

# THE LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF PANDITA RAMABAI

EDITED BY  
A. B. SHAH



*Published by Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture*

**The Letters and correspondence  
of  
PANDITA RAMABAI**



Pandita Ramabai's godmother, Sister Geraldine of the Community of St. Mary The Virgin Wantage (England).

*Courtesy: S. M. Adhav*

Dr. Dorothea Beale, Principal, Ladies' College, Cheltenham, England.



*Courtesy: S. M. Adhav*



Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922)

The Letters and Correspondence  
of  
**PANDITA RAMABAI**

*Compiled by*  
**SISTER GERALDINE**

*Edited by*  
**A.B.SHAH**



Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture, Bombay 1977

**Contents**

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## FOREWORD

The State Board for Literature and Culture has been set up by the Government of Maharashtra for the modernization and development of Marathi language and literature and for encouraging research and publication in Marathi with a view to protecting the rich heritage Maharashtra has in the fields of literature, history, culture and fine arts. To attain this objective the State Board has undertaken a manifold programme of literary activities, such as compilation of a General Encyclopaedia in Marathi (i.e. the Vishwakosha), history of Maharashtra, survey of various dialects of Marathi, translation of classics, sciences series, research and publication in fine arts, etc.

As a part of its multifarious literary programme, the State Board has undertaken the scheme to reprint, as its own, old, rare and important literary works and publications of hitherto hidden/unpublished source material of prominent and reputed Marathi writers and reformers of the 19th century and the early twenties of the 20th century, which have greatly influenced the literary and cultural history of Maharashtra as also the social life of Maharashtra, or to give suitable grants-in-aid to voluntary institutions for their publication/reprints.

Under this scheme, the State Board has published the complete works of Mahatma Phule, edited by Shri Dhananjaya Keer and Dr. S.G. Malshe and has also brought out the second revised edition of the book Maharashtra Mahodayacha Poorvaranga by the late H.N.Gadre. The Board has decided to publish the selected works of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Lokhitawadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Shivram Mahadeo Paranjpe, Narshimha Chintaman Kelkar and Rajaramshastri Bhagwat. Complete literature of Hari Narayan Apte, in 19 books, and Swami Vivekananda Granthawali, in 10 volumes, have been published with the help of suitable grants-in-aid from the Board. The Board has also given financial assistance for the publication of the complete works of Shripad Krishna Kolhatkar in 8 volumes, the complete writings of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 7 volumes, and the unpublished diaries of Maharshi Vitthal Ramaji Shinde.

The State Board now feels extremely gratified to publish, as its own volume, the present hitherto unknown and unpublished collection of letters and correspondence of Pandita Ramabai, preserved by Sister Geraldine, relating to the period from 1883 to 1917, and having an international importance. It gives the reader a sharp insight into the life and times of Pandita Ramabai who is known for her pioneering social work and her role in the uplift of women and their education. The publication of this valuable collection entitled "The Letters and Correspondence of Pandita Ramabai" is the most suitable occasion to honour the great scholar, social reformer and one of the builders of modern India at this time when the decade 1976-85 is being observed as the International Women's Decade, all over the world. We are thankful to Shri S.M. Adhav and Shri H.V. Mote, Bombay, for giving this opportunity to the State Board to bring to light this most precious treasure, as its own publication. Professor A.B. Shah, a member of the State Board for Literature and Culture, has edited the above volume by extending his unreserved co-operation and making available his valuable time for this job. The Marathi rendering of the above book has been assigned to Smt. Sarojini Vaidya, Department of Marathi, University of Bombay, on behalf of the Board, and the Board expects to place it in the hands of the Marathi readers shortly.

**LAXMAN SHASTRI JOSHI**

*Chairman*

*State Board for Literature and*

*Culture, Mantralaya*

*Bombay 400032*

1 May 1977

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The material included in this volume has been selected from the eight note-books compiled by Sister Geraldine (1843-1917) of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin at Wantage in England. Sister Geraldine came to India in 1878 as Sister-in-Charge of St. Mary's School in Poona. She was invalided home in 1883, but before returning to England had already come to know Ramabai and her infant daughter, Manorama.

Sister Geraldine's compilation was passed on to Miss Mary Lucia Bierce Fuller (1882-1965) by the Wantage Sisters whom she visited on her way back from the U.S. Miss Fuller was born at Akola in Central India where her parents were stationed as missionaries of the American Alliance Mission. She worked with Ramabai at Kedgaon for a number of years till the latter's death in 1922. She was born a Protestant but joined the Catholic Church in 1927 and died at Sangamner (Maharashtra) in 1965. Towards the end of her life she called Mr. S. M. Adhav, Hon. Secretary of the Pandita Ramabai Memorial Committee, and passed on to him the note-books compiled by Sister Geraldine.

Through the good offices of Mrs. Sarojini Vaidya, Mr. Adhav offered this material to Mr. H. V. Mote, who in turn offered it to the State Board for Literature and Culture. [\[Seven letters out of this collection, all by Pandita Ramabai, have been reproduced by Mr. Mote in Vishrabdha Sharada, vol. I, pp. 276-92, Mouj Prakashan, Bombay, 1972.\]](#)

Grateful thanks are due to all these ladies and gentlemen.

The Editor is also grateful to Mr. Adhav for making available to him certain other material on and by Pandita Ramabai, particularly her books (now rare and not easy to come across) on her voyage to England and her observations on the people of America. The Editor also wishes to thank Mr. Adhav for supplying most of the footnotes in the text. Since all the footnotes which appear in it, except those by Sister Geraldine which are so indicated, have been supplied by Mr. Adhav no separate mention of this fact has been made in the text.



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## INTRODUCTION

Pandita Ramabai Saraswati (1858-1922) was the greatest woman produced by modern India and one of the greatest Indians in all history. Her achievements as a champion of women's rights and as a pioneer in the fields of women's education and social reform remain unrivalled even after a lapse of nearly a century since she first appeared on the scene. She was a Sanskrit scholar who at the age of twenty was publicly honoured by the Shastris of Calcutta as a Pandita and a modern incarnation of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning. She was the first to introduce the kindergarten system of education and also the first to give a vocational bias to school education in India. Most important of all, she was the first to rebel against the inhuman slavery to which widows were subjected in Hindu society and to lay the foundations of a movement for women's liberation in India. And in all these undertakings she depended essentially on her own inner resources. While she accepted, even invited, assistance from all over the world, she never compromised her principles for the sake of pleasing anyone.

Ramabai's life falls into four natural parts. The first, from 1858 to 1882, when she left for England, was the most difficult and also the most important in shaping her ideas and determining the direction of her future life and work. It was during this period that, when she was six months old, her education in the hard school of life began. Ramabai's father Anant Shastri Dongre was a renowned pandit and an 'orthodox reformer' who believed in the education of women. The saga of his struggle against the obscurantism of his fellow-Brahmins is narrated by Ramabai as part of an autobiographical sketch (pp. 15 ff.) in this book and in the *Testimony* she later wrote and published in 1907 [Pandita Ramabai, *A Testimony* (ninth edn.), Ramabai Mukti Mission, Kedgeon (Pune), 1968, pp. 4 ff.] Finding no sanction in the Hindu scriptures against teaching Sanskrit (except the Vedas and Upanishads) to women, he began educating Ramabai's mother in the teeth of opposition from his traditionalist contemporaries. Ramabai, who was the youngest child of her parents, was herself educated by her mother in the course of the family's endless peregrinations. By the time she was sixteen she had lost both parents and elder sister, and was left with her elder brother, Shrinivas to continue the wanderings, which would only end with his death in 1880.

So long as her brother was alive, Ramabai had never thought of marriage. After his death, however, she was left all alone in the world and therefore got married, in June 1880, to Bipin Behari Das Medhavi, an educated Kayastha friend of Srinivas' and an admirer of hers. A daughter, Manorama, was born in April 1881, and for the first time in her life Ramabai knew what domestic felicity meant. She would have probably been content looking after her husband and child. She would have, no doubt, remained active in the cause of women's education and would have perhaps even started a school for that purpose. But all this would have been in the nature of leisure-time activity of the kind that other social reformers had already started in Western India and Bengal. It would not have placed Ramabai in the distinguished company of pioneers like Jotirao Phule (1827-1890), and marked her out as the greatest champion of the rights of women in a society which denied them, in the name of religion, not only freedom and equality in this world but even the right to salvation in the next.

Ramabai's husband died of cholera after a brief illness in February 1882. Once again she was left all alone, but this time with the responsibility of bringing up an infant daughter of ten months, in an unfriendly world. Ramabai therefore decided to devote the rest of her life to the uplift of women and to that end returned to Maharashtra in April 1882. Here she was welcomed by the Reformers, who arranged a number of meetings at which she spoke on the importance of women's education and their right to a life of freedom and dignity. She appeared before the Hunter Commission and stressed the need for women teachers and women doctors. The suggestion regarding women doctors was outside the purview of the Commission, but it attracted Queen Victoria's attention and led to the creation of the National Association for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India, popularly known as the Countess of Dufferin Movement, inaugurated by the Viceroy's wife in 1885.

Ramabai soon came to the conclusion that she could not render effective aid to the women of India unless she herself studied medicine. But there were no facilities for women's medical education in India then except at Madras, and these were not of a sufficiently high standard. She therefore explored the possibilities of going to England. The Sisters of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin (CSMV), Wantage, England working in Poona offered the necessary help to Ramabai, and thus began a new and fateful chapter in the life of this extraordinary woman.

Ramabai wanted assistance but was too proud to accept charity. Earlier too, on many occasions in the course of their wanderings, the Dongres had preferred starvation to begging. Ramabai therefore wrote a book in Marathi, *Stree-Dharma Neeti* from the sale proceeds of which she paid her own fare and that of her child. To meet her expenses in England she undertook to teach Marathi to the CSMV Sisters who were being trained for work in Poona. Later, when she studied at the Cheltenham Ladies College she taught Sanskrit to the students there in order to earn her keep. During her stay in the USA, the profit she earned on the sale of *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* met her needs.

Ramabai left for England on 20 April 1883 and reached there on 17 May 1883. When she left India she had no intention to embrace Christianity, and had indeed declared earlier that she would never do so. But she had no illusions about the Hindu religion and was disappointed by the lack of response to her plans, before she decided to study medicine, for starting a home for Hindu widows in Poona. She was as familiar with the ugly face of Hinduism, particularly as it was practised in her time, as with its dazzling philosophic formulations. In an account of her visit to the Taj Mahal after describing the horrors underlying that poem in marble, Ramabai turns to the Hindu religion and delivers one of the most eloquent indictments of its vicious and inhuman attitude to women. She says (pp. 312-314):

I beg of my Western sisters not to be satisfied with the looking on the outside beauties of the grand philosophies, and not be charmed with the long and interesting discourses of our educated men, but to open the trapdoors of the great monuments of the ancient Hindu intellect, and enter into the dark cellars where they will see the real working of the philosophies which they admire so much. Let our Western friends ... frequently go to the hundred of sacred places,... Jagannathpuri, Benares, Gaya, Allahabad, Mathura, Brindaban, Dwarka, Pandharpur, Udippi, Tirupaty and such other sacred cities, the strongholds of Hinduism, and seats of sacred learning, where the Mahatmas and Sadhus dwell, and where the 'sublime' philosophies are daily taught and devoutly followed. There are thousands of priests and men, learned in the sacred lore, who are the spiritual rulers and guides of our people. They neglect and oppress the widows and devour widows' houses.... They send out hundreds of emissaries to look for young widows and bring them by hundreds and thousands to the sacred cities to rob them of their money and their virtue.... Thousands upon thousands of young widows and innocent children are suffering untold misery and dying helpless every year throughout the land, but not a philosopher or Mahatma has come out boldly to champion their cause and to help them .... The educated men and learned priests... mourn over a few women who have the boldness to declare themselves as free women and to follow their conscience; but they say nothing of the thousands who die every year or lead shameful lives.... Let not my Western sisters be charmed with the books and poems they read. There are many hard and bitter facts we have to accept and feel. All is not poetry with us. The prose we have to read in our lives is very hard. It cannot be understood by our learned brothers and comfortable sisters of the West.

This was written in 1896, but the heartlessness of the orthodox high-caste Hindus and the pusillanimity and hypocrisy of the educated ones were known to Ramabai from her childhood. In her account of the voyage to England written soon after her baptism, she says that Bajirao II (whose first wife happened to be a cousin of Ramabai's mother) married a girl of ten when he was blind and sixty years old. Another old man, of 65, paid Rs. 30,000 to a man and married his daughter who was eleven years of age [Even M.G. Ranade, doyen of the Reformers, was of the view that the age difference between husband and wife should not be more than thirty years. His own second wife was twenty years younger than he. (Cf. The Miscellaneous Writings of the Late Mr. Justice

M.G. Ranade, published by Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, Bombay, 1915, p. 104.)). Countless other examples of a similar kind have been narrated by Ramabai in some of the letters included in this volume (pp. 176-178, 280 ff., 290-292).

The condition of high-caste Hindu women was bad enough in Ramabai's time, but what angered her more was the inaction of those who shed copious tears for them. At the third session of the Indian National Social Conference held at Bombay in 1889, Ramabai spoke in support of C. Subramanyan Iyer's resolution calling upon the government to treat as an 'offence and prohibited as such by the law' the disfigurement of child widows by shaving their heads 'before they attain the age of eighteen and even after that without the consent of the widow, recorded in writing before a Panch and magistrate'. In the course of her speech, she declared that 'she would not quarrel with those who did not think that the reproach to the community should be removed; but what she would impress upon them was that if once they came to a resolution [not to disfigure the widows] they should keep to it' [The Times of India, 30 December 1889, quoted in Padmini Sengupta, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1970, p. 195.]. It was the wide gulf between the professions of the educated Hindus and their cowardly refusal to translate them into practice that, no less than the inhumanity of the orthodox, alienated Ramabai from the Hindu society.

Long before she came to Poona in 1882, Ramabai had ceased to believe in her ancestral faith. For a time she thought that Brahmoism could take its place. It was Keshab Chandra Sen at whose instance she discarded the belief that 'women were not fit to read the Vedas and they were not allowed to do so', and 'began to study the Upanishads, then the Vedanta, and the Veda' [A Testimony, op. cit., p. 16.]. But by reading these works Ramabai became all the more dissatisfied. Nor could she reconcile herself to the eclecticism of the Brahmo faith and the unwillingness of its leaders to live up to their convictions [Keshab Chandra Sen, though opposed to child marriages, had the marriage of his daughter solemnized, according to the orthodox Hindu rite to which also he was opposed, with the prince of Cooch Behar before she or the bridegroom had reached the age of consent.]. Christianity provided the kind of faith she needed. What particularly impressed her was the Christian conception of a personal God as the God of Love. She was equally impressed by the spirit of dedication which the Christian nuns demonstrated in their work among the women whom society treated as "fallen" and outcast. Ramabai was, of her own choice, baptized with Manorama on 29 September 1883 with Sister Geraldine as her spiritual mother.

The letters and correspondence included in this volume have been selected from the material preserved by Sister Geraldine over a period of nearly thirty years. Referring to its significance, she says (pp. 3-4):

As I read the correspondence I realized that in ways besides the letters (for the memory of the many conversations and singular coincidences came vividly before me), I perceived that I had a unique possession, and that no one but myself could possibly record what I alone knew, and that without doubt I ought to endeavour to hand on my knowledge in such a form as might be useful to others. I had no desire to give it any literary value; only to arrange the matter with method and order, so far as I was able to make such remarks as occurred to me with regard to facts, events, character and sequences which might be useful.

Unlike the authors of most biographies of the Pandita written by Christians in India, Sister Geraldine does not seek to present her as a perfect human being. "I have found", she says, "the most interesting and edifying biographies to be those where the faults of the person under review are not withheld .... A life with the faults suppressed is dazzling, but tends to depress. Where the opposite plan is followed, that life simply told is bracing and heartening." True to this approach, Sister Geraldine freely refers to the weak points as well as the strong in Ramabai's character. For instance, in a letter to Dorothea Beale in January 1886, Sister Geraldine says (p. 114):

There is a want of candour and sincerity about her difficulties, and I fear she is willingly accepting a religion which has no claim to the name of Christianity, as she thinks it will commend itself more to the intelligence of her countrywomen than the revealed Truth, which

latter will require for them a higher standard of moral and spiritual perfection than they would be willing to accept.

This is a serious charge, especially since it involves a solemn matter like religion [A careful perusal of Ramabai's statements explaining her objections to the doctrine of the Trinity and her refusal to accept the authority of the Church when it had no basis in the Bible (pp. 128 ff., 151 ff.) would suggest that Sister Geraldine just failed to understand her mind. Of this, more later.] But a more serious charge that Sister Geraldine levelled at Ramabai was that she did not even shrink from telling a lie on certain occasions. Thus in the same letter to Miss Beale, Sister Geraldine observes:

I should think at one time she was an exception to the generality of Hindus; truthfulness was one of the traits of character in which she was an exception to the generality of her countrywomen: but she has both, in word and in letter, proved that she can no longer be credited with this virtue.

After this, it should not come as a surprise that nine years after Ramabai had left England, Sister Geraldine was of the view that the same arrogance and willfulness which characterized your life when you set up your opinions against the Ministers of God's Church,... that same arrogance and willfulness characterizes your life at the present time" (p. 339). Later we shall consider the theological content of the running debate between Ramabai and her spiritual mother; for the present it is enough to note that though both cherished a deep affection for each other and Ramabai never ceased to be grateful to Sister Geraldine and the other Sisters of the CSMV, she had too independent a mind to fit into any mould. At the same time, in spite of her remarkable courage in the face of adversity, there was a certain shyness about her which prevented her from speaking out her mind unless she felt certain of a sympathetic hearing. The sectarian arrogance of Sister Geraldine and the Fathers to whom she directed Ramabai for the resolution of her difficulties only aggravated the problem of communication.

But Sister Geraldine's collection has wider significance than she seems to have realized. She expected that it would be useful to a future biographer of Ramabai or Manorama [The letters pertaining exclusively to Manorama are not included in this volume. H 5022---B], point out the faults of missionary workers and their methods of work, and would also be a "valuable contribution to the psychologists, as well as to the psycho-theologian in the study of the Indian mind" (p. 3). All this the material presented here will no doubt do. But there are other directions, of much greater interest to the modern reader, in which the Letters and *Correspondence of Pandita Ramabai* will be found equally important.

Ramabai's letters reveal a cultured, sensitive and compassionate mind, which is not prepared to sacrifice its freedom of thought and expression for any price. They also provide valuable information on the state of Hindu society in the second half of the nineteenth century. They give an insight into the mind of the liberal social reformers of her age and the dilemma that educated Hindus, of a liberal as well as conservative persuasion, faced in responding to the challenge posed by the combination of Christianity and Western culture under the auspices of a foreign government.

Describing her visit to her ancestral home in Karnatak in a letter to Sister Geraldine, Ramabai writes (pp. 252-53):

The tableland on which our home was built is about a mile square. The river Tunga which rises about a mile higher than this place can be seen in its infancy. It winds its way round the place where our home stood in former days. The banks are adorned with beautiful fern-trees, some twenty different kinds of ferns are to be found there. The cool water of the Tunga, clear as crystal and very sweet, flows through rugged rocks. The beautiful branches of small and large trees, gracefully dropping leaves ferns, bow their heads over the rivulet as if to shelter it from the sun. ...Some of the flower plants, champas and roses which my dear mother loved and which she had planted with her own hand [nearly thirty years ago], are still to be seen on the banks of the Tunga. The whole ground seemed hallowed with the association of my

beloved parents. The clear blue sky which looks like a round canopy over this place looked more beautiful than any other sky I had ever seen. ...You can see the wonderful sky covered with bright stars as numerous as the sands of the sea. At about nine o'clock in the evening, you can see the wonderful constellation of the Southern Cross rise in the South, and also at midnight the constellation called the Scorpion adorns the Eastern sky. In daytime you can see the plain on the Western side about sixty miles up and down. The sea which is about 36 miles on the West can be seen on a clear day glittering in the sun like a sheet of glass. The beauty and grandeur of this part of the country is unsurpassed by any other that I have ever seen; but the inconvenience of travel makes it almost unapproachable.

