



MARY SLESSOR

CANNIBALISM CONQUERED

MARY SLESSOR

PANDITA RAMABAI

TWO THRILLING LIFE STORIES
OF FEEBLE WOMEN MADE
STRONG THROUGH FAITH

BY

E. E. ENOCK and J. CHAPPELL



PICKERING & INGLIS

14 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4
229 BOTHWELL STREET, GLASGOW, C.2

Made and Printed in Great Britain

“MA,” the Missionary Heroine of Calabar

A Brief Biography of Mary Slessor

CHAPTER I

That for Which she was Apprehended

ONE dark night, outside Wishart Pend, in Dundee, stood a group of rough lads. In their midst was a small, pale-faced girl. The leader of the gang held a piece of lead attached to a string, which he was swinging round her head.

The deadly weapon swung closer and closer with every round, but the girl did not flinch. The boy, as it almost grazed her brow, let the weapon fall to the ground.

“Boys, she’s game!” he cried, admiringly; and a murmur of approval came from each lad there.

“We’ll go into your meeting,” said the leader, and to the meeting they went. Thenceforth, instead of trying to break up the Mission,

they became her staunchest supporters. It was the turning point in the life of the boy who swung the lead.

And who was this small, brave lassie, who had stood so still and quiet under the ordeal?

She was Mary Slessor, the daughter of a cobbler, and herself a factory hand, but destined by God to be one of His greatest blessings to Africa. Timid enough to be afraid of dogs, but full of courage in the works to which God called her.

She was born in Aberdeen, on December 2, 1848. When first she came to Dundee with her parents and brothers and sisters, she was, as she says, "a wild lassie," and ran about the streets with other children as wild as herself.

An old widow who used to watch these children and felt concern for their souls would often call them into her room and tell them of their need of salvation.

"If Ye Dinna Repent."

One dark winter afternoon she had gathered them round her fire, and suddenly, with that fire for her text, she showed the children in a few forcible words what is the fate of those who reject God's offer of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ

"If ye dinna repent, and believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ, your soul will burn in the lowin', bleezin' fire for ever and ever," she said.

No paring down of the awful truth of eternal punishment here, no shaping it to please our weak, shrinking, easy-going nature. These children, young as they were, were in need of salvation; they were in danger of eternal destruction through neglect of it, and warn them she *must*, and *did*.

Dear, faithful old woman, what a wonderful thing she did for Africa when she spoke those words. Mary Slessor was then and there convinced of her need, and in a little while was rejoicing in the fact that she was saved. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Henceforth she lived not unto herself, but unto Him who died for her and rose again.

She was able now to be a help and comfort to her mother, who sorely needed it, for Mr. Slessor had fallen into habits of intemperance, which grew worse as time went on. Mrs. Slessor was often reduced to the direst straits in feeding and clothing her children. She, as well as Mary, had to work in the factory, as the father was no support to the home, spending every penny he could get in drink.

Life at the factory where Mary worked for

fourteen years, beginning at the early age of eleven years, was very hard. The hours were from 6 a. m. to 6 p. m., with an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. She had to be up at 5 every morning in order to help in the work at home, and yet with all these strenuous hours she managed to find time to cultivate her mind; like Livingstone, propping a book up on her loom in order to glance at it in precious leisure moments. On the way to and from the factory her eyes were mostly on her book.

Added to this, she attended the services in Wishart Church, to which her mother belonged; and she had a class of "lovable lassies" in the Sunday School.

When a Mission was started at 6 Queen Street, nearly opposite Quarry Pend, she volunteered as a teacher. This work was attended with dangers, as we have seen, and the older teachers always surrounded the younger ones on leaving the Mission, in order to protect them.

Later on the Mission was transferred to Wishart Pend, where she had charge of classes for boys and girls, both on Sundays and week nights. It was outside this room the boys had surrounded her when she happened to be alone, on the evening on which our story begins.

The lad who had swung the lead, when he grew to manhood and became prosperous, sent

her a photograph of himself, his wife, and family, which photograph decorated the wall of one of her bush houses in Africa.

Conquering a Bully.

On another occasion, whilst a very officious young bully, armed with a whip, was pursuing his usual occupation of compelling the lads to go into her meeting, whilst refusing to do so himself, she faced him and asked:

“What would happen if we changed places?”

“I suppose I’d feel this whip across my back,” he replied. Turning her back, she said she’d bear it for him if he’d go in.

“You would really bear that for me?” the astonished lad asked.

“I would, and much more. So go on. I am in earnest.”

But he threw the whip down and went in, and that very night accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Wherever Mary Slessor went she exercised a marvellous influence. The rough lads adored her; the women and children in the darkest, poorest houses where she visited, looked for her eagerly, and many a sad mother was braced and comforted by her courage and cheerfulness. In the factory, the strength and sweetness of her character influenced the workers to such an

extent that the whole community seemed to feel it.

Why was it? How was it? It was because Mary Slessor's heart was on fire with love and gratitude to Him who had saved her from wrath to come, and her one aim was to bring souls to Him.

Dr. H. Bonar's lines were perfectly exemplified in her life:

"Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth would'st teach;
Thy soul must overflow if thou
Another's soul would'st reach;
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.

"Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed."

Mary seized every opportunity of learning, and the papers she wrote for the Fellowship Association were unusually excellent, showing a happiness in phraseology and a spiritual insight not often found at such an early age. And so, unconsciously, she was being fitted for her life work, and advancing step by step nearer to the task which was destined for her by God.

Dr. Livingstone Dead.

In 1874 came news of the Home-call of Dr. Livingstone, and the great wave of missionary enthusiasm which stirred the land set aflame the spark which for years had smouldered in Mary's heart. It blazed up and stirred her to action. She must be a missionary in very truth. She was free from much of the strain of home support now, for Mr. Slessor was dead, and her two remaining sisters in good situations. She herself would be able still to contribute to the maintenance of the home from her salary as a missionary, so she forthwith discussed the matter with her mother.

Mrs. Slessor's heart had always been in the Calabar Mission, and it was through her, humanly speaking, that Mary had become imbued with the desire, so the mother's consent was gladly given. It was a joy to give Mary, since the two lads whom she had wished to send had both died. Some of Mary's friends were not very enthusiastic over her proposal, but Mr. Logie and Mr. Smith, church members, approved entirely, and Mr. Logie promised to look after Mary's affairs whilst she was abroad. Later he became a member of the Foreign Mission Committee.

Mary offered her services to the Foreign

Mission Board of her church—the United Presbyterian—in May, 1875, and though her heart was set on Calabar, she expressed her willingness to go anywhere, so eager was she to be sent forth with the life-giving message.

Her offer was accepted, but she was told to continue her studies in Dundee for a time, which she did until December, when the Board, at their own expense, sent her to Edinburgh for special preparation.

On Board Ship.

On 5th August, 1876, at the age of twenty-eight, she sailed for Africa, from Liverpool. Two of her Dundee friends accompanied her to the steamer "Ethiopia," in which she was to make her voyage; and the trio, watching some of the cargo put on board, noticed a number of casks of spirit for the West Coast. How often had Mary waged war against such stuff, and how often, during her missionary labours, she would have to do so again. "There are *scores* of casks," she exclaimed, looking at them rather dejectedly; "only *one* missionary!"

But her God could accomplish much with this *one* missionary against the scores of casks, and *did* do so, as this story will show.

The day she landed, September 11, 1876, was the beginning of brighter days for Calabar.

CHAPTER II

Learning the Ways and the People

CALABAR! What scenes the name can bring up before our imagination!

A beautiful land in many parts, but even amidst its beauty lurked disease and sickness, and sin and sorrow. The natives were considered the most degraded in Africa, and small wonder this, taking into account the treatment meted out to them by nations who were more powerful, *and* said to be more civilised than they.

In the fifteenth century the Portuguese opened up the coast and emptied the towns by their slave raids in the same way that the towns on the land side had always been desolated by Egypt and Arabia.

But God can bring good out of evil. Through the conversion of natives from Calabar who had been sold as slaves to Jamaica, the Gospel was sent to their homeland. That had happened thirty years before Mary Slessor came. Mr. Waddell had founded the Calabar Mission in 1846. The Mission stood upon the very hill

where the dead bodies of natives used to be thrown to the wild beasts.

Mary was well acquainted with many awful facts relating to the lives of the natives, and the difficulties which she had come to share with the brave souls who had been labouring there already for some time.

Calabar in 1876.

Here are a few of those facts, and as you read on through this story you will understand better the terrible and mysterious forces against which missionaries are ranged.

Witchcraft was interwoven with life in such a way as practically to rule the land. Superstition was rife everywhere. When a chief died numbers of people were murdered, and his wives, after dressing in their finery, were strangled, in order to go with him to the spirit land. Blood sacrifices were offered to jujus; the human skull was worshipped; guilt was decided by poison being administered, or the hands plunged into boiling oil; when twins were born they were always killed, and the mother sent away into the bush to do the best she could, generally to starve and die, or to be killed by wild beasts.

Mary had heard about all these things in far-away Dundee; now she was going to see them

for herself, to fight them in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had died to save these poor degraded people. Saved herself, and overflowing with love to her Saviour, she had a salvation worth speaking about, a real, definite thing, and with this treasure to share with all who would, she went forward eagerly, joyfully, into the dim, mysterious future now opening before her.

It mattered nothing to her that missionaries had been compelled in speaking of these people, to apply to them some awful names. What these missionaries said was really true; there was no exaggeration. The people were not an attractive people! But this did not move Mary. Did not the Lord Jesus Christ come down to an unattractive, repellent people, and give up His life for them? And should Mary Slessor shrink from any task, however hard and distasteful? Never! She looked upon such tasks as an honour and a privilege to perform.

The Mission Workers.

At the Mission she soon made friends, and fell quickly into Calabar Mission ways. "Mammy" Anderson saw to the latter; she found that Mary had not left all her love of pranks in Scotland, and the high spirits of the young missionary needed a slight check now

and again. There were times when she was late for meals, and the promised punishment of going without food was administered. "Daddy" Anderson, however, probably with "Mammy's" full consent, would convey bananas and biscuits to the offender. "Mammy" Anderson was dearly beloved by Mary.

King Eyo, whose acquaintance she seems to have made at Creek Town, was a much valued friend. He was a simple, sincere, kindly Christian, and when Mary told him how much interested Mrs. Slessor was in him, the African king was delighted, and he and Mrs. Slessor used to correspond. So strong a bond is the love of Christ, that it can bridge four thousand miles of sea, between people who have never seen each other.

Then there was Mammy Fuller. She was a coloured woman, and remembered the day when the slaves in the West Indies were emancipated. She never spoke ill of any one. Mary loved Mammy Fuller, and Mammy loved Mary. Little did either of them imagine "dear old Mammy" would live to see Mary laid to rest. But that is many years later. Mary has but just started work in the Mission now.

This is an account of the usual Sunday routine. First she sends round illustrated texts to all the big men, with the message that

Mr. Anderson is expecting them at the service at four, after which she sets out for the town.

Here is a man rocking himself to and fro at the door of his hut. No, he is not going to service. Why? "If your heart was sore would you go anywhere at all? Would you not prefer to stay at home and nurse your grief?" he asks.

In a moment Mary learns that his only child has died, and the man takes her to his wife, who is weeping over the grave in the hut.

The young missionary reads the story of Lazarus, and the sad, dark hearts are touched at last by the story of resurrection and re-union.

In the next yard she speaks to some slave-girls, who listen quietly. Further on she has an audience of women, who are lolling on the ground eating, sleeping, or dressing each other's hair. She is a welcome visitor. It is a little diversion, and she is taken to see a young woman who is being fattened for her future husband. Mary has to speak sternly to her, for the message is received contemptuously; the young woman is somewhat crestfallen, though still half defiant when Mary leaves.

The Rum Sellers.

After several other visits she comes upon a group of men selling rum. The white "Ma" is such a welcome sight that they put it away

and ask her to remain. She talks to them, and for a while they listen, but the moment she speaks against the sale of rum they are angry, and one says:

“Why white man bring them rum, suppose rum be no good? The God-man bring the rum—then why God-man talk so?”

Poor missionary! What can she reply? She feels very bitter against those god-men (?) who ruin the bodies and souls of their fellow-creatures for the sake of profit. She cannot answer the man.

But “*when HE maketh inquisition for blood,*” what will these men who have thus profited reply?

Next she visits a man and his wife who have lost five children. Has she some “medicine” for the sorrowing parents? She tells again about the resurrection, and the crowd around listens enchanted. Then she says that little twin-children are safe with God, and that they will yet confront those who murdered them. This is awful, and her audience with terror-stricken looks slink away, shrugging their shoulders at the strange and horrible things the white “Ma” has said.

Several more visits of cheer and comfort she pays, and, as the Lord was with her, there was blessing in her train.



"WE'LL GO INTO YOUR MEETING," SAID THE LEADER,
AND TO THE MEETING THEY WENT

(Page 3)

Now she repairs to the Mission House for the four o'clock service, tired, but happy.

For nearly three years Miss Slessor laboured, spending herself as we have seen, at Duke Town, but after many attacks of fever, in one of which she nearly died, she was ordered home.

Her First Furlough.

In June, 1879, she left Calabar and went to Dundee. During this furlough she moved her mother and sister to Downfield, a village just outside the city.

It was, too, during this furlough that she expressed her desire to go to untouched fields. The pioneering spirit was already at work. But "Daddy" Anderson opposed the idea. She, however, before returning, begged the Foreign Mission Board to send her to a different station, adding at the same time that she would do as they thought best.

She sailed with the Rev. Hugh Goldie and his wife, veteran pioneers in the work, and arrived at Calabar in October, 1880. There she heard with deep joy that she was appointed to the charge of Old Town.

CHAPTER III

Light in the Darkness

THE people of Old Town, Qua, Akim, and Ikot Ansa were amongst the most degraded in Calabar. That fact in itself was enough to induce Miss Slessor to go to them.

She was able to pursue her own methods in Old Town, although it was under Duke Town supervision, and, what was very important also, she was able to economise in her way of living in order to leave more of her salary for the dear ones in Scotland, a practice which was not so easy when she was with her colleagues. They did not know this was her reason for preferring to work alone, but put it down to natural inclination, and Mary never enlightened them.

Her house was in a dilapidated condition. It was built of wattle and mud, the roof was formed of mats, and it was whitewashed inside, but repairs were sadly needed.

Among the Natives.

Mary, however, was too eager and absorbed in her work to pay attention to personal comfort. Her heart must have been on fire with love to the Lord Jesus Christ. To all who came

to see her, whether they came in need, or out of curiosity to see what the white woman was like, she talked about the Saviour of the world, and of her visitor's individual need of Him.

On Sundays she was speaking of Him practically from dawn to dark—and after. She used to start early for Qua, and two boys carrying a bell slung on a poll summoned the people to the meeting. One of the chief men would put the seats ready and settle the congregation, which generally numbered 80 to 100.

The meeting over, she would go on to Akim and Ikot Ansa for more, visiting farms and sick folk on the way, giving short addresses and prayers. Back in Old Town by midday for Sunday School; and lastly, *the* service of the week—in the evening.

The yard of the chief was the place of assembly, and nearly every person in the vicinity would be there. A table, covered with a white cloth, a primitive lamp, and the Bible upon it stood in one corner. From there Miss Slessor could see row upon row of dusky faces, those nearest just catching the dim light from the lamp, those farther back merging in the darkness which surrounded them—a strange picture, a touching scene. The light of the lamp might be dim, but the Light of the World was there displayed, and how many souls were

brought to acknowledge that Light at these earnest meetings, the day of Christ alone will declare.

Against the terrible superstitious cruelties still practised by the natives in spite of laws enacted for their suppression by the Government, Miss Slessor waged incessant war.

Twin Children Murdered.

Twins were always murdered, because one of them was supposed to be the child of an evil spirit. It was, of course, impossible to tell which of them was of evil origin, and so both must die. They were generally killed and thrust into a calabash, then thrown into the bush. Sometimes they were thrown away alive, to be eaten by insects and wild beasts. It was not permitted that they should be taken out of the hut through the door, but through a hole made in the wall which was hastily refilled. The mother, herself sharing the superstition, was an outcast, and driven away into the bush, never more to use the native tracks, but to make her own through thorns and over rocks. She considered herself accursed.

Miss Slessor always got hold of any twins the moment it was possible, and some of those she rescued grew up in her house to be a comfort and blessing to her, and a proof to the super-

stitious folk about her that even twins were precious in the sight of God.

She also used to rescue the babies of slave women which were thrown away because there was no one to bring them up. Against witchcraft and the poison and burning oil ordeal she never ceased to fight.

Then, too, she tried to introduce a better relationship between the inland and the coast tribes, so that all could reap the benefit of trading, a campaign, this, which won her the hearty approval and sympathy of the traders.

A Forward Move.

But Miss Slessor was above all things a pioneer. She must *go forward* to preach the salvation that is in Jesus where it had seldom or never been preached. Therefore she used to make tentative excursions up-river, carrying medicine and bandages, and visiting the sick in the riverside villages, telling them at the same time of the Saviour.

At the earnest request of Okon, a chief who lived about 30 miles up the river, she paid his place a visit of a fortnight's duration. Her departure from Old Town created a great deal of excitement for days before she left. 9 a. m. was the time fixed for the start, but Mary knew enough of the ways of her people to go on calmly

with her day's work, and at 6 p. m., nine hours later than "scheduled" time, she was summoned to the canoe.

