THE CHILDREN ENCIRCLED MISS JONES
WITH THEIR WELCOME

RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION
INDIA
THE LORD IN THE MIDST

By M. S. Jones

With loving farewells and many prayers, the Australian Council sent me forth per the S.S. Stratheden on December 3, that I might see with my own eyes the work so dear to all our hearts. The manifest approval of the Lord and the love of the Council made for me my going forth an occasion of happy anticipation.

The ship berthed at Ballard Pier, Bombay, on December 18, and immediately after breakfast at 7.30 a.m., our Miss Fletcher and Miss Williams greeted me just outside the dining room. What joy to see their dear faces again!

Then followed a busy two days in Bombay, after which we entrained for Poona, and from there to Kedgaon. On Poona station we were joined by our Bhimabai and Dr Chandekar. Another happy thrill was to meet again dear Bhimabai, as together we made the completion of the journey.

What words could adequately express one’s feelings as the train slowly drew up to Kedgaon station? I was close to Mukti. Soon my eyes would see in reality that which for so long I had prayed and worked, and which through the medium of letters, pictures, and printed page, I had tried to visualize. My heart-beats quickened.

What a busy station I saw—so many people standing, so many walking up and down carrying loads on their heads, Indian fashion. It was explained that, being Tuesday, this was bazaar day in Kedgaon. Hence the unusually busy aspect.

Already garlanded by Bhimabai and Dr Chandekar, I stepped from the train to be met by some of our missionaries, who gave me a loving welcome.

But surely it was a special market day! My bewildered eyes saw decorated bullocks and carts, and beyond them a group of men standing in a circle with a large drum and cymbals. I watched as the drum began to beat, the cymbals to clap, and the men to dance, still wondering. I was sure I had happened upon a village festival, and was all interest. Then Miss Terry explained, ‘These men are our Hindu workmen, and they are doing this in your honour’. There in front of me stood the station wagon, also gaily festooned, waiting to convey me to Mukti, and the bullock carts were there to carry my luggage. It was hard to take it in—to think that these dear ones had prepared such a welcome for me! But more was to follow.

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WILL YOU FOLLOW IN THEIR TRAIN?

By Carol Terry

Some of them were burned at the stake, while some gave their lives under other forms of persecution, but reverently these men of the centuries gave their lives that the Word of God might march steadily on through the ages—true, infallible, unquenchable, giving light that pierces the darkest places on earth, the message that redeems souls lost in the deepest degradation of sin, a never-dimming torch lighting the way to God.

Pandita Ramabai followed in the train of Wycliffe and others who spent their days and nights, their years, studying, translating, printing God's Word, that men lost in darkness might find the way of salvation. The edition of Ramabai's translation into Marathi has long been exhausted. To requests for this Bible, the answer has had to be for many years, 'There are no copies left'. This reply cut into the hearts of God's people here in Mukti until the Lord brought us to the united decision to print again His most holy Word. It was realized that some of the Marathi words used in Ramabai's day are now obsolete, and, therefore, some revision was necessary. Four years of study and prayerful revision followed, foreign missionaries and Christian men and women of India working side by side, with Rev. Fred Schelander prayerfully chairing this Bible Revision Board. It has been a sacred task, to which unmeasured hours have been given, and now at last the completion of the revision work is in view.

As the need has been considered, it has been felt that an edition of 10,000 Bibles is His plan at this time.

Will you who read this article stop for a moment just now and pick up and finger lovingly and reverently the pages of your Bible? Think of what it means to your heart. And then will you join the Mukti staff in prayer regarding this most sacred opportunity of publishing God's Word? Let us ask the Author of that sacred Book what He would have each one do to share with the people of India the blessings of God's holy Word, to know its hope, its comfort, its message of eternal salvation. This is an opportunity for all who read these pages to follow in the train of those down through the centuries of time who have given God's Word to the people.
CHRISTMAS

