressed me.

Like most normal children, I remember we loved pets, and Aunty let us keep them provided we treated them kindly—squirrels, dogs, cats, innocuous garden snakes, touch-me-nots, crabs, fish, birds of sorts and even three stinky crows (as long as we fed them). But she called an abrupt halt when we brought in half a dozen sick rats—so we, we thought—during an epidemic of plague. We felt very maitreated because of that and even laid the outlines of a run-away plan, but it never matured.

Remember the time when Gordon and I were out playing marbles together and you came along, a rank new-comer to the Home, and only six years old too, and you teased us till I grabbed your loose shoe and chucked it over my shoulder—only to hear it splash dully into the thick black water of the garden tank. Aunty made me fish it out, clean it up and return it with due apologies.
And do you remember the day one of the girls fell into the filthy water when she tried to imitate us boys in jumping across? She almost made it!

Aunty Lothan is Scotch and she has to a highly developed degree that virtue for which the race is famous. But she was Scotch with herself and generous with others. She helped us to learn the value of money and the dignity and joy of work. One year, my brother Elmore and I earned the munificent sum of one rupee each per month for blacking fourteen pair of shoes from Monday to Friday and twenty-eight pair on Saturday. Included in our pay, and unknown to us at the time was a splendid tuition in the school of work, for which I am profoundly grateful.

Aunty has grown old in body now, but her outlook on life is as youthful as ever. She was always enthusiastic for any good fun: picnics on holidays, walks on Sunday-afternoon, ducking for guavas at a birthday party, Iroquois Chief games in the pine groves and the grand privilege we had of eating our Saturday noon dahim and rice anywhere we wanted to take it, even up into the spreading banyan tree in our compound at Panchgani. Her only stipulation was that we bring the dishes back whole. By making herself one with us in our joys she was the first one we turned to in difficulty. How often she heard us out in our lessons at home, checked our sums and spelling, drilled us in multiplication tables and listened attentively to our attempts at essays and composition, the while buttering the stacks of bread we could make off with! How understanding she was of the lad who could spell the same word three different ways in one sentence!

Aunty was tolerant of childish mischief and innocent pranks but she made short shrift of meanness or planned naughtiness. Many a time we were punished (and we needed it too), but always the punished one got a special “tucking in” at night and a very loving kiss with Aunty’s goodnight.

Spiritual training was never forced on us but came as a natural and informal part of home life. Family prayers I remember as simple, usually brief, and always sincere. It was while lying on my tummy on the floor with three or four others around a lantern during the singing of “Your Mother still prays for you Jack” in regular evening prayers that I gave my heart to the Lord at an early age.

Your old time friend

Bert Eicher

News and Notes

The missionaries of the C. & M.A. in India join with God’s people throughout the world in offering our humble thanks to “God, King of all kings, and Governor of all things... the Only Giver of All Victory,” for His mercy in causing the United Nations to triumph over the forces of evil in Germany and Japan. V-E Day and V-J Day have come and gone. We pray that V-S Day, the “Day of the Lord” when King Jesus will finally conquer Satan, will soon come!

The valiant soldiers of India had no small part in the global war that has just ended. From September 3, 1939, till February 28th, 1945 the Indian Army suffered 149,225 battle casualties of which 40,438 occurred in Burma, 22,497 in Italy and 15,248 in North Africa. In the Burma campaign alone 27 officers and men of the Indian Army won the Victoria Cross, the highest British award for valor. India’s Army during the war killed nearly 2,000,000. 700,000 were in Burma and 210,000 in Africa, Italy and Iran at the end of the war. We salute the brave defenders of dear old India.

A Cholera Epidemic which has taken a toll of 15,500 lives has occurred in the Central Provinces and Berar during the rainy season months this year. In Amraoti district where three of our mission stations are located the epidemic is the worst there has been in 45 years. In this district the mortality rate has been four for every thousand of the population. The lives of some of our village Christians have been lost by this dread disease.

