HER EXCELLENCY, RANI MAHARAJ SINGH,
VISITS MUKTI

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER, 1948

KEDGAON, POONA DISTRICT
INDIA
Her Excellency takes a wee Bud into her arms during her visit to our Nursery. The others in the picture (left to right) are: Miss Callan, Mrs. Nadkarni and Dr. Chandekar.

THE COVER PICTURE

Her Excellency is speaking with Miss Rajas Dongre. In the background (left to right) are Miss Asbery and Miss Craddock.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Ramabai Mukti Mission would like to take this opportunity to wish all its friends in many different lands of the world a joyful Christmas and a year filled with the blessing of the Lord.
HER EXCELLENCY, RANI MAHARAJ SINGH,
PAYS HOMAGE TO PANDITA RAMABAI

A Guard of Honour heralded the coming to Mukti of Her Excellency, Rani Maharaj Singh, wife of the Governor of Bombay Presidency. With the grace of the East she received a garland of flowers, and as she entered the Mukti archway, she bowed with the humility of a child and the graciousness of a queen, in order that a wee Bud, clad in yellow frock and ribbon, might present to her a Victorian bouquet of roses and paper lace and ribbons. While she was being escorted through rows of school children, she walked right into their hearts, as she responded here and there to a smiling face, a friendly gesture, and eyes that held in honour and reverence their Lady of the Land. The villagers standing by found their lifelong allegiance won by her few words to them.

In the Nursery the Buds played around her unafraid, while she held in her arms one of our babies, unwanted by the parents, but loved by the part of Her Excellency that is a mother. Her words of appreciation for the school programme made worth while for the children hours of practice, and their hearts filled with patriotism as they stood side by side with her to sing India's national anthem.

She caused the faces of the blind to glow with joy at her praise of their Braille studies and handwork. Those who bend their backs and strain their eyes day after day over fine needlework viewed with quiet pride her admiration of their work, and watched with keen interest her selection of pieces which she wanted for her own.

She watched the Blossoms play with the delight of a lover of children. As she went through the compounds, her eyes seemed to see everything, and she noted with great interest the grinding and other home-making work of the teen-age girls. The simplicity of her attire had about it a grandeur that awed these girls who are at the age when thoughts turn toward clothes and ornaments.

The embarrassment of those whose living quarters she unexpectedly examined was tempered by her gracious words of approval for flowers and other evidences of efforts to make their rooms homelike. No corner was too small, no person too humble for her consideration. The women in the Rescue Home saw kindness in her eyes, while the mentally deficient showed great delight that she graced their rooms with her presence. It reveals the greatness of Ramabai's character that she called these people who are unwanted by anyone her 'Friends', and it
is indicative of the character of Her Excellency that, with sympathy and understanding, she also treated them as friends.

As she stepped around the piles of brick and rubbish that are always present when building is going on, she expressed her interest in the erection of the new hospital and the problems involved. In almost every department she made suggestions for improvement with a grace that makes it a delight to fulfill them. She entered the Gospel Hall with a holy quiet that revealed her appreciation of the purpose for which it was built.

It was with quickened steps that she hastened her visit to the Outside Dispensary, that she might see a baby just ten minutes old. While she stood by the bedside of a woman and her three-day-old baby, she listened with a heart that grieved for her people to the story of the attack on the woman’s home in Hyderabad. The husband was called, and Her Excellency examined the wounds in his neck and hands. Because she is a woman of action, and because she is a leader who loves her people, she is making arrangements to help that refugee family.

She made friends every moment of her stay, and it was a group who, in those few hours of her visit, had come to love and honour her that stood as she came into the Church for a farewell word to the Mukti family. Her words of appreciation for Pandita Ramabai, for all she was and all she did, and for her faith in God brought a new remembrance of the heritage that is Mukti’s. Her closing words of challenge to serve the land of their birth that the Kingdom of Christ might come to India made a solemn hush pervade the church. It was a quiet, serious group who stood as she waved them good-bye at the door.

After a delightfully informal time of conversation with the missionaries around the lunch table, she requested those who knew Ramabai personally to come with her into Ramabai’s own room. The quiet and reverence with which she entered the room spoke of the honour she felt for this woman who had been an inspiration to her all her life. Quietly she sat on one of Ramabai’s chairs and asked that heads be bowed and they be quiet until again the spirit of Ramabai was felt. Then with the hush of the eternal in her voice, she prayed until she became overwhelmed with emotions that were holy and pure and strong.