This canoe had been sent by the king, and had a little improvised matting shelter with rice bags for her to rest upon, an act of love and thoughtfulness which touched her heart indeed. Setting her four twin children in the bottom of the boat she waited in patience through further native delays; then, at last, the thirty-three paddles fell into the water and the voyage was begun. There were songs in her honour—one stating that she, their beautiful beloved mother, was on board. And soon the low "tom-tom-tom" of the drum and the gentle motion through the water lulled "Ma" to sleep. In ten hours they reached Okon's place, just as dawn was breaking.

A busy fortnight ensued. There was prescribing, bandaging, cutting out of clothes, lessons in washing, ironing, starching, but above all the preaching of the Gospel. It was the first time many of the people had heard the story of Christ, and the numbers who crowded to hear her were so great that her voice could scarcely reach them all.

Afterwards these fierce looking men, some of whom had come from a great distance, would come up and wish her good night ere starting on the dark walk back.

A Kind Advocate.

Then came a day when such grave looks were on all faces that she guessed that there was something wrong. There was trouble ahead. Two of the young wives of the chief had wilfully broken Efik law by going into a yard where a boy was sleeping, and the punishment for that offence was one hundred stripes. "Ma" interceded with Okon, and he consented to have a "big palaver." There "Ma" rebuked the girls roundly for their mischievous prank, for it involved two slave-girls as well. Her rebuke excited applause from the men, at which she turned upon them and gave them her frank opinion of their treatment of women, and the system of polygamy, a speech which was *not* applauded.

However, through "Ma's" entreaties, the hundred was reduced to ten and nothing more. In an ordinary way salt would have been rubbed in, and possibly dismemberment or mutilation have followed. She bade the wives and slaves show their gratitude by loyal service, and then she began preparing for relieving the pain of the victims. Their piercing screams were heard above the shouts and laughter of the onlookers as the alligator hide did its work, and, at last, one by one the girls came to her in

agony for the comfort and easement she had ready.

At length the return journey to Old Town was taken. Okon himself accompanied her, and on the way they encountered a fearful storm of rain and thunder and lightning, which drenched them all, and presently "Ma" was shaking with ague and her temperature rising every moment.

As fast as possible the rowers got her to Old Town, and she was carried by a bush path up to the Mission House, where, ill as she was, she attended first to the needs of the children.

She was obliged to remove to Duke Town late in 1882 on account of a tornado, which damaged her house so badly that she had to fly from it. In Duke Town she was so ill that the Presbytery ordered her home, and she left in April, 1883, taking with her a little girl-twin whom she had saved. The other twin, a boy, had been stolen during one of Miss Slessor's brief absences from her house and killed, therefore she resolved to keep the little girl safely beside her so that she should grow up and show them the folly of their superstition.

Home Ties Broken

On this, her second furlough, Mary was destined to see her dear ones for the last time in this life. Janie, her youngest sister, was

very ill, and a change to a warmer climate was imperative. Mary ultimately took a small house in Topsham, and as no other course seemed possible, severed her connection for the time with the Calabar Mission in order to look after her people, hoping that at some future date she would be reinstated. She then went down to Topsham, her salary assured till February.

Shortly came the news of her sister Susan's sudden death, which meant that the entire upkeep of the home devolved upon Mary.

And Mary, by this time, was earning nothing. However, as Janie's health was improving, it became clear that Mary should apply for reinstatement. This was gladly given, and she also had her mother's willing consent to her wish to go up-country on her return to Calabar.

Everything was arranged for her departure when Mrs. Slessor suddenly failed, and was unable to leave her bed. Mary waited on her Lord for guidance in this sorrow, and shortly a letter was on its way to an old Dundee friend, asking her to come and take charge of the home. That truly noble woman agreed to do so at once, and the devoted missionary was soon on her way across the ocean.

She arrived at Creek Town just before New

Year, 1886. Naturally she was anxious about the dear ones she had left behind, little knowing that her mother had reached the heavenly home about the same time that Mary reached Creek Town. In March, Janie died, and the home life was over. Mary turned her face bravely, resolutely to her work in Calabar.

“Heaven is nearer to me now than Britain, and there is no one to be anxious about me when I go up-country,” she said.

CHAPTER IV

Storming Satan's Stronghold

MISS SLESSOR was two and a half years in Creek Town. The last year was occupied largely by negotiations for her removal to Okoyong.

Three times members from the Mission had accompanied her to spy out the land, but were received with sullenness by an armed people. At last, in June of 1888, she resolved to go up again.

King Eyo, of Creek Town, ever her friend, sent her up in his own canoe, fitted out for her in royal state, with Brussels carpet on the floor, a palm-leaf shelter, and a brilliant curtain to screen her from the crew, to say nothing of six pillows on which to rest.

On the way up the river she reviewed the Okoyong situation, which was delicate in the extreme, for her own paddlers were the sworn enemies of the people she was going to visit.

Infinite tact, and love, and patience would be needed. The Okoyong might even be on the war path. But, like David, she encouraged herself in the Lord her God.

Arrived at the landing beach, she made her way inland four miles to Ekenge, a mud hut village, and was kindly, if noisily, received.

The outcome of this brave visit was a promise from Edem, chief of Ekenge, and also another chief at Ifako, two miles farther, that they would give her land for her missionary enterprise.

With this promise she returned to Creek Town, and packed her belongings, amid much shaking of heads and gloomy prophecies from those around, to all of which she only laughed.

King Eyo, good man, came to see to the loading of the canoe, and in the grey, soaking dawn she set off, Mr. Goldie at the last minute sending Mr. Bishop, a member of the missionary staff with her.

Up to Okoyong.

In fading light they landed, and "Ma" immediately started on the four-mile walk through the soaking woods to Ekenge, leaving Mr. Bishop to follow with some of the carriers and dry clothes and necessaries.

"The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

Such promises were Mary Slessor's trust as she set out with the four children—first, a boy of eleven, carrying a box on his head filled with tea, sugar, and bread; then a boy of eight, with kettles and pots; after him a boy of three, and lastly a little maiden of five, all more or

less tearful. "Ma" walked behind, a bundle on one arm and a baby girl astride her shoulders. She sang funny child songs to cheer the little mites, albeit the tears were in her own eyes. And the rain was streaming down.

A strange little company this, to come to such a stronghold of Satan. But, even so, how weak so e'er the instrument, in God's hand it is mighty.

There was no one at home at Ekenge when the little party arrived, except two slaves. Every one was at Ifako for the carnival on the occasion of the death of the chief's mother. She had died that morning.

A fire and water were soon ready, and the children undressed and asleep, and "Ma" awaited Mr. Bishop's arrival with the carriers. He came at last and informed her that the men refused to bring anything up that night. After a brief confab he and Miss Slessor collected some of the slaves, and she started back to the beach, brave heart, with them.

Her sleeping paddlers were aroused, and by midnight the needed things were at Ekenge.

Darkness before Dawn.

The next day, Sunday, August 5, 1888, her first in Okoyong, was one of the saddest she ever spent, partly, no doubt, on account of her

extreme weariness after the strenuous hours of Saturday. She managed to have a little service with the women who returned—some with fractious babies, some for more food for the orgy at Ifako, and her heart was somewhat cheered.

Miss Slessor spent fifteen years in Okoyong. The sadness of that first Sunday was amply compensated for as the years went by. The fifteen years showed marvellous results and a great harvest of souls.

But at what a cost! "Ma" had to be on the qui vive practically night and day, ready at a moment's notice for any emergency—"Run, Ma, run!" and off she would go, either to the rescue of twins, or to some palaver or poison ordeal, and what not.

Edem, the chief of Ekenge, had a sister called Ma Eme, a widow of a chief. Ma Eme was Mary's firm friend and ally, and secretly kept her well informed of all the concealed, dark doings of the people, often at risk of her own life. She was a great big woman, always acting as peacemaker and intercessor between her brother and his wives. Mary noticed some marks on Ma Eme's arm, and pointed out her own vaccination marks. Ma Eme calmly said: "These are the marks of my husband's teeth."

For the first few weeks of her sojourn in

Ekenge, Mary Slessor had to live in the Harem, the memory of which never left her. Some of the horrors she witnessed are not to be described. "Had I not felt my Saviour near me I should have lost my reason," she said.

Meanwhile she starts her school, and her services, stories of which were soon all over Okoyong, and requests came from various chiefs that she would visit them.

On one occasion "Ma" was sent for by a sick chief who lived eight hours away from Ekenge. She went in a deluge of rain, arriving to find the men of his village awaiting his death, and ready to begin the slaughter of those who were to follow him to the spirit-land. In some cases the "retinue" would number over forty! It has even reached sixty several times.

Mary at once attended the chief, not even waiting to change her soaking garments until she had done all she could for him. After that she got into some filthy borrowed rags, and went out to send someone for more medicine. If she could save the life of the chief she would save many lives.

A Calabar man was discovered, and he went to Ikorofieng to Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank, who sent not only medicine, but tea, sugar, and other comforts, with a letter which was

more than cheering to the missionary in her feverish condition.

The chief recovered, and Mary was allowed to have morning and evening services. There were promises to learn "book," to trade, and to make terms with Calabar. In her turn, she was made to promise always to be their mother, and to try to find them a teacher, and to come and see them again. Okoyong was free to her thenceforward.

Superstition and Sorcery.

Against sorcery and witch doctors "Ma" had to fight continuously.

When her own chief, Edem, was ill, she attended him at first, but one morning there was evidence of the witch doctor in the form of a parcel of shot, powder, teeth, bones, seeds, egg-shells, and all sorts! All these, it was asserted, had been taken out of Edem's back (he was suffering from an abscess in his back), and, of course, as someone was to blame for this state of things, people were being denounced by the witch doctor and seized.

Mary's remonstrances so angered the chief that he had himself and his prisoners conveyed to his farm, where she could not follow. Presently she heard that the prisoners were to die, as Edem was growing worse. But one night a



NATIVE MOTHER AND BABE

deputation came to her for a letter to the native pastor at Adiabo, to ask him to see what his skill would do. She gave the letter at once.

The native pastor, however, when told that the soul of someone was troubling the chief, refused to go. His sister went as nurse, and under her care the abscess broke—the prisoners were released, except one woman, who was put to death.

Here is another case of "sorcery."

A chief came to visit Edem, and as a matter of course there was fearful drinking. On the day of their return to their own village, they were so intoxicated that "Ma" accompanied them as protection for the villages they passed through. On the way a plantain sucker was discovered in the path, with a few palm leaves and nuts, a sight which made the brawling natives fly in terror! Back must they go to the last town they had passed and wreak vengeance for this "sorcery" laid in their path. But "Ma" barred the way, and dared them to go back. In the end they went on homewards by a long detour. "Ma" laughingly pitched the rubbish into the bush, but kept the plantain sucker to plant in her own yard.

Next morning the chief she had accompanied sent for it, with information that (the usual articles apparently) teeth, shot, hair, seeds,

fishbones, etc., had been taken out of his leg by the native doctor. Someone was to blame. The plantain sucker was for evidence.

Of course there were ordeals imposed, and a young man seized. "Ma" was sent for to beg for his life—an odious task, for the chief was a callous, brutal man, and rejoiced in having "Ma's" supplications.

At first there did not appear to be any result, and Mary passed the days in prayer, as she went about her daily tasks. Then, one day the young man was sent back free to his people, and the fast ripening quarrel on his account between Edem and the brutal chief came to an abrupt end.

"Ma" had a song of praise in her heart we may be sure.

CHAPTER V

Christ Triumphant in Okoyong

It was many a long day before these extremely leisurely natives would help "Ma" to build the house and hall for meetings, but at length they crowded to the ground.

Tree trunks, bamboos, palm mats, and red clay were the building materials. The fireplace, dresser, sofa, and seat beside the fire were all made of red clay, and polished with a stone till smooth. The Okoyong regarded the completed building with awe, and never did house hold a merrier party than this when "Ma" and her bairns took possession.

One day a boy came from the village of Ifako and informed Miss Slessor that his master wanted her.

She at once obeyed the imperative message, and on arrival found the ground cleared for her hall; posts, sticks, and mud ready, and the chiefs waiting for her to direct.

She did direct, at once, and the work went on like a prairie fire, but not a single slave was allowed to help. King Eyo sent the mats for the roof. It took thousands, for the place was thirty feet by twenty-five, and two rooms at

one end, so that she could remain the night when necessary.

A Sanctuary of Refuge.

The opening of this hall was a day never to be forgotten in Okoyong.

The people appeared in their new Sunday attire, which in several cases was composed of nothing more than a freshly washed skin, but the children were mostly arrayed in garments from various mission boxes. The chiefs who were there promised that the house would be kept sacred to the service of God, no weapons of warfare should be brought in, the slave-women and children should come to it to learn, and also it should be a sanctuary of refuge.

And so Miss Slessor obtained a firm hold in Okoyong, which hold was never slackened by the vicissitudes and tumults she passed through during her long ministry.

With much difficulty she managed to establish trade between Okoyong and Calabar, and when King Eyo met the Okoyong natives for palaver—concluding the proceedings with a simple address to them in church on the words: "To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace," they returned home with increased respect for "Ma" and a great rever-

ence for King Eyo, and the things he said and did.

A burst of trading enthusiasm followed, and they had far less time for senseless palavers, and quarrels, and drinking.

Often she would be called away miles into the forest, where the natives had hidden in order to administer the poison ordeal without her knowledge, and usually she won the victory and saved lives.

Once Ma Eme's farm was attacked by robbers, and Miss Slessor spent Sunday there trying to establish peace among the drinking natives.

Then there was the frequent: "Run, Ma, run! there are twins!" and she would go at once. Up to 1890 she had saved fifty-one twins.

She was also constantly preventing the killing of the retinue of wives and slaves on the death of a chief. "Ma," said one man, reproachfully, "you have quite spoilt our fashions. Before you came a man took his people with him; now he must go alone."

Then there was the constant attention needed in keeping her home and yard free from the encroachment of the bush. Lovely as these flowering shrubs and trees were, they had to be cut down, for they grew too fast, and offered

covering for beasts of prey. She and her girls had to do this, as the natives were so busy now, planting yams for trading with Calabar.

Combating Smallpox.

In 1896 "Ma" Slessor's people had mostly moved from Ekenge to more productive lands, and she, of course, had to follow.

She stationed herself at Akpap. Very shortly smallpox broke out, and she was busy vaccinating her people.

The captain of the "smoking canoe," for so the natives designated the mission launch which plied up and down the Cross River, found her having some difficulty in making the lymph go round.

At Ekenge, where she had first begun her work in Okoyong, the epidemic was very severe, and she had to go over to nurse the sick and bury the dead. Among those who died were her two great friends, the chiefs Ekpenyong and Edem. The latter she had to bury unassisted in the bush at night, making his coffin and digging his grave herself.

The old house and Ekenge village were soon overrun by the bush and lost to sight.

She was sent home in 1898, but returned again that year.

Okoyong was settling down into a peaceful

territory under "Ma's" influence. Even more than one native had been known to take back his wife after she had given birth to twins, and a twin boy had been kept by his parents. Drinking was on the decrease, palavers were not so often scenes of bloodshed and quarrels.

One Government official says of her, that as an interpreter she made every palaver an easy one to settle, because she could represent to each side exactly what the other party wished to say.

She was even called upon to settle a dispute between the Umon and Okoyong, the Umon people being confident that she would mete out justice even if it went against her own side.

As she was going up-river to this palaver, there was an adventure with a hippopotamus which attacked the canoe, but happily no harm was done.

Later on, much against her will, she was ordered back to Creek Town, as the Government were obliged to send out troops against the Aros, who refused to submit to Government authority. During this unwilling absence Okoyong remained quiet and true, and she returned rather earlier than the Government had intended her to!

On the fifteenth anniversary of her arrival at Ekenge, the twenty-ninth year of her missionary

career, a happy company gathered round the first memorial table in Okoyong.

How different this from the first sad Sunday. Looking back over the fifteen years, Mary could see how tenderly she had been led, and how wonderfully God had blessed her work; and when the 103rd Psalm (old metrical version in native tongue) was raised, her heart was raised, too, in adoration and love.

CHAPTER VI

“Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my heart, my life, my all.”

ONCE more the pioneering spirit is urging Miss Slessor forward. Akpap could now be left to others, and she herself could go where for many years she had yearned to go—Enyong Creek.

She therefore starts negotiations for two ladies to come to Akpap, and, pending settlement, she, in her usual prompt manner, canoed up to Itu with two of her boys, Esien and Effiom, and Mana one of her girls, settling them there to teach school and take services, an experiment which proved successful far beyond “Ma’s” hopes—abundantly above all she asked or thought.

At Arochuku, after Miss Wright was settled in Akpap, she did the same thing, and when she was embarking for home she was pressed on all hands to come back soon.

She lay back in her canoe, thanking God for prospering her undertakings, and admiring the loveliness of the landscape around her. Enyong Creek, the scene of most fearful wickedness and anguish, the hotbed of slave-trade and superstition, was beautiful. Tropical trees lined the banks, their branches often

interlacing—the fallen trunks having their hollows full of lovely orchids and ferns; the surface of the water bearing pretty water lilies; blue kingfishers and yellow palm birds flitting through the foliage overhead as the canoe slips softly along the waterway.

Only Man is Vile.

But amidst all this loveliness there is the fearful sore of sin and sorrow, the crying need for messengers to bring the needs of the Saviour of mankind to the dark and sin-stained inhabitants.

