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# RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

## PRAYER BELL

*American Council*

*Ramabai Mukti Mission,  
260 West 44th St.,  
New York.*

*November and December 1931.*

OUR DEAR PRAYER HELPERS,

It seems scarcely possible that it is time to wish you all 'A Happy Christmas' again. The days of this year have gone 'swifter than a post,' they have 'flown away'—Job 9: 25.

The year is closing, and as we look back how many things have taken place—unrest, tumult, riots. We have many times said during the dark days 'The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.' O how we praise Him that He is Omnipotent and we can trust Him.

Miss Wells' report will tell you what has been going on, and the belated Balance Sheet is sent out with this. It will show you the mindfulness of our Wonder-working God.

We realise that we must keep close to the Lord to get His mind about every portion of the work and our duty in it, otherwise we get into difficulties of our own and hinder His plan.

Pray that we may have His promised wisdom liberally, for the many unexpected things that come. We are still expecting Revival; let us pray on, like the importunate widow.

These are days of conventions, round table conferences, and consultation committees of all sorts. Do not people tire of reading all these reports? One wishes that they might be spared the task of reading at least one report, but the powers that be demand a report.

'We know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.' There have been many 'all things' the past year to work together for good. We praise the Lord for them all. Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord and shall we not receive evil?

On October, 22nd 1930, a cable arrived telling of the 'Home-going' of Miss Victoria Brazier. She was booked to sail for India, October 4th, but on September 6th she was seized with an attack of acute appendicitis. Although everything was done that love and money could do to save her, it was evidently God's will to take her to Himself, for after weeks of suffering she entered into rest. Our loss is great, greater than we can express; we humbly bow to the will of God, Who makes no mistakes and Who doeth all things well. Miss Brazier was a burden-bearer, who did the many odd tasks, most necessary to be done, and which no one else looked after. Bai's friends are indeed bereft. They looked upon her as their own Auntie, who met their weaknesses and needs with patience and love. It was pitiful

to see their sorrow. They have little mental capacity, but they suffer just the same. We miss her every day more and more. We had counted on her helping us through the hot season, so the others could have a full time holiday, but she is not here, but up there with those who have gone before.

On October 10th, Miss McGregor left for furlough and left behind her a goodly amount of work to be looked after. The printing press has been very well managed in her absence by Ramberyabai, who took up the work in a way that surprised and gratified us very much. With Miss Hastie to oversee the literary part of it, we have been able to get on fairly well.

The next event of importance was the arrival of Dr. Sigrid Esbern, who was sent to us by the American Council of the R.M. Mission. On December 18th, 1930, she reached Mukti, accompanied by Miss Morrow. Great was the excitement of receiving our new doctor and seeing what she was like. We soon discovered that she was not like us old ladies in Mukti, nor was she like the young ladies, but an absolutely different type of worker. She will help us get out of old ruts and fossilized ways, perhaps.

The farm has not been so bad. The animals were a big problem at first; but as all problems do, it has solved itself so that now the animals are prospering and growing. The supply of milk still troubles us, as we need even more than we are able to produce. In spite of Miss McGregor's efforts to secure better stock, the results have been a bit disappointing. However, we have some fine calves which will be a benefit in time.

The farm has produced 8,016 paillies of jawari (1,146 bushels) and 21,000 big sheaves of fodder for the cattle; also vegetables and fruit for the Institution. The overseer has shouldered the responsibility, remembering that I am growing old and unable to look after so much work. We have found that by giving him a free hand he manages his men, and women too, better than we can. He has a patch of lucerne (alfalfa) which is good to behold. This keeps the milch cattle in green feed, which helps the milk supply.

The pumps have given us good domestic water supply and helped get the water in the wells on to the fields, thus securing good crop results. We cannot say that the pumps are economical. Perhaps it is because we still lack experience in operating them and we will improve as time goes by.