Due to drought at the beginning of the rainy season and floods at the end, another famine is threatened in Bengal. Thus far the rains have been normal in our part of India; the crops are still undamaged. Pray that God in His mercy may give us abundant harvest in Berar and Gujerat and have mercy on Bengal’s hungry millions.
The Annual Conference of our missionaries is scheduled for November 15th to 20th. Pray that in this gathering together God may give each one a new anointing for the task in hand.

Mr. K. D. Garrison has been elected to preside at the annual session of the Berar Khanda.d Christian Council to be convened at Basim, Berar, September 25th.

Mr. R. P. Chavan, by the call of the Church Board and appointment of the Synodal Executive Committee (Marathi), C. & M. A. I., is the new Pastor of the Akola Alliance Church. Mr. Chavan is son-in-law of the late Rev. M. Jelaji whom he succeeds.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmore Eicher and son, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Haagen, Miss Mary Price and Mrs. L. R. Carner and son arrived in India in August. Mr. and Mrs. Eicher will serve at the Bible Training School, Nargara; Mr. and Mrs. Haagen are beginning language study preparatory to service in Gujerat; Miss Price becomes the new “Aunty” of the Children’s Home in Ootacamund; Mrs. Carner will serve at Anjangaon.

SPECIAL prayer is solicited for Mr. J. Ringenberg who is still convalescing from the severe illness of the hot season.

Mr. E. R. Carner was the convenor of the Bible Refresher Course School for Indian evangelists which was in session in Akola from July 25th to August 29th. Mr. K. D. Garrison and Mr. A. C. Eicher assisted with the teaching.

The Plan for India’s Constitutional Advance as proposed by the Viceroy, Field-Marshal Lord Wavell, to the nationalistic leaders at Simla in July did not come to fruition, due to lack of unity among the various parties represented at the Simla Conference. Lord Wavell has recently visited England again for fresh instructions from the newly elected Labour Government. The development of India as a self-governing nation is still fraught with grave difficulties. Thus, special prayer is requested for her rulers and leaders.

‘As Thy Day’

By N. PHILLIPS, Redgoan

Oswald Chamber’s forceful saying that “routine is God’s way of saving us between our times of inspiration” is a source of keen encouragement to the missionary whose duties in “Institutional” life are of necessity centred about rather commonplace tasks. Those of us who work in Mukti Mission, the great home founded by Pandita Ramabai fifty-six years ago, shun the word “institution” preferring rather to call ourselves a fellowship with privileges and problems of family life. So while bells and tables must of necessity keep us to schedule and make for smooth organization, yet we find that with the Lord Jesus in our midst, the daily ordered round of most commonplace experiences becomes inspiring.

Picture the normal day of this life. Immediately after the rising gong at 5.30 (musical enough as bells go, yet it breaks in rudely upon sleep) there are sounds of stirring and before many minutes the sound of voices raised in song and prayer can be heard from different compounds—the Buds, home of children from one to five years; Blossoms, children from six to eight; Fruit Garden, children from nine to twelve; House of Joy, home of girls from twelve to sixteen; Bethlehem, home of girls who have finished school; Bartimi, home for the blind; Home of Love for those on the sunset side of life; Home of Grace for rescue cases and the Home of Ramabai’s Friends for the mentally deficient.

After the committal of the day to the Lord in these early morning prayer times the momentum increases. There must be a visit to the Blossoms to see that the family is well and happy, to give the needed mothering touch before they are off to school. Then there is a class in the Bible School with girls who are doing their apprenticeship of two years, learning to become useful women either with us or in their own homes, and as they learn are having two years of Bible Training. Immediately following there is the Bible class in the school where the children from Infant Classes upward are given twenty minutes of graded Bible instruction daily. Many Hindu children, some of them walking twelve miles a day, come to avail themselves of the advantages of a double school giving subjects both in the vernacular and in English. In their Bible classes the Hindu
children are coming to grips with the Gospel and we hear one boy asking his teacher, "How is it that while we never feel any exhilaration when we go to worship in our temples we simply long for our Bible time here when we shall sing the songs, learn the verses and hear the stories." It is now ten o'clock and the day has started in earnest. There are classes in secular subjects to be taken, yet even these yield unexpected opportunities and privileges. There are usually many interruptions during the school day. The father of one of the outside children is at the door trying to press a bribe of Rs. 5 upon us for promotion of his boy, meanwhile reprimanding our system which causes his small rather clever boy to pass and the older, equally stupid boy who is needed for work, to fail. The mother of another boy is waiting. Her husband runs the village hotel—her bribe is a cup of tea (such sickeningly sweet, milky, smoky beverage could never tempt our tastes).