By Margaret Williams

Come with me—It is a moonlight night, and we are about to set out on a carol-singing venture. We are not in a Christmas card setting of snow-roofed houses and old-fashioned street lamps. You will not need your muffler and scarf, but you will probably need a light coat until you are warmed up by singing. The background is typically Indian; the faces that will greet you are those of children, young people, and older folks, too, many awaiting excitedly the approach of the missionary band that has set out to sing carols on this Christmas eve. Here and there are candles and lamps burning, as the various groups await our approach and prepare to sing to us in return a carol in English. Some have even prepared a manger scene and stand around it holding candles and singing, ‘Oh come, let us adore Him’. It is a joyous night, for tomorrow is Christmas Day for Mukti—a wonderful day, not just because of gifts to be received, although that truly brings joy, but somehow the true spirit of Christmas seems to pervade the air. One by one all the large family is visited and wished a happy Christmas, and this is the real beginning of Christmas in our big home.

Christmas day dawns, and once again the sound of carols fills the air, as children come in groups to the missionaries’ doors ere it is light and sing again, bringing their tokens of love. How wide eyed they are.

A little later on we wend our way to the big church, where we once again remember the greatest Gift of all, our precious Lord Jesus. Then as the family parts, each one is presented with something to remind them of Christmas—maybe a brass vessel, a bed-cover or blanket, or, if younger, then a pencil case and a comb, perhaps a ball, and to everyone a bag of Indian candy. Oh, how the eyes light up! Ours is the joy to see their happy faces, truly something to remember.

And how do the missionaries celebrate Christmas? Perhaps we should go along to the dining room. It is 7.00 p.m., and the second bell has rung. We must not be late, for tonight is Christmas dinner, and then to the sitting room. What a pretty sight the red, green, and white candles make on the table, and we are thankful to the Lord for His provision, as we partake of the good things. Now to the sitting room, where folks have endeavored to make things appear like an old-fashioned Christmas. There is a ‘fire’ burning in the grate of the temporary fireplace, with a large branch of a tree decorated and standing alongside. Christmas is a busy time,
but such a precious time, when thoughts are centred around giving joy to the Mukti family, and now we take time ourselves to sit and enjoy some Christmas records, and to receive the gifts made possible by dear friends in the homelands. As the happy evening draws to a close, our hearts are once again pointed to the One whom the shepherds worshipped, whom the angels worship, and who to us is the fairest and dearest. So Mukti’s Christmas Day closes, kept as it was this year on Saturday. Tomorrow will be Thanksgiving Sunday.

Once again the sun shines from a clear sky, as young and old, clad in their new and gaily coloured clothes, wend their way to the church. This time in every hand is a gift—a gift of thanksgiving to the Great Giver. Throughout the service, voices blend in songs of praise, and at the close one by one the members of Mukti’s large family take their gifts to the altar. Such a variety we behold—plates of grain and homemade sweets, gifts of money, and there are several people carrying bags, and those bags are moving! Now we watch interestedly as they are opened, and out come poultry, which, being unused to observing silence in church, make their presence known by numerous cluckings in their endeavours to break free. But this sight is no new one to the onlookers; it is accepted as part of the thanksgiving service. Here comes a little girl, and she has brought her ball to the Lord Jesus. Here comes another, this one a little older, who, after emptying her grain into the large container, places the vessel also as a gift. Perhaps this is one of her little treasures. But then did not David say, ‘neither will I offer ... unto the Lord ... that which doth cost me nothing’. All of these gifts are the very own possessions of the donors, which adds to the joy of giving, for Mukti’s family is conscious that without such a loving, heavenly Father, their needs would not be supplied. The crowd continues to stream to the front of the church—young, old, blind. What a joy to behold! Thus ends the service, as all is committed to the Lord, and, along with the throng, we quietly leave the place of worship.

Once again in the evening we join the missionaries in the sitting room to enjoy the special Christmas programme of singing in the candlelight.

Then follows a week of special days for all of the compounds, as young and old alike at different times enjoy the fun and games and special fare of a Christmas party.