Her last message to us were these words which she wrote in our Visitor’s Book:

‘Having read of Kedgaon, heard of it, and met
Krishnabai Gadre, I had always hoped that some day I might have the privilege of visiting this corner of the Kingdom of God, so now my dream has come true, and I repeat with the Psalmist, “Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.” May God’s richest blessing rest on each one—those who serve the little ones, the sick and suffering ones, the young girls and older ones, all who come here with the love of God rooted in their hearts, and may the work prosper and grow to the praise of His glory.—Gunwati Maharaj Singh.

It is a fragrant note of Her Excellency’s personality that throughout her stay in Mukti she carried the little bouquet presented to her by the Bud. When she stepped in the car to leave, she still held in her hand that old fashioned bouquet of roses, ribbons, and paper lace. As she carried these Mukti roses away with her, she left in their place the fragrance of her lovely self and the challenge of the greatness of her God.

—Carol Terry.

NOT IN VAIN

Not in vain the tedious toil
On an unresponsive soil,
Travail, tears in secret shed
Over hopes that lay as dead.
All in vain, thy faint heart cries,
Not in vain, thy Lord replies;
Nothing is too good to be;
Then believe, believe to see.

But consider, was it vain
All the travail on the plain?
For the bud is on the bough;
It is green where thou didst plough.
Listen, tramp of little feet,
Call of little lambs that bleat,
Hearken to it. Verily,
Nothing is too good to be.

A.C.
MY MEMORIES OF
By Rajas

We want our friends to know that Rajas Dongre, who is related to Ramabai, has now joined the staff of the Ramabai Mukti Mission, a fact which would have brought joy to the hearts of Ramabai and Manoromabai and which we trust will call forth prayer and intercession from our co-workers in other lands for God's blessing on all Rajas' ministry. She presents here her personal memories of the Pandita.

—J. I. Craddock

‘Mother, when are we going to see Mothi Aji at Kedgaon? Let us go soon, for we have a holiday now. Mother, tell us, when can we go? You must fix up the date today.' This was the constant petition put to Mother by my brother and myself.

Mother would reply, ‘What use is it to take you to Mothi Aji? You don't utter a word in front of her. If you will talk to her, I shall take you.’

‘Yes, Mother, we shall really try this time. Do take us, please!’ But when we visited her and sat by her side, not a word would come out of our mouths, except 'yes' and 'no' to all the questions she put to us. We were too shy to hold conversations with her. She had indeed a very remarkable presence about her, and she drew us very close to herself by her magnetic power. She wore her hair short, and it added distinction to her face and head. Her skin was very fair. She had grey-blue eyes, and a face of great spiritual and intellectual beauty.

Mothi Aji was a great inspiration and attraction to my brother and myself, for we had no other relatives in the world to go to except four or five at Mukti. We lived at Ahmednagar, but we paid visits to Kedgaon several times a year. I gradually came to know every nook and corner of Mukti, and memories of those days are very precious. I remember the days I spent in Mothi Aji's Kindergarten school. There were lovely coloured toys there and beads to be counted and threaded, and learning was so enjoyable. I thought then that it was the best school in the world.

One of the corners of Mukti that always attracted us was the printing press. Dada (Krishnabai's father) looked after it, and we often accompanied him to the press. He

1 An endearing term of respect used for Pandita Ramabai, which literally means 'Great Grandmother'.
and my father were great friends, and they often discussed their conversions and persecutions. Dada and my father never regretted turning to Christ, and cheerfully endured all trials and difficulties for His sake. Once he asked my father why he left all our relatives and property in Mangalore, and he replied that he found the Lord, who meant so much to him that earthly wealth mattered nothing, and that he loved Him more than anyone and anything else in the world. My father helped Mothi Aji in the building of the big church. As a grown-up girl, I often ran in and out of the printing press, helping myself to leaflets, booklets, tracts, and portions of the Bible straight from the piles on the shelves, and distributed them to my Christian and non-Christian friends. There was that feeling and that freedom that they belonged to Mothi Aji, and that such treasures were not denied to anyone who wanted them.