Ramabai was a child of the forest and the mountain. Her love of nature also finds expression in her letters to Dorothea Beale (pp. 183, 216) after she had seen the Grand Canyon in America. At Poona, too, the Sharada Sadan had a fine garden, and Ramabai explained to its inmates the beauty, varieties and uses of different kinds of flowers. "Ever since then", says Ramabai, "a day has not passed by on which a flower was not brought to me by one or another child with a sweet look in her eyes" (p. 242).

Ramabai's sympathy for the oppressed and the suffering was spontaneous and knew no bounds of caste or creed. She had experienced poverty and all that it means in a society which attaches greater sanctity to the cow than to the human being, and in the name of *Karma* rationalizes its callousness to both. As early as 1885, she had therefore wanted "to start a Sisterhood (on the lines of the CSMV) for helping the widows and helpless women of India" (p. 90). Her ideas took a concrete shape during her visit to America, where she went in early 1886 to attend the convocation at which, her cousin, Anandibai Joshi was to receive her medical degree [In his biography of Max Muller Scholar Extraordinary Nirad Chaudhury states (p. 301) that Anandibai had known and helped "Ramabai in India after she became a widow". This like many other statements about Ramabai in the book (pp.300-01), is not correct. Till they met in America, the two women had never seen each other.] Anandibai was the first Indian woman to study modern medicine, for which she had gone to the Woman's medical College at Philadelphia about the same time as Ramabai to England. After the graduation ceremony Ramabai stayed on in the US till November 1888, and addressed numerous meetings from coast to coast on the condition of women in India. It was during this period that her book *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* was published in 1887 [Apparently the Pandita had already published an article on the same theme, entitled "The Hindu Woman's Life", in an English magazine while she was in England (p.173).] The book carries an introduction by Dr. Rachel Bodley, Dean of the Women's Medical College mentioned above, which opens with the following words:

The silence of a thousand years has been broken, and the reader of this unpretending little volume catches the first utterances of the unfamiliar voice. Throbbing with woe, they are revealed in the following pages to intelligent, educated happy American women....

To begin this story of *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, and not to read it through attentively to the last word of the agonized appeal, is to invoke upon oneself the divine displeasure meted out to those who disregard the cry of "him that had none to help him". These lines are written with deep emotion; the blinding tears which fall upon the page are the saddest tears my eyes have ever wept.

The appeal to which Dean Bodley refers appears as the seventh and last chapter of the book. In this concluding paragraph Ramabai pours out her heart to the people of America and calls upon them to help her in the work she proposes to undertake on returning to India. She says:

Mother and fathers, compare the condition of your own sweet darling at your happy firesides with that of millions of little girls of a comparable age in India, who have already been sacrificed on the unholy altar of an inhuman social custom, and then ask yourself whether you can stop short of doing something to rescue the little widows from the hands of their tormentors. Millions of heart-rending cries are daily rising from the stony wall of the Indian zenanas; thousands of child-widows are annually dying without a ray of hope to cheer their



hearts, and other thousand are daily being crushed under a fearful weight of sin and shame, with no one to prevent their ruin by providing for them a better way.

Will you not, all of you who read this book, think of these, my countrywomen, and rise, moved by a common impulse, to free them from life-long slavery and infernal misery? I beg you . . . all who have any interest in or compassion for your fellow-creatures, let the cry of India's daughters, feeble though it be, reach your ears and stir your hearts. In the name of humanity, in the name of your responsibilities as workers in the cause of humanity, and, above all, in the most holy name of God I summon you, true women and men of America, to bestow your help quickly, regardless of nation, caste or creed.

The book made a tremendous impact in America. 10,000 copies of *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* were sold out before Ramabai left the US for India in November 1888 and brought her a profit of Rs. 25,000. [Induprakash, 18 March 1889, quoted in D N. Tilak, *Pandita Ramabai (in Marathi)* published by the author, Nasik, p. 228.] A Ramabai Association was formed at Boston in December 1887. A similar association, called the Ramabai Association of the Pacific Coast, was formed in July 1888 and it contributed \$ 5,000 during the first year to the fund of the parent body. By May 1888 Ramabai already had \$30,000 and expected to have as much more before she left America (p. 181). In a letter dated 7 October 1888 to Miss Dorothea Beale, she says (p. 182):

My work has increased wonderfully, there are over 63 [Ramabai] circles now, about \$ 5,000 annual subscriptions pledged for my Child Widows' Home and about \$ 11,000 given for the new building. Now I am working here to get the remaining \$ 14, 000 that are necessary to build the new house; and if I am not successful here [in California], I must go back to New York.

On her return to India in February 1889, Ramabai addressed a meeting convened by Seth Madhavdas Ranghunathdas at his bungalow with Atmaram Pandurang in the chair. In the course of her talk, she said:

It was in America that my efforts showed signs of fruit. For the sake of my sister in India, I addressed, while touring, three hundred meetings and the foreign people were moved with pity. Suffering great hardships and difficulties, I travelled over 30,000 miles and raised Rs. 60,000 for this mission. And besides this, they have further assured a generous grant of Rs. 15,000 per annum for a period of ten years. A regular organization has been established for this purpose at Boston, with sixty-four sub-branches all over the country [Induprakash, 18 March 1889, quoted in Padmini Sengupta, *op. cit.*, p. 181.]

The Sharada Sadan was founded at Bombay on 11 March 1889, but owing to the high cost of running it in Bombay, it was moved to Poona towards the end of 1890. On the opening day it had two pupils, one of them being Godubai who was a child widow and who was later to get married to D. K. Karve, founder of the Hindu Widows' Home and SNDT Women's University. By the end of May the number of pupils had grown to 18, most of whom belonged to the Brahmin caste.

The constitution of the Ramabai Association clearly laid down that the education imparted in the Sadan would be completely secular. It was to be "a school in which no religious instruction either Hindu or Christian, should be given". Explaining the approach that Ramabai herself intended to adopt, Rachel Bodly says in the introduction to *The High-caste Hindu woman* :

She seeks to reach Hindu women as Hindus, to give them liberty and latitude as regards religious convictions; she would make no condition as to reading the Bible or studying Christianity; but she designs to put within their reach in reading-books and on the shelves of the school library, side by side, the *Bible* and the *Sacred Books of the East*, and for the rest earnestly pray that God will guide them to His saving truth.

This is not to suggest that Ramabai was not interested in sharing with her benighted countrywomen the light that she had received. On the contrary, in a frank statement which was later seized on by Lokmanya Tilak and used against Ramabai in his characteristically aggressive and unfair manner, she deemed it.

of the first important to prepare the way for the spread of the gospel by throwing open the locked doors of the Indian zenanas, which cannot be done safely without giving suitable education to the women, whereby they will be able to bear the dazzling light of the outer world and the perilous blasts of social persecution [[The High-Caste Hindu woman](#), p. 118. H 5022-B1a]

In other words, Ramabai would not actually seek to convert any of her pupils but she would neither go out of her way to protect them from exposure to Christian influence in order to ensure that they left the Sharada Sadan as ‘good’ Hindus as they were when they entered it. This was also the stand of the Ramabai Association. Though it insisted that the Sadan should impart wholly secular instruction, it could not demand that Ramabai should not order her own life as a believing Christian. In the nature of things, this was bound to prove an unsatisfactory arrangement. Ramabai had a charismatic personality and she was passionately interested in the freedom and welfare of her countrywomen. Since the Sadan was a residential school, and its inmates were all victims of the inhuman persecution to which high-caste Hindu society subjected its windows with the full sanction of the Hindu religion, it was natural that they were drawn to a religion whose living spirit they saw in the love that Ramabai bore towards them.

For instance, in about two months after she had joined the Sharada Sadan Godubai sought permission to join Ramabai and Manorama at prayer time. Soon two other girls also wished to join them, and the father of one of them desired her “to be instruction in [*the Christian*] religion and brought up like a Christian child” (p. 247). But in keeping with the Sadan’s policy of religious neutrality, Ramabai refused to instruct them in Christianity. Instead, she promised to send all three. “for religious instruction to a lady missionary every Saturday”.

Ramabai’s stand was not to liking of the missionaries, and the Hindus, both orthodox and conservative, were from the beginning suspicious of her intentions. Thus in a letter dated 30 May 1889 to miss Dorothea Beale, she observes (p. 185) : “Missionaries as a rule do not like the idea of my school being wholly secular; and the orthodox Hindu finds it repulsive to have me, a Christian outcaste for his daughter’s teacher”. A letter dated 19 August 1889 from Sister Eleanor of the CSMV working in Poona bears out the first part of Ramabai’s observation. Referring to Godubai’s wish to become a Christian, Sister Eleanor writes to Sister Geraldine :

However, she [Ramabai] had a talk with her and told her nothing was required to make a Christian but truthfulness and honesty, that she [Godubai] might go to Church “wish us” and that when her education was finished, she would pass her on to a mission-for something more, I conclude, than honesty and truthfulness. She deceives herself.

The Hindus, on the other hand, believed that conversation was inevitable and was, indeed, the ultimate aim underlying everything Ramabai did for improving the lot of the Hindu windows. As early as 28 January 1890, the *Kesari* played up a misleading report published in the *Christian Weekly* of New York about five weeks earlier, and warned its readers of the near-certainty of their children embracing Christianity as a result of the intrusion of religion in the teaching of every subject”. [[Quoted in N.C. Kelkar, Lokmanya Tilakanche Charitra \(in Marathi\), Vol. 1, published by the author, Poona 1923, p. 320. For Ramabai’s version, see p. 264 of the present work.](#)] The *Kesari* was at this time being edited not by Tilak but by one Vasudeorao Kelkar, who “though sceptical, was at heart in sympathy with Ramabai’s work”. [[Ibid., p. 320.](#)] But by the middle of 1891 Tilak was in full control of the *Kesari* and wrote five sharply critical editorials or editorial notes in the six issues from 17 June to 21 July. In one of them he quoted, out of context, the passage reproduced above from p. 118 of *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, and concluded that the Sharada Sadan was “worse than a government or missionary school”. He added :

The government is neutral as regards religion and the missionaries say that all they are here with the object of conversion. But in the lady's school one finds a pretence of education while the [real] aim is that of conversation. [Quoted in N.C. Kelkar, *op. cit.*, p. 321.]

One would have thought that the Advisory Board [The original Board, known as the Managing Board, consisted of eminent Hindu social reformers such as R. G. Bhandarkar, M. G. Ranade, G. H. Deshmukh ('Lokahitawadi'), S. P. Pandit, K. T. Telang, W. A. Modak, Atmaram Pandurang Dr. Kane, Lalshankar Umiyashankar and Mahipatram Ruparam (N. C. Kelkar *Op. cit.*, p. 319). I have not been able to trace all these names in any other book, and the original files of the *Kasari* or any other contemporary periodical, or their microfilms, were not available for reference during the period this Introduction was being prepared.] appointed by the Ramabai Association to help and guide Ramabai in her work would have stood by her in the hour of crisis. But most of its members were members of the Prarthana Samaj and were more interested in religious than in social reform. [D. G. Vaidya, *Prarthana Samajacha Itihas* (in Marathi), Prarthana Samaj, Bombay 1927, p. 35.] Tilak's attack, which was directed not only at Ramabai but also at the members of the Advisory Board, was too harsh for these soft-spoken leaders of the liberal school. Earlier too, at the first signs of trouble in 1889-90 one of the members of the Board had, on behalf of the entire Board, sent in a letter of resignation to the Ramabai Association in America on the ground that the latter did not agree with the Board that the Sharada Sadan should scrupulously observe all the caste rules of Brahminism and also discriminate in favour of Hinduism instead of adopting a neutral stand between Hinduism and Christianity. But owing to the ambiguous language of the letter, the names of the members of the Managing Board were included in the new Advisory Board appointed after the Sadan had moved to Poona. By the middle of 1893 the Board's resistance, particularly of its three members from Poona, had been worn but by Tilak's persistent sniping. On 23 August 1893, therefore, they wrote to the Ramabai Association in clear terms that they were for ever severing their connection with the Sharada Sadan. [D. N. Tilak, *op. cit.*, pp.252-56. Tilak also gives in Marathi translation the complete text of this letter, which was signed by R. G. Bhandarkar, M. G. Ranade and C. N. Bhat. The second, and operative, part of the letter is reproduced in the original English in N. C. Kelkar, *op. cit.*, pp.327-28. For Ramabai's version of the differences with the Managing Board and later the Advisory Board, see the above reference to Tilak's book."]

This development marked a turning point in Ramabai's attitude. Not only the orthodox and conservative Hindus represented, in this case, by Lokmanya Tilak but even the so-called Reformers were unwilling to allow full religious freedom in the working of the Sharada Sadan. She had agreed to run the Sharada Sadan on "wholly secular" lines not only because she did not believe in compulsion in matters of religion; she had also hoped that by keeping to this path she would be able to win the confidence of at least the liberal Hindus. But she had misjudged the liberalism of the Reformers no less than the hostility of the orthodox. In a letter to Miss Dorothea Beale written from the US on the eve of her departure for India, Ramabai had described her countrymen as "a people who are mine, but who look [upon] me as a foe and a stranger" (p. 184). Since her main concern was the welfare of Hindu widows she would have been happy if the Hindus were willing to take over the Sharada Sadan or start a similar institution of their own. In a letter she published in the *Kesari* on 2 February 1890 in reply to the latter's criticism on the basis of the *Christian Weekly* report mentioned above, she explained her position in the following words: If my countrymen had given me adequate support and encouragement, there would have been no need for the Sharada Sadan to become a Christian institution. Great efforts were made in the past, and are being made even now, in order that it should not be a Christian institution. [But since] the Hindus would not give the funds for establishing such a school, I had to beg [for funds] from the Christians. If you are prepared to run the school [even] now, our Christian patrons will make no difficulty at all about it. You bear the expenses, appoint such teachers as you wish, and appoint a Hindu lady as head of the school. If this is done, in keeping with our original objective [of relieving the plight of Hindu widows] we Christians will only help you. [But] you know as well we that it is easier to find fault with what other do than do anything oneself. [N. C. Kelkar, *op. cit.*, pp.320-21.]

Tilak's biographer recognizes the validity of Ramabai's retort and blames the critics for lack of genuine interest in the education of women, and the Reformers for lacking in a spirit of sacrifice and dedication even though they were strongly in favour of it. [Then, as now, they made long speeches but had little to show by way of action. For an example of what Ramabai calls "the talking-much-but-do-nothingness of these educated orators", see her letter in this volume to Mrs. Judith Andrews, Chairman of the Ramabai Association, dated 1 December 1892(pp.285ff.).] However, Ramabai valued the goodwill of the armchair reformers and was willing to accommodate their views

to a limited extent. But their cowardly response to Tilak's unrelenting hostility confirmed her feeling that unless she feel in line with the prejudices of Hindu orthodoxy, she would forever remain "a foe and a stranger" to a people whom she regarded as her own and to whom she was bound by bonds much stronger than those of religion. Henceforth she was to rely on her own strength and the faith she had in her God and Saviour. Her experience in rescuing women and children during the famines— in Central India in 1896-97 and in Western India in 1899-1900—and her visit to Brindavan and other sacred places in North India in 1895 [For a brief account of this visit, cf. Padmini Sengupta, *op.cit.*, pp.229-30.] contrasted sharply with what she had seen of the work done by the Sisters among "fallen" women in Fulham. Gradually Ramabai came to the conclusion that it was futile to maintain the original secular character of the Sharada Sadan. When the Ramabai Association was reconstituted in 1898, it allowed conversion to take place freely provided no coercion was used in the process. Meanwhile, inspired by Ramabai's example, D. K. Karve had already founded the Hindu Widows' Home in Poona in 1896—though admission to it was not yet open to non-Brahmin Hindu widows in view of the pollution complex of the Brahmins. [Vitthal Ramji Shinde, who later founded the Depressed Classes Mission, wanted to put up his sister in Karve's Home. He was told that the time for admitting non-Brahmin Hindu women had not yet come. (V. R. Shinde *Mazyz Athavani Ani Anubhav* (Marathi). Shree Lekhan Vachan Bhandar, Poona 1958, pp. 104-05. Shinde was a Maratha.)] Ramabai could, therefore, forget the high-caste Hindus and direct her efforts to those sections of Hindus society which for centuries had been treated as the scum of the earth. In 1902 the Sharada Sadan was shifted to Kedgaon and, for all particular purposes, Ramabai as well as the Sadan ceased to exist for the Brahmins of Poona.

The Mukti Sadan was founded by Ramabai at Kedgaon on a piece of land admeasuring about 100 acres in September 1898. Later she bought some additional land and tried to make her enterprise independent of outside help by digging wells and putting most of the land under the plough. Besides the Mukti and Sharada Sadans, the campus at Kedgaon also housed the Kripa Sadan (home for 'fallen' women), Priti Sadan (home for the aged and the infirm), Sadanand Sadan (home for boys) and Bartim Sadan [Bartimaeus was a blind man whom Jesus Christ is supposed to have restored to sight (Mark, 10:46 ff.).] (home for the blind). By the middle of 1900 there were nearly 2,000 inmates in the various Sadans at Kedgaon, most of whom were rescued from a life of starvation and shame which used to be the common lot of the victims of famine, particularly of women and young girls, in those days. Ramabai and her workers nursed them back to physical and moral health, and fitted them for living a useful life by training them for productive work like agriculture and horticulture, carpentry and masonry, tailoring, printing, teaching and education. In her note for the year 1900, Sister Geraldine sums up Ramabai's achievements in the following words (pp. 362-63) :

To do the work required for nearly 2,000 souls, Ramabai had only sixteen paid teacher from outside. Besides these, eighty-five of her own women and girls helped her in the three institutions; of these thirty-three were teachers, ten matrons and forty-two workers in different industrial works. The Sharada Sadan in eleven years had trained nearly eighty girls to earn their own living. Eighty-five trained girls are employed in their mother institutions; and sixty-five are either married or are earning their living as teachers and workers in different places.

But this was not all; before she died on 5 April 1922, Ramabai had other accomplishments to her credit. Out of the money she had earned from the sale of *The High Caste Hindu Woman* she bought scientific models and instruments, prepared and published illustrated science text-books in Marathi, introduced the Braille system for the education of the blind, trained teachers for kindergarten schools, and completed a new translation in simple Marathi of the Old and new Testaments from the original Hebrew and Greek.

Judged by any standards—social, educational, economic—this is a remarkable achievement, especially when viewed against the background of the times in which Ramabai worked. It was natural for Ramabai to attribute her success in the face of such heavy odds to God, in Whose existence and love for His creatures she believed with child-like simplicity. Her alienation from the Brahmin elite eliminated the need to keep her education and social work separate from religion and pushed her in the direction of open evangelization. The relationship of creative tension she earlier had with her

Brahmin environment now gave place to a condition of peace in isolation, which must have made a no less exacting demand, though of a different kind, on her inner resources. By temperament and background she was a crusader, but at Kedgaon there were no heathen armies to fight against. She therefore fell back upon the common basis of all Christian (and Islamic) mysticism—namely, the overwhelming consciousness of sin and one’s utter unworthiness to receive the grace of God. The growing awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Revival of 1905 (p. 390) were a response to this situation.

From now on Kedgaon become like any other missionary institution—and Ramabai’s critics must bear the responsibility for this unfortunate development—but with two important differences. Ramabai never took recourse to coercion or to methods of persuasion unworthy of her conception of truth and morality. Secondly, conversation for her did not have any extra-religious implication. She was born and brought up as a Hindu and an Indian, and except in matters of religion remained what she was before going to England. She loved India and her people suffered from no sense of inferiority in relation to the English, and was not afraid of speaking out against the government when the occasion demanded—as, for example, at the time of the plague in Poona in 1897. In May 1897 she published a long letter in the *Bombay Guardian* criticising the atrocious treatment to which persons suspected of plague, particularly young women, were subjected by the staff of the segregation camp set up by the government. She gave details of how one of her girls was forcibly taken to this camp on mere suspicion of plague and was later spirited away from it by one of the watchmen who kept her as his concubine. Ramabai ended her letter with a warning to other women : “I am mourning over my lost child as much as ever a mother mourned and wish death had put an end to all this. May mother protect their girl-children, even though it may be at cost of their own lives”. This letter created a furore and in reply to a member’s question was read out by Lord Hamilton in the British parliament in July 1897. A few weeks later she published another letter in the *Bombay Guardian*, asserting that

the shameful way in which women were made to submit to treatment by male doctors goes to prove that the English authorities in general do not believe that the Indian women are modest and need special consideration . . . . How would an English woman, poor though she may be, like to be exposed to the public gaze and roughly handled by male doctors? Is not the Indian woman quite as modest as the English women? Does she not as a women deserve better treatment at the hands of the Governor and the plague Committee?