Miss Slessor knew all about the Aros and the Long Juju, with its wily slave-trade system. Whilst in Okoyong she had had visitors from Arochuku, with their tales of cruelty and wrong, and had already won a place in the hearts of many of their chiefs. And now she had received a welcome from the men who themselves were responsible for the wicked slave traffic carried on by the superstition of the Long Juju, and had stood on the very spot itself where the iniquitous practice was carried on.

Small wonder that her heart was lifted up in praise that morning as she progressed quietly homewards in her canoe. God was about to do great things.

But suddenly another canoe shot out across the river and collided, quite politely, with hers.

The man in it had a wonderful story to tell, and a letter for her, which resulted in "Ma" there and then going to see the writer of the letter at Akani Obio. His name was Onoyom Iya Nya, and he had been chosen by the Government as President of the Native Court. Also he was the only chief in the district who had not been disarmed by the Government.

Well, this man, Onoyom, met Mary when his servant brought her to his beach, and told her he was seeking God; had been seeking Him a long while. There is not space to tell all the story. It went back to his boyhood in 1875, when a white man had appeared in the Creek, sending the natives flying in fear, except this boy.

The white man had come to tell the story of Jesus. He was Dr. Robb, from Ikorofieng. At one time Mammy Fuller had been nurse in his family. Dr. Robb persuaded the boy to lead him to the chiefs, and when he was with them, preached to them words which the boy, at least, never forgot.

After Many Days.

But he grew up a heathen, and had suffered

great sorrow. Now he wanted "Ma" to lead him to Jesus. The Lord Jesus Himself has promised (and He keeps His promises) that they who seek Him shall find Him. Onoyom found Him at last, and became one of His truest followers.

He had the courage to hew down a grand tree, around which was gathered much juju superstition, and turned it into seats for the Church he built. Better still, he put away all his wives, save one, making ample provision for them. The wife he kept was a twin-mother whom he had once turned away. His town was a prohibition town, and on Sundays a white flag was raised to show that there was no Sunday trading.

.

Years slipped away. Ma's keen desire to continue at Enyong had been acceded to by the Foreign Council.

The Government, seeing her influence with the natives, invested her with the power of magistrate. She undertook the work, but refused remuneration. Her popularity in Court was great, for the natives got their causes heard first hand owing to her perfect knowledge of their tongue, and the Government officials had implicit confidence in her judgment on account

of her clear insight and intimate knowledge of native life and character.

It was not an unusual thing for "Ma" to box the ears of a truculent witness or abusive chief in court, and she was held in fear and awe by the natives everywhere. The Government officials esteemed her highly, many of them reverencing her as a mother.

In Scotland Again.

In 1907 she was so ill that she was ordered home to Scotland, and Government officials vied with each other in making her journey easy, as also did her fellow workers. Mr. Gray packed for her, Mr. Middleton of Lagos undertook to care for her on the voyage, and she reached Edinburgh at last with a heart full of gratitude to them.

She and Dan, the little six years old boy whom she had brought with her, stayed with her dear friend, Mrs. M'Crindle. Miss Slessor was soon nearly overwhelmed by her correspondence. Parcels, post cards, letters and invitations were showered upon her. She paid visits to several friends, and went out cycling with some of them. But the civilised roads in Britain were not so pleasant to her as bush paths in Africa. So timid was she that if she saw a dog coming along she got off her machine

at once, nor would she remount until the dog had passed.

She addressed several meetings. People expected she would address a great many, but she announced her intention of returning to Calabar in October, though only a few months of her furlough were spent. She was not happy. She had heard by letter a story about one of her beloved girls in Africa, and was anxious to get back and see what it meant. As far as we know she said nothing about it, and bravely carried out her engagements, having her reward in large and reverent gatherings, to whom she gave vivid pictures of the life and work in Calabar and the need for more workers. She did not write or prepare speeches beforehand, but spoke simply out of her overflowing heart. On the last night of her stay, her friends found her weeping bitterly and realising her solitariness very keenly, for there were none of her own kith and kin. She felt also that life over here was too hurried, and filled with too many things. Very possibly she thought some of them a waste of time, and perhaps she was right. "Ma's" heart was in Africa. She was glad to find herself once more on the way there, and seemed to gain a new lease of life during the voyage.

On her arrival, her loving, anxious heart

was rejoiced to find that the unhappy story (which had been circulated by a native) was entirely without foundation.

And so ended Miss Slessor's last furlough in Britain. Would it have troubled her had she known it was her last? I think not. She had no home ties here, but in Africa she had vast—one may say eternal—interests, where she was doing a work for eternity. There was the scheme of a Home for Women and Girls to be carried out, there were new stations to be planted, natives in an area of over two thousand miles looked to her for advice and help. Even in Northern Nigeria they knew the brave white "Ma."

Use was her headquarters, and as soon as she felt free to move in the matter she purchased a site for the Home in the name of her girls (being European, she could not purchase in her own), with the consent and help of the Government.

A Home for Girls.

Then, as there was a period of waiting, she quietly went on planting the fruit trees sent by the Government. She also began to accumulate stock, her first memorable instalment being a cow, which she bought from a man to prevent his going to prison for debt. This cow

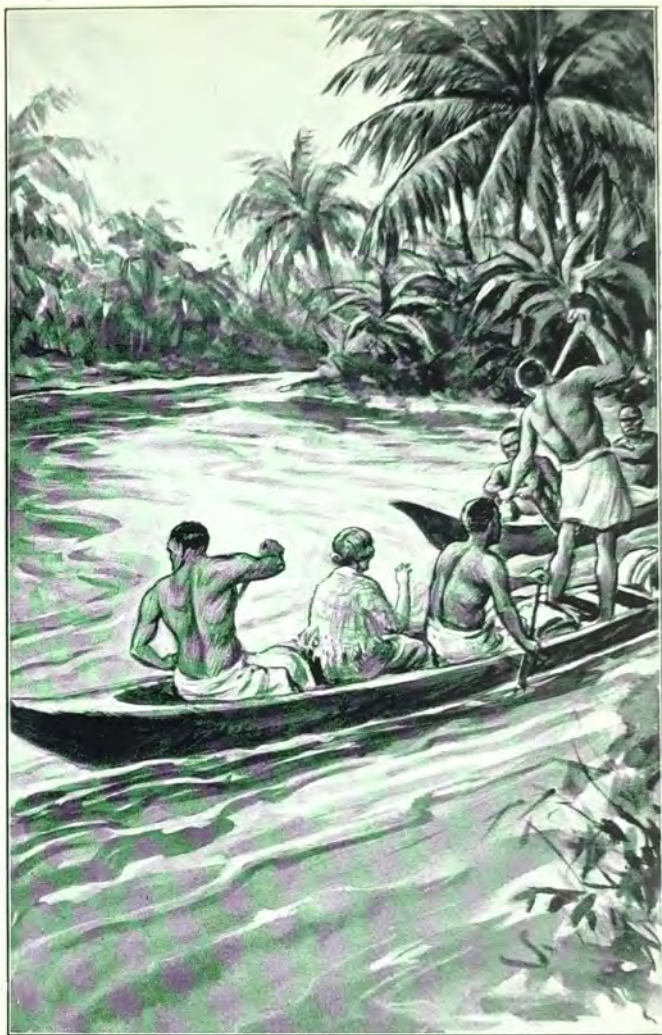
was a terror to the natives, and was always getting loose. It ran away even when "Ma" and the Principal of the Hope Waddell Institute were leading it gently home one day. It was more famous than "the cow with the crumpled horn."

But all this time Miss Slessor was growing weaker and more broken down in health; the frail body was not equal to the strong, brave spirit, and she was several times laid aside.

She felt that she ought to give up her court work, as she had so much to do in spreading the Gospel, and sent in her resignation, which was regretfully accepted.

One of her girls, Mary, was married to the young native driver of the Government motor car at this time, and shortly afterwards followed the first baptismal and communion services at Use—Use, only a short time since dark, degraded, and drink-sodden.

But "Ma" felt now that there was also work for her farther afield than Use. Some young men from Ikpe had come to her, and she had influenced them so strongly that they wished to become "God men," and had gone back to Ikpe to begin a Christian work there. Now they had come to "Ma" again and told her there were forty others ready to become Christians.



SUDDENLY ANOTHER CANOE SHOT OUT ACROSS THE RIVER AND COLLIDED, QUITE POLITELY, WITH HERS

(Page 43)

Onward, Still Onward.

Ikpe was two days away from Use by water, an old slave centre in a degraded part of Northern Nigeria, and in league with Aro. Services were held on Sunday and week days, and these young teachers knew only the most elementary truths as yet. What could "Ma" do in face of such heart-hunger as was manifested by these poor groping natives?

She went to them several times, but at last their reproaches that she did no more touched her so deeply that she said, "*I am coming.*"

In a short time she did return, with corrugated iron and other material for her building, and so the work began.

She still had Use as headquarters, making the journey to and fro by canoe. But it was too much for her, and in 1911, when repairing her tornado-ruined home at Use, she collapsed. At the time, Dr. Robertson's place at Itu was temporarily filled by Dr. Hitchcock, a young man, quite as masterful in his way as was "Ma," and she eventually found she had to submit to his orders. He even had the temerity to send her fowls, as she was not feeding herself suitably for her state of health. On one occasion, she asked him why he had sent that fowl; to which inquiry he promptly replied

that he was obliged to, as it could not come by itself, and that was all the answer "Ma" got.

It was a long time before she was at Ikpe again, and even then it was only by running away from the doctor. A great throng received her on the beach, and she was overjoyed to be at work once more. She established Jean at Nkanga as teacher and evangelist, where she had one shilling a week, and food from the people, and "Ma" provided her clothes. Jean was the best Efik teacher Mary knew, and her knowledge of the Scriptures very thorough.

Miss Slessor always looked upon money—even that given for her personal needs—as a help only for forwarding the work of God. A Government cheque for £25 for herself, in recognition of her work, was destined for her Home for Women; and so on with all that came. Thus it sometimes happened, in spite of abundant funds in Duke Town in her name, that in Ikpe and like places she was often hard put to it to find the wherewithal to purchase food.

The boxes of clothing, etc., which were sent out by the church were a cause of much pleasurable excitement. In 1911 shortbread and buns were enclosed, and this was doubly happy, for bush food had been upsetting her, and a diet of shortbread and buns for a week made her better.

Thirty-Six Years Completed.

The people around were kind, too, and saw to it that yams and rice were forthcoming from time to time, ostensibly "for the children."

But "Ma" was steadily growing weaker, and the gift of a cape cart in which she could be pushed along by two boys or girls was a great joy. In bygone days she had twice had a gift of a bicycle, but her cycling days were past.

In this cape cart, or basket chair on wheels, "Ma" was able to do more work in the way of looking for building sites for churches. It was her wish to make a series of churches and schools in Ibibio.

This scheme, and the basket chair, put a stop to her idea of going home on furlough, and in September, 1912, she completed her thirty-sixth year as a missionary by making tours along the Government road, opening up out-stations wherever she could gather the natives in their villages.

CHAPTER VII

The Last Strenuous Years, and the Life Laid Down until Daybreak.

AND now "Ma" was to have what she considered her first real holiday, though it appears she was almost ashamed to have such a glorious time.

Her health had given concern in Scotland and in Calabar, and a lady on the Foreign Mission Board at home succeeded in persuading Miss Slessor to go to an Hotel in Grand Canary, since the cold of an English or Scots winter would be too severe for her. Friends prepared her outfit—making her, as she quaintly said, "wise-like and decent"—and Janie went with her. Mr. Wilkie handed the cashbox to the Captain, he in turn passed it on to the other Captain when she transhipped, and he, again, on arrival at Grand Canary gave it to the manager of Hotel Santa Catalina, where she put up, and during the whole of her stay the management treated her with the utmost deference and love.

The change did her good, the days spent in

the sunny grounds, and on the hillsides were days she never forgot, and she returned to Use to find that she was frustrated in her intention of paying for it herself, for Miss Cook, the Foreign Mission Board friend, had settled the entire cost.

Shortly after this holiday, much to her chagrin, one of her eyes was injured by a pellet of mud. Erysipelas followed, she was blind and in much pain and fever for a fortnight, but as soon as possible she was at Ikpe again, though the eye was still troublesome.

The building at Ikpe progressed, and "Ma" was very busy with all the work on her hands. Her heart ached for those who were yet unreached, and she longed for more missionaries to be sent out.

Cut Off.

But even in all this bustle she yearned for letters and news. She once said she was seven weeks without a word from the outside. All the reading matter she had was old advertisement sheets which lined her boxes. From these she declared she had learnt the names of all hotels and boarding-houses in any part of Europe, and was willing to give the information to anyone who asked for it.

When any stray white visitor appeared with

papers and letters it was a glorious day. Let us remember, if we cannot *be* missionaries, we can *cheer* missionaries, if we will, by writing and sending papers.

Government officials always visited her when in her neighbourhood, and the relations between them were friendly and happy. To some of them her introductions were decidedly informal in character. A stranger appeared one day when she was busy on the roof of the house. Looking down upon him critically, she asked what he wanted, and he, hat in hand, replied meekly that he was her new District Commissioner, but he couldn't help it. She was charmed, and at once adopted him as a friend.

A great official, whose wife was writing to Mary added as postscript to his wife's letter: "*She* sends her kindest regards; *I* send my love."

The Government gave instructions that she was to be allowed to make use of any conveyance belonging to them, and that all possible help was to be given to her.

And from these same officials she received books, magazines, papers, etc., and sweets, crackers, and plum pudding at Christmas. On one Christmas Day several of them came and spent the day with her. The Governor of Southern Nigeria, Lord Egerton, with three or four officials, paid her a visit one dark,

showery night, and left a case of milk, two cakes, and boxes of chocolate and crystallised fruit. He and she were delighted with each other. In the eagerness of conversing she said once to him: "Hoots, my dear laddie—I mean, sir."

Simply Trusting

"Ma" valued letters from her friends, and still more did she value their prayers. And in later years when she prayed for them her petition was: "Lord, give them Thy best, and it shall suffice them and me." How wise, how trustful!

Her Heavenly Father was so near, so real to her, that she talked to Him as to a friend walking beside her, and her Bibles were full of marginal notes and remarks which showed how unspeakably precious the Book was to her.

In 1913 she revisited Akpap, and there was, of course, one great unending reception during the whole of her stay. Ma Eme was with her an entire day, and their reminiscences of bygone days were intensely interesting to both. Ma Eme was still a heathen, alas, and shortly after this visit she died. It was a great grief to Mary that she, this dear, brave, stately black woman never came out on the side of Christ.

There was a service arranged during Mary's visit, and it had to be held in the unfinished Church, for there were more than four hundred well-dressed natives present to hear "Ma."

A Public Presentation.

One day, soon after her stay at Akpap, came a most august-looking document for her. It asked her to accept the honour of Honorary Associate of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England. "Ma" was astonished, and eventually accepted.

Soon came another letter signifying the approval of King George and his sanction to her election. "Ma" said nothing about it, hoping to keep the matter secret, but the badge, a silver Maltese Cross, came through the Colonial Office to the Commissioners at Duke Town, and so she had to submit to a formal presentation there, and a Government launch was sent to fetch her.

The villages round Ikpe were not as responsive to "Ma" as others had been, but by degrees she made headway.

On the Government road at Ogoro Ikpe was a Government Rest House. She climbed up to it one Saturday. It had a doorway, but no door; only holes for windows, and a mud floor, but to her it represented a fortress from

which to attack the surrounding villages, and she appropriated it, knowing well that the Government would not object.

Of course, as always, there was the fight over twins and twin-mothers. The chiefs were firm and "Ma" was firm. At Ibam, when she asked to start a mission there she was advised to go home and let them think it over!

Odoro Ikpe was her next venture, and she gained a solid foothold there after a long palaver. This advance was regarded somewhat sorrowfully by the Ikpe Christians, and they asked if she was forsaking them. She could not do that, so, at this time she was keeping three centres going—Use, Ikpe, and Odoro Ikpe.

But more yet.

One Sunday morning during service she noticed six strange men enter. After service they told her they were from Ibam (the place where she had been told to go home and let them think it over), and asked her to come to them, and they would build a place to worship God. They gave their *best* yard, and crowds attended the meetings. Ibam was the last heathen stronghold in that district, and, it having surrendered, Miss Slessor wrote to her friends in the homeland saying that she was the most grateful and most joyful woman alive. What did it matter

that she only had the floor of the Rest House to sit on, her tired back against a mud wall, her only light a candle held upright by its own grease? The rest of the weary, the Light of the World, was being preached all around, and God was blessing her work.

One incident at Ikpe I must not miss. "Ma" was holding a service at Ikpe, and to her amazement thirty lads from Odoro Ikpe came in. So interested and so earnest were they now, that they had walked five miles to hear "Ma" speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Ikpe people, on the entrance of the strangers, got up at once and gave them their seats, taking up a position on the floor themselves. What a lesson in Christian politeness!

Widening Influence.

The discovery of coal in Udi, and the starting of a railway from Port Harcourt to that place brought before Miss Slessor's far-seeing mind the vital need of more workers among the numbers of heathen who would congregate in the new centres of industry.

Very frequent were her calls to those across the sea, telling them of this great need, and much was she grieved by the apathy of Christians in Britain.

*"Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high—
Can we to men benighted,
The lamp of life deny?"*

But Mary Slessor was not apathetic. She pursued her way. Wherever she could she built her little wattle and daub churches, and in them preached the simple Gospel to the natives. She was greatly averse to elaborate churches. She feared to put anything forward save Christ. The simplest form of worship in an environment of their own setting made for purer, clearer understanding of Divine things she believed, and surely she was right. She never spent the money given on expensive or ornate buildings, but in pioneer work among the tribes.