One day I watched Mothi Aji putting circles, oblongs and squares around certain verses and sentences in the Bible. Then, to my great horror, Mothi Aji picked up a pair of scissors and began to cut out the marked portions from various pages. It worried me, and I dared not ask anyone. We were taught never to deface the Holy Bible, and among all people, Mothi Aji did it! Then one of the women came and Mothi Aji sent these pieces, pinned on to certain papers, to the printing press. The first thing I asked my father when we arrived home was why Mothi Aji cut those pieces from the Bible. Then he explained that Mothi Aji’s translation of the Bible would enable people to read the Word of God in the Marathi language. This Marathi translation of the Bible was printed on her printing press.

I used to sit by Mothi Aji and watch her work at her desk. She was interrupted hundreds of times.
by streams of people coming to ask her advice, to carry out her orders, to take her messages, etc. I remember one time when two new girls were brought before Mothi Aji. The girls covered their faces, in the usual manner, with their saris, and were looking down. Mothi Aji asked them to look up, and somehow the saris and the hands also went down. After looking at them for two to three minutes, she said to the matron, 'Take this one to Sharada Sadan (our school) and that one to Krupa Sadan (the rescue home)' and off they went. It was indeed more than amazing how she held her reins from her desk and ran the whole of Mukti.

When there was no one around her, then her eyes went down to the translation of the Bible or other writings in front of her. She could 'read' the people as they approached. Girls were put at ease; the anxious were relieved; the downcast received encouragement.

She always looked at me from one to two minutes in the mornings and at night when I went to say good-night. I wondered why. Her look did not worry me, for it was neither of approval nor disapproval. It was calm, serene, with some thought behind it. To this day I can so vividly picture her—her lips, her eyes, and the expression on her face as she looked at me. I wonder if she wanted to say something to me and tell me what she wanted me to do in the future.

Mothi Aji on the whole made hardly any remarks or comments. I do not remember her talking at length to anyone. Her look and her glance were more than enough to indicate her approval and disapproval to the people around her.

She had a host of Persian cats. They, too, were very obedient and regular at meals. The lovely kittens often crawled over her shoulders. One day as I stood by her, I saw one kitten going right up to her neck, trying to sit on her shoulder. How I enjoyed watching them. She looked as if she took no notice of them, but she enjoyed them and let them do as they liked.

Mothi Aji took great interest in my spiritual welfare. I had to answer questions as to how I prayed, when I prayed, what Scripture lessons we were taught at school, and a host of things. I told her that I liked everything about the school except getting up early in the mornings at 5-30 to go to the chapel to say our private prayers. I confessed to her that I felt far too sleepy to say my prayers at that time, and much worse to read my Bible, and I often fell off to sleep on my knees with half-said
prayers. I was surprised to hear her laugh. Just then a missionary came for something, and she said to her, 'Look at this child. She does not like getting up early in the morning. Don't you think she should go to bed earlier?'

Mothi Aji tried to make time to be sociable in the evenings. She walked up and down the garden in front of the guest rooms or looked at the zoo. Chairs were brought out into the garden, and she would sit down for a breath of fresh air. Dada, visitors, her colleagues joined her until the circle became quite large. They shared their interesting happenings of the day and laughed over them until it was time for dinner. If you wanted to see Mothi Aji laughing or enjoying fun and telling interesting and humorous stories of her travels and experiences, that was the hour to watch and hear her in the twilight of the evening.

Mothi Aji was a great believer in prayer, and when we attended prayers in the church, we realized what prayer meant to all at Mukti. Her faith was like breath, and to speak to our Lord was more real to her than any other facts of life. Prayer was indeed with her the luxury of her soul.

When Manoramabai passed away, I came with Mother to visit Mothi Aji. How brave and calm she was. She talked as if nothing had shaken her in any way, but we knew she became physically weaker and weaker day by day. The strain of work, the future of Mukti, and her great loss weighed on her mind.

My brother was at one time seriously ill with relapsed typhoid. He was six or seven years old, and the doctors despaired of his life. He was saved through the intercession of Mothi Aji and the Mukti community. It is our strong belief that God heard the prayers seemingly against all nature. My brother passed the crisis and recovered. We could never forget our gratitude to the Lord and to Mothi Aji for this memorable event.

On Sundays Mothi Aji sat in her usual place in the church. I was often asked to sit beside her, but I sometimes felt awkward when the time came to open the Bible at certain books and I had to turn the pages backwards and forwards in search of them. I couldn't but be calm and good in the presence of such a personality. She was too great and I felt too small in every way, but such a personality as hers could not but inspire greatness and goodness in others.