Instead of enquiring into the working of the segregation camp, the Governor of Bombay, Lord Sandhurst superciliously dismissed Ramabai’s charges as “grossly inaccurate and misleading”. This provoked her into writing a further letter to the *Bombay Guardian*, in which she observed *inter alia* :

So the Governor of Bombay has declared my statement about the shameful treatment of one of my girls and the bad management of the Poona Hospitals as “grossly inaccurate and misleading”. Some believe that only Orientals make certain assertions without giving any proof of their truth. But I see that the Occident also can boast some people including our worthy Governor who make certain assertions without giving any proof of their truth . . . he never even condescended to ask me a word about it, . . . In the name of truth and justice, I ask the conscientious Christian public to say if Lord Sandhurst did right to declare my statements as “grossly inaccurate” when he has never so much as asked me to prove them. [D. N. Tilak, *op. cit.*, pp.’296-303.]

Sister Geraldine was one of the ‘conscientious Christian public’ who would have thought that Lord Sandhurst had done the right thing. In her introduction to Vol. V (p. 348) she charges Ramabai with having “added fuel to the fire by a childish, sensational and seditious letter to the Editor of the *Bombay Guardian*”. “Sedition”, she says “quickly spreads and hardly a month had elapsed after Ramabai’s [first] letter when. . . . Lieut. Ayerst and Mr. Rand were murdered in cold blood”. This would suggest that the murders were the culmination of an unprovoked agitation to which Ramabai had, even if unwittingly, lent a helping hand. That the government measures were inspired less by concern for the people of Poona than by the fear that the epidemic might adversely affect India’s trade



with England. [N. C. Kelkar, *op. cit.*, p.527.] need not have occurred to Sister Geraldine. But she could have easily satisfied herself that the charges that Ramabai levelled against the administration were, if anything, an understatement of the facts. [For a contemporary description of the manner in which the Poona Plague Committee under Rand's leadership went about its work and the feelings it aroused, even among the Reformers, cf. N. C. Kelkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 521-37.] However, she did not think such verification necessary before brushing them aside—though in her opinion Ramabai was “a leader among her people, gifted by God with good sense, nobility of purpose and high courage” (p. 348). For Sister Geraldine the British government in India could do no wrong, perhaps because it was run by Christians belonging to the Anglican Church. It was incomprehensible to her that Ramabai, herself a Christian baptised in the same Church should contribute to the agitation against the measures adopted by the government.

This incident was illustrative of a fundamental difference between Ramabai and Sister Geraldine as regards their conceptions of Christianity. For the latter Christianity was what the Church of England prescribed in matters of doctrine and mode of worship including the details of food and drink at sacramental meals. She expected Ramabai to accept without question the authority of the Anglican Church as superior to even that of the Bible and as leaving no scope for individual judgment. For Ramabai, on the other hand, Christianity was the religion preached by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. She was not prepared to accept any doctrine which did not find a clear sanction in the Bible. Similarly, having grown up as an orthodox Hindu, she could not bring herself to partake of meat or wine though the latter was an essential element of the eucharistic meal.

Ramabai's insistence on thinking for herself involved her in a prolonged, and sometimes bitter, debate with Sister Geraldine on the nature of the Christian faith. Unlike her spiritual mother, Ramabai was not born in Christianity, she had come to it the hard way and brought to it the same critical attitude as she had earlier shown in relation to Hinduism and Brahmoism. She accepted Christianity because she found that its God was a God of love and forgiveness and because the Christians she had known were, unlike her Hindu countrymen, genuinely concerned with the uplift of the poor and the oppressed. But while she accepted Jesus Christ as the Saviour and the New Testament as the word of God, she would not surrender her right to study the Bible for herself and to formulate her own faith regardless of what the Church of England felt about it. In a letter to Sister Geraldine dated 12 May 1885, she stated her position in language that left no room for doubt:

It seems to me that you are advising me under the WE to accept always the will of those who have authority, etc. This, however, I cannot accept. I have a conscience, and a mind and judgment of my own. I must myself think and do everything which GOD has given me the power of doing. . . . Although priests and bishops may have certain authority over the church yet the church has another Master Who is Superior even to the bishops. I am, it is true, a member of the Church of Christ, but I am not bound to accept every word that falls down from the lips of priests or bishops. . . . Obedience to the law and to the Word of God is quite different from perfect obedience to priests only. I have just with great effort freed myself from the yoke of the Indian priestly tribe, so I am not at present willing to place myself under another similar yoke by accepting everything which comes from the priests as authorized command of the Most High.

Sister Geraldine was aware of Ramabai's love of liberty and knew “how contact with America had strengthened it, and developed it”. She also understood the significance of the emblem that Ramabai later chose for the cover of the Mukti periodical. It was a large cracked bell—the Liberty Bell—with a passage from Isaiah IX: “The Lord hath anointed Me to preach Good Tidings unto the meek and to bind up the brokenhearted, *to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*” (p. 402, emphasis added). But Sister Geraldine was a member of an authoritarian and hierarchically organized church. She could not see the inherent in-compatibility between Ramabai's love of liberty and the Church's insistence on unquestioning conformity. Instead, she attributed Ramabai's difficulties in accepting certain doctrines of the Anglican Church to “vanity and arrogance” which made her “chafe at the child-like attitude of heart which alone can receive Divine mysteries” (p. 407).



The most important of these “Divine mysteries” was expressed by the Doctrine of Trinity and the divinity of Christ, over which a long and bitter controversy had raged in the early history of Christianity and was attended by brutal persecution on both sides. The point at issue was whether Christ the Son was of similar substance (*homoiousios*) as God the Father, or of the same substance (*homooousios*). If one accepted latter position, it followed that Christ was in essence identical with God and together with the Holy Ghost constituted the Trinity. (The word ‘trinity’ is somewhat misleading here, for what is meant is not the unity of three different elements, but the three aspects of a single, divine, *uncreated* unity.. The Athanasian Creed, to which Ramabai refers in one of her letters to Sister Geraldine as unacceptable to her (p. 89), asserts this Doctrine of Trinity. Its central thesis may be stated in the following words:

Scripture and tradition know of only *one* Godhead : they, however, at the same time, pronounce Christ to be God : they call the Divine which has appeared in Christ, Logos, Wisdom and Son; they thus distinguish it from God, the Father. Faith has to hold fast to this. But in accordance with this we get the following propositions:

(a) The Godhead is unity. Therefore the Divine which appeared in Christ must form part of this unity. There is only one underived or unbegotten principle; this is the Father.

(b) The very name Father implies, moreover, that a second exists in the Godhead. God has always been Father, and whoever calls Him Father posits at the same time the Son; for the Father is the Father of Son, and only in a loose sense the Father of the world and of men; for these are created, but the divine Trinity is uncreated, for otherwise it might either decrease again, or further might increase in the future.

(c) This Son, the offspring of the Father, was not, however, begotten in a human fashion as if God were corporeal. On the contrary, He has been begotten as the sun begets light and the spring the brook; He is called Son because He is the eternal, perfect reflection of the Father, the image proceeding from the substance of the Father; He is called Wisdom and Logos not as if the Father were imperfect without Him, but as the creative power of the Father. “To be begotten” simply means completely to share by nature in the entire nature of the Father, implying at the same time that the Father does not therefore suffer or undergo anything.

(d) Consequently, the assertion of the Arians [\[A statement of the Arian position follows.\]](#) that the Son is God, Logos and Wisdom in a nominal sense only, that there was a time in which the Son was not, that he has sprung from the will of the Father, that He was created out of the non-existent or out of some other substance, that He is subject to change are false. On the contrary, he is (1) co-eternal with the Father and (2) He is of the substance of the Father, for otherwise He would not be God at all, (3) He is by His own nature in all points similarly constituted as the Father, and finally He is all this, because He has *one and the same substance in common with the Father* and together with him constitutes a unity, but ‘substance’ in reference to God means nothing else then “Being”. It is not the case that the Father is one substance by itself and the Son another substance by itself and that these two are similarly constituted. This would do away with the unity of the Godhead. On the contrary, the Father is the Godhead; this Godhead, however, contains in it a mystery which can only be approximately conceived of by men. . . . There are not two divine ousias, not two divine hypostases or the like, but *one* ousia and hypostasis, which the Father and the Son possess. Thus the Son is true God, inseparable from the Father. . . . [\[Adolph Harnack, \*History of Dogma\* \(tr. Neil Buchanan from the third German edition, c. 1900\), Dover Publications, New York, Vol. 4, pp. 30-35.\]](#)

The Arians—so called after Arius (d. 336), bishop of Antioch, who propounded the doctrine—asserted that “the Son is an unrelated and an independent being totally separated from, and different from, the substance or nature of the Father”. Their argument ran as follows:

(a) God, the Only one, besides whom there is no other, is alone unbegotten, without beginning and eternal; He is inexpressible, incomprehensible, and has absolutely no equal. . . . He has created all things out of His freewill, and there exists nothing besides Him which He has not created. The expression “to beget” is simply a synonym for “to create”. If it were not, the pure simplicity and spirituality of God’s nature would be destroyed. God can put forth nothing out of His own essence; nor can he communicate His essence to what is created, for this essence is essentially uncreated. He has accordingly not been Father always; for otherwise what is created would not be created, but eternal.

(b) Wisdom and Logos dwell within this God as the powers (not persons) which are coincident with his substance, and are by their very nature inseparable from it; there are besides many *created* powers.

(c) Before the world existed, God of His free will created an independent substance or hypostasis as the instrument by means of which all other creatures were to be created, since without it the creatures would not have been able to endure the contact of the Godhead. This Being is termed in Scripture Wisdom, also Son, Image, Word; this Wisdom, which, compared with the inner divine Wisdom, is called Wisdom only in a loose sense, has like all creatures been created out of nothing. It originates in God only in so far as it has been created by God; it is in no sense of the substance or essence of God . . . .

(d) As regards his Substance, the ‘Son’ . . . has neither one and the same substance together with the Father, nor a nature and constitution similar to that of the Father. If he had, then there would be two Gods. [In a foot-note to (a) above, Harnack observes: ‘In laying down their doctrine of God, Arius and his friends express themselves with a certain fervor. One can see that they have a genuine concern to defend monotheism.’— *Ibid.*, p. 16.] On the contrary, like all rational creatures he has a free will and is capable of change. He might consequently have been good or bad; but he made up his mind to follow the good, and continued in the good without vacillation . . . .

(e) Since the Son is, as regards his substance, unrelated to the Godhead, he is not truly God, and accordingly has not by nature the divine attributes; he is only the so-called Logos and Wisdom. As he is not eternal, neither is his knowledge in any sense perfect; he has no absolute knowledge of God, . . . . accordingly he cannot claim equal honour with the Father.

(f) Still the Son is not a creature and a product like other creatures; he is the perfect; by him everything has been created; he stands in a special relation to God, but this is solely conditioned by grace and adoption; . . . Through God’s bestowal of grace and by his own steady progress he has become God, so that we may now call him “only-begotten God”, “strong God”, and so on.

(g) . . . .

(h) Amongst the number of created powers the Holy Ghost is to be placed beside the Son as a second, independent Substance or Hypostasis; for the Christian believes in three separate and different substances or persons; Father, Son and Spirit. [Adolph Harnack, *op.cit.*, vol. 4, pp. 15-19. Harnack was a German Protestant; for a Catholic discussion of Arianism, cf. Jean Guitton, *Great Heresies & Church Councils*, Harvill Press, London 1963, pp. 79-95.]

The issue was, for the time being, settled at the Council of Nicaca convened by the Emperor Constantine in 325. Constantine threw his weight on the side of orthodoxy and the Council adopted the Nicene (or Athanasian) Creed which asserted the divinity of Christ, pronounced Arianism a heresy and anathematized those who were guilty of professing it. [For a delightful narrative of the proceedings of the Council of Nicaea. See ch. 7, entitled “Constantine”, in Robert Payne, *The Christian Centuries*. W.W. Norton and Co., New York 1966, pp. 100-111; for the text of the Nicene Creed, see Henry Bettenson (ed.), *Documents of the Christian Church* (2nd edn.), Oxford Paperbacks, London 1967, pp. 25-26.] Arianism staged a come-back at the Council of Rimini (in Italy) in 359, but had lost ground and seemed defeated by the end of the century. It reappeared for a third time with the rise of

the Goths, the Ostrogoths, the Alans, the Alemanni and the Lombards. It was finally put down in the sixth century with the rise of Clovis. “a still un-Christianized barbarian [who] put his fighting force at the service of Church, the bishops and the monks of Nicaea” [Jeen Guitton, *supra*, p. 88.]

We have deliberately dealt with Athanasian Creed at some length, for it brings out as nothing else the nature of the conflict between Ramabai and her spiritual mother. The Arian view of Christ was more in keeping with St. Paul’s teaching, it was more rational—to the extent that any religion can be—and Arius himself was looked upon by “the sailors and labourers of Alexandria’s dockside [as a] friend of the workers and a man who made religion simple and taught in a chant whose beat fell in with the rhythm of their chores”. Among his followers were also “certain bishops who had held to the more humanistic and more exegetical or, as we would say today, more rational and more critical tradition of Antioch, Alexandria’s closest rival”. [Jean Guitton, *supra* p. 84. Note that Jean Guitton is a Roman Catholic and as such anti-Arian.] Given her background and personality, it is not surprising that Ramabai should find herself in sympathy with the Arian viewpoint and incapable of reconciling herself to the mystery-mongering involved in the Athanasian Creed. She was a religious humanist and was drawn to Christianity in revulsion against the brutality and male chauvinism in the name of the Hindu religion that she saw all around her in India. But she had no patience with theological subtleties and Higher Criticism (p. 421); most of what she knew was an apologia for the Catholic Church. She could not agree with Sister Geraldine who, echoing the official doctrine, asserted that the Church existed before the Bible (p. 339), thus claiming for the Church an authority higher than even that of Jesus and the Apostles. (The dogma of Papal infallibility in matters of doctrine was promulgated only a few years ago.) For Ramabai, the question was simple : “Is Christianity the teaching of Christ or the teaching of a certain body of men?” She believed in the Holy Catholic Church but, again, asked what that Church was. “Is it the English Church? Is it the Lutheran Church? I understand by it the Church Universal, the multitude of men and women who believe in Christ and in his teaching, *consciously or unconsciously*, in any country, tribe or sect. A certain body of men cannot claim to be the only Catholics in the world” (p. 161; emphasis added). Ramabai could not, therefore, believe that only those who were members of the English Church could hope for salvation and that all others, including her own parents whose memory she cherished with respect and affection, would be consigned to eternal damnation. She was satisfied that “the Bible says in detail all that is necessary for the salvation of mankind . . . a doctrine that is essential to faith not left unnoticed by the Bible, and I am not prepared to accept an essential doctrine which I shall not find in the Bible” (p. 80). She formulated her own creed strictly on the basis of Christ’s teaching consisting of only five articles as against the thirty-nine of the English Church. She believed that this creed, together with good works, especially as recommended in *Matthew* and *John*, and keeping away from sin was sufficient for salvation (pp. 157-58). All else was indicative of sectarian differences, which only reminded her of the various sects of Hinduism.

Though Ramabai took her stand by the Bible, she did not interpret it literally. She did not believe in the miracles [For a short period around 1895 Ramabai swore by faith healing but soon came out of it (pp. 335. 409).] mentioned in it (pp. 155-56) and frankly declared that Revelation was not “a store of gross absurdities that cannot stand the test of reason” (p. 141). It would be interesting to speculate what her reaction would have been to modern biblical research. She was aware of the possibility of St. John’s Gospel not being authentic (p. 138). But would she have received with the same equanimity the findings of contemporary research which deny not only the authenticity of the other three Gospels but also the historicity of the Jesus around whose personality the entire edifice of the Christian faith is reared? [For a critical and scholarly study of the evidence pertaining to the myth of Jesus Christ. See G. A. Wells. *The Jesus of the Early Christians: a Study in Christian Origins*. Pemberton Books, London 1971.] How would she have reacted to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which suggests that Christianity cannot even claim the credit for giving the world a new morality based on forgiveness and love in the place of the old one of “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”? or to the finding that not only in the sphere of morality but even in that of doctrine and ritual the new religion was an amalgam of the Judaic and pagan religions it sought to replace? [Cf. J.M. Robertson, *A Short History of Christianity* (3rd edn.), Thinker’s Library Watts & Co., London 1937.] Subject to the hazards involved in all guesswork, and its futility in relation to past events, one may venture to suggest that Ramabai would have accepted the truth even if it went against her deepest beliefs. She would have been distracted for some time at her loss of faith but would have once again emerged triumphant from

the crisis. More than anything else, God to her was a principle of moral perfection, which implied freedom, equality and the opportunity to use one's gifts in a manner that would make oppression and suffering a thing of the past. Truth would have liberated her and, like Gandhi, she would have affirmed that 'truth is God'.

6 December 1976

A. B. SHAH

## Ramabai

*The little Hindoo maiden heard a voice amid the lull  
Of singing streams and rustling leaves, in groves of Gungamul;  
It swept along the mountain wind, down to the western sea;  
Heaven whispered to the listening earth: "Truth, like the air, is free!"*

*That word had winged her father's feet from fettering caste away,  
To give his fledgelings liberty for flight in ampler day  
Than Manu's cage-like code allowed, and so the maiden grew  
To reach of thought and insight clear no dim zenana knew.*

*Child of the lone Ghaut Mountains! Flower of India's wilderness!  
She knows that God unsealed her lips her sisters dumb to bless;  
Gave her the clews to lead them forth from where they blindly grope,  
Bade her unlock their dungeons' doors and light the lamps of hope.*

*Bravest of Hindoo widows! how dare we look at thee,  
So fearless in love's liberty, and say that we are free?  
We, who have heard the voice of Christ, and yet remain the slaves  
Of indolence and selfishness, immured in living graves?*

*O Ramabai, may we not share thy task, almost divine?  
Thy cause is womanhood's is Christ's our work no less than thine!  
The Power that unseals sepulchres will move thy little hand—  
The stone rolls back; they rise—they breathe! the women of thy land!*

By LUCY LARCOM

## Apologia Pro Opere

In the Spring of 1907, a somewhat serious illness incapacitated me for a time and bid me think whether there were any matters yet to be set straight before my final call. The thought of a somewhat large correspondence, not only with, but in connection with, Pandita Ramabai and her daughter made me desire the aid of someone who could put it into such form as would be useful to anyone in the future to whom the call was given to write the lives of either of these two important personalities. As a contribution to the history of the conversion of India, they will be undoubtedly valuable. The faults of workers, their methods of work, will be summoned to the bar of public opinion; and further the lives of such leading Indian women, if well set before the public, will be a valuable contribution to the psychologists, as well as to the psycho-theologian in the study of the Indian mind, and of the methods best suited to present the highest knowledge for its reception.

As I was thinking who best could collect and arrange the material I had a message from a friend who was writing the life of Miss Beale to ask if I could give her an interview to answer some questions in connection with Ramabai's time at Cheltenham Ladies' College. A week elapsed before I could send an answer in the affirmative; and when I did, I realised that I must myself look into the correspondence to enable me to give accurate answers to the questions about which I should probably be asked. As I read the correspondence I realised that in ways besides the letters (for the memory of many conversations and singular coincidences came vividly before me), I perceived that I had an unique possession, and that no one but myself could possibly record what I alone knew, and that without doubt I ought to endeavour to hand on my knowledge in such a form as might be useful to others. I had no desire to give it any literary value; only to arrange the matter with method and order, so far as I was able and to make such remarks as occurred to me with regard to facts, events, character and sequences which might be helpful. This latter may be of little or no value to others or it may be of use; that I cannot judge. It seems to me that my work is to do my best—probably it will be what may be compared to setting out some few letters of the alphabet for another to arrange into words, and still for another to group into sentences.