As classes are finishing a call comes from a village man who wants some typing done. He is a master at flattery—the words flow out in liquid form—our system of typing is so excellent that he begs us to oblige him with a few minutes. The few minutes stretch out until a precious hour has gone before he leaves salamading profusely and thanking us for our "mere help". Still, another contact has been made, another link forged.

Scope is offered, not only to spiritual and educational ministry but also to the more practical sides of every day life. Word comes of an unexpected guest and since that is part of the assignment of the work we hasten to see that all is in readiness remembering Paul's admonition to "be on the watch for opportunities of giving loving welcome to strangers," whose visit may mean ordering and arranging of menus to suit limited rations, but whose presence in Mukti with resultant insight into the work being done may mean another link in a chain of circumstances.

So the day rushes on. The evening hours when school is finished give free time for other classes—preparation classes with S.S. teachers, special coaching in English for those desiring higher training and Christian Endeavour meetings and committees, or for a stroll out in the open with the children.

Throughout from morning to night there have been interruptions which became times of added opportunity for personal touch on lives—an unexpected talk with one who was finding the way difficult or the one who was troubled and distressed. These were not planned in the day's schedule, but grew out of it.

At night when quiet reigns again, the work of the day can be viewed with a long range view. What comfort then to have known that "as the day" so has the strength been given, that the labour has not been in vain in the Lord. Surely from things that during the day we termed small He has seen great things looking out. The day was made of little things which seemed so ordinary that we were even tempted to call them insignificant, but all tasks which would have been missed had they been left undone. We go to rest with the comforting assurance that we have lived another day in the strength of the Lord and in the presence of far more than is visible to the eye or has appeared on the surface.

The House by the Side of the Road

By ADELINE H. GARRISON, Akola

Many years ago a godly officer of the Royal Engineers, seeing the spiritual destitution of Berar gave the mission the property which has ever since been our headquarters station. It was a beautiful freehold property of six acres with a bungalow on it. About twenty-five years ago one of our missionaries, who was an experienced builder, raised the ceilings and added an upper story thus doubling its capacity and making the
home large and airy. Thus God provided for the conferences and various gatherings that are a part of missionary work.

The Akola Home is a busy place with much coming and going. Last year the young people’s rally for the province was held here and brought some four hundred and fifty Indian guests. Bamboo matting shelters were put up all over the compound. Toward the end of the rally, a heavy storm came up and drove the whole crowd to the verandas and rooms of the bungalow for shelter; but enthusiasm was not dampened. The next day they were none the worse for the rain even if clothes and belongings were.

"The ornaments of a Home are the friends who frequent it."

Here we have the privilege of entertaining many servants of the Lord. This being the railway station for a neighbour mission, many miles in the interland, we have opportunity to minister to these and other missionaries other than our own.

Recently there was a knock at our door in the night. The door was opened and there stood a tall young American army uniform. "Watson Custer, a former Nyack student," he said. "You knew my parents." He had been granted a few days’ leave from the Burma front instead of going off to see the sights of India travelled over eight hundred miles to seek out his Alliance missionaries. How delighted we were to welcome him! In the short time he had to stay, he was able to see something of the work, and to address through an interpreter, several groups of young people who were intensely interested in his story of God’s protecting care. We would be happy to welcome other Alliance boys also, should they come our way.

Occasionally British soldiers have taken shelter for the night. Once or twice they came when convoying a wrecked aeroplane. An army chaplain of the South African forces "appreciated Christian fellowship" and said "Write to my wife and tell her how well I look."

Lately the Akola Home may have acquired some of the courtly dignity of the Celestial Kingdom! The route to America from China, these war days, passes our door. Twenty-seven of our China missionaries and their thirteen children have come to Akola to wait for a sailing from an Indian port, remaining from a few days to a few months. This gave us a valuable opportunity to better understand each other’s problems, and brought India and China closer together.

