RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION
PRAYER BELL
January—February, 1950
OPENLY FOR CHRIST

The greenery of ferns and the spreading branches of Gold Mohur trees framed the picture of twenty girls listening to the message of our new pastor as they stood waiting for baptism. As each girl was baptized, those who knew the stories behind each conversion saw in memory tiny, unwanted baby girls who had been nursed and trained, prayed for and taught through many years; they saw mothers from our Rescue Home who had come out of darkness blacker than night into light brighter than day; they saw missionaries leaving homelands and loved ones that this scene might be; they saw friends in many parts of the world praying long hours that this day in the lives of these girls might dawn; and they saw the Lord’s people making sacrificial gifts that through the years these girls could be fed and clothed and brought to this hour of public testimony for Christ.

It was the privilege of these girls to receive copies of Ramabai’s translation of the New Testament from the hand of a visitor to Mukti from America, that of Dr. Louis T. Talbot, President of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, in which school several of our missionaries have trained for service in Mukti. As Dr. Talbot gave out the Testaments, he thanked God with us that Ramabai’s vision for these girls included the translation of the Bible in their own tongue, that the foundation of their lives might be the Rock Christ Jesus. With the twenty girls, clothed in white saries after their baptism, can be seen Miss Steed at the extreme left while Dr. Talbot and Pastor Chowdhari appear at the right of the picture.

In a land where the powers of darkness assail those who publicly name Christ as Lord, a strong wall of prayer needs to surround and protect those who publicly confess His Name. Because you have prayed, these girls have reached this point of decision for Christ. Will they continue to live a life of victory in Christ because you continue to pray?—C. T.
When the remaining hours of the old year were few, the peals of the church bell summoned the Mukti family to gather in the church. The cool, night air and the whiteness of the moonlight made it easy for those from cooler climes to imagine they were stepping out upon freshly fallen snow! How beautifully the temple of worship stood in the soft light, reminding us of the years of loving devotion that had passed. The light of Coleman lanterns inside revealed our large family gathered in expectancy, as this was to be the first meeting in our week of prayer.

Rev. A. I. Garrison had come as God's messenger, and he pointed us to Ebenezer, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' He showed us that Ebenezer was set up between Mizpeh and Shen, the former meaning 'Watch Tower' and the latter meaning 'Pinnacle' or 'Goal.' Thus at Ebenezer we have both a backward and a forward look.

The backward look takes our thoughts back to the founder, the beloved Pandita Ramabai and her faith, devotion, toil, and courage; back to those who have given years of unselfish ministry in this place, and back to those across the seas who have reached out helping hands to the task of lifting India's womanhood out of the mire into the beauties of His grace. Our hearts welled up in praise to God for all He has done for Mukti's women and children in the past and for all who have gone forth from here to disperse His Light in dark places.

As we look forward we know that the same Heavenly Father will care for the widow and the orphan, and the host of faithful helpers will continue to bear the needs of Mukti to the Throne of Grace. There remains much land to be possessed and much to challenge our fullest consecration.

We sincerely thank you for every message of love, every greeting, every gift, every prayer. We do not know you all by name, but every act of love is written in His book of remembrance. In the natural we would tremble as we look ahead, but our eyes are unto Him.

May God's richest blessings be upon you all in this new year, and may we together fulfil the ministry He has appointed unto us.

Yours sincerely in Him,

—Bernice Steed.
CHRISTMAS DAWNS
BY CAROL

The sacredness of Christmas caused many to walk on holy ground this year in Mukti. You will know of the joy of Christmas festivities, decorations, lovely dresses, and bright ribbons, but great as was that joy and deep as is our appreciation to those friends across the seas who supplied such gifts, it is not of that which we would write to you today. It is, rather, of sacred scenes of holy ground, scenes that caused hearts to worship and that made us realize Christmas had really come to Mukti. Will you walk softly with us through the following stories, realizing that they are holy scenes to be read only by hearts that understand and eyes that see beyond the printed page into the very depths of the human soul, into which depths we cannot enter without first taking off our shoes in prayer.

IN THE HEART OF OUR FARM WORKERS

There was sweet smelling hay there, the lowing of a cow, the bleating of little goats, and a haloed babe. The scene was in India, the shepherds and the wise men were our farm workers, Hindus from our Adult Literacy School who for the first time in their lives told to others the Christmas story, Hindus who a few months ago were ignorant illiterates and who now read aloud with stumbling lips to other Hindus of the Christ who came to save. People did not laugh at grown men and women reading a simple Bible verse with great difficulty; people did not laugh at awkward farm hands offering a bleating goat to the Christ child; people did not smile at the brilliantly costumed but uneducated ‘wise men’ who filled the Gospel Hall with the fragrance of frankincense. Instead of the smile that might have been, there were praying hearts and eyes that saw Christmas being born for the first time in the hearts of men who have been ignorant, illiterate, and heathen, and one realized the ground was holy on which we stood that day.

IN THE HEART OF THE VILLAGERS

The deafening noise of hundreds of village people, not accustomed to being quiet, hushed before the words and songs of little children who lisped out the message of eternal life to those living in heathenism for miles around Mukti. A wall of prayer surrounded that group as they
IN MUKTI'S HEART

TERRY

listened to words that could mean for them the difference between eternal joy and eternal agony. They came because of the children, and we prayed it would be the children who would lead them Home.

AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF PRAYER

The prosperous, the poor, the well, the lame, in two long lines the people came to the altar on Christmas Sunday, each laying there his birthday gift to the Lord. For some it was their food, for some it was their clothes, for each it was a sacred matter between himself and his Lord.