My work then seems to be to hand on my possession to a future generation with as much truthfulness and with such fullness of charity as it possible for a frail and erring human being. I should like to add that I have found the most interesting and edifying biographies to be those where the faults of the person under review are not withheld. Shadows shew up the light and help to give true proportion. Secondary lives which are brought onto the stage are often brought into high light and become an inspiration by a truthful narration. A life with all the faults suppressed is dazzling, but tends to depress. Where the opposite plan is followed, that life simply told is bracing and heartening.

1907

SISTER GERALDINE

1917

Much has happened since I wrote the above and further light has been thrown upon the singular life of Pandita Ramabai.

Mrs. Raikes [[Mrs. Elizabeth Raikes is the author of the biography \*Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham\* \(1908\)](#)] when she returned me the correspondence lent her for reference when she was writing the Life of Miss Beale, sent me with it the typed correspondence which came into her possession between Ramabai and Miss Beale. These are bound up in Volume II and are much pleasanter reading than the Pandita's letters in this Volume. Her letters in this Volume leave one with an unpleasant impression. She took keen delight in intellectual fencing and her pride and vanity were dangerously inflated by her getting hold of points of controversy from her non-Conformist friends and dragging them clumsily and offensively into her letters. The reader of these and of some of those in Volume II might easily imagine that her child was given religious instruction far beyond her years, whereas she was taught rudimentary

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Christian knowledge of the simplest possible kind. She had never had the Athanasian Creed or the 39 Articles mentioned to her. Such things were fictions residing in the manifold recesses of Ramabai's fertile brain.

There are among what can be termed much rubbish, passages in her letters of rare beauty—diamonds sparkling in the rubbish heap! These tell of much worthier intellectual contemplation than most of her letters at this time give the impression.

A word about myself, which I write with great reluctance but which seems only right to add as so many references in the letters which run over 30 years allude to it—that is, my ill-health.

First I would say that intellectually I was not equipped for such a work as instructing Ramabai. Though I read a good deal of Hindu literature at that time and it doubtless enlarged my mind, yet neither my natural gifts nor my educational advantages would have fitted me for the work. This was why it was decided to send her to Cheltenham Ladies' College, that she might have the advantage of instruction by women of the highest education and culture.

Added to this, I was not fitted from the point of health to undertake strenuous work on my hand. When I returned from India early in 1883, I was suffering from a severe nerve break-down. The burden of a school which had rapidly increased and which was greatly understaffed had made great demands on nerve power. Added to that, the responsibility of the whole of the women's side of the Mission was laid on my shoulders by the sudden going home of the Sister Superior—invalid. The Mission passed through a time of such testing through various sorrowful events that, in the words of Bishop Mylne, only the good work done in St. Mary's School saved it from *complete failure*. It was these circumstances which completely broke down my health. In those days it was customary to treat nerve exhaustion as pure imagination and the remedy applied was to try to whip up the spent horse. People after many years learnt differently and resorted to rest cures for spent nerves, but it was not so then.

Immediately on my return I was set to work. Two months elapsed and Ramabai and her friend [\[Anandibai Bhagat\]](#) and child arrived who were given into my care. All I can say is I strove, as I hope I have always done, to do my best. My best was a poor failure. But however much I have failed from lack of ability or health, that charge which was given me I have sought to be faithful to and only give it back into Higher Hands with my life.

March 19th, 1917

SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

P.S. (i).—The discussion raised by two Indian [\[In those days there were no Indian Bishops. In this context it means the English Bishops who were in India.\]](#) Bishops as to the wisdom of the Pandita having been allowed to give instruction to English youths in Sanskrit is one of the few things in this Volume which would be of interest to introduce into a biography of Pandita Ramabai.

P.S. (ii).—The first thing the Pandita did when she was in a position to discharge debts was to pay by instalments the money which Anandi was possessed of and which she had expended on her voyage to *England, etc.* This I had urged her to do at the time of Anandibai's sad death. Then she felt she had received great hospitality and loving care from the Community of St. Mary the Virgin and she sent us a cheque for £300 with a gracious letter. This money was made a gift to the Epiphany School and was a great help with the buildings.

Later on, in 1906 or 1907 when, after the great Revival at Mukti, she saw her life in clearer vision, she was conscious of ingratitude and made a great amend honourable in a TESTIMONY she wrote and printed and sent round to some of her friends. It will be found in Volume V. Another she wrote a little later, in which she gives some interesting information on her early life.

March 20th, 1917.

SISTER GERALDINE, C. S. M. V.

## Pandita Ramabai

It was in Poona in 1882 that I first saw Pandita Ramabai. After her husband's death [[Ramabai's husband, Bipin Behari Das Medhavi, died of cholera on 4th February 1882, nineteen months after their marriage.](#)] at Silchar (District Kachar, Assam) she went to Madras, and had there found no open door; so she came back to the Maratha country and among her own people. It was here that she came under the notice of Dr. William Hunter, at that time prominently connected with the British educational interests of India. Her earnestness and enthusiasm touched him, and he thought her career and the good she was doing so worthy of admiration that he made her the subject of a lecture in Edinborough. Henceforth her name was well known in England to all who were interested in the social amelioration of the people in Hindusthan.

As early as 1880 however her fame had reached England. A gentleman writing from Bengal tells of a young Brahmin lady of twenty-two years of age, slight and girlish-looking, with a fair complexion, and light grey eyes, who with her brother was holding meetings on the education and emancipation of woman. They were received every-where with great enthusiasm by the Hindus, who were delighted to hear their holy Sanskrit from a woman's lips; it seemed to them as if *Saraswati* (the Goddess of Eloquence and Learning) had come down to visit them.

Miss Hurford, at that time on the Mission staff of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin and working in the Zenanas, was introduced to her, and finding her anxious to learn English, began to teach her. Thus a connection between her and our Poona Mission began. She was then lecturing in Poona, and not unfrequently addressed large assemblies at Hirabag, at the foot of the Parvati Hill. Impulsive and energetic, and at that time quite undisciplined, she was swayed by every passing thought. Her little daughter [who was] one year old was a problem to her. What was she to do with the child when her own work of lecturing and writing absorbed both time and thought?

Ramabai occasionally paid us a visit at the Mission House [[This Mission House is the Convent of St. Mary, situated in Guruwar Peth, Panch Howd, Poona, India.](#)] and began to be drawn to those strange people who is dress and manner were unlike her other missionary acquaintances. One day she appeared with little Mano in her arms, [and said:] "I have come to give her to you and you shall bring her up, she shall be yours", or words to that effect. How our hearts rejoiced at such a gift! It was indeed an overweight of joy to have so precious a little treasure to bring up for our dear Lord, and to make a child of the Heavenly Father. But our joy was of short duration. Within two hours the mother re-appeared to fetch the little daughter : "My friend will not hear of my parting with the child, and she has been very good to Mano and will miss her; so I have come to take her back". Sorrowfully, we gave up our little treasure. We little thought then how soon she would be given back to us again and what an important part she would for some years play in the history of the Community [[Community of St. Mary the Virgin, Wantage.](#)], by which for a time she was adopted and educated. So we were not quite strangers when she came to us on 2nd May 1883.

It would not be possible to write a truthful story of Ramabai's life as far as it is known to myself without sometimes alluding to my own personality. It seems right to say here that I think it was originally intended that Ramabai should have been under Sister Elizabeth's guidance. She had been the first Superior of the Poona Mission, and had had some experience of native work, and had a very warm love for [the] Indian people. She was at this time Superior of St. James's Diocesan Home, Fulham. It was not, however, possible that this should be, as it was considered by competent judges a questionable thing for a high-caste woman to take up her abode in what was as its *raison d'être* a Home for fallen women. So she was sent to the Mother House of the Community at Wantage and there I was the only available Sister to be given to the work.

Though I had been working in India, my work had almost wholly been in an European and Eurasian high school, and so I had had no experience in native work, and if I felt then wholly inadequate for so responsible a work, how much more so now, as I review the past.

The difficulties of the case were enormous, and abnormal, and the result of the work for a time seemed to have been complete failure. But where failure and success come in, the Highest judgment alone is final and complete. Where man in his finality fails, the Maker of the instrument takes up the work and brings it to an issue worthy of His greatness and goodness, as the sequel of Ramabai's story is a fitting illustration.

The following is an extract from the Rev. Mother's letter of June 1st, 1883, to the Associates of the Community.

St. Mary's Home, Wantage  
June 1st, 1883

On the very day our Sisters sailed, Ramabai Pandita landed, bringing with her, her little child of two years, and a friend. Our last letter gave an account of her, so that there is little more to say. All three are with us and seem quite to have settled. Ramabai studies some hours every day, and is already able to talk a little English. Her object in coming to England is to take a medical degree, that she may on her return to India, benefit her countrywomen. The little child is a great delight to all; Ramabai hopes to remain with us many months. Will you use for them the prayer which we enclose.

Pandita Ramabai asked us to receive her with her child and friend for five years: this was to give sufficient time to her friend and herself to study and to equip themselves for some useful profession. She her-self desired to be a lady doctor, and she hoped her friend would be trained to be a teacher. In this they were both doomed to disappointment. The Pandita was seriously hindered by very great deafness; everything possible was done to assist her hearing, but both doctors and aurists were agreed that the deafness would be an insuperable barrier to the medical profession. She had later on some training in teaching.

The sad history of her friend [[Pandita Ramabai's friend, Anandibai Bhagat committed suicide by swallowing poison.](#)] is contained in the September letter. She was much liked by all who had to do with her, and Mother Harriet (the then Mother Superior of the Community) in a special manner devoted herself to Anandibai, helping her in the evenings with her studies. Her case was quite an unsuitable one to have come to a foreign land. She suffered mentally and felt keenly the difference of caste between herself and the Pandita; and the latter, ardent and keen herself, was unable to be as sufficiently sympathetic and patient as Anandibai's case required.

## VOLUME I

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- 1      *Letter from the REV. MOTHER SUPERIOR, C.S.M.V. to the Exterior Sisters of the Community*
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St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
September 1st, 1883

My dear Sister,

Our September letter must be a sad one, as we must tell you (what perhaps you may have already heard) of the almost sudden death of Anandibai, one of the Indian ladies who has been for some time living with us. She took (in what must have been a fit of temporary insanity) that which was only intended for outward application, and died after twelve hours of intense suffering; she had only the Sunday before expressed a desire for Baptism, so that our Chaplain had no hesitation in baptizing her a few hours before her death. It will, I am sure, interest you to read a letter we found written in Marathi, in her portfolio, and which she intended to post in a few days. What follows below is a literal translation. Ramabai and her little girl are very well, the former is still most earnest in her studies, and is looking forward to her baptism with great anxiety.

I am, your affectionately,  
HARRIET, Superior, C. S. M. V.

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- 2      *She received the name of ANANDI (which means joy) in her Baptism. Note her mention of joy in the letter to her Master.*
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To my Master,

With humility and love I greet you. I left you all on 19th March bidding you good-bye. After that I stayed in Bombay a few days, after that, going thence, I arrived in this country in good health, by God's grace. I am very sorry at parting with you and dear Sister students. I hope by the mercy of God you will all be happy and I hope God will give me a day in which I shall meet you all again. My mind is always looking forward, like the bird *kutchu*, to my India, and I pray to God that after my studies are finished, He will bring me again to my own country. I thank you for the favour that you told me about my brothers, that they are in good health. I sent three letters to my brothers, but they did not answer even one of them. Never mind, when you write to Pandita Ramabai, then you will write in that letter whether they are in good health or not, I shall be very thankful to you. Do you know whether my brother is in Poona or in Wanouri? And, if you meet him at any time, ask him why he does not send me a letter; it will be a satisfaction to me to know why he does not write. I am very glad to hear that Vithabai has gone to Sholapur school. I am so sorry about Andabai. There are only a few people (in India) who wish the advance of education among ladies, and if such things happen, they give occasions to evil-speakers to say bad things against the cause at the Feast of Shimaga. These reasons hinder the progress of female education, for if one lady loses her character, everyone is ready to speak evil of the female sex. Matabai has much sorrow. It is beyond human power to bring her comfort and peace. I pray to God that He may comfort her. Give her my greeting with love. What is there about Ramabai, are her family in good health? The climate of this country now is colder than winter in India. The days in which the snow falls are not come yet. The present climate is very good for us all. I am better than I used to be in Poona. I have not any sickness; weak people cannot live in this country. The villages of this country are like our large cities—Poona, Sholapur, etc. We live in Wantage. This city is the birthplace of Alfred the Great; he is at the foundation of England's progress.

The statue of this very king is set on a high throne in the middle of the city; this city very pleasant and is nice to be seen. We stayed three days in London. If anyone sees that city, he cannot help being truly astonished and pleased. While we were in London, we saw the Houses of Parliament. We have nothing in our country to be proud of. Seeing the progress here, we are very sorry to think about the backwardness of our country. In former times, the condition of England was very low, and contrasts very wonderfully with its present exalted condition. All things we use in this country are very pleasant and very beautiful. The ladies in whose company we live love us very much and other people honour us. Pandita Bai loves me like her Mano. I think that God has created a good friend to love me. I think that my mother's love was not much greater than hers.

I am very grateful to you [This letter is addressed to 'Master' and perhaps it meant the Teacher or the Headmaster of the Mission School founded by Mrs. Murray Mitchell of the Church of Scotland Mission in Poona.] and Mrs. Mitchell, because before Government gave me permission, you gave me leave to go, and if you had not done it, and if Pandita Bai had come here, and after that if Government had given me leave, I never should have been able to see these scenes. I am not sorry for having paid to Government 568 Rupees, because I have received from Government a scholarship and therefore I ought to repay it, so there is no reason to regret it. I have received for this, money and education (they have taken money from me), but no one is able to take from me my education. "If the mind is in good health (well educated) then we are able to earn 50 turbans."

The happiness which is mine in coming here, would not be mine if I were in Poona, and had 10,000 Rupees in my possession, you are not able to understand it. Those who come to England know the pleasure they have. After serving the Government and having still in my possession my 568 Rupees, I should not have the power of coming to a foreign country, because here the monthly expenses are no less than 60 Rupees. If the monthly expenses are so much, then 568 Rupees would last me only for my food for eight or nine months. Had I lost this opportunity, the day would not have dawned upon me in which I should come to England. I have great joy. We have two rooms to live in. They have each a window with glass. From these windows the lookout into the garden is very pretty. The garden in which we live is no less beautiful than our Bund Garden in Poona. The air to this place is very pure. We never take any coffee or tea. In the morning for breakfast we have milk, a loaf, butter and oatmeal. At dinner about one o'clock, whole boiled potatoes, rice, curry powder which we brought from Poona, and preserves which we brought from Bombay, and curds, these things are for dinner. The milk which we make into curds, comes into this state after three or four days, but it is not so nice as in our country. After that at half-past four, milk, loaf sugar and butter; and again at eight, rice, milk, whole boiled potatoes, etc. We take our meals four times a day. In this country are many vegetables, but they are not cut as in our country, but are boiled and not mixed with spices.

It is possible for Pandita Bai to go up for Matriculation examination next year. The examination for Matriculation is harder than in our country. She studies very hard every day. She works nearly twelve hours daily. Now she speaks English better than she used to do. Her progress is continuous, and some day she will not hesitate to deliver a lecture. Mano speaks half English and half Marathi. She will learn English very quickly. Baba is getting far, he will be stronger soon. I go to school to learn.

The sun shines equally on all people in the world; the shadow of a tree is equally for all in the same way. I hope that your favour will be upon me. For my rudeness (this is what Mrs. Mitchell termed my breaking with Government) no one will love me. To the first and second class I send my greeting with love. To the Assistant Mistress give my salaams, and my greetings to the Assistant Master. To you and your wife, I send my salaams with love.

Excuse me for my mistakes, I pray to God for your happiness. May your love increase for me, and this is my prayer.

Your humble pupil,

## ANUNDI

The shock occasioned by the death of Anandibai brought Ramabai to prepare with great humility for her Baptism. She did not make use of the Sacrament of Penance prior to Baptism, but afterwards came a much greater conviction of sin, and she herself sought for relief, and made a very whole-hearted and painstaking preparation for Confession.

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### 3 *Extract from a letter of the REV. MOTHER, C.S.M.V., to the Exterior Sisters of the Community*

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St. Mar's Home, Wantage,  
October 1st, 1883

My dear Sister,

You will, I know, rejoice with us when you hear that Ramabi and her child were baptised in the Parish Church, on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels. The Rev. Canon Butler officiated. Ramabai's witnesses were the Rev. Father Page, the Mother Superior of St. Mary's, Sister Elizabeth and Sister Geraldine; the child's sponsors were the Rev. Thomas Henry Archer-Houblon, Sister Mary, Sister Agnes and Sister Emily. Ramabai was named MARY RAMA, the child MANORAMA MARY. [\[Ramabai's Confirmation took place early in December, and her first Communion was made on Christmas Day.\]](#)

We telegraphed to Poona as soon as the service was over. Our Sisters, as you may imagine, were most anxious, and wishing if possible to sing their Te Deum on the same day we did. Mary Rama will now go quietly on with her medical studies which have been for the time being interrupted.

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### 4 *Letter from the REV. MOTHER, C.S.M.V., to an Exterior Sister, C.S.M.V.*

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
November 1st, 1883

My dear Sister,

I think it will interest you to see a short account of Ramabai written by herself at the request of a friend. I will give it to you just as it came from her pen :

'I was born in the Mangalore District, in a forest named Gangamul, on the Western Ghats in April 1858. My father's name was Anant Shastri Dongre. He belonged to the caste of the Chitapavana Brahmins, and was a good scholar in the Sanskrit Shastras. When he was a lad of about sixteen years of age, he went to the teacher of the Peshwa Baji Rao for instruction; he was a great learned men named Ramchandra Shastri. In this capacity he had access into the Palace of Baji Rao. There he became acquainted with the wife of Baji Rao, Shrimati Varanasibai Sahiba, who was learning Sanskrit with Ramchandra Shastri. This roused my father's attention to the cause of female education. When he came to manhood, he was honoured for his learning in Mysore, and other States, and received the title of Shastri. According to the present custom of our country, he was married in the childhood, so he could not carry out his desires as to female education with his first wife. Many years after her death, he married by mother, when she was nine years of age. Her name was Lakshmibai. From the time of their marriage, my father began to educate my mother. At that time, that is to say fifty years ago, in the Mangalore District, there had been nothing done by the English Government for the important of the people. All classes were against female education, and the prejudice clings to them still (e.g. I have received a letter last month from my half-brother, disapproving of my coming to England to learn English, etc.). When my father began to teach my mother Sanskrit and Dharma Shastras, the people in the neighbourhood disapproved of it, and threatened to put him out of caste



but he would not heed them and as he was in no way beholden to them, he pursued his own ways. When they found they could in no way prevail with him to leave off educating my mother, they went to the Dharma-Guru (a spiritual teacher) and brought the matter before him, begging him to enforce the law against my father, because he was a breaker of their sacred laws and customs. So my father was sent for by the Dharma-Guru and was asked his reasons for breaking the law. My father replied by asking the Dharma-Guru: ‘What is written in the Dharma Shastras which in any way forbids the education of women?’ But the Dharma-Guru could give no satisfactory answer, so my father remained in caste. Several years after, when at Swade (Soday) a village in Karnataka, where is a monastery of one of the Dharma-Guru, several Pandits and a Dharma-Guru were assembled to discuss the matter. There my father proved from the Dharma Shastras that women must be educated and learn their own Dharma Shastras. He received from the Assembly a statement to this effect with their signatures affixed.