I was in my first year at Wilson College when I receiv-
ed a parcel of a hood, gown, and cap from Mothi Aji. She also sent me a message to come and see her. When my examination was finished, I hurried to Kedgaon. Little did I know that it was to be my last meeting with Mothi Aji. She inquired as to whether there was a good goldsmith in the village. Never before had she ever worried about a goldsmith, and I wondered why she wanted one now. Then she went inside and brought her gold wedding ring. A mauve stone was set in it and ‘R’ was engraved on it. It was a heavy ring, and she put it on my finger. I was embarrassed, but delighted. At the same time my heart sank within me. I cannot even attempt to tell you in words what I felt during those valuable moments with Mothi Aji.

She took me by the hand aside and we sat facing each other. As usual, she looked straight into my face, as though she were looking into the future. These are a few of the things she said to me. ‘When is your result out? I am very eager to know (but she did not live to know). I would like you to keep this ring in memory of me. It is the only ornament I have. It belongs to the family. You know we gave up everything, all our worldly wealth, for the Lord Jesus. Remember that you belong to the family of Anant Shastri Dongre. You must feel proud of your name, Dongre, and always use it, even though you may get married.

‘I want you to study up to M.A. India needs Christ and her salvation lies in Him alone. I want you to educate yourself for this important task. Enrich your mind with ideas and knowledge. The Lord will give you His gift for putting vitality and energy into the working for His Kingdom, but you must have faith in Him. Amid all the changes and fears, let the sense of the eternal abide in you. All we endure is full of blessings and preserves unsubdued our faith in Him. The gift we give is the gift of self. Our God is Giver, Receiver, Gift, Thinker, and Thought. To love Him is divine, but to know Him is reward. Also remember our efforts are acts of love and devotion to Him. The greater our love for Him, the greater is our pain. Bear it all for His sake.

‘I would like you to show forth to the world the true meaning of Christianity. Our own community needs Christ, and I am eager for you to work for Him."

She dwelt on the subject of the Kingdom of God, the future India and its relation to the Lord. She sounded as though she were worried about the Christian community, the church of Christ, and how Christianity would
face future India. I was overwhelmed with her advice. That was the first and the last and the longest talk she gave me, lasting for nearly two hours.

Service—that was what that moment called for, service by me to our Lord. I had to serve Him. I felt as though there were a fountain of wisdom springing up within her. She taught me out of her own large experience, and inspired me with her noble thoughts. I was speechless, but was humbled by the vision for the future. My words fail to express how much these words of Mothi Aji meant to me and mean to me to this day. At the convocation when the honour of Bachelor of Arts Degree was conferred upon me, it was with deep humility that I wore Mothi Aji’s gift of the gown and cap and hood.

How I long for Mothi Aji to this day, for her advice and guidance to help me go deeper into spiritual things. But I am eternally grateful for what I received from Mothi Aji, for her life of complete surrender to God and her never-failing faith. I am proud of such a heritage, for she was God’s most precious gift to us. My pen cannot describe the fullness of my debt to this saintly woman. I would not be a Christian today had it not been for her. Now I want to be more worthy of her, of the greatness of her life. The pain of losing her from Mukti shows how much we owe to her presence. Let her memories now hallow Mukti.

Mothi Aji lived very much in the future, and her ideas and plan of work at its very beginning were very advanced. I have prayed for and watched Mukti through the years, asking God to supply those who could carry on the work
of His handmaid and His devotee, the Pandita. Today I feel her spirit is very much living in Mukti. New workers have offered their services, and Mukti is today definitely on the road to progress, improvement, achievement and development in every direction and in every department. The work of the Lord seems to be going on with new life, new zeal, new aspiration, enthusiasm, and prayer, which was ever the weapon of the Pandita.

What is the future of Mukti—her contribution, her place in new India, nay, in the world today and in the years to come? The Christian world expects Mukti to prepare leaders, women leaders, to take their right places in new India. They must go to every part preaching the Word of God in their lives, by their work and by their lips. The work must not only be among the poorest of the poor but among the rich. It must show to the world a faith in Christ and a vision for the future.

The urgent need of Mukti today is capable, good leaders to carry out the responsibilities of various departments, leaders with initiative, leaders who are spiritually minded. Mukti presents a challenge to all, missionaries and non-missionaries alike, who are ready to accept the faith and the vision of Pandita Ramabai and to follow in her train.

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