Among the men who came forward to lay a gift on the altar walked a little boy all alone. Eyes turned to the back of the church to see if the father were there. Yes, there he stood for the first time in the twenty years he has been teaching our missionaries the language, there he stood a crippled man leaning on a crutch, a man who has lost seven children to the grave, a man for whom Mukti missionaries have prayed continually for two decades, a man in whose heart God is working and who came for the first time in his life to lay a gift at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hearts went into the Holy of Holies to pray. Is it possible that at last Christ has been born in the heart of our language teacher?

IN THE HEART OF CHILDHOOD

Birthday time is giving time, and the Blossoms sat together discussing what they would give to the Lord Jesus on His birthday. Last year they laid their Christmas Sunday candy on the altar, but this year they wanted to give a different gift. One of the twins looked at her pretty new dress. 'Let's give our new dresses to Jesus,' she said. The missionary thought of the scanty wardrobe each child had and of how much each one needed that new dress, but she realized it was a sacred matter and remained quietly in the background. Another's face was full of seriousness as she said, 'Our ribbons are the very prettiest thing we have. Let's give those to the Lord Jesus.' Some of them thought of the many days in the year ahead when they would want to wear pretty ribbons on their hair and would not have any. Faces were serious.

Who knows but the Lord Himself of the inner thoughts of those minds and hearts, for when the Blossoms went
forward in the church to give their birthday gift to the Lord, some laid one ribbon on the altar—and some laid two. They were not told nor asked, but each one according to her heart gave. Only He who knows the secrets of hearts knows why some gave one and some gave two, but we did not ask or probe, because it was holy ground on which each child walked alone with her Lord Jesus.

As the little ones and the grown folk came back from the altar, their faces were radiant, but over the radiance and joy of that moment a hush suddenly fell. All eyes turned toward a little girl walking up the center aisle. Her steps were slow as someone led her along, for this little girl was blind. In her arms something was held very tenderly as though it were the most precious thing in the world. Her face was radiant with a joy her blind eyes could not reflect. As she drew near the altar a sunbeam caught the cellophane wrapped around her offering and haloed it in light. The hush in the church deepened until it seemed as though everyone had almost stopped breathing, for the sunbeam revealed that haloed gift to be her Christmas doll. With a loving, last pat she laid it on the altar, and, as she walked away, the joy of her face became lost to sight in the mist of tears that covered every eye that saw.

The One who knows above all others what it meant to give His only Son saw that little girl cuddle her new dollie to her breast the night before. He heard the tiny mother say to her baby, ‘I will have you just one night. Today they gave you to me, and tomorrow I’m going to give you to Jesus. We will have just this night only, so you can sleep in my arms tonight. Tomorrow is Jesus’ birthday. I want to give Him the thing I love the very most in all the world, and that is you, my precious dolly. Let me kiss you good night, for tomorrow you will be with Jesus.’

Tears blind us as we write this story of a child’s devotion. It is too sacred to comment on, too holy a ground to tread. He who gave heaven’s best sent a sunbeam to halo the gift of this little blind girl, and we know He will hallow it to your hearts as you read.
A REPUBLIC IS BORN

Wake up, India! Wake up! What a change in a year. When we celebrated our Independence Day last year, one of our women cried aloud, ‘Our country is dead to us now,’ because she thought that in being loyal to an independent India she was being disloyal to our missionaries. But when the missionaries themselves showed respect to our country and to its flag, our women understood that it was possible to be loyal to one’s country and loyal to Christ.

January 26, 1950, was a great day in Indian history, perhaps the greatest thus far. On that day India became a sovereign Republic, an independent, democratic state, an important and influential member of the society of nations.

We owe this great privilege to many men and many forces. We owe it to God who has ordained the powers that be; we owe it to the British who consolidated the country by military power and led the way to a well ordained administration by rule of law and close contact with the West; we owe it to the political wisdom of the British who, in peacefully leaving India, gave us our right of citizenship. The inauguration of the Republic is the achievement of a goal. After centuries of political slavery, the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi brought the achievement of independence by truth and non-violence.

On the morning of Republic Day our school children marched in a parade down the village roads. Two tall boys carried the flag of India, others carried the flag of the Christian church, while some carried large scripture texts. When they returned to our compound, the flag was raised and the national anthem sung, while some of the children stood so as to form the map of India. Sonubai and Pastor Chowdhari brought messages of history and of a challenge for the future to the assembly which then gathered in the school, and heads bowed in prayer that we might be worthy of our new Republic, and loyal to our God and to our country.

—Bhimabai Harishchandra

‘Thou mighty God, who settest up the nations of this world,
We thank Thee for our new Republic born to us this day;
We ask of Thee to take the helm of this our Ship of State
And through the storms and times that blind be Thou our Guide and Stay.’
FROM THE MAIL BAG

We would like to share with our readers the following letter from friends in America:

DEAR FELLOW CHRISTIANS:

This dollar is a very special one. Our David (aged 10) was saving up for a cowboy gun, he being like other boys, although he is a Christian.

He was sick on Halloween and he said, 'Mother, I don't need my gun to go with my cowboy outfit, because I can't go out tonight when the kids go trick or treat, so will you get my money out of my drawer and give it to a missionary, because there are a lot of poor kids that don't have near what I've got.'

I remembered that David prayed for the Ramabai Hospital to be built, so may our Father multiply David's gift for His honor and glory. In Jesus' dear Name, Amen.

In His love,

ESTHER AND DAVID WILSON.

1 Trick or treat is an American custom on Halloween night when the children dress in costumes and go from door to door saying trick or treat. The occupants of each household have the choice of giving sweets as a treat or having some prank played upon them.

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