The house at Odoro Ikpe was some long time in course of erection; the men and boys employed were the laziest and greediest she had ever tackled, and during her occasional absences at Use, the work was always badly done.

But it was finished at last, somewhat in the rough, and by means of a ladder "Ma" climbed up to the top rooms to sit on the loosely boarded floor whilst tending her latest motherless baby, gazing meantime across the wild African plain.

Brave woman, *lonely* woman humanly speaking, but she knew that He who will never leave us nor forsake us was there. Her spirit was dauntless, though her body was weak and broken.

This was July, 1914. Then came whispers along the African bush paths of strange things happening in the great world across the sea.

Why had canoes laden with produce returned unloaded? Why had trading come to a sudden end? Why did not the building materials come?

Louder and louder grew the whispers, until in wild panic natives came and told her of awful tragedies in Europe. Britain and France at war with Germany! She could not believe it, and bravely continued her station duties in order to calm her people. But she sent for food in case it were true, and found prices already doubled and her difficulties thereby increased.

The Crash of War.

Then came the real blow—her first war mail. Hitherto the Government official at Ikot Ekpene had given her some news, but not the worst. Now she had the unvarnished account of the brutal invasion of Belgium and the reverses of the Allied Armies.

The shock struck her down. As a matter of fact she does not seem ever to have really recovered from this. The thought of dying alone in the bush at the Government Rest House troubled her, on account of a fear that her skull might be seized and worshipped as a powerful juju by the people. After a fortnight of intermittent, raging fever, she was conveyed by her boys and girls to Okopedi beach. There a trading agent sent at once for Dr. Wood at Itu, and she was taken to Use, when, realising how near the end she might be, she asked Miss Peacock to come over to her. Miss Peacock knew that "Ma" must be very ill before she would send for help, and she set off on her bicycle for Use at once.

There was a small measure of improvement later, but Miss Peacock and Miss Couper, who both visited her, now noticed that her old rallying power was gone. She consented gladly to an offer made by her dear friend, Mrs. Arnot, now a widow, of a home with her during this visit to the old country. The idea was that she should finish the house at Odoro Ikpe and leave in spring for Scotland.

But the Lord whom they both served had other plans for these two dear women. Mrs. Arnot was to be missionary in charge of the memorial to her friend—"The Mary Slessor

Home for Women and Girls"—and Mary would be at Home with the Lord.

The Last Rally.

On Christmas Day she held a service. It was difficult to speak of war between Christian nations to natives, and she was glad to tell them that a day of National Intercession was fixed for the following Sunday.

On New Year's Day Miss Peacock and Miss Couper were with her. She was as happy as a girl, and they had a merry time. Miss Peacock speaks of a new tenderness and sweetness about her—the last touch of the Master's hand.

She wrote her last letter to Miss Adam—the friend who had been so truly helpful through several years—and her closing words were: "God be with you till we meet again."

On Sunday, 10th January, she struggled up for the service. Next day she was so ill that the girls sent for Miss Peacock. Miss Peacock at once summoned Dr. Robertson, and she herself remained till the end, administering the medicine and sips of milk or chicken soup. Five of her girls were there—Janie, Annie, Maggie, Alice, and Whitie—and they watched beside her till the brave spirit had winged its flight, at 3.30 on the morning of January 13, 1915, in the sixty-sixth

year of her age and the thirty-ninth of her missionary life.

She was buried at Duke Town. Missionaries, Government officials, merchants, were there. Flags were flying at half-mast. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and borne shoulder high by the boat boys. Crowds watched the silent procession to the grave on Mission Hill. There a wail began as the coffin approached, but Mammy Fuller, sitting alone at the top of the grave, rose, saying: "Do not cry—do not cry! Praise God from whom all blessings flow. 'Ma' was a great blessing."

And so, amid a silently weeping throng, the short, simple service was conducted by Mr. Wilkie, and when the last sounds of "Asleep in Jesus" had died away and the coffin was lowered, Mammy Fuller said to Mrs. Wilkie: "Ma, I don't know when I enjoyed anything so much. I have been near Heaven all the time."

Mammy Fuller knew that for Mary there had been an abundant entrance, and that we should sorrow not, even as others who have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

THE WORLD FAMOUS
BIOGRAPHY OF

MARY SLESSOR OF CALABAR

BY
W. P. LIVINGSTONE

3/6 net

“One of the best books I
ever read”—

Dr. ALEXANDER WHYTE.

“I have been thrilled by
a book called ‘Mary Sles-
sor’”—JAMES DOUGLAS.

“The story of missions
does not lack heroines,
but the record has no one
quite like ‘Mary Slessor’”

—*Westminster Gazette*

HODDER AND STOUGHTON, LTD.
PUBLISHERS ————— LONDON



PANDITA RAMABAI

PANDITA RAMABAI

CHAPTER I

A FOREST CHILD

RIGHTLY and fairly to judge the character of any human being, one should be well acquainted with his family history for several generations before he was born. This being in most cases impossible, it is better, obviously, to judge very mercifully, or not at all. Concerning the subject now before us, the almost unique personality of the Hindu lady, Pandita Ramabai, we must, to discover the earliest perceivable trace of her mental and spiritual origin, go back to the beginning of the last century.

At that period, a young Brahmin student at Poona, Ananta Shastri by name, chanced—"eternal God that chance did guide"—to have for his tutor in Sanskrit a gentleman who was also tutor to one of the royal Princesses. How it came about that this little lady was thus taught we are not informed, for at that time it was a thing almost undreamed of in India for a woman to learn so much as to read and write. However, Ananta Shastri was much impressed by the fact that a girl actually could be taught as well as a boy, and conceived the wild and revolutionary idea that he would like an educated wife!

His own course of study completed, the young Brahmin returned to his home in the Mangalore district, full of a generous enthusiasm to impart to

the girl bride who was waiting for him all he himself had attained. But neither the maiden herself nor Shastri's mother was inclined to give him any encouragement. "He will be wanting to teach a primer to the chickens next!" they derisively said.

So he was forced to relinquish his hopes.

In course of years, Ananta Shastri's children grew up, and his wife died. At about forty years of age, being an earnest and devout man, he undertook a pilgrimage to one of the sacred rivers of India. Bathing one morning in its waters, he met with a fellow-pilgrim of his own caste. The latter was a man with several daughters to dispose of, who, having learned a few particulars as to the clan and position of the stranger, agreed, gladly enough, to give him in marriage a fine little girl of nine years old.

Needless to say, the wishes of the child or her mother were not deemed of any account whatever. She was soon prepared for her journey of nine hundred miles to her future home, and Ananta Shastri set out to return, all his blighted hopes of an educated wife springing once more into life.

This time, although he bargained with his mother that he should teach his little bride to read, he still found the opposition of relatives and fellow-Brahmins so great that at last he carried her off to a rude home in the forest, where they could pursue their studies unmolested. Here many a night the tiny wife lay under her quilt, shaking with terror at the howls of the wild beasts that prowled around, while Ananta Shastri, like a true knight, kept guard with drawn sword outside. He seems indeed to have treated her with a tender and chivalrous solicitude that invests the strange story with the beauty of true romance, and must have taught love

to the child's young heart while her mind was imbibing the Puranas' sacred lore.

As time passed on, and the girl bride became the mother of a son and daughters, their father, now an old man, adhering to his enlightened views with regard to education, caused them all, impartially, to be instructed in reading, writing, and the sacred learning of the Brahmins. His wife gladly aided him in teaching her children, but so utterly did his friends disapprove of such revolutionary proceedings, that Ananta, finding himself socially ostracized, took up a permanent abode in the forest.

Here, in April 1858, was born to this singular pair their youngest child, a little girl, who was given the name of Ramabai. This means "sister of Rama," the goddess of light—an unconscious prophecy of her future life, for truly has Ramabai been a light to those who for ages had sat in impenetrable gloom.

The child was unusually bright and intelligent. Early taught by a fond mother in the scriptures of Hinduism, she at the age of twelve years had committed to memory no less than eighteen thousand verses from these sacred writings. Sanskrit, the language in which they are written, thus became perfectly familiar to her. From hearing her parents speak Marathi, she became fluent in this dialect also, as well as Kanarese, Hindustani, and Bengali, which she acquired during the wanderings of the family.

Along with Ananta Shastri's advanced ideas on the subject of female education, he held opinions differing from those of his co-religionists as to the child-marriage of girls. Therefore, we find Ramabai at fifteen or sixteen years of age still living with her parents, sister, and brother at home. On other points, however, the family observed the

utmost strictness in regard to Brahminical usages. On one occasion, during a sea-voyage of three days' duration, when meals prepared in accordance with their own caste codes could not be obtained, they all not only fasted totally from all solid food, but did not relieve their thirst by a single drop of water, lest it should contain ceremonial defilement.

In advanced age the good old pundit was overtaken by poverty, infirmity and blindness, the first-named affliction resulting more or less from too lavish hospitality towards religious pilgrims and students. Then came the terrible famine of 1874-77. The family of Ananta Shastri, though so well versed in the sacred learning of the Brahmins, possessed no secular education by which money might be earned, and to engage in any kind of manual labour would involve loss of caste—to them, an inconceivable degradation. So, believing their misfortunes to be the punishment for some unknown sin, there was nothing left for them but to endeavour to propitiate the gods, and so secure "a change of luck."

This they essayed by spending a large proportion of the little money that remained to them in alms to Brahmin priests, and in pilgrimages to sacred tanks and streams; also in gifts to astrologers, from whom they hoped to learn the mind of the gods concerning them. Their constant prayer was for wealth, learning, and renown, which they believed would be showered upon them from heaven, without any more practical efforts on their own part. Yet, though the gods of brass and stone were dumb, the cry of these poor, earnest, sincere people had entered the ears of Him who alone could help, and the answer was already on its way,

though only to be received in this world by the youngest of the group.

To human sight things went from bad to worse. Clothing, jewellery, silver-ware, even the cooking vessels of copper and brass were sold—not to procure food, but to give yet more alms to the obdurate deities, while the family lived sparingly on grain of the coarsest kind. Ramabai's brother, a fine young fellow a few years older than herself, fasted so continuously in the hope of winning divine favour that his constitution was injured beyond recovery.

At length the last coin was spent, the last handful of rice gone, and this sad little group of five who so helplessly loved one another realized that the time to die of starvation had indeed come. They decided to meet the end hidden in the depths of the forest, and thither they accordingly retreated.

But release from suffering was tardy. For eleven days and nights they lingered, subsisting miserably on leaves, water, and a few wild dates. At length a voluntary death by drowning in a sacred tank, which is regarded as a meritorious rather than a sinful action by the Hindus, was decided upon to put an end to these hopeless and protracted sufferings.

The dear old father resolved to die first, and bade a solemn farewell to his children one by one. The turn of his youngest, the girlish Ramabai, came last. That touching scene can be described in none but her own simple words :—

“ I shall never forget his last injunctions to me. His blind eyes could not see my face, but he held me tight in his arms, and stroking my head and cheeks, he told me in a few words broken by emotion to remember how he loved me, and how he had

taught me to do right, and never to depart from the way of righteousness. His last loving command to me was to lead an honourable life if I lived at all, and to serve God all my life. He did not know the only true God, but served the—to him—unknown God with all his heart and strength; and he was very desirous that his children should serve Him to the last. 'Remember, my child,' he said, 'you are my youngest, my most beloved child. I have given you into the hand of our God; you are His, and to Him alone you must belong, and serve Him all your life.' "

But the God whom he thus ignorantly worshipped, and the movings of whose Spirit he in darkness faithfully obeyed, preserved the good old man from suicide. Ananta Shastri's son at this critical hour rose up and bravely said he would renounce all caste pride, and do any honest work that he could find to support his parents. The old Brahmin was persuaded to give up his idea of death in the sacred tank, and though almost too weak to move, the pitiable little group made their way out of the jungle and once more sought the abodes of man.

In a village at the foot of the mountain, which they reached after two days' weary and painful journeying, the family at first took refuge in a temple, but the priests, whose religion teaches little pity for the weak and suffering, turned them out. The next day they found temporary refuge in a ruin, and a young Brahmin gave them some food.

Here, after a few days' illness, Ananta Shastri's release came. Alone, his son carried the body out beyond all human habitations, and buried it according to the directions of the sacred code.

The same day the mother was taken ill, but she

lingered for some weeks. Though the young man found himself by this time too weak to work even if he could have obtained employment, they were still too proud to beg, and lived wretchedly on what was given them by kind-hearted neighbours. Once, towards the last days of her life, the sick woman suffered so terribly from hunger that she sent Ramabai to the house of a Brahmin lady to beg a piece of coarse cake.

Although kindly received, the young girl could not force her tongue to frame the humiliating request ; but her silence and irrepressible tears spoke for her, and the bread was given. Alas ! it was too late to be of any service to the dying woman. A few days later the three young wanderers were orphans indeed.

Ramabai feels not a shadow of doubt as to the salvation, through God's loving mercy, of both her parents. Speaking in America, years after their death, she said : " If any one wishes to say that my father, so eager to learn of God, and my mother, so tender and sweet, have gone to hell because no Christian ever reached them with the glad tidings of Christ, I have only to tell you never to say so in my presence, for I will not hear it, and I cannot bear it."

We will not linger longer over this saddest part of Ramabai's life. The elder sister was the next victim of starvation, and Ramabai and her brother were left to struggle on alone. They travelled on foot, without shelter from the cold at night or the heat by day, to the northern boundary of India, then back to the east as far as Calcutta. Sometimes the young man got work to do at wretchedly low wages, but even this was most precarious, and

most of the time the pair were still on the verge of starvation.

Two results, however, that were good came of these weary trappings—the sister and brother gradually lost faith in the Hindu religion, and gained, through what they saw and heard, increased enthusiasm in the cause of the down-trodden Hindu woman.

They began to speak publicly on the subject, endeavouring to enlist the sympathy of their co-religionists. Ramabai herself, so young and so gifted, attracted such attention among the Brahmins of Calcutta, which city they eventually reached, that she was invited to appear before a solemn conclave of Pundits. These wise men were so much amazed at the girl's learning—mistress of seven languages, as well as of the sacred books—that they conferred on her the title of "Sarasvati," or "Goddess of Wisdom," and permitted her, the only woman ever so honoured, to be called "Pandita."

Thenceforth poverty and privation were of the past. Together Ramabai and her brother travelled throughout Bengal, holding meetings on the education and emancipation of woman. Notwithstanding the opposition their father had endured, and the scepticism of the Brahmins of his day as to the possibility of cultivating female intellect, a concrete example of what could be done in the person of the Sarasvati was everywhere received with enthusiasm and generously supported.

But the mutual happiness of this devoted pair was all too short-lived. Ramabai's brother was taken ill in Calcutta, and his strength, wasted by years of privation and hardship, soon succumbed. His last thoughts were for his young unprotected

sister "God will take care of me," she said, to comfort him.

"If God cares for us," said he, "I fear nothing."
So he passed away, and Ramabai was left alone.

CHAPTER II

THE HINDU WIFE AND WIDOW

TO the fact that Marathi women are not confined in the zenana, as are most of their sex in the North-West and other parts of India, is chiefly owing the liberty with which Ramabai Sarasvati moved among the Brahmins of the more southern provinces. But she showed herself of so independent a mind as to assert her freedom from the bonds of caste, by remaining unmarried until she was twenty-two years of age, and then uniting herself to a man of her own choice.

Ramabai's husband was a Bengali gentleman, a graduate of Calcutta University, Bipin Bihari Medhavi, M.A., whom, to the scandalization of the women round about, she dared to call by his first, or as we should say, his "Christian" name. Such familiarity with the exalted being whom a Hindu wife is taught to regard as "like unto a god," was surely enough to make their hair stand on end.

For less than two years the pair led a happy life in the husband's home in Assam, during which time a baby girl was born to them. She was a welcome gift—not disliked or despised, or regarded as a misfortune, as a first-born daughter usually is in India. And she was named Manorama, or "Heart's Joy," to signify her parents' love for her.

Before little Manorama was twelve months old, her father was stricken down by cholera, and once more Ramabai was called to suffer the agony of bereavement.

This time her loss placed her in what, under ordinary circumstances, would have been the most painful condition imaginable to a high-caste Hindu woman—that of a widow without a son. But the Sarasvati's education, her emancipation from the tyranny of caste, and her knowledge of the world gave her a tremendous advantage, and rising bravely above her own grief, she set herself to alleviate the sufferings of her sisters in sorrow.

Often as we have heard of the extreme sadness of the lot of the Indian widow, the reasons which have brought about this deplorable state of things are not clear to all our minds. It is naturally a puzzle to many how the "mild Hindu," whose Vedas teach him to "consider the life of every animal as precious as his own," and who has actually founded a hospital for disabled horses, dogs, bullocks, and monkeys, can be so inhumanly cruel to infants and women of his own race.

The cause lies in the calumny of women by the Hindu Scriptures.

In most Oriental countries woman is regarded as immeasurably the inferior of man. Even the Jews before the time of our Lord were not untouched by this idea, though it never reached the pitch of absolute brutality as in India at the present day. The Hindu is taught by his sacred writings that man is everything that is noble and good, but woman, his temptress, as naturally prone to all evil. No doubt it is the sin of our first mother that has borne bitter fruit in the misery of countless millions

of her daughters. Woman, according to the Hindu Vedas, is vain, immodest, unfaithful, and her heart "more deceitful than that of a viper."