## BUILDING

Most of you who have been praying about the dispensary will be disappointed that we are not reporting it finished and in running order. We are sorry for this, but it has been an impossibility to get it built. We trust that in another year we shall have accomplished the purpose. Meanwhile the Lord has opened another door for our new doctor by a call from a neighbouring Mission for her services for a year, to take charge of a hospital already equipped and a practice built up. This will not take her wholly away from us, as she will be near enough to visit us at least twice a week, and more if necessary, and to look after any serious cases in the hospital, of which she will have charge. Thus she will be able to give full scope to her medical talent and at the same time serve us acceptably.

We have plodded on with the building and repairs with many interruptions. Five new lavatories have been built of brick and stone, with iron roofs. Some walls that fell during

the rains have been rebuilt, dormitories readjusted for the blind and Bai's friends and others, and six large rooms and three smaller ones have been flag-stoned. Weeks were spent in installing the pumps, which took the combined force of carpenters and masons. Pumps have been installed in six wells, two for domestic use and four for the farm.

When Dr. Esbern arrived we were obliged to arrange a suite of rooms for her comfort and convenience. New desks for the school, a large new show case for the school and two smaller ones for the sewing department were made. An outside staircase for one of the workers' two-storey rooms was about to fall down and had to be repaired altogether with a new one; a fowl house and dove cote were made, besides numerous changes in the farm yard, gates, fences, etc. Several new ceilings have been put up. We are still at it and yet there is much to be done; indeed, one coming in as a visitor might well wonder whatever we have been doing all this while.

Then came Christmas, but on account of Miss Brazier's passing, the boxes were delayed. We had Christmas on Christmas Day, to be sure, but the presents were not distributed until late in March, when our Chairman, Mr. Moyser, was visiting us and gave out the presents to the girls and women. He enjoys this service as much as the recipients and almost as much as he loves to preach. We take this another opportunity of thanking all the givers of these lovely, useful gifts which, even though they were delayed, were no less appreciated.

The year has been full of unusual trials and strain, but God has been with us, and in spite of our stupidity and failures He has helped us through. As workers we have been drawn closer together in love and unity. The things that brought discord have been, in a measure, removed through prayer. Times of waiting try us sorely, but they bring joy and gratitude in the end.

Our sister, Miss Jackson, severed her connection with the Mission by resigning. She is now in England with her relatives and friends.

We cannot report great progress in the work, save that we have sheltered and helped through their time of trial a score or more of sinful, so-called Christian girls and women, and nursed and made to live another score or more of unwanted babies, and cared for the helpless ones who have been with us for years. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.' If this is His service, what greater can we ask?

Yours in His Name,  
EUNICE WELLS.

'What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of Salvation and call upon the name of the Lord'—Psalm 116: 12, 13.

It is with a heart full of thanks and praise to my Heavenly Father for His saving love and keeping grace that I sit down to pen to my friends across the seas something about our visit to Pandharpur in July.

Pandharpur is one of the so-called sacred cities of India, situated on the banks of the sacred river Bhima or Chandrabhaga. One wonders why a place like this, reeking with every named and unnamed filth and immorality, idolatry, drinking, gambling, thieving and debauchery should ever be called sacred.

This being an *Adhik* (extra) month according to the Hindu calendar, they had an extra *Adhiki Ashadhi Jatra* (Religious Fair) this year. So there was an 'extra' of everything, of people as well as of vice of every description. This *jatra* generally lasts for five days beginning from *Ekadushi* (first day of the fair which is a general fast) but people begin to throng the city nearly a week beforehand, and do not leave until a week after, unless some epidemic like cholera or plague drives them away.