My father gave my mother a good education in Sanskrit and taught her the Dharma Shastras. She had six children but three died in childhood. I was the youngest, my elder sister and brother were both educated by my father and mother. As I was a good deal younger than they, I could not learn with them. According to the present custom of the country, my sister was married in her childhood, but as my father intended to keep her and her husband in his own house, her marriage did not hinder her education. She and my brother were both well educated in Sanskrit.

When I was old enough to receive instruction, my father was too infirm to teach me, so I received from my mother all the education I had in my youth. At the age of eight, she began to teach me Sanskrit. My parents found that marriage in childhood was a hindrance to education, so I was not given in marriage when I was a child.

You will ask me here why I did not follow in my sister’s footsteps and was not married in my childhood? My father had taken a lad of needy parents to be the husband of my sister, for the reason that he might keep him and educated him with his daughter. Had he given her in marriage to the son of a wealthy and influential Hindu, she would have had to live with her father-in-law and be brought up in ignorance. The boy turned out dull and would not take to his studies and finally he ran away from my father’s house; this marriage ended in a life of unhappiness to my sister. So my father resolved that he would not do the same in my case, and as he would not part with me, I remained unmarried. This was contrary to the present Hindu custom, but though his friends and neighbours constantly reminded him of this, he paid no attention to them. In 1874, I lost both my parents within two months of each other. We were living then in the Madras Presidency. After their death, because of the persecution which was carried on against us on account of my not being married and because he advocated female education, we were obliged to leave our country. After a few months my sister died of cholera, and my brother and I travelled for six years in various parts of India. In our travels we were obliged to go on foot, not having the means to afford ourselves conveyance. In this way we went a distance of 2,000 miles, and thus we had a good opportunity of seeing the sufferings of Hindu women and were much touched by their sorrows. We saw it not only in one part of India, but it was the same in the Madras Presidency, Bombay Presidency, Punjab, the North-West Province, Bengal, Assam, etc. This made us think much of how it was possible to improve the condition of women and raise them out of their degradation. We were able to do nothing directly to help them but in the towns and villages we often addressed large audiences of people and urged upon them the education of the women and children. In order to be able to converse with the different races we were obliged to learn Hindi (as it is a general language in India) and Bengalee. In the year 1880, when we were in Dacca, my brother died, and then I was alone in the world. Six months after, I married a Bengalee gentleman, Bipin Behari Das. He was a great friend of my brother, and I knew him two years before I married. He was born in the Sylhet District in Assam, and belonged to the caste of Shudras (the fourth of the Hindu castes). He lost both his parents in childhood and was brought up by his uncle until he was 14 years of age. From that time, he continued his education by his own industry and perseverance. For some time he was Headmaster of the Government Normal School in Assam. After this he entered the Calcutta University until he obtained the degree of M.A. and B.L. After this he became a pleader and followed this profession until his death. It was against the Hindu religion for me, being a Brahmin, to

marry a Shudra, but neither my husband nor I believed in the Hindu religion, so we were married under the Civil Marriage Act. After our marriage, we lived together in Cachar (Silchar) in Assam, for 16 months. In 1882, my husband died of cholera, leaving me with one little daughter. After his death, I had to pay off his debts; then I went to the Bombay Presidency and lived there for a year. During that time my countrymen helped me and they were willing to maintain me independence, but my wish was to come to England and thus fit myself for a life of usefulness, in order to benefit my countrywomen. I had not money to pay my passage, so I wrote a book [[This was the Marathi book, Streedharma-Neeti \('The Duties of Women'\)](#) published in June 1882] and published it. The Government kindly bought 600 copies of it (which was a great help to me) and other copies were sold by booksellers. In this way I received sufficient money for my passage, but how to support myself and [my] child in England I knew not. It was my good fortune to become acquainted with the Wantage Sisters working in Poona; so I asked them if they would help me, and they promised to do so. Now I am staying in Wantage with them, and they are kindly supporting and teaching me. I am very grateful for their kindness. If my health allows me to carry out my plans, and it is God's will that I should do so, it is my intention to study medicine in England in order to benefit my countrywomen and with the hope of inducing some of them to follow my example. As I was by birth a Barhmin, my religion was at first Hinduism. Then for a time, I was a Theist, believing that Theism was taught in [the] Vedas. In the last two months, however, I have accepted Christianity and hope shortly to receive Holy Baptism.'

\* \* \*

To write about Ramabai's time at Cheltenham is to touch upon one of the most painful episodes in her career. Even now looking upon it from a long distance it is difficult to handle it. It is so full of complexities.

At her first return to Wantage, we noticed a change in her. She was less free with her early friends, less confidential. She seemed somewhat less cordially disposed towards us, and to have a sense of distrust. We sought in every way in our power to shew her our goodwill, and that we were wholly interested in her cause, and desired to forward it to the utmost of our powers.

In the summer holidays she went into Devonshire with one of our Sisters and had a really happy holiday. While there she was introduced to Canon Cooke, a learned linguist, scholar and acquainted with Arabic. They spent much time together, she teaching him Sanskrit and he instructing her in Greek and Hebrew. Visits to learned people were planned for her, as well as to educational and philanthropic institutions.

Later, she was present at a Consecration of Bishops at St. Paul's Cathedral, and was the guest of Dean Church and his family. She was ever grateful and appreciative of kindness, and there were times when she seemed wholly her simple, childlike self; but the dark shadows were not far off, and the letters by post would not infrequently conjure up the clouds.

It was not until after the Easter Holidays of 1885 that Miss Beale became aware of the great change which had come over her. She had had several invitations from Mrs. Gilmore, a lady of strong Protestant sympathies, to stay with her. As she was among the so-called friends of the Pandita, who were trying to dispel the Church's influence over her, we were naturally unwilling for her to accept the invitation, but when one excuse after another had been offered, it seemed impossible to avoid the difficulty [any] longer, and her invitation for a part of the Easter holidays was accepted. The visit hastened on a crisis which probably would have been inevitable before long.

Miss Beale's letters describe the unhappy state of mind in which Ramabai returned to Cheltenham after the holidays, and attributed her mental and spiritual disturbance to the influence under which she had been brought in the holidays. We who knew further back were sure these influences had been doing their work prior to this time. But the climax had come when she went on her visit to Mrs. Gilmore. There is no doubt that Miss Beale was peculiarly fitted to meet the difficulty. She had herself passed through like times of apparent loss of faith, and had risen out of

them with stronger grasp and clearer vision. This had led her to make a study of metaphysical philosophy; and so she had been specially prepared to help Ramabai. She certainly spared no pains, and it is wonderful how one, with such a heavy burden to bear as the Headship of so large an educational work involves, could have placed so much time at the disposal of a single pupil.

She was hopeful and sanguine and felt that Ramabai who had gone through so much already, and who had placed her feet on the Rock of Ages could not be swept away by chance currents. She counselled utter faith for her, and prophesied that God was leading her, and that when she rose above the present mists of doubt, she would be stronger and better able to help others. The result has proved her to be right.

Her letters in the latter part of 1885 made it clear that for the present we had little hope of helping her onward and upward. The opening of an unexpected door released us from our obligations to the Pandita (in that we had promised to help her for five years with her education) and relieved us of our difficulties.

One of these letters had been very perplexing. While Ramabai was at Cheltenham, a Brahmin friend appeared on the scene, and she went to meet him at Bristol. He was the occasion of not a little embarrassment to us, as to his reasons for coming as a sort of attaché to the Pandita. Ramabai had always had with her travels some friend to act as escort and courier, and it is probable that after the death of Anandibai, she shrank from travelling about in foreign countries quite alone, and had therefore invited him over. The Society of St. John the Evangelist came to our relief and invited Bank Rao to their Mission House. There he was instructed, and eventually baptised and confirmed, after which he went back to India, and attached himself to some Mission.

Bishop Westcott was greatly interested in Ramabai and before leaving England she paid a visit to his house, and was very cordially welcomed by him and Mrs. Westcott. When Ramabai's faith was eclipsed, he counselled that those dealing with her should seek to get her to believe rather than define, and this was the attitude her Wantage friends sought to take with her.

In spite of the clouds which had arisen, and which she termed "difference of opinion", there was at no time estrangement between Ramabai and her Wantage friends. She spent the Christmas of 1885 with them, and with the exception of a few days' absence, when visiting friends, made her home with them until she left in February 1886.

On account of her not being able to accept the Divinity of our Lord, she was recommended for a time to forgo her Communion. Before many months these clouds lifted and she came back to Communion with much thankfulness.

There are various passages in her correspondence in which she speaks with very grateful affection of her sojourn in the C.S.M.V. and the lessons she learnt there from the all-embracing fullness of Christian love, which in one letter she says was the cause of her conversion, and which have been happily applied in her work for her country. It was God's "love for sinners" which was brought home to her through penitentiary work in England that impressed her deeply and gave her not only courage to visit one who had grievously sinned and had become a leper, but later on to found a Rescue Home herself in which 250 women and children, the outcasts of Indian society, are sheltered and lovingly cared for.

Ramabai with her little daughter left Liverpool for America in February, and was received by Miss Rachael Bodley, Dean of the Women's Medical College, Philadelphia. The occasion of her visit was to be present at the ceremony of conferring the M.D. degree on Anandibai Joshi, Ramabai's cousin, and the first Eastern woman to receive such a degree.

St. Mar's Home, Wantage,  
18th December 1883

Dear Miss Beale,

I feel before we commit Ramabai to your kind care and instruction that it would not be right to withhold from you the fact that plans for her future have been and still are being arranged for her by many who are most deeply interested in her and her cause, but to whom on this point she has not looked for advice; I know the responsibility you feel the care of her involves, and therefore I am sure you would wish to know also if there are any rocks to be steered clear of in guiding her.

Since her conversion she has so shrunk from being in any way considered a public character, and had evinced such a desire to walk quietly and hiddenly, and has been pained when she has at times come to know that the eyes of many are upon her and her future work, that the less the future is alluded to, the happier she will be at Cheltenham, and the more able to profit by the great advantages you will give her while there. She will be much gratified and interested in discussing Indian topics with you and others who have the good of India at heart, and that this will be much to her advantage there can be no doubt; but in committing her to your care, we desire to do so from the standpoint that a parent places a child with you for education. Any suggestion as to future work and usefulness which you deem right to make, we beg may be made to Canon Butler or to myself, as acting for the Community in Ramabai's case.

In saying this we are not unmindful of your very great kindness in lessening expenses with regard to her instruction and in making good boarding arrangements. We are sure both as regards your work with her and ours also that the path of each will be straighter and smoother if we avoid the pitfalls which lie in the way.

SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V

Ladies' College Cheltenham,  
January 2nd, 1884

Dear Sister,

I have just got a line from Mr. Horace Seymour : "Mr. Gladstone desires me to say that he will be happy to place a sum of £ 25 at your disposal for Ramabai from the Royal Bounty Fund, and if more be wanted after he is out of office, he will be glad to contribute something privately". So now there is no difficulty about providing all expenses for the year without encroaching on any little fund you may have, I will return you the £ 5 when I get it.

I hope Ramabai is keeping well, and that you will impress upon her the need for great care in wrapping up. Mrs. Poole finds her rather difficult to induce to take the necessary precautions.

With kind regards and best wishes to all,

Yours very sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

P.S.— I am much better and hope to go downstairs today. I have been shut up exactly one month.  
Give my love to Ramabai and kind regards to Canon Butler.

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7     *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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21, Lansdown Crescent  
Cheltenham,  
Ash Wednesday, 1884

Dear Old Ajeebai,

How kind of you to take so many pains for me. I like your letter and the Lent rules very much. I shall try and keep as many of them as I can. This morning I went to All Saints to the early service. The scene there was calm and solemn. The morning is lovely. We have a holiday today. I shall go to Christ Church at 11 o'clock. Mrs. Poole had kindly offered to come with me.

How I miss our lovely Chapel on these occasions. Yesterday Miss Beale read the first Chapter of the Prophet Isaiah. She reads so nicely. Sometimes, I wish you could hear her when she seems absorbed in the Holy meaning of the Bible.

The other day I was reading the works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. In his life there is a remark which he made about the Lord's Prayer. He says, 'There is no other prayer in any religious book which can be compared with Christ's Prayer. It is full of all good things and spirit, and yet so short'.

In Calcutta when Rev. \* \* \* wished to establish a school for the people, he gave his own house freely for some time to carry out the good work and asked him to begin his school work everyday with the Lord's Prayer. When the Hindus objected to Bible teaching in the school, he said calmly 'Why do you object? Study it and take what is good from it', etc. Our beloved countryman Keshub Chander Sen had much more realised about Christ's teaching than Raja Ram Mohan Roy did. I should like you to read his lecture about Christ. I have asked Miss Collet to send me some of his works. I will send it to you when Miss Beale has read it. So much for the feelings of the other Indian people about Christ's teaching.

When I who not a Christian and never dreamed of believing in this religion, even then I felt the great and deep meaning of the Lord's Prayer. How many words are used, how many grand things are told by other people when they pray or when they write books, when they preach sermons, but the true life and spirit do not seem to come in them. On the other hand, think of the Lord's Prayer. Is there anything left that we need to ask in it? Can there be any other words in the whole world's literature so full of life and spirit yet so few and simple? The answer is "No". I do not mean to tell you these things newly, for I know you know about it much better than I do. My object in telling you this is to show you or rather tell you from my own experience how Indian people are touched by the simplicity of Christ's teaching. Take away all outward shows of your words and grand ceremonies and teach simply the words of Christ as they fell from His lips, without making any comments and you will see what power they have of enchanting the people's hearts. Now I must stop.

Good-bye, dear Ajeebai,

I am ever yours,

Cheltenham,  
July 1884

Dear Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I do not say that you did anything against my will. But still I was tempted to ask you once more (I hope you do not think that I have no trust in you) because once you yourself told me that the experienced Bishop was right when he said that Indian women who came over to England are not of much use to their country, etc. I believe it is not learning or wisdom that makes people either proud or idle. It is their own nature that makes them so. People ought to remember (when they say that coming over to England and learning English only makes them highly educated) that we Indians can be learned in our own country and can be useful too. We are anxious to come to England and to learn English because these two countries are so closely connected and also because the best scientific books are written in English. (This is principal thing which I want to learn). Now let me go back again from the moment when I heard you say that you thought the Bishop was right. I was in great doubt whether you would like my learning or not, and therefore asked you about it. It is quite true that we cannot know of what will come (in) [the] next moment, yet we have the great gift from God, i.e. our own free will. By it we are to decide for ourselves what we are to do, and fulfil our intended work. We are not right always in deciding our future plans but we must do so, or else we shall not be able to do anything. Our determination is a very great help to us next to God's goodwill.

I cannot do a single thing without knowing what I am to do. It is very difficult for an old pupil (at least for me, if not for you) to go on working, when I do not know the thing which I have to do. In my former intention, God's goodwill was plainly shewn that he did not like it, so I must not attempt to go against it. But for the present thing it is not revealed to us; why then shall I not purpue it? I am arguing with those people who give their opinion or decide anything for me without knowing my will, and above all God's will. Now as I know that you are not of the same opinion as they, I must not try to grieve your head and mine too. I have received a letter from Miss Beale which I send to you. I am always surprised when I see or hear people troubling themselves to decide my future, when my Lord is All Powerful and knows best to do with me whatever he likes. My love and kisses to Mano, Sister, Miss and Mrs. Fuller. With best love and honour to you.

I am yours,  
MARY  
RAMA

Lymestone, Devonshire,  
July 1884

Dear Ajeebai,

I hope you are well. I do not know how to begin and end this letter, for my head is very stupid, so you must not be surprised about it. We had a very hot and tiring journey on Tuesday. I do



not know how Sister Mary was (she looked rather tired) but I was very bad. My head seemed as if it wished to break asunder, and made me very sick. Now I am getting better. I am very sorry to say that Miss Hill is not well, so I can scarcely see her. General Hill and Mrs. Hill are very kind and good people, and I need to say she is like Sister Mary.

Tuesday, 12th August

My dear Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for your letter. I began to write to write this letter on Friday so you will see how quick I am. I was very pleased to have Sister Eleanor's letter; the letter addressed to Cheltenham is from Father Page; I send it to you with mine. Today I went to see the old gentleman who wants to learn Sanskrit. He knows it pretty well and wants to know more. He is very old. I like him very much for his old age. I teach Hindi to Mr. and Mrs. Hill and to their cousin; the country here is so beautiful, I feel quite idle. There are no lessons but I write some rubbish. Give my best love and many kisses to Mano, please, and to old Ajeebai (i.e. yourself) and to the Superior Mother with honour.

Yours very truly,

MARY RAMA

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10 *Letter from MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V. Wantage in answer to one from SISTER GERALDINE about Parents and Guardians*

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham  
August 1884

Dear Sister Geraldine,

Thanks for your note. I quite feel with you in the matter, and would wish her life to be as quiet as possible. I shall be very sorry if anything is done that would be disapproved of by those who have stood *in loco parentis* to Ramabai, or be in any way disloyal to the Community or divert her thoughts from what one hopes will be the main thought of her life (as it seemed to me to be), helping her countrywomen to lead a higher life, and preparing them to receive the truth, and indirectly helping them by showing us better how to understand and help them.

I should be to sorry in any way to interfere with her desire to lead the "hidden life" which is such a direct consequence of our recognising God's grace as the source of all good. You will like to hear that our Quiet Days were as full of blessing as one had hoped. There were a hundred present, and Mr. Stanton's addresses were just what we wanted; indeed we could not have found anyone more able to and suited for the particular work. Only yesterday those who remained for the month left us. I begin my holiday as soon as I can get away. It has been a very happy time. With kind regards to all I know and especially to Mary Rama,

Yours very sincerely,

DOROTHEA BEALE

October, 1884

Dear Ajeebai,

I am so very sorry I cannot have a talk with you and express my feelings. I could not fully understand Sister Eleanor's letter. The two things which I can make out are these that the colour is approved by the Father Goreh, and that she wishes us (that is for the Sisters of the Indian Community) a Cross like yours with Latin words on it and not Sanskrit. I am really surprised at Father Goreh's approval (as you are). I did not except so. It must be the work of the H.S. and we need not say any more about it. I am not going to find fault with Father Goreh about the words 'Sacrament and Priest'. I know quite well the feeling of those people, who when they make up their minds to leave some bad things of their custom, etc. are entirely blinded by the new atmosphere. You yourself told me many times, and I read in books that the Reformers, when they began to get rid of false doctrines, etc. have sadly swept away many good things. Father Goreh no doubt is good, old and wise, and perhaps he thinks right (I have not received his letter yet, so cannot tell what he thinks about those words), but I am sorry to say in some things I cannot agree with him. Whatever may be in others' opinion, all the good old things are *very, very* dear to me, and if I do not find anything in them that is contrary to our blessed Religion. I will not and must not part with them. I do not want to take from others what is not wanted, and also what is not want good for my country.

As for the Cross, you know very why I do not like to have that great sign. It is all right with you, who are Christians from generations, and with Father Goreh who does not or will not sympathise with Indian feelings, but I am just plucked down from (as Indian say) Hinduism and Brahmoism, so I know very well and sympathise [with] their feelings. So I am not inclined to do any such thing, which will lead my fellow (Indian) Christian into wrong ideas.

Well now for a moment I put aside my opinion, and take Sister Eleanor's. Suppose we are going to have a Cross as she wishes us to do; then why should it not be inscribed with Sanskrit words, instead of the Latin? Here again I am obliged to be a Conservative. Do you think that [the] Latin language has something better in it than our old Sanskrit or have you the same feeling for the Latin as the Brahmins have for the Sanskrit (i.e. to think it to be the Sacred Language and spoken by God and Angles)? I stick fast to Sanskrit, not because I think it to be sacred or the language of gods, but because it is the most beautiful, and the oldest language of my dear native land. And, therefore, if I must have a Cross, I should like to see Sanskrit words written upon it instead of the Latin words. Moreover, I do not myself understand the Latin, neither (do) my countrywomen (with some exception). And even also Latin is not the mother tongue of Marathi [people], so our Indian Sisters will not find a single word in it that they know or is like to some word that is known to them. Then why should we be kept in ignorance of our professed text?