Therefore the urgent need of every possible restraint to keep her fairly within the rules of decent behaviour. Hence, the early marriage, and the subsequent imprisonment in the zenana. A gentleman who allows his daughters to remain unmarried after ten, or at the utmost twelve years old, is thought to have disgracefully neglected his duty towards them. Vast numbers are consequently married as mere infants, sometimes to boys of their own age, but often to men of mature years. To get a girl married to a Brahmin is considered so specially meritorious an act, that some unscrupulous youths of that sacred caste go about the country marrying all and sundry, accepting bridal gifts from parents, and departing to be heard of no more. Occasionally one of these much-married beings will have over a hundred nominal wives, all of whom are plunged in the horrors of widowhood should he untimely die.

As a rule, the betrothed girl goes away to her husband's home long before she reaches a marriageable age, that she may be prepared for the duties of wifedom by her husband's mother. Then her troubles begin. Sometimes the mother-in-law is considerate and kind, but too often she is tyrannical and hard to satisfy, and occasionally, especially if it should happen that her son is not pleased with the bride chosen for him, she treats the poor little creature with bitter cruelty. In any case, the loneliness of the child-wife, torn from her mother and all whom she loves, and sent perhaps hundreds of miles away to a home among strangers, may be imagined.

Yet marriage is looked forward to with more hope than terror by most little Hindu girls, for they know it will be a time of feasting and merriment, of sweetmeats, fireworks, and the donning of gay clothes, when each one for a brief, bright season is a centre of interest and petting, and reigns as a little queen. Of the long years of misery that may follow their innocent young hearts know nothing.

The position even of the most beloved wife is to our Western minds one of humiliating servility. Her main business is to prepare her husband's food and to serve him with it, meekly standing by till he has finished, then gratefully making her own meal from what he has been pleased to leave upon the dish. A current Mohammedan tradition sufficiently pictures the Oriental ideal of a good wife.

"A woman was one day seen sitting half in the sunshine and half in the shade. By her side was a vessel full of hot water and another of cold. Also, close by, was a stick, a piece of rope, and a small heap of broken bricks.

"On being asked the meaning of all this, she replied: 'My husband is a grass-cutter, and I know not whether at this moment he is at work in the sunshine or in the shade. I want to sympathize with him whichever it may be. And I know not whether, on his return, he will need hot water or cold, so I have prepared both. Also, should he be in a bad humour, it is impossible to say whether he will choose to chastise me with a stick or a rope's end, or if he would prefer to throw bricks at me. So I have got them all ready for his hand.

"When Mahomet heard this, he said here was indeed a good woman, who deserved to go to heaven."

The one way in which a Hindn woman may raise

herself in the general estimation is by becoming the mother of sons. Having "looked upon the face of a living son" is to a man a passport to future blessedness, while a husband having died sonless has no right to heaven or immortality. Therefore the wife who confers this boon on her husband places him under an obligation which he is free to reward by gifts of sweetmeats, jewellery, and fine dresses, these being the only goods which the inferior mind of a woman is supposed to appreciate. He is indeed commanded by the Vedas to take care that she is made happy, that his welfare and that of the children she bears him may not suffer. She may even, after giving her husband one or two sons, venture to present him with a daughter, without fear that the helpless mite will be cradled in the nearest well, or "accidentally" furnish a meal for the night-prowling beasts of prey.

Should her sons live to man's estate, the lot of the Hindu woman reaches its highest possible pinnacle of bliss, for she rules supreme over them, and their wives and families. A son is commanded always to honour his mother.

But even a favoured wife has not for a moment her husband's trust. She is believed to be always liable to betray him unless closely watched. Hence the excessive severity of her seclusion. Ramabai relates the story of a lady, who, seeing from a window that her little son—her only one—was in imminent peril in the street, impulsively rushed out to save him. If anything could have excused the violation of purdah rules it was surely such an emergency as this. But although the husband, on hearing of the incident, did not openly blame her, *she was seen alive no more.*

Another wife was killed by her jealous husband simply because a glimpse of her back had been accidentally seen by another man through an open door, she herself being wholly unconscious of the circumstance.

Such then is the condition of the happy wife in India—she who by securing the eternal bliss of her lord has won the approval of himself and his relations—classed by Hindu Shastras among the valuable female properties of her husband, such as “cows, mares, she-camels, slave girls, she-goats and ewes”; and, say they, “Let a wife who wishes to perform sacred ablution, wash the feet of her husband *and drink the water*”!

But on the reverse side of the picture is the fate of the sonless wife; and that of the sonless widow is darkest of all. Nothing can be more sad than the wholly unmerited sufferings of the child-widow whose husband has died before the consummation of their marriage. This, gravest of all misfortunes, is very liable to occur when the betrothal of mature or even elderly men to mere babies is not uncommon.

To be thus left a widow is considered a sure sign that in a previous state of being the poor little girl committed some fearful crime, for which not she alone but the man who was unlucky enough to marry her has had to suffer—he being hurried, sonless, to a hopeless doom on her account. The feelings with which she is regarded by his relations can therefore be conceived.

Some sad day the child is suddenly snatched from her companions, her pretty clothes and ornaments all stripped off, and her rich dark hair shorn close to her head. This disfiguring shaving is repeated



PANDITA RAMABAI DISGUISED AS A LOW-CASTE WOMAN
FOR PURPOSES OF INVESTIGATION AND RESCUE



PUPILS OF PANDITA RAMABAI AT THE SHARADA SADAN, POONA

by some castes every two weeks, for they believe that the widow's long tresses would "bind her husband's soul in hell!" She is then clad in a single coarse, ugly garment, to mortify her vanity; her tinkling silver bangles and sparkling gems are confiscated to humble her pride, while the scantiest food and frequent fastings are ordained for the subduing of the evil passions with which her young soul is believed to be filled. The hardest work, the vilest names, and the most brutal blows are henceforward her daily portion—for is she not in essence a murderess? She may never again join in any festivity, she may not even be seen at a family gathering, for her touch is pollution, the sight of her an omen of ill-luck. And this as long as her life lasts, for re-marriage is strictly forbidden. No wonder that many of the unhappy creatures seek relief from their miseries in suicide.

The practice of burning alive the widow on her husband's funeral pyre was put an end to, as is well known, as far back as 1829, but "cold suttee," as a leading reformer has well named it, still remains. Said a Hindu widow to a European friend: "The English have abolished suttee, but, alas, neither the English nor the angels know what goes on in our houses, and the Hindus not only do not care, but think it good."

Another widow touchingly said: "Bruised and beaten, we are like dry husks of sugar-cane from which the sweetness has all been extracted."

This then was the class to which Ramabai herself now belonged, and whose earnest champion she had become.

It was years before, when a mere child herself, that the Pandita's sympathies had been first

aroused on behalf of the victims of Hindu notions about women.

In part of her father's house there lived a man with his mother and his young wife of sixteen. The poor girl's heartrending cries when brutally beaten for some trifling fault filled the happier child with an indignation that after nearly thirty years was keenly remembered. She believes it was her first call to the service of her ill-used sisters.

Later, the troubles of a friend, a high-caste young lady named Rukhmaibai, confirmed the Pandita in her longing to see Indian women placed in a less unfair position with regard to marriage.

Rukhmaibai was a well-educated girl, betrothed in her childhood to a boy of her own age on the understanding that he was to receive education equal to her own. Her relations must have been among the few who sympathized with the enlightened views of Ananta Shastri, for she was also allowed to remain at home till she was nineteen years of age. Then, when her young husband claimed her, it was found that his parents had neglected their part of the contract. He was illiterate, and in many ways quite repulsive to his bride.

Rukhmaibai appealed against the union, but even an English judge was compelled to come to the decision that as the law stood there was nothing for it but to order the girl to join her husband, or endure six months' imprisonment. She chose the latter alternative, but subsequently a compromise was effected, and by bearing the cost of the trial, and paying the disappointed bridegroom 2000 rupees wherewith to marry another wife, she was released.

But Ramabai's first real *protégée* was a poor little arab of the streets, a Brahmin child cast out by her husband's relations after his death, and who had been able, chiefly owing to extreme lack of physical beauty, to lead a virtuous if starving life, up to the age of twelve years.

This homeless wanderer Ramabai took under her protection, and she is now leading a happy and useful life as a Christian Bible-woman.

But there were myriads of others—in 1891 the number of widows in India was estimated at 23,000,000—many of them quite young girls and children, in similarly wretched case, and Ramabai could not rest till she had wrought some practical work for the alleviation of their lot.

CHAPTER III

A BOLD PROJECT

ALL this time, though, like her father, Ramabai was in her loving sympathy for suffering unconsciously following "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," she knew not the source of her good impulses nor who was guiding her. But she had already heard of the Christian religion, and was deeply interested in it, insomuch that she procured a Bible and began to study its teachings.

For a while, after her husband died, Ramabai supported herself and her little daughter by lecturing on the Education of Women. Her intimate acquaintance with the Hindu scriptures enabled her to assert that their most ancient teaching enjoined

that women should be taught, and this the Brahmins were unable to deny. She was so favourably received, especially in Poona, that a society of high-caste Marathi ladies was actually formed, with branches in various cities, for the avowed purpose of encouraging the education of girls and postponing marriage to maturity.

In 1882 Ramabai spoke on these subjects before a British Commission on the question of Education in India; and the President was so much impressed by her views, and the clear and able way in which she stated them, that he had them translated from Marathi and printed in English.

Soon after this, the Pandita conceived the idea of further improving her education, and acquainting herself with the English language and literature by a visit to these islands.

A Christian mission at Poona recommended her and her little daughter to the hospitality of an Anglican Sisterhood at Wantage. Here she was received, and remained for a year, studying English and the Christian Scriptures, with the result that before leaving she had embraced the Christian faith, and with her little Manorama was baptized according to the rites of the Church of England.

After this twelvemonths' preparation, Ramabai accepted the post of Professor of Sanskrit at the Cheltenham Ladies' College, which she held for a year and a half, continuing her own studies at the same time.

It is interesting to learn that, even in our cold, damp, and variable climate, this Brahmin lady faithfully adhered to the rules as to diet in which she had been brought up. Never did she taste fish, flesh, fowl, or even an egg, for that contains the

germ of life which is so sacred in the estimation of Hindus. Nor can we suppose that this was any great piece of self-denial, for the sight and smell of meat is most disgusting to those who have never tasted anything but fruit and grain. She was also a strict abstainer from alcoholic beverages.

When Ramabai had been at the Cheltenham College a year and a half, she was invited by a fellow-countrywoman, Anandibai Joshi, of Poona, to go and see the latter receive her medical degree in Philadelphia. Thus was another new world opened before the Pandita's eager gaze.

The late Miss Frances Willard's picture of our heroine in early womanhood is as graphic and graceful as one might expect. After stating that Ramabai can trace her Brahmin ancestry for a thousand years, she tells us that the Pandita has "dark grey eyes, full of light, a straight nose, with a tiny tattoo between the brows, mobile lips, close-cut blue-black hair, and perfect white teeth." She dressed, we are told, in grey silk, very simply made, with a boyish, turn-down collar, and a white "chuddah" or native shawl draping her head and shoulders.

In personal characteristics she is "full of archness and repartee, handling our English tongue with a precision attained by but few of us who are to the manner born." Yet in disposition she is "incarnate gentleness, combined with celerity of apprehension, swiftness of mental pace and adroitness of logic."

To which fascinating description Miss Willard's mother, in her diary of that memorable visit, added: "Pandita Ramabai is a marvellous creation. She has a surprisingly comprehensive intellect; is as open to perceive truth as a daisy to

the sun ; with face uplifted, she marches straight into its effulgence, caring for nothing so she find the eternal truth of the eternal God—not anxious what that truth may be.” Tenderness towards all living creatures is also one of Ramabai’s winning traits ; “ even of flowers she thinks we ought to let them grow and to admire them in their bright living beauty rather than to pull them from their stems. The wearing of birds on bonnets seems to her a pitiable vulgarity.”

This, then, was the woman who took to America, the land where above all others our sex is crowned with honour, her harrowing story of the Hindu wife and widow.

Ramabai at once found a true friend in Rachel Bodley, A.M., M.D., the Dean of the Women’s Medical College in Philadelphia, and the early death of Dr. Bodley’s former Hindu pupil, Anandibai Joshi, soon after her graduation, seemed to draw the American lady’s heart the more closely to this second freedom-seeking Asiatic.

The Pandita’s sojourn in America extended to three years. During that time she took every opportunity of studying the educational methods of that country, and especially the kindergarten system, which greatly aroused her interest. She also travelled much, with a view to enlisting public sympathy in the important scheme which was now definitely shaping itself in her mind.

This was nothing less than the founding of a school where Hindu widows of high caste could be received and educated by their own countrywomen in such a way as to enable them to earn their own living when their school course was finished. Especially did Ramabai hope to train teachers who

might be received into native homes, and even penetrate the seclusion of the *zenana* itself with the light of knowledge and truth.

With this end in view she addressed drawing-room meetings everywhere, and larger audiences whenever she could, evoking enthusiasm and gaining supporters among the most cultured and intellectually advanced of American women in all sections of the Christian Church.

While with Dr. Bodley, Ramabai also wrote her deeply interesting book, *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, which is unique, as throwing light upon the existing condition of things from the inside, which could only be done in an absolutely accurate and reliable manner by one who had actually lived from childhood in the midst of the abuses of which she so graphically speaks. To this volume Dr. Rachel Bodley added an admirable preface.

This work further aroused the sympathies of American women, and as the profits arising from the sale of it were—and still are—devoted to the cause which Ramabai had at heart, she was able to start at once on the production of educational material for her projected school. Before leaving America she had sufficient money to purchase about six hundred electrotype plates for the illustration of her complete series of books, which were to comprise a primer, five graduated reading-books, a geography, and a natural history—the first series of the kind for girls ever published in India.

But perhaps the most valuable fruit of Ramabai's visit to America was the formation in 1887 of the "Ramabai Association," to which is almost entirely owing the Pandita's ultimate ability to realize the dream of her life. The headquarters of the Associa-

tion were in Boston, the President and Vice-Presidents included representatives of five religious denominations, the Board of Trustees secured some of the best business intellect of that city, and the Executive Committee was composed entirely of women. The object of the Ramabai Association was the formation of "circles" in every part of the States, which should pledge themselves to provide a certain sum annually for ten years, to start and maintain a home and school in India for high-caste widows.

After travelling and speaking throughout Canada and in most of the cities on the Pacific coast, Ramabai bade good-bye to her generous Transatlantic entertainers in November 1888, and set out for her Indian home, *via* San Francisco and Hong Kong.

Parting from her true friend, Dr. Rachel Bodley, the Pandita begged her to remind the readers of her book that "it was out of Nazareth that the Blessed Redeemer of mankind came; that great reforms have again and again been wrought by instrumentalities that the world despised. Tell them to help me to educate the high-caste child-widows, for I solemnly believe that this hated and despised class of women, educated and enlightened, are by God's grace to redeem India."

Ramabai's personal humility (indelible mark, perhaps, of her race and sex), notwithstanding her courage and high aspirations, is well illustrated by her own comparison. "Christ," she once said, "came to give different gifts to different people. Some He made prophets; some He made preachers; some He made teachers. Since I have become a Christian I have thought He has given me the gift of being a *sweeper*. I want to sweep away some of

the old difficulties that lie before the missionaries in their efforts to reach our Hindu widows."

After making the most of her opportunities whilst journeying to still further enlarge the circle of her sympathizers, the Pandita landed in Bombay early in the year 1889.

Here was awaiting her the welcome of her little Manorama, now about eight years old, who had arrived in India from England a short time before in the care of one of the Sisters from Wantage. Asked by a friend why she had not left the child to finish her education in England, Ramabai said, "I want her to grow up among her people, to know them as they are, and to prepare herself for the work there is before her. If I left her in England, she would grow up to be an English girl, and not one of us."

So truly does this pioneer of female education in India realize that to make culture and Christianity really acceptable to the Hindus, it must be shown to be perfectly compatible with the retention of native customs in regard to both food and dress.

In this spirit, therefore, and with the broadest ideas upon most subjects, Ramabai, in the spring of 1889, opened her Widows' Home in the busy Anglo-Indian city of Bombay.

CHAPTER IV

ITS WALLS "SALVATION" AND ITS GATES "PRAISE"

SHARADA SADAN, or "Abode of Wisdom," was the somewhat high-sounding name, attractive to Oriental ears, which Ramabai gave to her boarding-school.

She commenced with two pupils, one of whom was a poor young widow who had three times essayed to put an end to her own wretched existence, and was only deterred by the fear that even if she did so she might again be born a woman. An efficient helper was found in Miss Soonderbai Powar, another Hindu lady reformer, who has visited England in the interests of a suppression of the Opium Traffic, and an elementary study of three languages, Marathi, Sanskrit, and English, was at once commenced.

As to the ground which the Sharada Sadan was to take with regard to the delicate and difficult question of religion, Ramabai had definitely made up her mind. Strict neutrality she believed to be the only practicable position.

Already it had been proved that Christian missions were of small avail as affording refuge for the high-caste widow. Their avowed object being the conversion of the heathen, no Hindu woman with any regard for the faith of her fathers would be willing to place herself under proselytizing influences for the sake of material comforts. If we substitute the term "loyal Brahmin" for that of "obstinate idolater," which is too often used to describe faithful souls who are not ready at once to embrace a, to them, new and false religion, we shall be the better able to sympathize with their position. The worthiest are not the soonest won; it is the thin rock-soil which produces the quickest crop.