As we go about during these days one is impressed with the fact that these *jatras* are becoming more a money-making concern than pure religious gatherings, as they used to be. Though the chief temples of this city are those dedicated to the god Vithoba and goddess Rukhmai, yet there are hundreds of other temples large and small scattered all along the river and its vicinity. Those belonging to the low castes find no place within the main walls, nor do they find an entrance into the other temples, unless they can bribe the priests substantially enough. Each temple has its priests and its sacred cows. Wherever you go you come across fattened cows and still more fattened priests. All the maimed, the blind, the lame, the leprous, people as well as animals throng the paths leading towards the temples. They want pittance from the crowds pushing their way towards the shrines to get *darshan* (a sight of the gods). There, one also comes across the innumerable *sadhus* sometimes dressed in saffron, but more often in pure nature's garb, with hair unkempt, long double nails, necks bedecked with charms, bodies painted with varied dyes, with a bowl in one hand and a stick in the other, going from house to house, in a sing-song rhythmic fashion repeating the names of their gods Hari-Ram, Hari-Ram, Hari-Ram or Gyanba-Tukaram, Gyanba-Tukaram or any other of the three hundred and thirty million odd gods and other deities they worship. They are quick in cursing anyone who refuses them alms.

There were over fifteen palanquins (conveyances made of wood or canvas) decorated with gold and silver ornamentations for carrying their special deities. These are carried by their devotees on their own shoulders from other far-off sacred cities like Alandee, Dehoo, Jecuree, etc., etc., the people of which carried their local gods and brought them to Pandharpur to join their fellow deities.

Each palanquin is accompanied by its followers and singers, who may number from 50 to 200 at times. They all go on foot, singing, dancing as well, and playing on musical instruments. On the way they are fed by the villagers wherever they may stop. They take two to three weeks before they reach Pandharpur.

This time instead of going by train, which is packed like sardines or rather flocks of sheep on their way to a butchery—some of us went by our evangelistic car which not only saved time but the suffocating crush as well. It also gave us a fine chance of following up the thousands of pilgrims on the way. Some were riding in buses, some in bullock carts but many were on foot with bundles on their backs. There were companies of women also, with babies tied on their backs all wending their way to that sacred city, hoping to wash away all their sins, as well as to gain some extra merit.

For nearly five miles before entering the city the road was so packed with people, men, women, and children, as well as the blind, the lame and the sick, that the buses and the cars had a hard time pushing their way through.

The booths and stalls on either side of the road and the daring bullock carts at the head, made the situation still more difficult. Horns kept blowing unceasingly, but more often than not their speed-mad modern conveyances had to come to a stand-still and wait until the Eastern crowds felt inclined to move out of their way. And what are all these crowds going there for? Because they firmly believe that going on a pilgrimage is one of the good acts by which they can earn endless merit. They are told that the pilgrims will have all their sins washed away by bathing in the river Bhima, and feeling the sacred wind that blows over the river and temple of Vithoba and other gods, as the Bhima contained all the holy water capable of washing all the sins away of everyone who bathed in them.

In that city live 330 millions of gods disguised in stones, grains of dust, trees, shrubs, and all other things found there.

At the time of the *jatra* every person who enters the city has to pay a toll of four annas per head. Besides this they must pay the priests pretty well for an entry into the temples for a *darshan* (a look at the god). The minimum charges are from An. 1 to Rs. 10 but the rich, in money, as well as in caste, pay enormously to reserve the right of seats, as well as a sight of the god so-called. Sometimes the poor have to wait for hours, nay even for days before they are let in. And then what? They are let in, in single close packed file—such a crush and such a smell of filth. Each one rings a bell to inform the god of his or her arrival, then they go in and touch the idol of Vithoba, hastily throw some leaves, or flowers, or money, or some offering at his feet and all must be over within a second. Police are there not only to guard the gods, but to keep order too. They see that no pilgrim goes beyond his time. It is so pathetic to see them being pushed off so ruthlessly at times. Thousands of pilgrims do not even get that chance. Imagine coming for hundreds of miles, undergoing every inconvenience, enduring every possible hardship, and discomfort, spending all they possess, and then coming away all empty and disappointed. The enthusiasm which brought them here is no more. They are often heard telling one another how the priests have robbed them, how the god has treated them and how he has killed their dear ones, etc., etc. Truly these poor ignorant people deserve to be pitied.