You must write and tell Sister Eleanor what I have said about the Cross and the Latin inscription. You know well what I mean; you must not take any crooked argument of my writing. I think you will be able to make her understand better than I can. Here I must say good-bye, dear old Ajeebai. It is getting dark. You will of course write to me what you think of my argument.

Yours mischievous,  
MARY RAMA

My dear Lord Bishop,

By the Mother's wish I am sending you a correspondence which I have been carrying on with Miss Beale and Ramabai. You will by the same mail doubtless have a letter from Miss Beale on the subject. We have been anxious about Ramabai lately on matters of faith. She has been going through difficulties which I suppose to a mind like hers are inevitable. Miss Beale has done all in her power in arranging for her well-being while at Cheltenham, and we have been quite satisfied with that arrangement, but she could not guard her, neither could we had she been with us, from the subtle influences of those who calling themselves Christians have been at work to undermine her faith and our influence with her.

We felt we were guided from above in placing her at Cheltenham and we can only trust and feel that all will in the end turn out to His glory, and to her being rooted in the Faith. I had felt she had been getting out of hand, and so tried to make the difficulty which arose an opportunity for showing her that she could not act independently but must defer her judgment to those in authority. You will, I am sure, let us know at your earliest convenience whether the disputed point is to be conceded or no.

After you have seen Rambai we shall be very grateful to you if you would kindly come to Wantage and talk the matter over with us.

Ladies College, Cheltenham,  
December 29th 1884

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I have just had a line from Mr. Shuldham, promising me £5 towards Ramabai's expenses, so when the cheque comes, I shall forward it, *as I do not wish stay here to be any expense.*

On Christmas Eve I got a letter from Professor Max Muller, asking me to send our Magazine to Mr. Gladstone, as he was interested in Ramabai. I had a letter from him yesterday, thanking me and asking whether there was any need of funds. I replied that a contribution would be acceptable, so we shall see what he means. Give my love to Ramabai, and all good wishes and thank her for the card. Kind regards to all.

Yours most truly,  
DOROTHEA  
BEALE

Ladies College, Cheltenham,  
January 3rd, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I do not think I can tell you quite precisely the cost, for I do not know the expense of books; perhaps some might be got second-hand. But £50 should include board and all the lectures and private instruction and laboratory work. The laundress she can pay herself.

As regards Ramabai, you have paid Mr. Poole for [the] last term, £15. I have sent you £10 and will, when I get it, send you £5 more. Then you are not to pay Mr. Poole at all for this term, as I shall, I trust, have plenty for this and next after. I should like Ramanbai to write a pretty letter to Mr. Gladstone, thanking him. She might say that his gift coming from the Royal Bounty Fund makes her feel, what she already knew, Her Majesty's deep sympathy with the widows of India; that she hopes to be one means of drawing closer the ties of sympathy between Christian England and the Seekers after God in India. She might add that her great desire is to establish some sort of college for teaching the widows and helping them to lead a life of usefulness and therefore of happiness, instead of the life of degradation and uselessness that makes them often regret the times of Suttee. She would put this into her own words if she approves.

Give Ramabai my love, and tell her for the work's sake which God has given her to do, she must consider nothing a trouble in taking care of [her] health; she should almost add it to her daily prayers, I think, "that I may take care of that body which has been committed to my keeping, that I might use it to Thy service and that of others". Tell her that from me, and I would write, but I am still in bed, though I get up part of the day, and hope to go to London tomorrow, that I may consult a doctor.

Yours most sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

Ladies College, Cheltenham,  
January 12th, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I did not remember how it had happened, so I wrote to Miss Gore; she supplies it, so that is all right I suppose; you did receive £7.18 I hope. I hope Ramabai is well now. What do you think about her continuing with Mrs. Poole? Ought I to take her in here? I fear it would be dull for her, I am so *very* busy and then too I should not always look after her clothing. I think if it is not *necessary* for her health she is far better where she is. I might if the weather gets very bad, or on the first threatening of cold, invite her. I should be so *very, very* grieved, if we did not do the best things for her health. Excuse haste.

Yours very sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

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16 *Letter from MISS DOROTHEA BEALE to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage  
Proposal for Ramabai to leave at midsummer*

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The Grove, Penshurst,  
April 22nd, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

As regards the future, do you not think Ramabai might find another year at Cheltenham tedious? Much *must* depend on her own wishes. As regards her being in a smaller school, I do not see [what] that signifies; she comes into direct contact with very few and those are the sort of persons in Collage who influence her rightly.

I am quite *sure* if she is to be *firmly* established in the Christian faith herself, and to be able to exercise influence on others when she returns, she must study Christianity as a philosophy. She cannot receive it merely as an historical revelation, it must also commend itself to her conscience. *We* say (who are brought up as Christians), - "Such things *were* and they reveal to us such and such truths". She *can* only say, "Such and such things are meta-physical necessities, therefore, I am ready to receive evidence". And it was thus that St. Paul often spoke to the Greek-thinking converts. "It was necessary" is common in his mouth; and so our Lord spoke to His disciples.

If she does not find someone to whom she can speak freely, she will be silent, and might easily pass into Unitarianism. And you will see that to a woman she can speak on the Incarnation as she could not to a man; I cannot help thinking that God has given me some preparation of mind and heart to help her with; but it may be that I shall have done my part by midsummer, so I shall, if it seem so, be content to part with her, though I shall gladly accept the responsibility (which I feel to be a most serious one), if it shall seem right then that she should return.

I wish much that she should see a good aurist. I particularly liked Mr. Comberbatch of Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square (his name is on the door, I forgot the number). I did not find Mr. Dalby do me the *least* good.

I enclose a note in case you go. He takes £ 1.1. I am sure, we must be very patient, it takes *years*, may I not say a life-time, really to assimilate the great truths of Christianity. And do we not feel as the end draws near, that we have only begun to read that wondrous book, sealed with seals within and without, which only the Lamb can open?

Yours most sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
April, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I had been planning to bring Ramabai to you and have some talk about things, but now I heard you are at Wantage, and I see no chance of my being able to come to you. Perhaps, you might be able to come over next term.

I feel how much one needs patience and wisdom in helping to guide in any way that eager spirit. Her training in the Brahmo Samaj, though it has helped in some ways, has, I fancy, developed a feeling against the miraculous element. I have been trying to show her why the miraculous Birth was the necessary accompaniment of the miraculous Life. I am sure we ought not to be anxious, for God has led her on so wonderfully, but she does need time to absorb Christian truth, to become rooted and ground in faith. There are some subjects that she could only discuss with a woman. She spoke very nicely and reverently, and I hope I may have helped her to see that the Second Adam must be, like the first, in a special sense the Son of God. I have lent her Liddon's Bampton Lectures. I am *so* sorry about Canon Butler's accident; please thank him for his letter.

Yours most sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

21, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham  
9th March 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for the letters. I am so glad to hear that you are getting better. The Marathi letters are something like hieroglyphics, I can hardly understand what Mano's friends say. I shall try again and see if I can make anything out of them. I shall translate one of them and send [it] to you, they both have the same things written in them. I cannot say what the price is of Tod's *Rajasthan*. It is re-published in Calcutta, and my friend has promised to let me know about it. I am sorry you did not find *Ferishta*. Never mind, you will perhaps give me another book instead of *Ferishta* ! You know I am not a person to let you alone.

Mrs. Hoggoin, the lady doctor come to see Miss Beale. She told me there was an exhibition of women's work conducted by women at Bristol. It will close at the end of this month. I wish I could see it, but it is I suppose expensive and I cannot part with my poor stock of money, as I want it for other purposes, so I must be satisfied. But she has told Miss Beale; if Miss Beale tells me to go there what am I to do?

It is very good of you that you are planning to show me some of the philanthropic works of London, but I cannot see why I should not stay with Mrs. Gilmore. She has asked me to bring Mano with me. Her house is 3, Montague Place, Montague Square. I suppose it is not very far from Paddington, where you are going to stay with the Sisters. If I stay with Mrs. Gilmore with my child, will it not be quite convenient? You can tell me whenever you want to take me out.



I think it will be very uncivil of me if I refuse Mrs. Gilmore this time. I have done so many times under several excuses. But I have written to her and asked if she could not put off her plan till the vacation. If she can, I have no particular wish to go to her this time. I shall let you know what her answer is when it comes.

Please give my respectful love to Mrs. and Miss Fuller and have the same for yourself.

Yours very loving,  
MARY RAMA

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19 *Letter from* MISS DORATHEA BEALE *to* SISTER GERALDINE, *C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
August 27th, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I do not think, after this, that it will be well for Ramabai to stay for your Retreat. What do you think? I don't think the Dean will enter into her difficulties, and if he expects her to bow down, and she *will* not, then the breach will be widened. I am so sorry.

I am enquiring here about a servant. I suppose Mary Anne is engaged, and that the Sister knows of no one likely to suit.

I was so glad I was able to get a little while with you, dear Sister Geraldine.

Yours most sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

The enclosed for Ramabai: perhaps, you would read it to her, as I can't write so that she can read.

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20 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI *to* SISTER GERALDINE, *C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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21, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham  
March 19th, 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I received your letter yesterday morning but I had some Indian letters to write, so I could not answer it directly. The dress that you have ordered for me has not yet reached me. I hope it will fit me, and will not give the trouble of re-fashioning it, which is worse than making it by myself.

I think your holiday has not been very long. Before you were called to work, I hope your old over-wrought brains are rested sufficiently. It is very true that to be useful to others is a real happiness to active people. You may well be thankful to the Almighty who has granted you the best happiness that can be had in this world. There are not many people who have this, or having, who use it rightly.

I do not hear from Mano, now that you are away from home no one writes to me about her. I am anxiously looking forward to see her in London.

I am glad you permit me to stay with Mrs. Gilmore. I have promised that I shall stay for a fortnight with her, so I think from 16th to the end of April will be just the time. I should very much like to see the consecration of Bishops. I have never seen St. Paul's Cathedral before and it will be very interesting to me to see the Cathedral on this occasion. Miss Beale has gone away for a few days, where I do not know. I was very sorry to hear from her this morning that Canon Butler has hurt himself. I hope the accident is not a serious one. I should like to hear from you if he is well.

Mrs. Poole wants to know if you can find a general servant who could also take the place of a cook. She does not want the servant for herself, but for a lady whom she knows. And she also tells me to let you know that **I, Mrs. R.B.M.** [Pandita Ramabai refers to herself as "R. B. M." –may be Rama Bai Mary or Ramabai Bipin Medhavi.] behaved very well and kept very well throughout this whole term [of] 3 weeks.

**I** have about two whole pennies, 5 penny stamps and 3 Indian stamps. **This** is my property. I am determined not spend any more money in this term. I had altogether £2 from you, from which 11/- were spent for my passage (because of the second class). The rest I have spent in stamps, envelopes, note-paper, 2 books and my own private expenses. If you do not mind my buying books you may send as much money as you please. **But** I am afraid I am very extravagant. I do not trust myself when I have money in my pocket. There is sure to come some book or other before my eyes which I feel tempted to have for myself. I shall certainly not spend any more money for stamps.

I shall be glad if you let me know whether I am to start straight for London or go to Wantage first and then to London on 15th April.

I hope you are well. I was very much pleased to see that letter of Mr. Scott's which your father has been so kind to send for me. Will you thank him for me and give my Namaskars with love.

With love and honour to you,

I am, ever yours,  
MARY RAMA

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21 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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21, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham  
March 25th, 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I received your letter, the cheque for £1 and the two dresses and thank you very much for all these. I like the dresses as far as their fashion of cutting. I have not changed the cheque and will not change it unless some urgent necessity obliges me to do it. The books that I bought are only for my study; one is "History of Different Sects in India" by an Indian gentleman, and the other is "Biographical Essay" by Max Muller. I wish I could buy the "Christian Ethics" and "Christian Dogmatics" by Martensen, translated into English by the Rev. William Urwisk. **But** they seem to be expensive books. I am studying Christianity with a view to a real study. They (these books) are a great help, for the author compares the Heathen philosophy with that of Christianity, and brings out clearly the meaning as far as it lies in his power. I shall wait.

I have nothing to say about myself except that I am well. I had a letter from the Superior and one from Mano. I am in a hurry. I must go to College now. Excuse my hurried letter please.

I am, ever yours,  
MARY RAMA

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22 *Letter from the BISHOP OF LAHORE (in England) to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE*

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Eastbourne, May 9th, 1884

Dear Miss Beale,

I was much interested in your note with its notice of Ramabai and her plans. The arrangement, I suppose, is intended as a temporary one, as I fear there will be an end to her great work as a Reformer in India, if she remains this side of the water. It she has not the heroic courage I take her to have, she will of course gladly settle down and become an English lady; but my impression is that the wail of her Indian sisters will not suffer her to rest, till she has mingled her tears with theirs, not in the way of sympathy at a distance, but where they can trickle from face to face.

I find Miss Riddell is settled down at Simla for the present, so I expect to find her in my Diocese when I return. She seemed anxious at one time to have Ramabai under her protection, or rather to be associated with her in training some Indian widows for school teachers, or Christian helpers in other departments.

I am much perplexed and bewildered this week with preaching and speaking in London and elsewhere, and must not add more. I have been trying to make a study of Miss Collet's Yearbook of the Brahmos. For the last 3 or 4 years they have been growing in interest, but I fear they will be only fresh examples of the truth of our Lord's words, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad", a very solemn and suggestive passage! I wish I could write more, but I am pledged elsewhere.

I am, with kindest regards,  
Yours very truly and obliged,  
THOMAS W. V. LAHORE

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23 *Letter from the RT. REV. DR. MYLNE, Bishop of Bombay (in England) to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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Tilehurst, May 21st, 1884

Dear Miss Beale,

My wife has shown me the note and enclosure in which you tell her of Ramabai's proposed lectures at Cheltenham.

I am feeling a good deal of anxiety about the results of her being put forward in this way in England. All who have experience of native Christians know that it is the rarest thing possible for one of them to return to India from this country without having been completely spoilt and upset by the notice they have received here.

I have known a Cambridge course render a man who might have otherwise done well, absolutely useless for all work in India.

I am afraid you will think me a terrible wet blanket. But there is not a missionary or a Bishop in India who would not endorse what I say. A native Christian (Anglicised) is ruined for life as far as future usefulness is concerned. I consider that if Ramabai begins to lecture in this country, the hope of her doing good work among her countrywomen is at an end. The mere fact of the paragraph which you have extracted, appearing in an English newspaper makes me fear the mischief must be half done. Publicity of that kind is fatal to them. Let me beg of you now to bring the arrangement to an end.

Ramabai owes herself to her own countrywomen. English girls have not the shadow of a claim upon her, and every moment that she gives to them means a fresh obstacle raised in the way of her discharging what is clearly the one function to which God has called her. Had I ever dreamt of the Sisters allowing such an arrangement to be made without asking the advice of those to whom it would have been natural that they should look in such a case, I should have warned them how fatal it might prove.

I am making a great demand on your belief in asking you to accept all this, but I will not rest my case on my own words alone. I hope you will write to one whose authority you would acknowledge as indisputable, the Bishop of Lahore, who is now at Eastbourne. Pray send him the paragraph which I return, and ask him whether he thinks the hope of Ramabai's future usefulness in India is or is not interfered with by the proposal that she should lecture, I will not say to men but even to ladies in England, and by her being brought before the public here in such terms as are used in the paragraph.

I remain,  
Yours truly,  
L. S. Bombay

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24 *Copy of letter from MISS DOROTHEA BEALE to the BISHOP OF BOMBAY in England*

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
May 22nd, 1884

My dear Lord Bishop,

It is discouraging to find that you think Ramabai's coming to England will be fatal to her future usefulness in India. With that, of course, I had nothing to do; she regards her coming as very clearly the leading of God. She came to study medicine; when I first met her, she had become a Christian, and it had become clear that she could not carry out her intention of being a medical woman, owing to her deafness. She was, and is, not in good health; she suffers from sickness, which they say proceeds from exhaustion of the brain and nervous system, in consequence of all that she has gone through—that she needs rest. All who know her felt that it was best for her to remain quietly at Wantage, both to regain strength and to become established in the truth. There she will be until September next.

Then the question arose regarding the future. Her own plan was to stay a few years in England and then to return to India, as soon as an opening was found for the establishment of some system of teaching for Indian widows. She would not, I believe, be content to lead a life of dependence and inaction much longer. The time did not seem ripe for her return, nor did she seem sufficiently established in health or her new faith, to be sent back at once. Some ladies who are in the Unitarian interest have wished her to come to London.

I proposed therefore that she should come here. She would feel that by teaching the native languages, she was earning something towards her own living, and I hope that whilst remaining in England she will be carrying on her work in India, by writing her Apologia, by sending over papers on various subjects to the native newspapers, by translating into the languages of India things which would be useful to her countrywomen, and on the other hand, I hoped that she would be helping to establish a better understanding of Indian ladies by the English. Miss Riddell who is working for the **S. P. G.** [[Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.](#)] is always writing that I am to send out more English girls, who are to spend several years when they get there in studying the native language, religion and philosophy. Now this we cannot do, but I believe that we can interest some, who in the natural course of things, will go to India, and who will be able then to come in contact with the native mind, as they could not, if they had never known an educated Brahmin, and had picked up the language only from the talk of Ayahs. I thought also the lads at the College, preparing to go to India, might be glad of lessons, and with proper arrangements, there would be no objection to her giving them lessons. Many of our teachers give lessons at the Working Men's College.

She may of course be spoiled by her stay in England, but the question is, now she is here, is not this the best plan we can propose? I hope that her head will be turned, because her sufferings in the past have been so great and so varied, it seems as if God had been fitting her for some work amongst her countrywomen. She is quite decided to return; her one desire is to see some institutions at work for the higher education of her countrywomen, and for delivering them from the evils and utter degradation of many a widow's life. Of course in deference to your opinion, I will suppress that part about teaching any boys. But do you still think this whole plan ought to be given up, and if so, would you suggest some other? People tell me that the feeling against her is so strong because she embraced Christianity that her life would not be safe. Still if it were her duty to go, one would not let that weigh, nor do I believe she would shrink from a martyr's death. But it does seem as if the time was not ripe, and as if for her own sake, she needed a little longer for ripening in various ways.

The Bishop of Lahore did expostulate; I will send him your letter and a copy of mine. I should be so sorry to do in any way what you and he think to be wrong. You must know much better than I the circumstances of India. Still you may not know the sort of home I have provided for her, the influence that I want brought to bear upon our Indian girls, and you have not so intimate a knowledge of her character as the Sisters at Wantage, who think that the proposal I made is the best for her.

There is another difficulty in making any fundamental change now. I have made the offer for a year; she has accepted it, and any withdrawal on my part she would certainly regard as a serious breach of faith, though the change might be prompted by a desire for her good.

She is very desirous that another Indian should come and be with her. She says the bondage of social prejudice is so great, that a visit to England is the best thing completely to overcome it, and get higher principles of action, and she thinks God has pointed out one likely to be a suitable fellow-worker. A native who has adopted Christianity, and who though unknown to her, wrote to say she wished to do just what Ramabai had told me she thought would be best. I should like to have just one line, pointing out any other course of action if you still think I am wrong. If I have not misjudged Ramabai, I believe that if on your return you should write to her and say : 'Here is a post in which I believe you could do the best service to your countrywomen, come and fill it' –that she would obey at once.

DOROTHEA BEALE

Sheffield,  
May 25th, 1884

Dear Miss Beale,

I thank you very much for letting me see the correspondence with the Bishop of Bombay. In its general tenor it is in agreement with that of my letter, though I felt that the question had been prejudged very much and I could only plead for the modifying and limiting to the utmost the possible ill-effects, which could not wholly be avoided. I say *possible* ill-effects, because in one case at least of a native lady educated in England the effects have been in no way prejudicial, so far I can judge. But *as a rule* I have protested against young Christian Hindoos being sent over to England, as they have almost uniformly scorned work among their own countrymen, and become wholly denationalised.

The remaining quietly for a while in the Sisterhood (if I understand the Bishop rightly) is not what he objects to, so much as the undertaking a Professorship among English young ladies, which might lead to a little undue self-exaltation.