Ramabai felt that to make her school an institution for the promulgation of Christianity would defeat its primary object. Therefore, she pledged herself to her Brahmin friends that the utmost liberty should be accorded to all inmates of her

Home to maintain their own religion, and facilities afforded for the performance of all sacred rites and for the strictest observation of the customs of caste. And although she claimed equal liberty for herself and her assistant to worship in accordance with their own Christian belief, she promised that no pressure whatever should be brought to bear upon the minds of her pupils.

Certain well-intentioned persons were disposed to find fault with this arrangement, as we know there have been teachers foolish enough to promise non-interference with the religious ideas of Hindu pupils, and then break their word!—a course which must inflict more injury upon the cause they wish to serve than the work of many missionaries can undo. But Ramabai was faithful.

The school increased rapidly, and in 1892 the "Abode of Wisdom" was removed to Poona, as being in every way a more desirable locality for the purpose.

Mrs. Dyer, who visited it on the occasion of the opening ceremonies, describes it thus: "There were about forty pupils, including a specially bright group of little girls from ten to twelve years of age. It was difficult to believe that the latter rested under the cruel ban of widowhood. The school, a fine bungalow, stands in a garden, which is "dotted here and there with fine shade trees, the gold mohur, the plumeria, and others, which are covered with gorgeous flowers in their season. Roses and lilies, jasmine and elemanta, variegated crotons, caladiums, bougainvillea, and the hundred and one tropical shrubs that are cherished greenhouse plants in our colder atmosphere, luxuriate in the beautiful climate of the

Deccan of India. . . . A shaded fernery planted around a fountain close to the house affords a cool retreat for the heat of the day. . . . The pupils came and went everywhere, learned their lessons in groups in the drawing-room, or walked in the garden by twos and threes, gathered roses and lilies for each other and the visitors, made wreaths of jasmine, and decked each other's hair."

A glimpse of Paradise indeed to the child-widow, whose portion had previously been that of a hated outcast, to whom everything pleasant was to be rigorously denied!

"I wish them," said Ramabai, "to see the contrast in everything where love rules. I wish them to become acquainted with as many good people as possible; to learn what the outside world is like from pictures and books; and to enjoy the wonderful works of God, as they ramble in the garden, study with the microscope, or view the heavens from the little verandah on the roof."

No wonder that the girls followed their dear friend and teacher all about the bungalow, and "clustered around her like bees!" No wonder that her good-night kiss was a boon on no account to be missed, but to be claimed twice over if a little innocent scheming could compass it! No marvel, either, that the religion which was known to be the source of all this sweet motherly kindness should ere long begin to attract some of the young hearts thus within the range of its tender influence.

It was the custom of Ramabai to meet with her companion-helper, Soonderbai, and her little Manorama, for Bible-reading and prayer every morning before the duties of the day were begun. If any of the pupils voluntarily chose to join them,

they, of course, were not forbidden. As time went on not a few did so, and by the spring of 1893 quite half the widows in the Sharada Sadan had formed the habit of attending this family worship, several apparently being deeply impressed.

When the Brahmin supporters of the school heard of this they were indignant. They wished the pupils to be kept to the strictest observance of the Hindu religion, but not to be free to attend Christian services. This, Ramabai pointed out, was not that absolute *neutrality* which had been laid down as one of the fundamental rules of the institution. She appealed to the parent committee in America, and was of course upheld by them.

About twenty-five girls, however, were withdrawn from the school by those in authority over them, and bitter tears were shed. Ramabai knew that many were going back to hardship and ill-usage which would seem more unendurable to the poor things than ever, and some even to the imminent danger of moral ruin. The case of one girl, a Gujerathi, whom Ramabai had adopted as her own, was so desperate that the principals of the school had recourse to unusual stratagems to rescue her.

These, which never overstepped the bounds of strict legality, were successful, and so enraged the leading Hindus of the Bombay Presidency that the extinction of the Sharada Sadan seemed at one time imminent. But Ramabai was staunchly supported by her American friends, and the storm was weathered.

Meditating much upon plans for the continued support of her school, the Sarasvati hit upon the idea of starting a fruit farm. A suitable piece of land having been found at Khedgaon, about forty

miles south of Poona, the trustees of the American Fund were applied to for help. This they were reluctantly compelled to refuse, as such money could not legally be used for the purchase of land. Copies of Ramabai's appeal were, however, sent round to several friends.

Greatly disappointed at this refusal, Ramabai went to Bombay to try and raise money on her own life insurance, but without success. Returning to Poona, heavy-hearted, she noticed, as the train rushed along, a tiny bird sitting on the branch of a tree, undisturbed by the fiery monster with all its smoke and noise. Then she "thought of what the Bible said about the sparrow, and felt ashamed of her lack of faith."

On reaching home she reminded her teachers that although she had so failed they had a rich Father in heaven who would yet give them that farm; and she and her friend Soonderbai agreed to pray together, remembering our Saviour's promise, for the money wherewith to purchase it.

"Not long after," she writes, "I was awakened very early in the morning, and a cablegram from America put into my hand. I trembled, fearing I knew not what, but raised my heart in prayer to God to help me bear whatever the cablegram contained. I opened it, and *the farm was mine!*"

Half a dozen American friends had responded to her appeal with sufficient generosity to start a special fund for the acquiring of the longed-for farm; other contributions were subsequently added, and in 1894 the purchase of the land was an accomplished fact.

By degrees the spot was cleared, and planted with fruit trees and various crops, but one rocky portion

still remained unutilized. What it was reserved for was presently to be seen.

The terrible famine of 1897 aroused in Ramabai a passionate desire to do something for the rescue of the hundreds of young widows whom she knew to be exposed to even worse perils, in such a crisis, than those of starvation only. The difficulties in the way were tremendous, but at length she resolved to travel to the Central Provinces, where the distress was the greatest ; and money for her needs began to flow in.

Having found shelter for the first sixty girls and women she gathered in, Ramabai told their pathetic story in a letter to the *Bombay Guardian*, and this, being reprinted in pamphlet form, was circulated largely not only in India, but also in England and America, with the result that still more support was given.

An outbreak of bubonic plague, however, put a stop to the reception of famine victims at the Sharada Sadan, and arrested the erection of new premises at Poona for their accommodation.

At once Ramabai's thoughts turned to the piece of unoccupied land at Khedgaon. Permission from America was cabled for, and promptly obtained, and grass huts were speedily built to shelter the poor outcasts. The pupils at the Sharada Sadan were as enthusiastic as their dear teacher on behalf of these poor sisters. They willingly denied themselves food to help to provide for the famine-stricken, and when Ramabai appealed to them for volunteer mothers for several very tiny children who had been brought in along with older ones, the response was ready and tender.

At a camp-meeting, some six months before the

famine was thought of, Ramabai had felt strangely prompted to ask God for the apparently impossible boon of an increase of the fifteen spiritual children (converts) which up to that time He had given her, to two hundred and twenty-five ! It seemed almost madness to dream of obtaining, let alone of providing for so many, yet the desire was urgent, and the words coming into her mind, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh ; is there anything too hard for Me ? " convinced her that it was to be granted.

Now the way was made open. When the famine was over, and Ramabai had placed in various mission orphanages all of the rescued ones that she could, she found herself with just three hundred girls to whom she was free to teach the Gospel. In less than ten months from the commencement of her famine-campaign, ninety of these rescued ones were baptized as Christians.

About this time, after ten years' existence, the original school was able to report that fourteen pupils had been trained as teachers, nine of whom were occupying good positions, two having opened schools of their own. Of eight trained nurses, five were in employment. Seven girls had become matrons, two were housekeepers, and ten had happy homes of their own. Of the three hundred and fifty widows who had been in the home a longer or shorter period, forty-eight had become Christians through the unconscious influence of the principals, twenty-three of whom were voluntary Christian workers, all retaining their Hindu customs and dress.

Ramabai's hope, however, that at the expiration of these ten years of support pledged by the Boston



A LITTLE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

KRUPA was picked up on the road as a small baby, and taken to Pandita Ramabai, where she grew into this fine little girl of four years old. About this time some famine waifs, who had been brought to Mukti, were formed into an infant class. Observing that their teacher had tried in vain to arouse their interest, Ramabai sent for Krupa, who soon had the little ones beating time with their hands, and singing after her, "Jesus loves me"



THE KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL AT MUKTI

Association the Hindus themselves would be sufficiently enlightened to take up the work, was not fulfilled.

In 1898 she therefore paid a second visit to America, the result of which was that the Ramabai Association was re-organized, and started afresh on a satisfactory basis.

Meanwhile a new building at Khedgaon was being erected to accommodate the great increase of scholars ; a new friend, a Miss Abrams, an American missionary, being in charge of the settlement there.

After a busy time of mingled trial and encouragement, and a brief visit to England, Ramabai reached India again in time for the dedication of these new premises. They are called by their foundress, " Mukti," which means " Salvation " ; while " Praise the Lord " in Marathi characters is inscribed over the principal gate. A large number of missionaries and Christian friends were gathered on this occasion, as well as the entire establishment from the parent school at Poona. To this building was added a special rescue home for those women who had been injured and deserted by wicked men.

Mrs. Helen S. Dyer, who, with her husband, visited Khedgaon in 1899, describes the flourishing state of the Mukti home, both as to its temporal and spiritual work, and the many industries which were being carried on ; dairy-work (promoted by a special gift of money to buy cows, from a lady in England), oil-making, the cultivation of grain and red pepper, and the weaving of sarees upon hand-loom, being among the most profitable. The undertaking is thus to a large extent self-supporting, but it has been from time to time greatly helped by

those almost miraculous gifts, arriving exactly when most needed, which the history of every good work can record.

Another clever stroke of business carried through by Ramabai's practical wisdom was the purchase of a farm hard by the Mukti settlement, which belonged to a liquor-dealer, and was in danger of becoming the site of a liquor-shop. On this vacant spot Ramabai invited the hawkers from the surrounding country to establish a weekly bazaar. This has been a great success, and quite a boon to the neighbourhood, the nearest having previously been eight miles away. When the people are assembled here to buy and sell, a splendid opportunity is afforded of telling them the story of the Gospel.

In 1900 a recurrence of famine once more taxed Ramabai's resources to the uttermost, but many of the converted girls who were themselves rescued in the preceding famine gladly helped to tend the poor victims that were brought in, many of them suffering from loathsome diseases resulting from starvation and neglect.

Among the older native women who helped at this distressing time, were three whose love and zeal their leader specially records with warmest praise. They were named Gangabai, Kashibai, and Bhimabai. These travelled hundreds of miles on foot and unprotected, enduring great hardships in their search for starving girl-outcasts, to gather them into the shelter of Ramabai's home.

Not least among the difficulties in the way of rescuing the poor young creatures was the almost unconquerable suspicion and fear with which they often regarded their would-be benefactors. Ignorant heathen acquaintances, as well as those who wilfully

planned their ruin, had filled their minds with horrible stories of the selfish and cruel purposes to which they would be sacrificed if once they fell into the hands of the Christians. It was the work of months, and sometimes years, to make them believe, for instance, that they were not being fed and fattened that oil might be and by be extracted from their bodies by roasting or grinding in a mill ! Nothing is more eloquent of the usual social condition of the child-widow, than the fact that it seems almost impossible for her to conceive the idea of being cared for and loved. But this is the heavenly lesson which, above all others, Ramabai's school was founded to teach.

With a few extracts from the Report issued in that year we must close this chapter.

Ramabai says : " Five hundred and eighty girls in the Mukti Sadan, and sixty in the Kripa Sadan (Rescue Home) are being trained to lead a useful Christian life. . . . Including the hundred girls of the Sharada Sadan, I have altogether nearly seven hundred and fifty girls under training. . . . The Sharada Sadan has trained seventy teachers and workers in the past eleven years, and the Mukti school has trained nearly eighty girls to earn their own living in the past three years ; eighty-five of the old and new girls have found work in their own mother institutions, and sixty-five of the old girls are either married or earning their living as teachers and workers in different places. . . . I have had a hundred requests from missionaries and superintendents of schools to give them trained teachers, Bible-women, or matrons. I have had quite as many, perhaps more, requests from young men to give them educated wives. It will not be difficult

to find good places and comfortable homes for all these young girls when the proper time comes. . . . My aim is to train all those girls to do some work or other. Over two hundred of the present number have much intelligence, and promise to be good school teachers after they receive a few years' training. Thirty of the bigger girls have joined a training class for nurses. . . . More than sixty have learned to cook very nicely. . . . Forty girls have learned to weave nicely ; and more than fifty have learned to sew well and make their own garments. The rest, small and large, are learning to do some work with ' the three R's.'

" Most of my helpers have joined the Bible Training Class taught by Miss Abrams. . . . Out of this Bible Training Class I hope there will rise a trained band of Bible-women, who will take the Gospel to their sisters in their own homes. Some girls have already begun to go about in the villages around here. They are working as Zenana Bible-women and Sunday-school teachers in their spare time."

Chundrabai, Ramabai's head teacher, whose portrait is given on page 32, was herself a widow at twelve years old. But being singularly favoured in possessing a mother wise and strong-minded enough to insist on sending the child, first to a mission school in Bombay, and subsequently to the Sharada Sadan to be educated to support herself, her life was preserved from much of the suffering that would otherwise have been her lot.

A recent visitor to the colony of rescued ones reports that Ramabai's family now consists of no fewer than eighteen hundred widows. Most of those preserved from the last great famine will bear

the traces of that terrible time to their lives' end. Many were already beyond possibility of rescue when brought to Mukti, and only the five hundred small graves in the cemetery there bear witness to the efforts unavailingly made to save them.

Ramabai begs every friend who visits her from this favoured land of ours to remember her in her immense work and responsibility with their sympathy and prayers. So impressive is the sight of her needy children and the loving care she bestows on them, that she rarely appeals in vain.

Writing quite lately to one of her supporters in England, the Pandita says: "Try as I will I cannot maintain this large company of eighteen hundred people with less than 150*l.* per week; this works out at less than threepence per head per day. To try to do with less is to starve the children, and send them about almost naked." But surely one-and-ninepence a week—less than the cost of maintaining many a pet animal in England—seems marvellously little with which to feed, lodge, and clothe a child; 4*l.* 10*s.* per annum only, to save a girl-widow from despair and admit her into the paradise of a loving Christian home.

In the midst of all her cares and responsibilities, Ramabai, the trusting child of a loving Father, keeps always sunny and young. A recent gift from England, coming at a time of great necessity, enabled her to dispense new sarees, long needed, to her huge family. The little widows received the bright new garments with rejoicing, but Ramabai's heart was so light and glad that she playfully dressed herself up in one of the smartest of them, a bright green (her own dress is usually of pure white), and thus disguised, and with her head covered,

paid a surprise visit to the room of one of her teachers, who for several minutes did not guess who the stranger was! The peals of laughter among the tiny widows who shared in this innocent joke must have seemed like the music of heaven to those who heard.

It was while these new sarees were being distributed that one of the elder girls said to Miss Abrams, "We don't want sarees, or anything else; we only want Bibles. Do give us a Bible!" "Wouldn't you rather," asked one of the helpers, "have a big feast instead of a Bible?" "No," replied the girls, who were inmates of the Rescue Home; "for that would be only one day's pleasure, but this food for our soul will take us to heaven."

Soon after, through the kindness of a member of the Society of Friends, their wish was gratified. Twelve hundred copies of the Word of God in Marathi, neatly bound in cloth, arrived as a present to Khedgaon. On the following Sunday the platform of the Mukti Church was decorated with green leaves and pot plants, and given up to the precious books. Nine hundred were presented that day to girls who were able to read them, and, we are told, "The delight of the children knew no bounds."

In June 1900 Ramabai's daughter, Manorama, who was educated at the expense of one of her mother's many friends, at the Chesbrough Seminary, North Chili, New York, returned to India to relieve her mother and learn the details of the work.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENTS

AN interesting feature of Mukti is the little homes springing up all around, peopled by the families of the married pupils, who are employed in the work in various capacities; Christian homes affording great interest and pleasure to Ramabai. They are for the most planted in a section of Mukti, called "Bethel." The children, of course, attend school at Mukti, where the kindergarten department is constantly increasing.

Miss L. Couch, who has the oversight of the boys' department, says that these young people appreciate their home life. The boys make good husbands and fathers. She says it is very touching to see how tenderly they care for their little ones and help the mothers to nurse them. Many have come into real spiritual blessing, and take their turn at Gospel preaching. Prayer is continually made at Mukti that God will call many of these young men and send them forth anointed to preach the Gospel.

The young women make good, thoughtful wives. None of them are idle. They do their own cooking and washing, take care of their babies, and, in addition, each has some duties at Mukti which employ them several hours daily.

Many of the girls from Mukti have married Christian men and have gone to live in distant parts of India, where they are testifying to the heathen around them of the Saviour's love. Good testimonies come to hand of the godly lives of some of these who are working as Bible-women in other missions. In

fact, you can go to almost any part of India and find women trained by Ramabai.

A missionary, writing concerning one who had worked as Bible-woman in a village mission in North India, and was leaving to be married to a preacher in another place, said: "This young Bible-woman's one desire during these years of preaching has been to give a helping hand to her brothers and sisters still in darkness. To this end she has worked and prayed early and late. I have known her to rise in the small hours of the night while others have slept in order that, prior to cooking her food, she might spend an hour or two laying hold of God for the day's work in the villages."