The *Ekadashi* (Fast Day) was our greatest opportunity. Great calm had enveloped the whole city. People were ready to sit down and listen. They sat down, they stood in hundreds, and they listened for hours. Six bands of evangelists had taken six strategic positions. Each band had two bags of gospels, tracts, booklets, New Testaments, Life of Christ, and one or two copies of the Bible. The bands were out from 7 to 11 a.m. and again from 3 to 7 p.m. *Bhajans* were sung, message after message was repeated in which the way of Salvation by the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus was made clearly known. Books, Gospels, and copies of the Holy Bible were sold at a nominal price of 1 pice to 4 annas each. Thousands of tracts were distributed. People were hungry and thirsty for something, they knew not what. Do pray that this printed word may find a ready entrance into the hearts of the readers and thus lead them on, until they find the Living Word who alone is 'The Way, The Truth and the Life.'

In spite of the rapid increase in the number of temples, shrines and mosques, and all the degradation that follows in their train, the day seems to be near at hand when the prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled to its very letter, when 'the idols He shall utterly

abolish. They shall go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth for fear of the Lord. A man shall cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.' Praise His Name, for 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly.'

KRISHNABAI GADRE.

May the Lord richly bless each prayer worker, each fellow helper, and all whose love and sympathy and ministry are such a help to us.

We delight to get the parcels that the different ones send, but we see a notice in the daily paper that the Customs' duties are to be raised again, so where possible if the duty can be met it will be a tremendous help at this end and enhance the value of every parcel.

We unite in wishing you all a richly blessed Christmastide with the days full of His Presence. May we seek to make Him glad too, and keep looking out for His coming.

One of our Secretaries, dear Mrs. Weston of Tasmania, who was such a cheer and help to us, will have her Christmas with the King. He called her Home recently. It will be a wonderful Christmas for her. May the 'Everlasting Arms' be underneath those left in the home, who will feel the gap, and may they be comforted and enfolded in God's love.

With our love and prayer for all.

Yours in our blessed Lord,

EUNICE WELLS,  
M. LISSA HASTIE.

*Ramabai Mukti Mission,  
Kedgaon, Poona District, India.*

*Treasurer in England.*

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Dunedin.

**RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION, KEDGAON, POONA DISTRICT, INDIA**

**BALANCE SHEET, YEAR ENDING MARCH 31st, 1931**

RECEIPTS				Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
April 1st, 1930, to Balance on Hand	..	..					12,363	10	0
Mukti Mission Fund	..	..	45,499	0	8				
Miscellaneous and Travelling	..	..	242	9	3				
Food and Clothing	..	..	5,860	13	9				
School Books, Stationery and Postage	..	..	995	0	0				
Industrial Account	..	..	2,512	2	0				
House	..	..	122	8	0				
Church	..	..	689	4	0				
Medical	..	..	1,800	2	3				
Farm	..	..	8,434	8	5				
Building	..	..	104	2	6				
Printing	..	..	1,193	3	6				
							67,453	6	4
							Total Rs. 79,817 0 4		
EXPENDITURE									
Miscellaneous and Travelling	..	..	2,089	14	6				
Food and Clothing	..	..	20,242	1	1				
School Books, Stationery and Postage	..	..	5,950	3	9				
Industrial Account	..	..	4,398	4	3				
House	..	..	11,219	7	6				
Church	..	..	2,717	10	9				
Medical	..	..	3,686	6	6				
Farm	..	..	12,859	0	3				
Engine	..	..	3,308	14	9				
Building	..	..	6,191	10	0				
Printing	..	..	3,061	10	0				
							75,725	3	4
General Fund Balance, March 31st, 1931	..	..					4,091	13	0
							Total Rs. 79,817 0 4		

Four thousand rupees of the above balance is designated for building, so actual  
General Fund Balance on March 31st, 1931 is Rs. 91-13-0.

I have this date audited the above account, and certify the same to be correct.

May 30, 1931

BLANCHE B. CONGER,  
C. & M.A. Mission Auditor.

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