We are not in the war zone and because of that have fared better than the workers in China. Of course food is rationed here and is expensive but at least we have real milk instead of "milk" made from soy beans. One little boy from China when offered a glass of milk, shook his head. "No," he said, "It’s beans!" But when he found that it was real milk from a buffalo he drank it with relish. Another five-year-old arrived from the train in the middle of the night and drank down two full glasses of milk without stopping to take a deep breath! Another little boy whispered in Chinese in his mother’s ear, "Ask Auntie if I may go into the garden and pick a lettuce leaf and eat it."

A favourite pastime of some of these little children from China was "air raid shelter." We watched them scurry with their dolls, to a shelter under the stairs, in an imaginary raid and were grateful for all that we had been spared.

Now the Home is awaiting guests from the other direction, some new missionaries are nearing India, with some of our number who are returning. These new ones will be the first reinforcements in seven long years!

We are thankful for the pleasant home the Lord has given us in this land and glad that it stands by the side of the road, where wayfarers come and go.
We Crawled to India

By LACY LEE CARNER

Anjangaon

In India hungry-hearted people willingly crawl long distances on the ground and measure their length like inch-worms in the dust to holy places in a vain attempt to gain merit and satisfy the deep longing of the human heart. Our party of eight did not plan to return to India at the comparable speed of our ardent Indian pilgrims but in waiting for passages, sailing on slow ships, and loading and unloading cargo at ten African ports we all but crawled to India at tortoise pace. Just five months elapsed en route. During that time we saw Portugal and learned the burden of the Dark Continent.

Fortunately, two lively boys of three and five saved us from total inactivity, and all in our party took their turns in rescuing these from dives overboard, from moving traffic, from inevitable quarrels, from fascinating shop windows, from destruction of public property, from disturbing the quiet of dignified hotel lobbies, and from all the other intrigues that so totally arrest a boy’s attention making a trip half way round the world. Entertainment in port was ample, but their remarkable energy and high-pitched voices confined to one deck of small ships for sixty-one long days imposed unprecedented strain on the creative and persuasive powers of entertaining parents. Sympathetic applause by well-meaning passengers added fuel to these infantile egos and discipline often postponed in the interest of preserving the peace resulted in all but total destruction of family standards.

Added to the above compensations of slow travel were strenuous days of preparation for disembarking. Suitcases already too full were crammed to bulging proportions. Name tags and stickers were renewed. Corroded locks were oiled to fasten. Then the day of anticipated release came. First land in sight! Pilot ship approaching. Pilot taken on board. Inspection of passports, health certificates and permits. And then with arms loaded with excess coats, knitting bags, umbrellas, raincoats, thermos bottles in tiffin baskets, and restless children we waited in long lines for the exasperating ordeal of customs. Perspiring coolies shouting in unknown tongues and wrestling with stacks of luggage twice their height championed us to advance slowly but surely before the steel gaze of custom officials. With all disregard for meal time, four to six hours usually elapsed before we completed these chores and we were left questioning the advisability of ever starting to a mission field again with an outfit. The pertinent adage of one of our missionary philosophers went running through my mind, “Blessed be nothing.” Dog-tired we stumbled into waiting taxis and insensibly mused on the irreligious exercise imposed on the patience of the war zone traveller, and tried to encourage our new missionaries, making the trip for the first time, by assuring them that the next ordeal would not be so inadequately handled. Our new comrades were well prepared for the pace of the Orient long ere its shores came into sight.

However each trans-shipping experience brought us nearer our goal. In Portugal we were hundreds of miles nearer India, in South Africa we were thousands of miles nearer still, and in Mombasa, East Africa we were at our last port of call. After five long months—Bombay lights—and rejoicing! Then in a few days, united with families and cherished friends and yoke-fellows in old responsibilities, we soon forgot all about the visitudes of travel in war time and shared the unspeakable joy of being at our post again in the task so dear to our hearts. Our kind Heavenly Father graciously watched over us and cared for us and encouraged us all along the long way, and we render to Him our thanks and praise for the safe journey.