Yes, Christmas is a blessed time. Perhaps it is to you that we owe a big ‘thank you’ for some of the good things of
our Christmas time here. Did you enjoy it as we reminisced together? Then you will know the joy in this heart, too, at seeing its first Mukti Christmas, in seeing for the first time such a great number of people entering truly into the spirit of Christmas, and seeing for oneself the truth of the words of the Greatest Giver, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'.

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The band led the procession, the station wagon and carts crawling slowly behind. How those men danced! My untutored eves had never before seen such a performance, given with such enthusiasm. And right and left the Mukti people gathered—the Christian families, the aged women, the Rescue Home girls, villagers, until at length the gate was reached. There I was met by a burst of welcome song so sweet that I could imagine it was coming from the angels in heaven. But no! I was still on earth, and in Mukti, and it was our own dear children waiting there at the gate, with their shiny, black, beribboned heads and sweet, smiling faces. It was their song that filled the air.

Another garland and a lovely bunch of flowers were received, and, with joy that could scarce restrain tears, I made my way slowly to the room assigned me, the songsters lining the way to the very door. Even the dear blind folk were there joining in the song.

What a welcome! It will never fade from my mind; it will ever be a treasured memory. But my heart went up with a cry to God. Oh that these dear people were all as ready—nay much more so—to welcome our beloved Lord who bought them, and whom we represent! Oh the joy that would be theirs; oh the joy that would be His! And only thus can the peace we all long for be realized.

A meal, which was served Indian fashion, followed. Seated on the floor, we ate Indian food from banana leaves. It was all so delightful, and one felt the warmth of Christian love behind all the preparations.

Days have passed since then, all full of interest and joy, not the least of which has been to fellowship with the dear missionaries, who labour here in happy unity.

One feels the tremendous privilege of it all. With grateful heart, I acknowledge the goodness of the Lord in leading me here. As day succeeds day, there is a deepening consciousness that the spirit of the founder pervades the atmosphere, and the Lord, whom Ramabai trusted so implicitly, is still in the midst.
Great has been the faithfulness of our God towards Mukti since its inception sixty-seven years ago. Great has been the company of faithful friends who have prayed and given of their means. Miss Laird is of that number. For many years she has also given of her time and her strength in her capacity as Secretary-Treasurer for Mukti in Scotland. Miss Laird, it is with a heart full of love and gratitude that we say ‘Thank you’, as you hand over your task to Miss Carol Whyte. We know that Mukti has been too indelibly written on your heart for you to forget us, even as we shall never forget you.

Have you ever sat at the back of a very large church and strained your ears to hear a speaker? Such has been the experience of the older folk and the Christian families in our Mukti church. Last Sunday morning all attended the service as usual. Bhimabai stood up to speak, and her usually soft voice carried to the farthest corners of our church. A look of astonishment and joy appeared on the faces of the congregation, as each person seemed to be thinking, ‘Why, I can clearly hear everything that is being said!’ As the loud speaker unit was dedicated to the service of the Lord, I thought of the story behind its purchase. Years ago money had been left by Krishnabai for such a purpose. Last Christmas, on our Thanksgiving Sunday, young and old brought gifts in money and kind, amounting to nearly one thousand rupees. In this way the need was met, and now all can join in the time of worship and praise.

When darkness falls on Mukti, there are no electric lights to illuminate darkened compounds and buildings. A feeble flicker of light thrown by a lantern may be seen here and there. Eyes have suffered, and many go to bed when darkness falls. All have felt the need of an electric plant, yet we had no funds for such a project. We went to the Giver of every good and perfect gift and told Him of our need. Today we have the generator and engine. Some equipment is still needed, and then putting it into operation will take time. By faith we look forward to the night when, by the simple press of a button, light will flood Mukti, scattering darkness and gloom. What a day of rejoicing that will be! But even more than that, we look forward to the city that has no need of the sun or moon, for the glory of God will lighten it, and the Lamb will be the light thereof.
The Ramabai Mukti Mission is an international, undenominational Mission of evangelical faith, with representatives in the home countries as follows:

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