Be Thou their Guide, Lord Jesus

RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

PRAYER BELL

July—August, 1951
FAREWELL TO MAI

It was the loving name of Mai, which means 'Mother,' that the girls and women gave to our American Secretary, Miss Josephine Patterson, when she arrived. After eight months in India, the Mukti family bade her farewell, and among the tokens of love given to her was a scroll, written both in Marathi and English, in which the women and girls expressed their appreciation for her. We share with you the words written on that scroll:

Honourable Mai,

We heard a lot about you and it was our greatest desire to see and meet you personally. We are thankful to the Lord for giving us this opportunity of meeting you. You have been here for a very short period. The days flew quickly and now it is time to bid you 'good-bye.' We are very sorry to lose you.

Now we recall the day of your arrival in Mukti. Everybody was present to greet you at the door. You recognized most of us and called us by our name, as if you knew us before. We were surprised to see that. No one in the history of Mukti was given such a warm and grand welcome except you. As you stepped on the threshold of our home, Mukti, it brought back the precious memory of our Mother, Pandita Ramabai, who so nobly sacrificed her whole life for our spiritual, physical and educational uplift. This made you forget your own self and you have put others first. You were unaware of hunger, thirst, and exhaustion.

In America you did great sacrificial work for us day and night. Here also you never rested. You
took keen interest in every department. You were always willing and ready to render help whenever and wherever necessary.

Your desire is that the young people should come forward to offer for the sacred and noble work started in Pandita Ramabai's days of evangelistic bands of women going out to neighbouring villages.

The most important task which you have done since you came to India is your visit to the birthplace of Pandita Ramabai and the places which are associated with her life and her acquaintances with some of her relatives. You told us about your visit, but the pictures of the places made her life so real today. We are ever grateful to you for giving us such valuable information.

Self-sacrifice, real love and interest for everyone, as well as joyous spirit, courage, frankness are the virtues we found in you. In short you sacrificed the whole of your life for this work and have been a witness for Christ in spite of all difficulties and problems.

We know that we grieved and disappointed you in many respects. We are really sorry for our shortcomings. We wish and pray that you may come back to us and then you will find great improvement in us and Mukti.

We pray that the Lord will bless Mukti abundantly in every respect in order that it may be a real spiritual life centre and set an example to the life and people of India. May He bless you as you work for Mukti in all directions.

Josephine Patterson

Yours in His fellowship,
The Mukti Family
FROM STRENGTH

BY JOSEPHINE

Many changes came into the life of Pandita Ramabai as she walked with the Lord and was ‘changed from glory to glory’ and went ‘from strength to strength.’ Her original vision of service to Brahmin widowhood enlarged until thousands were benefited through the ministry of the Mission which she established at Kedgaon to serve India’s womanhood.

Ramabai’s girls were trained from Kindergarten through high school, many useful industries were taught, and an effective evangelistic ministry was carried on constantly. Important as these things were, however, the Word of God had pre-eminence from morning until night in Mukti. The mental and spiritual state of her famine girls was like that of wild animals. She tamed them with the Word of God. When Ramabai and her daughter, Manorama, who for years ably assisted her mother, stand before the Lord to have their work on earth reviewed, they can each whole-heartedly say, ‘I have given them Thy Word.’

Nearly sixty-four years have passed since the founding of this noble work. During the eight months I have been in Mukti, I have seen the need for certain changes and improvements which I would like to see take place—improvements in the Nursery to make it a healthier place for our little children; the hospital needs to be fully equipped; a proper school building is required to meet the needs of the many village boys and girls as well as our own children; there is the need for a nurses’ home, new living quarters for our girls in their late teens, and small cottages to take the place of long dormitories so that our children can grow up in small family groups and feel something of the security of a home.

This is a huge institution, receiving into its fold forsaken children, deserted and ill-treated wives, young widows who need protection, problem girls from the court and other Missions, and blind women and children.

There is little opportunity for education in the villages, and over a hundred boys and girls come to us for a secular education and with it they receive God’s Word; practically the same number receive adult education in our literacy school, and over sixty children from far-away villages live with us during school days in our Boarders’ Compound. The parents of most of these children from so-called Christian homes are so desperately poor that they can contribute little or nothing for their children’s maintenance here.
TO STRENGTH

PATTERSON

It is normal that with the passing of time changes and improvements should take place, but there is ONE thing in Mukti which has never changed during the years and which needs no change today. The WORD OF GOD has pre-eminence here. The day opens and closes in every compound with God's Word, children hear it in the school, Hindu men and women hear it in the Literacy School. The Word is ministered in the hospital and village dispensary, taught in organized daily Bible classes, in Sunday Schools, and the most inspiring sight of all is to see 800 people sitting on the teak wood floor of the big, stone church twice on Sunday and during the week on prayer day listening to our splendid pastor expound the Scriptures so simply that even a child can understand. Thus if external conditions are not all that we desire, we find comfort in the knowledge that the Word of Truth is daily, faithfully being taught in every department of the work.