But a less prominent position for a short time, with an humbler title such as teachership, making no demonstration in any way, would probably lessen the danger of elation of mind very considerably.

I believe the lady is of Mahratta extraction, and therefore would naturally ally herself with the Bombay Mission. Otherwise, Miss Riddell appeared very anxious to be associated with her in Simla or Delhi, for the purpose of founding a college for training Hindoo widows for education work. I do not wish to *covet* the advantage such an arrangement would give to the Mission work in my Diocese, but would do my best to foster and promote it, if the opening should occur, and the course of God's Providence should render it desirable.

The Pundit Kurrach Singh's Paper, for which Ramabai made application, is not published, I fear. I will remember her request, should it be printed.

I pray that our God may guide you and her into the course of action which will tend to His greater Glory.

I am,  
Yours very truly and obliged,  
THOMAS V., LAHORE



Choir House, St. Paul's,  
26th May 1884

Dear Miss Beale,

I have to thank you for the way in which you have received what I ventured to say about Ramabai, and have passed by deficiencies and faults in the manner of saying it, about which I was not quite happy myself.

There is just one passage in which you have not understood my drift. I did not mean to say that I regretted her having come to this country at all. That seems to have been God's providential way of bringing her to the truth. What I meant was that in spite of the visit having been, in this case, made the channel of blessings which did not come, and might never have come, in any other way, one's experience showed that natives suffered so much from having their heads turned when they come over here, that I most earnestly hoped that the evil would be minimized in her case, lest the blessing should be alloyed through the very means which in the first instance had been used to convey it.

I do not feel that I know enough of her immediate circumstances to advise positively in detail. But generally, I am sure I cannot do wrong in saying that all publicity, anything which indirectly tends to make silly people treat her as a lion, is of all things most to be avoided. And I am sure that no kindness, no wisdom even, on the part of her true friends can prevent her being treated as such if she is put forward in the way proposed. Above all things pray believe that her *influence* will be ruined forever in India if she is known to have taught young men.

St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
June 15th, 1884

Dear Miss Beale,

Last Sunday I was at Oxford and I had a good talk with Sir George Hunter, the Director, I understand, of Indian medical work. He seemed to me a very sensible and kindly man. He knew all about Mary Ramabai, and he warned me that her influence as a fellow countrywoman with the Indian natives is utterly at an end. She will have no more access than an English woman. Therefore, said he, bring her up as much as may be, in English thought and ways and let her go out as a part of the staff of some English institution.

He quite approved of her going to Cheltenham, but entirely agreed with what we have already been told, that we must be most careful not to advertise her, or to make much of her in 'public'. No native, he told me, that he had ever met with, could bear this without evil ensuing. He says that vanity is one of their very faults. I think also that it would not be well for her to have to do with any but of her own sex.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM BUTLER

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28 *Letter from the REV. CANON WILLIAM BUTLER, Wantage, to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
June 17th, 1884

Dear Miss Beale,

I quite agree with every word of your letter. I think that Mary Ramabai's knowledge of Indian ways, etc. will give her a power of influence which no English woman can have. All that she needs is an English development of her Indian brains. Touching the Apologia, I rather feel that this will come better a little later on, when her position is more intelligible to herself. Religious truths open out by degrees. I wish that you had heard a sermon of Canon Holland's [of St. Paul's] at Christ Church on Trinity Sunday on this subject. When we next meet, I will give you a piece of it. In another year or so, she will know where she is.

I am now setting her to translate very literally a book on Sanskrit Tales with notes explaining difficulties and a glossary. The translation will be at the top of the page; then the text, notes at the bottom, glossary at end, like my (?..son's) Edition of the Purgatorio. I do not know whether you have seen it. It is used as a text book at Oxford. I want this to be published for 2s. 6d, Sanskrit books are frightfully dear.

By the way, I like Wilson's Grammar much better than Max Muller's so far as I can judge of the difference between the two by a hasty glance at the latter.

Now what will you think of this? Mary Ramabai told me yesterday that her heart was set on becoming a Sister and endeavouring to found in India a "Religious House" on Indian lines. The thought came first to her at her Baptism, and has pressed on her so strongly that she could not refrain from uttering it. I told her that we would keep her in England till she was at least thirty. She is now twenty-six. I should wish her still to go to Cheltenham and if she continues in the same mind, return to Wantage for her Novitiate. What do you think? Would it be better or not for her to become a Postulant at once, and *may* go to Cheltenham? This would involve no outward manifestation. It would only be an inward bond.

Yours most truly,

WILLIAM BUTLER

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29 *Letter from MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham  
April 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

Please let me have the enclosed back *by return*. My own impression is that it would be a pity not to let Ramabai take this pupil offered. I think you said yourself you did not think there was any

objection. It was the Bishop of Lahore and Bombay who were so strong, but I doubt whether they quite understood what was meant.

In haste,  
Yours affectionately,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

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30 *Letter from* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., *Wantage to* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, *Cheltenham*

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Wantage, May 6th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I am very sorry the Canon is away for I should have wished him to be the Reference in this matter. Mother thinks with me that he would not have felt justified in giving his sanction to what was so strongly objected to by the Bishops of Lahore and Bombay. The pupil who has offered himself may be a mere boy, but if one of the boys of the College receives lessons from Ramabai, how would it be possible to refuse her teaching others?

With regard to Ramabai's disappointment, I cannot see a wholesome lesson to her just now. She has to learn that as a Christian, she is bound to accept the authority of those over her in the Church. She is a little inclined to take too independent a line, and though this is but a temporal matter, yet she should be willing even in this, to accept the opinion of those, who from their position in India and from their experience had a right to speak. If you could make this an occasion of giving her a little teaching on submission to authority, I think, the disappointment would not be without fruit to her.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

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31 *Letter from* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., *Wantage to* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Cheltenham*

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May 6th, 1885

My dear Ramabai,

Miss Beale has referred to me about your giving lessons to a boy from the College. From what she has told already taken place, with regard to your giving lessons to young men and boys, I do not feel that there is any course open to us but to accept the opinion of those who, from their knowledge of India and its people, are far better judges than ourselves in the matter. I think you may be a little pained by this decision, but I am sure when you think it all over, you will see it (as all that is ordered for us by the Most High) is for the best and we must always accept the order of circumstances and the will of those who have authority to speak, as expressions of His Will. I want you not be too anxious about earning money at present. God will provide you with all that is necessary for you. Remember our Lord's words of St. Matthew VI: 25,34—"Take no thought for your life", etc. "but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you". Your first and important duty is to have as much as free time as possible in order to set about (both prayer and study) learning the things of the Kingdom of God. Let this be your chief care and

your anxiety, leave the rest alone. God has helped you hitherto with all temporal goods and he will continue to help you as long as you are faithful to him.

Your very loving,  
AJEEBAI

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32 *Letter from MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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May 8th, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

After getting your letter, I sent mine, omitting the passage about there being any possible compromise. I got a letter in return which made me feel the matter was a very serious one, and she will probably write to you as she did to me. I then saw her, and she will be content to let the matter rest this term, so we gain time. I see now why she makes this a matter of principle. I think we must remember that God seems to have anointed her with power to throw down the pernicious caste restrictions and those barriers which wrongly separate men and women. In this she has worked with all whom God set over her—father, mother, brother, husband. She would feel herself disloyal to their memory, who approved of her (a young girl) speaking in mixed assemblies if she gave in to any rules which said a woman should not teach boys. She was deeply wounded, because it seemed as if she were not trusted. It seems to me a matter in which we ought not to bind her conscience, indeed she feels she could not be bound. She would rather give up everything; however, she is quite content to wait.

Then she spoke to me about a friend and teacher [\[Rev. Mr. Isaac Allen, a Baptist missionary, was stationed at Silchar \(Kachar\) where Pandita Ramabai and her husband lived.\]](#) of her husband's, I think now living at Bristol and about to leave. This afternoon I got the enclosed; I felt I must say yes.

Yours very sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

P.S. —She seemed to feel that she was acting against the spirit of Christianity. In Christ she had learned that there was perfect liberty, and though there was necessarily a church order and subordination, yet in the Spirit, there was in Christ neither male nor female. It seemed going back to what she had been delivered from. I *would* not say who were the objectors, only that they were quite unconnected with Wantage or with Cowley. [\[Cowley is the name of a place \(like Wantage\) and is the headquarters of the Society of St. John the Evangelist. The Fathers from this place are known as Cowley Fathers.\]](#) I do feel with her in the matter, now I see what a matter of principle it is.

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33 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Cheltenham, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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May 8th, 1885

Dear Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for your letter. Do not feel for a moment that I am very anxious to make money and that I have always the same thought. If money were the chief aim of my life, I

should have had many opportunities of making it by means which are honourable in the sight of society and of individuals.

Now I want to consider your words: “We do not feel we have any course open to us, but to accept the opinion of those who from their knowledge of India and its people are far better judges than ourselves in the matter. I think you may perhaps be a little pained by this decision”, etc.

This, no doubt I am, not a little but a great deal, for it is plainly saying no less than that the people who are not of that country know India and its people far better than I do, who am born and brought up in it and that you or rather the people who are your advisers, do not trust me and my honour, that they have authority to decide anything for me, and that I ought not to have a voice of my own to say anything against that decision. Is it not so? My dear Ajeebai, you may be quite sure that when I write these lines, I do not mean or even think for a moment of giving you pain, or to anyone else by my words, for I who have suffered a great deal know what mental pain is. At the same time, I should speak out and plainly what I feel it my duty to do. I know India and its people, as far as is necessary for a woman, and myself who am one of them, better than any foreigners even if they have been staying in India from long time before I was born. If you and your countrypeople do not trust the people of India, it matters little, but for my part, I do trust and love my country with all my heart. I know very well trust brings trust and love brings love with it. When people themselves begin to distrust others, they of course make others distrustful of them. Your advisers, whoever they may be, have no right to decide anything for me. They must excuse my saying so—they have gone too far in this matter. You may perhaps not like my saying so, in which case I do not want to trouble you with my things. It was very kind of you to give me a home in this country, for which I shall remain grateful to you all my life, but at the same time, I must tell you that when I find out that you or your friends have no trust in me, and they want whether directly or indirectly to interfere with my personal liberty, I must say “goodbye” to you and go my own way, by which my Lord God will guide me. I have long since taken all matters which concern me into my own hand, and shall by no means let others lay hand on my liberty, but for all this I am not the least ungrateful to you. No word shall ever escape my lips which shall in any way shew my ungratefulness to you. My things are open, they shall be the same before and behind you. Please write and say to me all that you want to say to me openly as I do to you. The things which come from the Most High *and* which are ordered by Him for my good come directly to me and then I am prepared for them, but they do not come through persons whom I do not or little know. I have long since through my personal experience known that “God will provide me with all that is necessary for me” and this is my great hope, that although man may forsake me God will never do so; though very often I am not faithful to Him, He is always faithful.

I am, yours faithfully,

MARY RAMA

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34 *Letter from* SISTER GERALDINE, *C.S.M.V., Wantage to* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Cheltenham*

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Sunday : May 10th, 1885

My very dear Ramabai,

I will write to you, I hope, as openly as you have written to me, and I trust by always so doing, any little trouble which has arisen, or which in future may arise, will be cleared away. I did not say that you, but that we, felt bound to accept the opinion of those who from their experience of India knew more than ourselves of the mind of the people. Miss Beale has in part explained to you what occurred and how it came to pass, that *she* pledged herself that you should not give lessons to the pupils of the Boy's College. I will tell you now who the objectors were. They were three (I believe) of

the Bishops of India, who being over here at the time, objected to an advertisement which Miss Beale inserted in a local paper. One of these Bishops has had 50 years' experience as a Missionary in India. We, at Wantage, knew nothing of the correspondence until the matter was settled, and by the request of one of the Bishops, the correspondence was sent to us to read. The matter will be referred to them again, but until we hear from them, you will, I know, loyally respect the word which Miss Beale has given and cannot at present retract. You will also, I am sure, think of the part which the Bishops had in the matter in a spirit of love. Remember how very different your position in India was to that of any of your countrywomen and you will, for you have a generous nature, allow that if they have erred, it was not from ignorance of your people (because your women are hedged in with) restrictions, and your men are for the most part much opposed to the idea of allowing any liberty to your women) neither was it from any wish to restrict you unnecessarily, but from the fact that the life you led in India was so unlike any which had come under their knowledge, that they feared if you were put in the position of a teacher of the opposite sex, it would on your return be detrimental to your influence with your people. Let me tell you, dear Ramabai, that I think there is a difference in addressing mixed audiences of your countrypeople, and in giving lessons to young Englishmen. We have a proverb: "the end sanctifies the means and though the proverb has been very often misused, yet I think it may be legitimately used here, and will help to explain to you wherein I see the difference of the two positions. The object of your lectures in India was to rouse in your people a sense of the useless and degraded state in which they allowed their women, especially their widows to exist and to stir them up and have them trained to lives of usefulness. This was a grand and noble cause and you felt yourself called by God to forward the cause by all means in your power. You have yourself told me you did not choose this line of action yourself, neither had it suggested itself to you. Then how did God will you to do it? It was suggested to you by the Syndicate of Calcutta, the Heads of one department of your country people, and in carrying it out you were not following a selfchosen path but one of obedience to the orders of your people, through whom at that time God made His Will known to you. The same plea cannot be made with regard to your teaching young men now. The end in view in this case is to forward them in the elements of Sanskrit, which, if it is very desirable for them to learn, their parents can by placing them either in London or Oxford afford them opportunities for so doing.

You speak in your letter of being distrusted by us. I cannot recall one circumstance during the two years you have been with us which can have given you a cause for saying this. You have I think been dealt with every confidence and in true love. You say "Trust begets trust and love begets love". I think as far as lies in our poor powers, you have had both confidence and love. You say "we want to interfere with your liberty" and that "you will not let others lay hand on your liberty". I think you hardly understand in its true sense the meaning of the word "liberty"; it is a word so sadly misapplied that it will be well just to consider a little what it means. I have had copied for you a passage from one of the greatest art critics (Ruskin) on the use and misuse of the word. You will see in its corrupted sense it means licence, lawlessness and on the other hand, true liberty means obedience to law. This is written by a layman and as such shews the opinion of one of the wisest and most literate of England's people on this subject. I also send you some thoughts on Christian liberty collected chiefly from the writings of those who have authority to speak in the church. No one in this world is without their responsibilities and restrictions. Those holding highest offices in the church or State are hemmed in by restrictions perhaps as much as we in much humbler sphere. The most unhappy person of my acquaintance, and one who has made shipwreck of her life is one who in independent circumstances and without family ties can do pretty much as she pleases. She made fair promise of good at the outset of her career, but in consequence of having no restrictions is unprofitable to the world.

God has given you great talents and He has doubtless chosen you to do a work for Him. He has trained you hitherto for that work chiefly by discipline and trial. He drew you to us, and while with us, you by your own choice became a Christian, and by so doing you placed yourself under the perfect law of liberty of the Gospel. Read carefully the Epistle for the week, St. James I : 22-27, and mark every word. With the help of the extracts I send you, you will understand what this law of liberty is. You have by your Baptism looked into this Law of Liberty : take heed that you continue therein, and in so doing you will in God's good time be blessed in your work. You will be blessed in the gradual rolling away of the mists of darkness which still hang about you; you will be blessed if



only you are faithful in your Christian calling, in being an instrument in God's hands to the benefiting of your countrypeople in the highest and noblest way of which it is the privilege on anyone to labour, I mean in raising them through imparting Christian Truth.

Only strike the roots of Humility deep in the soil and in time the seed which has been sown in your heart will grow up to a full and perfect tree and will bear fruit abundantly.

Your very loving,  
AJEEBAI

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35 *Letter from SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE*

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Wantage : May 10th, 1885

My dear Miss Beale,

I have written at length to Ramabai on the subject of the Sanskrit lessons. I should like you to read what I have said to her and have enclosed it in your cover. She did not lecture during the lifetime of her parents, and when first she did it, she and her brother lectured together and she went about under his protection. We were very sorry to hear of her visit to Bristol. I do not think I have ever heard her mention this friend of her husband though she has often talked to me of his and her brother's friends. We have been most careful since she came to us about her travelling or being about without an escort. When in London, though at some distance from where she was staying (and I took her out almost daily) I went for her and saw her home and on one occasion when it was impossible for me to go the whole day with her, put her, on parting with her, under the charge of the guard and told her to take a cab, a walking distance of 5 minutes. On several occasions she has had friends to visit her here and on one occasion a friend of her husband's had lodgings in the town and came here to see her. Is it not contrary to our English customs for any young woman of her age, married or single, to go on her own account to visit a gentleman friend? It is contrary to Hindu customs. I trust some arrangement was made about finding her a lodging and that she was not left to find one herself. I think, dear Miss Beale, it must have escaped your memory that we asked you to consider Ramabai in the same light as other pupils under your charge and to look to me, for the time being, as her guardian and to refer such matters to me. Forgive me, if I have written in too dictatorial a manner. We are most grateful to you for what you have done for Ramabai. Though in one sense on a very different footing from the other students at the College, yet from her being a young convert and a foreigner and one who has everything to learn both as regards the Faith and as regards the manners and customs of English people, we feel she needs as carefully guarding and as much holding in as those who are much younger in point of age than herself.

Yours with much respect and affection,  
GERALDINE, SISTER of C.S.M.V.

May 12th, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I should be glad if you will come. I feel this is a crisis. I may have been wrong but it seemed that not to yield would have been to provoke and perhaps bring about a result which some yielding might avert. However, I can say more than I can write.

Yours very sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
Sunday : May 24th, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

Just a line to tell you I have had a very nice talk. I think your visit has set things right : the old sunniness and trust was there. She sees no one wants her to believe what she cannot, but only to seek and love the truth, to open her ears to the Divine teaching she does now fully accept, I think, the Lord's Divinity, and only objects to some of those crude and inaccurate statements too often met within our popular religious literature.

She seems to think that the Brahmo Samaj is rather a reaction from the pantheism which lost all separate existence in the One; that those who have been brought up in pantheism will have to pass through a struggle of thought in which they will distinguish strongly the divine and human ere they can receive the Christian teaching, which gives to man a distinct personality and a will, which he can offer to God; then they will be able to receive the teaching of the indwelling in Christ of His meditative life, and our redemption through Him, of His being Son of God and Son of man.

Yesterday Ramabai was speaking again of her idea of a sort of Guild, or of a School in India. She was afraid that if someone else were Head, she would not be able to carry out some plans, because any English lady would not see the necessity and a Head could not be interfered with. I told her I did not think it was in her to organise, and that a good Head would let her, as I do, carry out what seemed best, and listen to her in things about which she knew most. In fact, I was sure she *could* not manage anything of that sort alone.

I wonder if ever you would be strong enough to go to India and work with her; that would seem best. She does not seem inclined to go for another. When I said I thought she would find it dull to remain longer here, she seemed to think not. Well, you will see better at Midsummer. I feel much cheered and relieved of present anxieties.

Yours very sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

Malbar Hill, Bombay,

5th June 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I received your letter *enclosing* the correspondence about Mary Ramabai by last mail, but no communication came from Miss Beale. The situation is far from being a simple one. Your advice to her is right beyond all question, and I shall greatly regret it if she does not follow your counsel. Nor do I think you have failed in kindness and sympathy in your manner of conveying it. Yet just because you are a Sister and she in the world, I fear your way of treating the case has in some ways not been the one most likely to simplify matters.

Had it been a Religious whose conduct was in question, then of course the fact that three Bishops had advised against the course she wished to follow would have been conclusive, and she would have had no duty in the matter except to submit her own will and judgment to theirs. Should we be prepared to tell any English woman in the same position as Mary, that she as a widow under no "religious" obligations, was bound to follow their advice as being simply the voice of God to her independently of her own judgment coinciding with it? I hardly think we should, or at any rate that we should expect to be obeyed if we did.