Occasionally it has been found that some of the girls and young women rescued during famine times have been married in their heathen days, and the husbands or some relative has come to claim them. One of these, a peculiarly fine girl, thoroughly converted and on fire for souls, was claimed by her husband from Gujerat. After ascertaining that his claim was genuine they were permitted to meet, when the young woman consented to go with him on his promise to allow her to remain a Christian.. She wrote afterwards thanking Ramabai for what had been done for her, and telling of her endeavours to spread the Gospel message in the place where she was.

Several others have boldly declined to go back into heathen homes where they would not be allowed to confess their faith in Christ. It was a joy to Ramabai to stand by one and another of these as they testified boldly to their people.

As will be seen elsewhere, Christmas at Mukti is always a time of great joy, and friends in many lands send parcels and gifts to help make it a time to be looked forward to. But it is not always spent in the

same way. On one occasion the boxes for Christmas did not arrive at the expected time. Prayer was earnestly made that the Christmas joy might not be diminished on this account. And the Lord answered prayer abundantly. There was not a murmur, but abounding happiness prevailed. Then some weeks after, when school was again in full swing and Christmas a thing of the past, the missing boxes arrived and every one received their gifts.

On another occasion one of the workers proposed that as the Mukti family had for years known the joy of receiving gifts from God through loving friends, it would be well for them to learn the joy of giving to the Lord. It was suggested that the Christmas morning service should take the form of a thanksgiving service, and those who were led to give would then have an opportunity of bringing what they wished towards the spread of the Gospel in India.

Knowing that many had not any money to give, Ramabai arranged for an early distribution of presents, so those who wished to do so could bring some of their gifts as offerings to the Lord at the morning service.

By 10 a.m. the steps of the Church platform presented a beautiful sight. Dolls, toys, books, clothing, and many other articles had been brought willingly as offerings to the Lord, and happy faces could be seen in all parts of the Church which told of the real joy which filled hearts to overflowing and then burst forth in hymns of praise. One worker noticed a touching little incident. A little child brought her doll, which she wished to give to the Lord. It was an offering that cost her something, and as she turned away to take her place in Church she felt drawn back to take one last loving look at the dollie. She took it up and kissed it, and then laid

it down again that some other child might hear of Jesus.

In the evening there was a Christmas tree, to which non-Christian assistants and servants were invited with the Christian families and some four hundred villagers to hear the Gospel and to receive some of the gifts the children had given up. Some of the dolls went on a journey to Mr. Albert Norton's Boys' Home at Dhond. A box of presents was made up for the boys and a number of dolls put in. As many of the boys were too old to care for dolls, the dolls were returned to be used elsewhere, but they did not come home empty handed. Around each doll's neck was tied an envelope with a few copper coins in each, contributed by the orphan boys toward the work of preaching the Gospel. Thus the doll's missionary trip was quite successful.

During the hot weather holidays the pupils at Mukti enjoy some picnics, a favourite resort being the dry bed of a river overhung with shady trees. "Mukti out for the day" is said to be a very delightful occasion. Those who work hard appreciate the release from tension such an opportunity affords. Under the green trees, and in the shelter of the great boulders, little groups are seen everywhere. There are swings and other delights. Some little groups gather for prayer, and others lead the blind girls, of whom there are a number at Mukti.

Miss Couch is the lady who takes charge of the visitors' rooms at Mukti and attends to their comfort, helping anywhere her services may be needed. On one occasion, when Manoramabai was invited to take part in some Marathi meetings in Bombay, she invited Miss Couch and about eighteen of the higher standard girls to accompany her. They went to the museum and then to the docks to see the largest steamers.

A lady at the Y.W.C.A. took them over their nice building and showed the girls a lift and a telephone. These things were quite new to these girls, who had always lived in villages.

They also went to see the Mint. The girls have learnt from the Bible about the refining fire, and many of them as they saw the different processes through which the metal goes talked to one another about it, and seemed to understand. What impressed one most was that when the coin was not perfect it was not thrown away, but placed into the crucible to be melted down and go through all the processes again.

A Call from Gulbarga.

A call came to Pandita Ramabai asking her to open a school for girls at Gulbarga, in the Nizam's dominions, two hundred miles from Khedgaon. The call originated in a Bible-woman of another mission creating an interest among some Brahmin ladies. Apparently there would be an opening for Gospel work. These Hindu ladies asked that Pandita Ramabai would come and give them a lecture now and then and open a school for their daughters.

Manorambai went to Gulbarga, and with the proviso that the Bible would be taught, opened a school for girls. One European lady and a staff of teachers from Mukti went there to live. Then the Brahmins of the city decided that they would not send their daughters to a Christian school. While waiting and praying for guidance, and feeling distinctly that God had brought them there, a promise of one pupil was given them. One by one they came. In two years' time, there were twelve pupils; a year later, thirty-five. Manoramabai wrote:

"One day we were visiting a gentleman who had

strictly forbidden his wife to have anything to do with a Christian school. He evidently knew something about the power of God's Word, for he said, 'Yes, your school will prosper. You Christians are not like other people. Others soon grow discouraged and give up in despair, but you drop a seed into the ground and you wait till it grows. You do not get discouraged when you do not see the result of your work. You drop a seed and you know that it will grow, and so you persevere.' How we longed to drop a seed which would take root in that man's heart! He was an orthodox Hindu gentleman of the old type, a very learned man of the highest caste, and in his own estimation far above us."

A promising zenana work was soon started. But the people who had promised to pay the expenses of the school did not fulfil their promise because the Word of God was made the basis of all the teaching. The difficulties were numerous from the first. The opposition was renewed from time to time. There was difficulty in getting premises, and then an outbreak of plague stopped the work, and when it was safe for the workers to return from Mukti to take it up again the number of pupils had decreased from fifty-five to twenty-three. It was most difficult to rent premises. Then an opportunity occurred to purchase a plot. Little by little a fund had been accumulating, starting with gifts from two poor widows. A suitable plot of land was purchased. It was negotiated for in Manoramabai's absence by a friend. She wrote: "When I went to look at the plot I found it was a beautiful piece of land which I had noticed during my first visit to Gulbarga four and a half years before. We had been out for a walk, and as we passed this beautiful stretch of open country I had said to my companions, 'Would it not be

splendid to have a school just here?’ It had been just a passing thought, hardly framed into a desire, but the loving Father had taken note of it, and now when we ourselves had quite forgotten He had remembered and granted the fulfilment of the passing wish. ‘He shall give thee the desires of thine heart,’ were the words that came first into our minds as we held our first prayer meeting on our own land in the moonlight. And then followed the verse which had been our stay all through the eight months of waiting and opposition, ‘They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them, but Thy right hand and Thine arm and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them.’

“An idol was standing in the middle of the plot which had been worshipped by the cultivators of the soil for years at the beginning of each rainy season. This we pulled down, and standing on the very spot where the shrine of the idol had been we dedicated the land to the living God, and we prayed that very soon the people of Gulbarga might learn to know and worship Him, who alone can satisfy every longing of their hearts. This wonderful gift of land, coming as it seemed straight from the hand of God, was all the more remarkable, because it came just at a time when the whole city was in a ferment of opposition against us. Several of our pupils who had learned to believe in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour had been confessing Christ each in their own homes.”

This caused an uproar again, and the school was reduced from seventy pupils to two. One girl died through her earnest effort to win her father for Jesus. “Such cases,” said Manoramabai, “give us courage to go on, and now there are nearly forty pupils. Very slowly but surely we are recovering from the

great blow which was intended to altogether uproot the Lord's work at the Shanti Sadan."

This work at Gulbarga is quite separate as to finances from the Mukti work, and Manoramabai had the entire responsibility, spending a few days there each month. The means were supplied in answer to prayer. The work on the new school building, when in progress of erection in 1919, proved a great boon to the poor people during the famine, which was specially severe in the Nizam's dominions in that year.

But let us return to Mukti. To the glory of God it must be recorded that over and over again, during years in which the bubonic plague raged in India, it rarely even touched Mukti, although thousands were carried off in the villages around.

The burden and trial of the late Great War was felt heavily in India. Prices of almost every necessity of life doubled, and sometimes trebled, yet at Mukti all needs were supplied. And not only so, but after the war, while the necessaries of life remained high, and famine again raged in Western India, Ramabai had the joy of being enabled to feed about eight hundred starving people daily. Before the war it was computed that to keep Mukti in food alone the sum of £100 weekly was needed.

At the famine period above referred to, Mr. Wm. C. Irvine, Editor of *The Indian Christian*, visited Mukti and held a series of special Gospel services. From his experience and observation he subsequently described Ramabai's famine work as "splendid from the spiritual point of view." A circular letter, issued later from Mukti, speaks of Mr. Irvine's visit as a time of great blessing among the girls, and says: "On Sunday morning he gave a very clear and interesting Gospel address to the

famine people. For more than two months over five hundred of them have been joining us in our Sunday morning services. We did not ask them to come to Church, but they asked to be allowed to come and worship with us rather than to be gathered into a different hall for separate Scripture teaching. The word which came to Ramabai when this request was made known to her was, 'My house shall be called the House of Prayer for all nations,' and so it was arranged that they should come inside. These people seem much interested, and behave reverently in Church. One day when these famine cases were waiting around for their pay, one man was heard to remark, 'If Bai did not pay so much money to these people she could build a very big bungalow.' 'Ah,' said the other, 'Bai is building bungalows in Heaven.'"

The circular letter also says that "people who were so opposed to Christianity a few years ago that they would on no account enter our employ are now pleading to be taken on to the work. Poor widows who belong to what were once wealthy families are now suffering from hunger and starvation. We are so glad to be able to help these needy ones, and thus to give them an object lesson which teaches them about the love of God. At the same time our hearts are full of praise to God for the gracious way He is supplying the needs of our own family here at Mukti."

When Manoramabai was in England in 1908 she said the story of the Mukti Mission was just the story of "proving God." Ramabai always spoke of herself in the most humble manner. She never was self-assertive, but some years ago she felt that the Lord gave her Nahum 1. 14: "The Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: ...I will make thy grave; for thou art

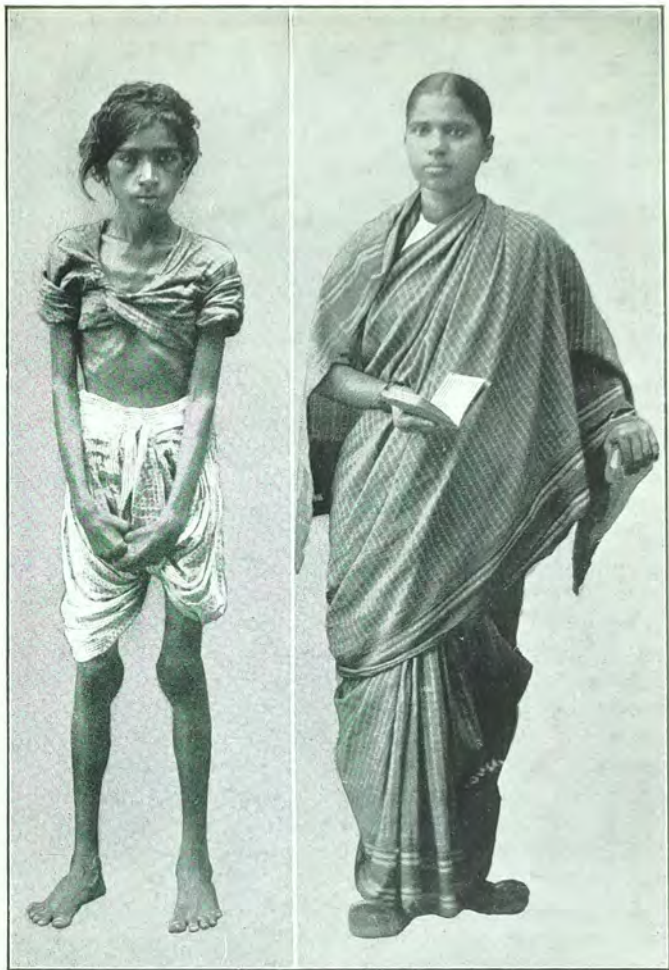
vile." Thenceforth she has been careful to write and speak only of what the LORD was doing through the Mukti Mission.

When Miss Mary Macdonald, the second European missionary to join the work at Mukti, came to Ramabai in 1901, the latter said: "Now I want you to go through this institution and teach them all about the Lord Jesus Christ. I am a sweeper; that is all I am. I sweep into this compound as many as I can get; child-widows, deserted wives, and orphans of every kind, and I want you missionaries to preach to them."

No honour was ever more unlooked for or unsought than the Kaiser-i-Hind medal given to Ramabai in January, 1919. We have heard nothing from *her* concerning it.

A visitor from Australia, who spent a few months at Mukti, wrote: "One of the workers remarked to me that 'Ramabai is as a Moses to her people,' and as I went in and out among them I found this to be true. Her intensity of aim to uplift and save, the deep soul-hunger and complete self-abnegation, savoured of the things of God, too high for common wordy praise." Another visitor says: "I was not prepared for the impression I received of Pandita Ramabai herself and of her work, which transcended all my anticipations. I would say without hesitation that she represents, in her single personality, the most remarkable combination of executive, intellectual, and religious powers that I know of in recent times in either man or woman."

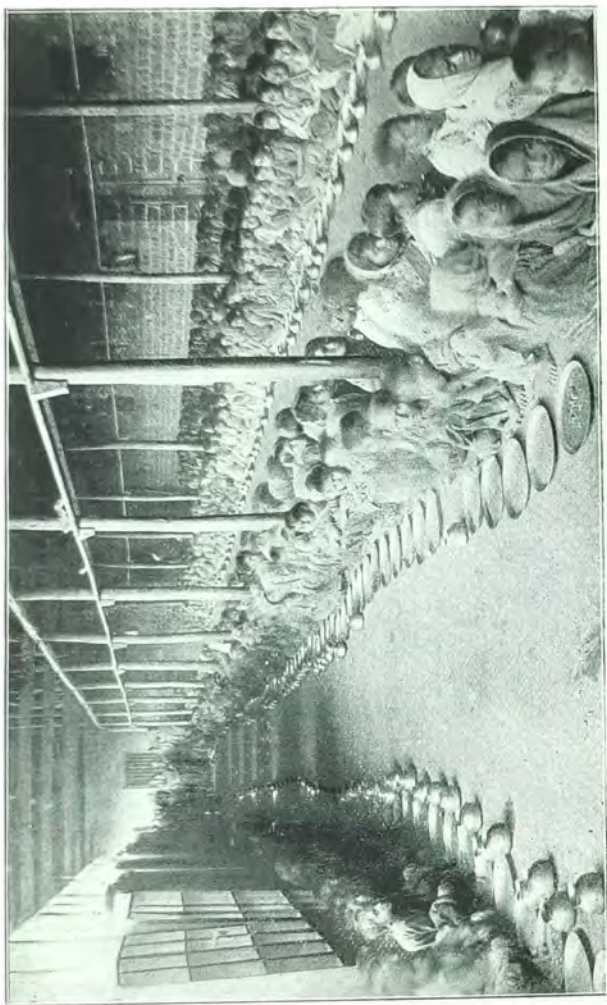
The foregoing opinions and testimonies concerning the personality of the subject of these pages may well be concluded by a quotation from one of her own countrywomen. Our adopted Indian daughter, Heriabai, who has worked in the Mission founded in



BEFORE AND AFTER

A VICTIM OF THE DREAD-
FUL FAMINE AS SHE CAME TO
PANDITA'S

AFTER BEING CARED FOR AND
TRAINED, NOW A NOBLE BIBLE
WOMAN



DINNER TIME AT MUKTI

North India by Miss Abrams, wrote regarding her visit to Mukti: "I came here to bring one of dear Ramabai's girls, who has been a Bible-woman with us for nearly four years. Ramabai's mother-heart wished to see her daughter, so asked for her to come for a holiday." After describing the various interests and industries at Mukti, the writer went on to say: "One almost holds their breath at the magnitude of this work, going on in every department without a hitch; and then to realise that the human head of this huge enterprise is just this most wonderful woman, Ramabai. My heart rejoices as I see what God is doing through one of India's daughters."

* * * * *

It has been remarkable to notice how the Lord has laid Ramabai's work for her outcast sisters in India on the HEARTS OF WOMEN in different parts of the world, who have heard His call to support her in these God-given labours.

In England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the United States, in Canada, and New Zealand, these are to be found, ranging from the leaders of Bible classes and mission meetings, who collect each their small sums annually, to several, some now deceased, who have given a large portion of their time to spreading the interest in the good work at Mukti.

But the premier place in this service must be given to Mrs. Rachel Nalder, of Windsor, Nova Scotia. As far back as 1892 she began speaking for Ramabai in her own neighbourhood, and gradually branched out into other towns in Nova Scotia and the near provinces. After four or five years of this work she, too, became a widow, and thereupon devoted her life to spreading interest over wider fields.

She came to England, her native land, and traversed the country, speaking wherever she could find

or make an opening. Then in the United States and Canada. A year was spent in California, from whence she sailed to New Zealand in March, 1914, where she also spent a year, and then went on to Australia. In all these countries Mrs. Nalder has found sympathetic friends, who have been moved to help her to further openings as soon as her mission has been fully understood.