'We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal' (2 Cor. 4:18).

New India is moving ahead, away from old customs and is looking for those who can lead into a future of promise. Christian womanhood can do much to lead Mother India toward Christ. Our Lord is giving us day by day tiny, new feet to lead in the way and little hearts and minds and hands to train. He is also giving us sad and broken lives to comfort and reclaim for Him.

As I bid farewell to Mukti, I am encouraged to 'press on,' for India needs Christian doctors, nurses, teachers, students, wives, and mothers, and Mukti is doing its part to give new India Christian womanhood.

Pandita Ramabai
I N  T H E  S H E L T E R  O F  T H E  P A L M S

B Y  L I L L I A N  D O E R K S E N

The train that brought another little girl for our Boarders’ Compound tonight has just steamed out of the station. Little Sheila, tired and sleepy from the journey, did not shed a tear as she bade her grandmother ‘Good-by,’ but she took my hand and smiled as we walked to the compound. Then there was no strangeness as she snuggled down on her little mat and told me ‘Good-night.’ She was ‘at home’ and off to sleep in Elim Sadan, which means ‘The House of the Palms,’ and is where the children live who only come to us for the school year.

We had reached the threescore mark in Elim Sadan, and I wondered how we could possibly squeeze in another, but two of the girls quickly moved their mats a bit and made room for her between them. Sheila is from a Christian home and will adjust quickly and happily among us. But how different the backgrounds of most of the other girls are. Perhaps you would like to hear about some of them in order to share more intelligently this ministry in prayer.

One of our most recent and youngest additions is little Anusaya. The other Saturday I was called to the gate and there was this bright-eyed, five-year-old, with her old granny. Anusaya’s father had died, and the mother is dying of Tuberculosis. There was no one left to care for Anusaya. The grandmother went back after turning over all that the little girl possessed, namely, two tiny, shrivelled up mangoes and a small ball of food tied in a dirty, grey rag. Her eyes were black and alive to everything (and I noticed at a glance that her head was alive, too). But everyone received her gladly and after her bath the others joined in the search for those little traffic officers in her hair.

Only one girl was reluctant to receive Anusaya, and that was Goony, our other five-year-old. She wondered for a day whether she wanted to share her privileges and affections as the youngest of our family with another. She soon realized that her new, little sister was wonderful company and could teach her lots of things. Although only five years old, Anusaya must have been a fine cook to help her mother, for she would pick leaves and sit down beside a flat stone, fold back her little dress, and roll and rock another smooth stone on the leaves exactly like our village women out here prepare their vegetables. When it was exactly the right texture, she would place it in a little plate
of water. She would look up at me, smile, and answer my questions, but would go right on working as though there were nothing so important as getting the meal ready on time. Pray that this life may blossom into such ambitious service for the Master.

Elizabeth and Martha came to us from a supposedly Christian home, but one that was such only in name. Their mother had run away the year before and was living with another man. The father had left the girls two weeks before they came to us, and he had left them with nothing. There is little that is wicked and naughty that these girls do not know. The missionary who found them and brought them to us asked if we could make a home for them. There were bad habits which had to be broken, and it was not easy. Martha was more convincing when she lied than when she told the truth. How greatly I need God’s grace and wisdom in working with these children. Our Lord, in whose sight these girls are precious, is ever so faithful in the training process, and they are adjusting and fitting into our family nicely.

Then sixteen-year-old Malti is one of our ‘big sisters.’ She was sent to us by the court magistrate because of the conditions of her home and because of her disability. In spite of anything that specialists can do for her, she is rapidly going blind, and she knows that her sight will soon be completely gone. It is little wonder that at times she becomes very depressed, but she has put her trust in Christ, and to listen to her prayers as we gather for evening devotions brings tears to my eyes. She naturally is not as keen about Braille as those who have never seen. She would rather struggle to see with the paper right up against her face. Do pray for her. She has a keen mind and we covet for her a teaching ministry among our blind girls. Pray that she may receive her parents’ consent for baptism, because she is anxious to follow the Master in this way.

These are only a few from among our more than sixty in the Place of the Palms. Some have come from broken homes, some from homes of sin and shame, some are from Christian homes, and some from heathen, including Buddhist and Hindu. Will you pray that while they are in the shelter of the palms—the atmosphere of a Christian school and home—they in turn may grow into stately trees that will give shelter and strength to many other destitute and needy souls in India.
FAMILY NEWS

May I express deep appreciation for the help and prayers of friends at the time of going through the valley of separation from my mother. After two months in America with my father, I have returned to India, and would like to share with our readers the Scripture wherewith our heavenly Father comforted me at the time of mother’s Home-going: ‘And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing’ (John 16:22, 23).—Carol Terry

We are glad to report that Miss Lillian Doerksen has passed the preliminary, six-months’ language examination.

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