Mrs. Nalder speaks with the thought of helping the spiritual life of her hearers, and for that alone her meetings and incessant travelling must be an acceptable offering to the Lord. Here is a specimen of her talk from one of her addresses printed in Australia:

"I do thank God that I was permitted to entertain Ramabai in my home in Nova Scotia....My husband and I felt that we had a greater honour put upon us than if we had entertained our gracious Queen Victoria. I believe Pandita Ramabai is one of God's queens,...towering far above all the white queens. I look upon that brown-faced Christian as head and shoulders above many other Christians, of whom I have seen thousands. How is it? I will tell you. It is because of her single eye to God's glory; she has but one idea, but one ideal, and that is that she may reflect the Lord Jesus Christ.

"When I was speaking at a great welcome meeting in New Zealand, I said, 'Pandita Ramabai radiates the Lord Jesus.' It is true. You could not get into her presence without knowing the direct power of the Lord Jesus. If she were here to-night she would not tell you of any of the things she has done, but would be telling you what Christ has done."

Mrs. Nalder's descriptions of the atmosphere and work at Mukti were marvellous, considering that all these years she had been at work she had never seen India until she went there from Australia in 1915.

CHAPTER VI

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

By MANORAMABAI

OUR book-keeping class is so small, and its work so different from that of the Gospel bands, that few realise what an important place it takes in the affairs of the Mukti Mission. Yet the silver and the gold are His, and those who handle it may glorify God in their work as truly as those who preach the Word on the streets or visit in the homes of the people; and, as in the days of old, God chose men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and gave them a special commission to serve tables, so we believe that those whom God has chosen among us for what may seem trivial duties need much wisdom and power from above, and we crave the prayers of God's people for this special department.

We include in this class those who work under the special direction of my mother and myself, who help in many duties to which we are not free to devote all our time since more important matters call. As we follow some of these girls through their day's work we shall learn how we may pray for them.

First, we take a peep into a little passageway which is at present "Ramabai's office." My mother moves her office to any place in Mukti where she feels she is needed most. At one time she may be in the printing office for five or six months, at another time her office is in the weaving-room. Perhaps she wishes to watch the masons and carpenters at work, and then her office for a time will be out of doors, where she is sheltered from the sun by a little shed, or we may find her on the veranda outside the kitchen, watching

the food being served, seeing that each girl gets her right portion, and that the food is cooked properly, etc. In this way the mother of our family moves about from one department to another, and wherever her office is, there people from every part of Mukti come and consult her about their work.

Early in the morning my mother meets the head carpenter, the head mason, the head matron, the head of the weaving department, the chief typesetter, and the leaders of other departments, and gives them their orders for the day. It is the work of the girl who helps my mother, to put her paper and pencils ready for her on the table, and to place ready to hand the various notebooks and registers, dictionaries, concordances, rubber, scissors, and anything else she is likely to need. As one by one the helpers come and talk over their business, this girl stands ready at any moment to open any cupboard, take down from any shelf anything called for, to run any errand, look up any record, and help in any way she can.

When this part of the day's work is over, perhaps the next thing on the programme is proof-reading. Every Marathi tract or portion of Scripture goes through Pandita Ramabai's hands. Sometimes my mother gets Hindu Pandits or other gentlemen to do a little work under her direction in the way of proof-reading or preparing manuscript for the press. These helpers are usually paid for the number of pages they have done, and so it is the duty of the girls who help my mother to keep a faithful record of the work of each person, to put away and keep in order all manuscript of this kind, and to reckon and record the amount of money due to each.

Later in the day Pandita Ramabai may turn her attention to the weavers. Perhaps five or six girls

may come with pieces of cloth or *saris* which they have woven. Their work is received by one of our book-keepers. She examines each piece carefully and weighs it. Then she submits it to Pandita Ramabai for inspection, and turning up various notebooks gives a correct estimate of the amount of material, yarn, dye, etc., that has been put into it, and states the exact time it has taken for the girl to weave it. Pandita Ramabai takes these details into consideration and gives the price accordingly. This is marked by the young accountant on the goods and entered into a notebook with the sum to be paid to the girl for her work.

But here comes a merchant. He has brought various samples of grain—wheat, rice, jwari, etc. He names his price, but does not mean what he says, for this is the country where the shopkeeper asks a much higher price than he expects to get, and waits for his customer to beat him down to what happens to be the market price. When my mother has done this part of the business, and stated how many sacks of grain she has decided to buy, one of our book-keepers comes forward and undertakes to measure the grain. She spreads a large piece of sacking on the ground, and after emptying his grain upon it the merchant proceeds to fill his measure and to count aloud measure after measure as he empties it into some sack brought for the purpose.

An Indian merchant never begins by counting one, as that would bring ill-luck, and he might get only one rupee, so he begins by saying, "profit," and then goes on to count two, three, four, etc. The girl watches him closely, as he is likely to cheat if he can. Then she puts down in the grain book the exact number of measures and reckons the money due. A similar record is kept by the girls to whom this

service is appointed of the number of quarts of milk purchased, the pounds of meat, the amount of wood and fuel, the kerosine oil, the sugar, the materials bought for every industry at Mukti.

In the needlework classes the European helpers keep a record of each girl's work and send in their reports to us. The book-keeping girls copy these reports and record the amount due to each girl. Every now and then we have a pay day, and then the book-keepers are very busy. While my mother and I do the actual paying of the money, the girls help to get it changed and counted, and keep the books straight. This is no easy matter when there are hundreds to pay, and much of it in small change.

Once a month my mother asks one of the village merchants to bring his shop to Mukti. He brings grain, curry powder, spices, sugar, and other groceries, and spreads them out for sale. It is not easy in a large family like this to arrange for the girls to have much choice of food, or to consider all their likes and dislikes, so some of the elder girls have the privilege of buying their own food and cooking for themselves. But they have little experience of the world, and if they went to the bazar the Hindu merchants would cheat them; so when the merchant's shop comes once a month one of the matrons helps them in the choice of what they want, and the book-keepers keep a record of what each one buys, and the merchant is paid in a lump sum for what he sells. Nearly all those who cook separately are engaged in some work of responsibility and are paid a fixed sum every month, when what they have bought of the merchant is deducted, and they have the rest of the money for clothes and any little extras they may want. This system involves a lot of book-keeping, but we find it satisfactory.

Once a week we have a market day, when the village people gather at the market-place near Khedgaon Station to sell their goods. This bazar is a boon to the poor people, as it fixes the market price of goods. As we can only buy vegetables once a week we need a large quantity, and on bazar days the people are glad to bring their goods to our doors, and we spend a considerable time in buying small quantities from poor people who have grown them themselves, from one halfpennyworth upward, from fifty to eighty poor people. This involves much work for the book-keepers, and many payments in copper coins; and while they are busy with the books and money one or two girls from the Bible school are going in and out among the poor people and talking to them of Jesus. Here also we have a small shop of our own, where other members of the book-keeping class do their best to sell articles made in the Mukti Industrial School. Every day all the petty accounts are gathered up and entered in one large cash book.

There are several other important kinds of work that these young helpers are learning to do. With our assistance they keep a record of all money which comes in by money order, postal order, or of all the small amounts paid in. They see that the receipts are properly made out, and that no mistake has been made in reducing dollars and cents, pounds, shillings, and pence, marks and franks into Indian money. They keep records which help to remind us of the needs of the Gospel bands who are out in camp, and must have money to buy their provisions. They see that certain bills are paid by money order and others by cheque or cash, and keep a faithful record of all such proceedings. Of course every bit of their work is examined and corrected; they are just learning and

make mistakes, but they are receiving a good business training, and learning lessons of faithfulness, accuracy, and patience, which will make them really useful women.

Beside this, our girls are learning lessons in prayer and faith. God does not send us money for a whole year in advance, nor for a month, nor even for a week. If He did we might forget the One Who in His great goodness gives us all these benefits. The manna came day by day, and as our God gives His children their spiritual food morning by morning, so He also supplies our temporal needs. Our book-keepers have learned to calculate just how much is needed day by day. They are trusted not to talk about the accounts to any who are not in their class, but we sometimes hear them talking among themselves, and making such remarks as this: "What shall we do for to-morrow?" "The poor villagers will be so disappointed if we do not buy their vegetables, for they are really in need of food." "To-morrow is the day for the money to be sent to the band in S— or B— (or some other place). They will be needing it, and, look, the money bags are empty!" "Oh, we must pray. Our Father God will send the money." So we all go to our knees and tell the Heavenly Father. And in the morning, perhaps just in time, the supply comes—"all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"—and as we thank Him for His goodness we wonder how we could ever have doubted Him.

CHAPTER VII

HOME-CALLS

AFTER a long season of weakness, during which she concluded her great work of translating the Holy Bible into the Marathi tongue, Pandita Ramabai literally "fell asleep in Jesus" in the early morn of 5th April, 1922. The end was so silent and peaceful that the watchers were not aware of the passing.

Miss M. Lissa Hastie, of the missionary staff, the Pandita's personal assistant and secretary for many years, wrote:

"What a glorious day-dawn that was for her! But words cannot express the meaning of the loss to us, to all the hundreds of girls here in Mukti, and to the hundreds all over India who call her 'mother.' She was truly a 'mother' to India, a 'Moses' raised up by God. 'Our Greatheart has gone from us,' said one. Her life of faith in God has been a blessing to thousands all over the world."

"We laid the body to rest in our Mukti Cemetery, in the presence of a great concourse, old and young, Christian and Hindu, for all alike honoured and revered her."

Another member of the missionary staff, Miss Jessie Ferguson, of New Zealand, writing a few days later to her friends in that land, said:

"At 5 a.m. we were aroused by a cry, and knew without any telling what had happened. Only one word was on our lips—'Bai!' And only too true was the thought which filled our hearts with alarm, and which we hoped against hope was a mistaken one.

"The news flew to the various compounds, and I cannot tell you now, the grief of the children for their mother. It was the deep, heart-rending grief

of those who are orphaned, and who realise it. Their mother! Their beloved mother, she who had rescued so many of them from famine, she who had taken them into her heart and home when no one else wanted them, she who had broken her alabaster box of precious ointment over them for His dear Name's sake, she had gone from their sight and touch! The Master said, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me,' and the fragrance of that broken box, that poured out life, is filling Mukti to-day. . . .

"From morning till evening a stream of village people from all the nearby villages to whom Bai had given famine relief in every year of scarcity since 1896 kept coming to pay their respects and show their love to the Great Bai, as they all call her. It was a strange incongruous gathering to see in a land where caste means so much—high castes, low castes, and out-castes, all intent on one thing—to fold their hands in reverence to the silent form of a Christian woman, from a caste and clan so high, who would in her youth have shuddered at the touch of many of those who wept about her and told brokenly of her great kindness to them. Surely never before in India had a woman who might have been worshipped far and wide, had she allowed it, for her great learning and holiness, been so strangely and beautifully honoured by the tears of those whose very touch or shadow would have been defilement if she had remained in the religion which makes human deification possible.

"One dear old Brahmin widow, bent with old age and the fastings and hardships that are the lot of Brahmin widows in orthodox families, came, and leaning over the bed, cried: 'O, Great Mother, Great Mother, whom now shall I call Mother? Who

will care for me?' Her grief was intense. Bai had been kind to her, had kept her alive during the famine and other years of scarcity, especially three years ago, and was still her succourer. Two Brahmin widows they were, but oh, what a difference! One had found the Saviour and yielded to Him her all, and the other was still groping in fear and darkness, not daring to step out of that religion that spurned her and gave her no place because she was a widow."

The New Zealand Council of the Mukti Mission, on hearing of the passing away of Pandita Ramabai, decided to initiate a fund of £5000 for further printing and circulation of her Marathi translation of Holy Scripture.

Manoramabai had preceded her mother by less than nine months, after a long and painful illness. The end came on Sunday morning, 24th July, 1921, at the Missionary Hospital at Maraj, where she was under the loving care of Dr. and Mrs. Wanless and their helpers. During her last days she repeated again and again, "Rest, rest in the Lord;" "Safe, safe in the arms of Jesus." In breaking the news to a world-wide circle, Miss Hastie added: "In those blessed arms we leave her, knowing that it is only a little while, and we shall meet again." At a later date the same pen wrote: "We still have a very vivid sense of our loss, and we seem to be finding out more every day how much Manoramabai did. Hers was a poured-out life, and yet given without attracting any attention to herself. She yet speaks to many."

The shock to Ramabai through the loss of her daughter, her anticipated successor, was followed by the call from earth of her greatly valued friend and former associate, Soonderbai H. Powar, founder of

the Zenana Training Home and Orphanage at Poona, many of the Bible-women trained and sent out therefrom to various missions having been famine orphans similar to those received at Mukti.

Pandita Ramabai's Successor and the Mukti Staff.

In forethought of her home-call, Ramabai nominated Miss Hastie as her successor, stipulating that the work be continued on exactly the same lines. In accepting this great responsibility, Miss Hastie modestly wrote: "I hope only to hold the post until an Indian lady can come forward to fill the place."

Miss Hastie's name is familiar to a world-wide circle of supporters of the mission by her signature at the foot of the Monthly Circular Letter, and in other ways. Prayerful sympathy for her in the added responsibilities will not be lacking from hundreds of warm-hearted friends who have never seen her face, and it is hoped also from many who make her acquaintance through this volume.

A Time of Great Testing and Great Faith.

In June, 1922, Miss Hastie wrote: "Directly after Pandita left us we were face to face with a tremendous test. We discovered we could not get any of the money which came for Mukti in her name; so here we were with a thousand people to feed, to say nothing of other expenses, and no money. The lawyer said he would do his best to get probate of the will quickly, but it would probably be two or three months, as it was holiday time in the Courts! We committed it all to our God, who can work quickly and who still watches over His own. Oh, it was wonderful to just be still and watch Him work, and from day to day He has magnified His Name and sent

enough to keep us going on. I could almost hear Him say, 'Wherefore did ye doubt?' and in answer, 'Forgive us Lord; we are going on in utter dependence on Thee.' Psalm 68. 9 became such a living word during these days."

A note of appreciation is due here concerning other members of the Mukti missionary staff. There are no guaranteed salaries. It is faith work all through, except where a missionary is possessed of a private income or is supported by a Church in the homeland of which she is a member. Members of the staff, whether foreign or Indian, are a Christian sisterhood, though not such in name or organisation. Doubtless those from western lands often have an inner reminder that the most beautiful characters of Bible history, including the companions and personal friends of Jesus in the days of His humanity, were of eastern birth, as where it is written, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

Such an atmosphere at Mukti cannot be otherwise than contagious among its dwellers, concerning which a single incident will illustrate, written in December, 1921:

"The last market day our hearts were full of aching as we saw many of the people from the villages round, with just a rag or two to cover them, and the nights and mornings are so cold now. One man was going home carrying his wife on his back; her legs were completely swollen, and she looked so miserable. We had a collection here in Mukti for them, and one and another gave a garment they could spare and a few coppers to supply their need. Tears of gratitude rained down their faces. They could not speak for a few minutes, so overcome were they. Then the man said, 'Oh, thank you; it is a year and a half since she was clothed so.'"

AN APPRECIATION

IT may be asked: What was the secret of PANDITA RAMABAI'S success? As one who has had the great privilege of visiting her at Kedgaon, off and on for twenty-five years, I would unhesitatingly say that it was *her child-like, yet profound, faith in the Bible as the Word of the living God.*

She herself acknowledged the influence the lives of GEORGE MULLER and HUDSON TAYLOR had upon her, as doubtless had the lives and writings of others, but she was pre-eminently a *woman of faith*, and her faith rested neither on Muller nor Taylor, but on God and His Word.

Hers was a live faith, as her works testify. Knowing from experience the emptiness and deadness of Hinduism, her great heart went out to the multitudes living around her. Unlike the many, she felt as keenly for those perishing for the lack of the Bread of Heaven as she did for those languishing in famine-stricken areas, whose sufferings are so much more apparent. I suppose that the work of no single individual in India approaches that of the Pandita, with respect to providing for the need of the souls of her people.

Her great work for the widows would have more than satisfied most Christians, but her passionate love for Christ constrained her to launch out in other directions. Bands of women workers were chosen, instructed, and sent forth to the villages around; countless numbers of pilgrims passing to and fro to Pandharapur were appealed to, the "Bai" herself sometimes speaking to them; passenger trains were regularly met and thousands upon thousands of Gospels and tracts, issued from the Mukti Press, were

distributed freely, that none who could read should perish for lack of knowledge.

It was her deep love for God's Book which constrained her to undertake the Herculean task of translating from the original languages the Old and New Testaments into Marathi, and that with failing health and at the age when many would prefer to take things somewhat easily. This labour of love God permitted her to complete shortly before she fell asleep; and great is the boon she has conferred upon the Marathi speaking peoples in Western India by providing a more simple translation of the Holy Scriptures.

Many are the conversations I had with her concerning the more recent trend of things in India. She was openly antagonistic to the teachings of Higher Critics, and mourned greatly the tendency towards Modernism ever increasing amongst Indian Christians.

I always found Pandita Ramabai the same. Unworried, unhurried, always abounding in the work of the Lord; generous, courteous, thoughtful for the welfare of her visitors and all at Mukti. Though broadminded and large-hearted, she was truly separated to God, living with a single eye to His glory. She was greatly loved by those who knew her, and the little children of the great Institution loved to sit quietly in her company and receive her caresses.

Though I have not been to Mukti since our sister has gone to her reward, I do not doubt that the one she has named as her successor—Miss Hastie—will, with God's help and the invaluable assistance of a band of capable European and Indian workers, carry on the work in the same spirit, building faithfully on the foundation so truly laid, with, let us trust, an ever increasing measure of blessing.

WM. C. IRVINE.