Is it not just one of those cases where pressing a person beyond what can quite be expected of her, we shall make her less and not more amenable, not only in the particular matter but generally? If she has so-called friends who are trying to detach her from us and from all that we represent in her eyes, then we must be careful not to make her feel as though adherence to the Faith entailed committing herself to obligations which she is not prepared at present to come under.

The obedience of a Religious and the obedience which is essential to Christian liberty are two very different things. To one we must hold fast at all costs, and let her know that giving that up means giving Christ up. The other, if it is ever to be undertaken, must be part of a whole life which has its own special graces and helps to compensate and fit people for its own special sacrifices and obligations. Have you not been treating her a little as if you did not recognize this distinction? A little giving her to understand that she could not be obedient to Christ unless she is prepared to take up that yoke of obedience to His earthly ministers which only a special vocation requires of people?

I have in no way changed my opinion as to what is desirable and wise. But it is one thing to put strong pressure on Miss Beale who does not know India, to prevent her suggesting or encouraging a course which my Indian experience makes me deprecate; it is quite another to press Ramabai herself to submit her will and her judgment to others in a matter where she feels competent to judge. Wrong and obstinate she may be; I think, she is. But the question is how to minimize an evil which we cannot wholly prevent. And that I think can be secured by not pressing upon a woman in the world, the kind of obedience which is proper to a *Community*.

Probably my best course is to enclose a letter to Mary myself. I hope I have made my meaning quite clear. It seems to me a case for trying to convince the judgment, and to point out how the judgment may be warped by self-will. It does not seem to me one for saying simply that duty demands that one should forgo the right to judge at all.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

L. S. Bombay

P.S. – I have thought it better to write direct to Ramabai herself. Very likely, she may send you the letter to read.

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39     *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Ladies' College,  
Cheltenham,

May 12th, 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

Last night as I came back from Bristol, I received your long letter. I did not write to you the other day that I was going to Bristol to see a friend who was once my teacher of Bible in Cachar, when my husband was living. I was too much excited and felt too tired to write in detail about my journey to Bristol or rather to Clifton. I was so pleased to see my old friend again, you may have heard about him from me. His name is Rev. Isaac Allen. He was staying with Mr. and Mrs. Glover, a Baptist Minister of Clifton. Mr. and Mrs. Glover who knew me long since through him had invited me (last term) to pay them a short visit, but then having no time to spare I refused to do so. This time, Mr. Allen who was staying with them asked me to go there and see him. He is not very well, his health broke down in Cachar, so he had to leave that station and come home in order to save his life from the malarial fever. I enjoyed my visit to Bristol very much. On my arrival there on Saturday afternoon Mrs. Glover took me to the Arnos Vail Cemetery to see the tomb of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. On Sunday I attended the Annual meeting of the Baptist Sunday Schools where Mr. Jones, a missionary who has returned from Agra spoke about mission work in India.

Yesterday I went with Mrs. Glover to see the portrait of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the Bristol Mission, and the Bristol Cathedral, and came back to Cheltenham at 7 o'clock p.m. Here ends my three days' history. Now to turn to your letter, I will first reply to to-day's letter and then go back to that of yesterday.

Do you ever really think, my dear Ajeebai, that I could be otherwise than a true friend to you? We may more than thousand times differ in our opinions and must be separated by unavoidable temporal difficulties, but it does not in any way follow that we must be enemies or indifferent to each other; even in barbarous countries and people it is a shame to be false to a friend who has put confidence in any person, how much more it is (or at least ought to be) so among ourselves who profess to be the members of civilised countries and followers of the true religion and perfect Love. At the same time it does not follow that because we are friends we ought not to have our own judgment and mind, but on the contrary we are to agree in everything; as all that is ordered for us by the Most High is *for the best*, and we must always accept the order of the circumstances and the will of those who have authority to speak as expressing His will! It seems to me that you are advising me under the WE to accept always the will of those who have authority, etc. This however I cannot accept. I have a conscience, and mind and a judgment of my own, I must myself think and do everything which GOD has given me the power of doing. You have, perhaps, known that on the eve of my leaving India for England, a priest had told me that it was not according to GOD's will that I should start for England. But it so happened that my mind told me it was GOD's will that I should *then* go to England, and I did so. Although priests and bishops may have certain authority over the church yet the church has another Master Who is Superior even to the bishops. I am, it is true, a member of the Church of Christ, but am not bound to accept every word that falls down from the lips of priests or bishops. If it pleases you to call my word liberty as lawlessness you may do so, but as far as I know myself, I am not lawless. Obedience to the law and to the Word of God is quite different

from perfect obedience to priests only. I have just with great efforts freed myself from the yoke of the Indian priestly tribe, so I am not at present willing to place myself under another similar yoke by accepting everything which comes from the priests as authorized command of the Most High. At the same time I am not willing to offend anyone or to do wrong. But can you or your friends prove that giving lessons to boys is a wrong thing? You must have misunderstood me if you think that I have told you I began to lecture in public in obedience to the Syndicate or the Englishmen, in your words the

“Elders of my people” for I have never told you so. On the contrary I told you that at first my brother and I were invited by Pandit Tara Nath into a large meeting of Pandits where a Pandit (the Principal of Sanskrit College of Calcutta) having seen me was interested in me and introduced me to Mr. Fauny and Mr. Croft (I do not know the exact spelling of their names). When in the college, they with the assistance of the said Pandit examined me in Sanskrit, kindly gave me the title of “Saraswati”. I did not tell you that the Syndicate suggested or commanded me to lecture in public, for they never did so, etc. I have also told you (if you remember) that it was the example set by the good Brahmos which kindled my spirit and made me able to plead the cause of women before my countrymen. It is true, it is not necessary for me to be a teacher of men, but when either in India or England I can get women as well as men for my pupils there is no reason why I should not teach both. It is not a general custom in India for ladies to teach men, it is true, because there are scarcely any among ladies who can teach. It surprises me very much to think that neither my father nor my husband objected [to] my mother’s or my teaching young men while some English people are doing so. You can call some of my countrywomen “hedged” but you cannot apply this adjective to Marathi Brahmin women. You have yourself seen that Marathi ladies are neither hedged nor kept behind thick curtains. Even in the days of the Mussulman rulers they never used to be so. It is true they do not mix as a general rule with men as you do in England, but you cannot say now some of them do not [do] so, I am one of those “some” and am not afraid of men. Why do you say (if you trust me) that to address mixed audiences is quite different from giving lessons to young English men? I have not addressed only mixed audiences but most of them (especially in Bengal and North-West Provinces, where no Hindu lady is allowed to come before men) purely composed of men, and have also given lessons to young men at different times. But then it did not seem to take away my influence with my countrypeople, and why should it be so now, I cannot see. I am not anxious to give lessons to young men, but I am anxious to do away with all kinds of prejudices which deprive a woman in India of her proper place in society. Can I confine my work only to women in India and have nothing to do with men? I do not think so. To help the women to come forward in the society I must first of all urge upon men, and teach men of poorer classes. Then when men are convinced of the necessity of elevating the condition of their women, I shall have access to their Zenanas. Unless I begin to have a regular and pure intercourse with men, I shall in vain hope and try to help my countrywomen.

I do not think I shall say anything on behalf of my liberty. You have yourself misunderstood this my word, [and] give sermons about it. As far as I know from the time I have had a real liberty, I have not acted as a lawless woman, and never want to do so. When people decide anything for me, without consulting with me about it, I of course call it interfering with my liberty, and am not willing to let them do it. Suppose you were in my place and an unknown bishop were to advise your friends to decide a thing for you without telling you about it, and your friends did so, what would you think of it? Would you feel bound to accept every word or rule which comes from the bishop as the expression of the will of the Most High. Perhaps you would. I am not quite sure about it, but I do not, and will not. I am not going to act against Miss Beale’s promise or your decision at present but I do not want to ask or follow the opinion of the bishops before whom you are going again to put this matter. My conscience does not trouble me in this matter and that is quite enough. It will be impossible for me to follow others in every single act and to be always pleasing them and never to think for myself.

With love and honour to you.

I am,

Ever yours faithfully,  
MARY RAMA

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40 *Letter from* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., *Wantage to* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
May 25th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I was so glad to receive your letter of the 17th and to learn from you that Ramabai is again trustful and happy. I have been wanting to answer it for some days past but I have been prostrated by one of my old attacks of brain exhaustion, and have not been able to do any letter-writing. I had a letter from Mr. Gore about Ramabai in which he said he should be very pleased to go to Cheltenham to see her, but unless there was immediate necessity he could not well get away till after Trinity Sunday. I have told him I thought he would hear from you.

I wrote last mail to our Sister Superior at Poona upon the subject of work for Ramabai on her return. I have asked her to correspond with Ramabai on the subject. It will be important now to keep her interested in some scheme of work in which, though she cannot be the organizer, she may carry out her own ideas for the training of her countrywomen. I have suggested our St. Michael's as the typical sort of training home, because girls are trained to various callings both intellectual and industrial, and from it many go out daily to work in Wantage National Schools and in village schools in the neighbourhood, and learn their work as teachers in elementary schools. I think we shall find in the first home which is formed it will be most necessary to provide occupation for those who cannot attain to any standard.

Yours very sincerely,  
Sister GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

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41 *Letter from* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, *Cheltenham, to* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., *Wantage*

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
June 16th, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I had a talk yesterday with Ramabai, and found she had got the impression that I did not want her to stay here; so I told her that was *quite* a mistake, and I should be glad to take the money responsibility and do all I could for her for another year. You and I only wish to know what is *God's* will for her.

She does want to go further in the science and mathematics, etc. than she is doing, if she is to become a teacher, and enter into fuller sympathy with Western thought. I think nowhere else could she get from first-rate teachers private instruction in everything. Also she does want to grow established in her Christian Faith. I sometimes think that the great love I have and the not inconsiderable knowledge of metaphysical philosophy has fitted me to help her a little, and that the mental and spiritual trials I have had may have been in God's providence partly to *enable* me to help



her. At least she seemed sent to me, as she was to you. I should like, and will try to come and spend a week with you in the holidays.

Mr. Gore is coming on the 25th. I have asked Ramabai to let me show him her letters, and she is quite looking forward to his visit. She is teachable. We must not be anxious, but really trust God with that wonderful mind and character that He had fashioned for her. Nor do I think it the slightest use to try to keep her away from people, who think differently. She has gone through so much already, and now she has got her feet on a Rock, these currents will not sweep her away, I am persuaded.

Father Black came the other day and she was delighted to have a chat in Marathi.

Yours very sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

I hope you are better. How is the Dean of Lincoln? I hope quite recovered.

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42 *Letter from MRS. POOLE to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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21, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham,  
June 1885

Dear Sister,

Ramabai is excited at the prospect of her little visit and I hope it will be a happy one for you both; I am sure she needs your constant help and influence, for I consider her Religious life has deteriorated much since she left Wantage, and not only this, but I don't think she has this term the same love and respect for you all that she had when she came first here. I do my best to keep up what I know is in accordance with your wishes, and I often feel that I fail, and have failed sadly; I hope for Ramabai's sake you will take her back, as you thought of doing when you were here in July.

I don't think (though she hates discipline) the freedom here is good for her. You will pardon me for saying all this, and consider it quite between ourselves as I dare say Miss Beale would not like me to express my opinion on the subject so freely; but as I have more opportunity of seeing than she has, I like to tell you my opinion.

Yours affectionately,  
E. L. POOLE

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43 *Letter from SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage to PANDITA RAMABI*

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St.Mary's Home, Wantage  
June 21st, 1885

My very dear Ramabai,

I will tell you honestly as you have asked me always to deal with you why I grieved to heart what you said about perfection. It was not only your remarks upon the subject, but all matters which touched upon religion made me fear there was not the same earnestness of your purpose and desire for GOD's Glory as there was in the early days of your conversion. I am not surprised, because our

adversary the Devil, as soon as he perceives we are slackening in our first fervours, little by little troubles us with old temptations, and if he finds we are not clad with the complete armour of a Christian (Ephesians, VI : 11-18) he wounds us with his weapons and endeavours to destroy us. You have, dear Ramabai, to learn about the Christian warfare, as well as about all over details of the Christian life by experiencing them. And I who have gone through many bitter trials desire only with loving tenderness to help to warn you, that you may, I trust, escape some of the pitfalls which lie in your way. I desire nothing for you but that you may so yield yourself up body, soul and spirit, into the Hands of an All-Wise Father that He may use you without hindrance to the carrying out [of] all His Will for your country. And you cannot do His Will without seeking perfection in *all* your duties small as well as great. To give you some examples: as a Mother, study the highest types of Christian Mothers, and seek to imitate them. In your life as a student, cultivate your talents for GOD's Glory. Let no ambition or the desire of the good opinion of others or any earthly motives creep in and so destroy the higher and nobler motives of which you are capable. Think how the fairest fruit is destroyed by the little maggot. This is indeed a remarkable type of what one single indulged sin may do to the soul. One more duty out of very many I would remind you of, that in it also you may aim at perfection; that is the duty of prayer. I cannot urge upon you too often that the life of prayer is as necessary to keep up the Divine life as food is to sustain the bodily life. And prayer consists of so many parts : Confession, Supplication, Intercession, Thanksgiving, Adoration. The Epistles abound in exhortation to the early converts on this duty—pray without ceasing. In all things by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto GOD. In everything give thanks. As I said to you when we were discussing the subject of perfection, no man attains it here, but by aiming at what our Lord *bids us do* we shall be perfected in His own time. The verse you quote from St. John does not mean we shall be like Him when He shall be manifest, *unless* we strive to imitate His perfect model here. As you say GOD alone is perfect, but with His creatures there may and can be perfection in degree. A flower, a bird, are perfect in degree. Our Blessed Lord was perfect as a Child, as a Son, as a Youth, as a Labourer, as Teacher, as a Preacher, a Physician, a Friend, etc. etc. Though perfect as GOD, yet as man He was not perfected except through suffering, and so it will be with each of us. Though we may aim, and as Christians *are bound* to aim at perfection, yet we shall not be perfected except through suffering, and through all Eternity we shall ever be growing in perfection, and ever be increasing in knowledge and love.

You ask about your return to Cheltenham; you know, dear Ramabai, in sending you to Cheltenham, I said we should send you for a year, and see how you got on. Miss Beale both by letter and in her last conversation with me, let me to understand that she thought that a year would suffice for you to have seen the working of a large school, and I felt also that there were certain studies which I should like you to make, and which could be equally well carried on at Wantage as at Cheltenham. Let me tell you money is no consideration where your welfare is concerned. We wish only to do the very best for you. The plan I have contemplated for you will involve a greater outlay than another year at Cheltenham would entail. I feel too that as your time in England is drawing to a close, it will be often necessary to discuss with you your future plans which can be done better perhaps in conversation than by letter.

Yours very loving,  
AJEEBAI

21, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham,  
24th June 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I need scarcely say about the charges with which you have charged me. It is not for me to speak on my behalf in such a question in which one cannot be justified by one's own feelings and opinion. It is for GOD Himself to decide the question as He likes it. I do not want to make a show or noise about my prayers or earnestness about glorifying GOD or such things.

I did not say we are not to try after perfection. The charge that I care about other' opinions, etc. is not quite like you.

You need not have reminded me about what you said about my staying at Cheltenham for a year so. I had heard from you, and remember it very well, that you said when I asked you "how long shall I be allowed to stay at Cheltenham?", the answer was "as long as Miss Beale would like to have you". I did not force you to keep me here, I said if you were willing to keep me here to go through a course of regular study, I shall be much obliged to you, but if not I have no right whatever to urge upon you to do it. When Miss Beale said to me that she would not say anything about my staying here, and that she left it to my choice, and asked me if I felt I had learnt enough to leave the College, I of course told her that I *did not* feel so. *And* even now I say so, but at the same time I say I shall not force anyone (either you or Miss Beale) to keep me here. I feel that I do not know enough to enter into my work, I shall continue to study elsewhere, wherever I get the chance.

Thank you for all your advice. I should like to know how your health is. Nobody has written to me to tell [me] how my child is.

With much love and honour to you,

I am,  
Yours very truly,  
MARY RAMA

P.S.—Mrs. Poole asked me to tell you that Bath was not very far from Cheltenham and that she would be glad to see you if you could come here sometime. I had a letter from Father Page and one from Miss Hurford. Both of them are full of the same things as you write to me, so I did not send them to you.

21, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham,  
25th June 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

In order to prevent any misunderstanding on both parts, I had showed that piece of your letter to Miss Beale which concerned my future departure or stay at Cheltenham. After I left the College yesterday, Miss Beale wrote a letter to me which I copy here:

Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
June 24th, 1885

Dear Ramabai,

Perhaps it is better to write instead of speaking. Sister Geraldine has quite misunderstood me, if she thinks from anything I said I should be otherwise than *glad for you to stay* if you would like to do so. Don't think that (here is a word I could not make out) anything and trouble, but I am able to do for you. On the contrary, it will be a great trouble to me to part with one with whom I am in deep sympathy of heart.

Your Wantage friends wish, I see, to have you amongst them, and I should like you to stay here—perhaps you may wish something different—but the great thing for us all to wish is simply to know GOD's will—so I shall try to forget self in the matter.

I know the Good Shepherd, into Whose fold you have entered, will lead you to green pastures. You know His voice, and will follow Him.

With true affection,  
Your loving sister in Christ,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

Now I should very much like to know what do you think I must do. When Miss Beale asked me as you know whether I felt I had learnt enough at the College, I told her *I did not* feel so, on which she told me to stay here, not minding about the money matter. But now if you feel that I must do as you wish I shall be sorry to displease you in any way by staying here. But to tell you the truth I am not inclined to leave Cheltenham if Miss Beale does not want me to do so. And as I told before if I must leave this place to please you, I must go somewhere else where I can get [a] chance to continue my studies. So please, dear Ajeebai, tell me anything whatever you feel directly, and do not bring it before me in a philosophical language which I do not understand. To talk over the future plans, I am sure we shall not want more than two months, which are easily to be got in [the] next vacation.

You tell me about something of my earnestness and [of] how many parts prayer consists, etc. of which about the first I will not say anything, as I told you it is for the All-knowing Father to decide the question. Secondly, I see and understand, you and Canon Butler are much displeased with me because I do not go to Confession. I must tell you I shall in no way do anything which it is not satisfactory to my mind; not that I shall say every religious duty must be satisfactory to *me*, but I mean by that it must be proved from [the] Bible that people cannot obtain salvation unless [they] do such and such [a] thing. From [the] Bible I can derive the necessity of confessing sins or faults to *one another* and to GOD, and not to a particular priest in India. You will, I suppose, know what I mean. In my opinion, if not in yours, India is not ripe enough to practise these things. Thirdly, I do not like formalities as you know very well from the first time. I am bound to do the things which are commanded by our Saviour as necessary for salvation and to please GOD, and these I will do by GOD's help, as I have promised on the occasion of my Baptism, as much as it lies in my power, but I shall not do [anything] which is not necessary, and which it passes my power of doing. Well then, why should you and the Canon be displeased with me, and say all at once that I was under the influence of [the] Devil as the Canon is very fond of saying, and you echoing his words? Is it for you or to please you, I ask, that I am become a Christian and pray to GOD, or exercise virtues or not? Don't be vexed with me if my words are too strong, but I confidently say they are true. I am not as you say or think under the influence of the Devil, and please GOD it may not be so, and I earnestly pray to the Father that it may not. But I must say it is very wrong of the Canon to say so only because I differ with them in certain things. People should not think that they are the masters of others'

conscience, and that others are not bound to do exactly how they want them to do. I am one of the least, but one of Christ's disciples, I shall hear Him and hear others, when their advice agrees with His Own directions.

With much love and honour to you.

I am,  
Yours very truly,  
MARY RAMA

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46 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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21, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham,  
June : Monday, 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I am sorry to hear from you that you are not well; I hope you will soon be quite well at Bath and am glad to hear that you have very good people for your hosts.

Thank you very much for praying for me. I need many prayers to attain to the perfection and to the true knowledge of GOD. Will you kindly tell me, in which "You [I] fear sometimes me [you] too readily seek happiness in things of time" so that I may understand your feelings and correct myself? After you have explained it to me, I will (if need be) write to you on the 3rd page of your letter.

I am unable to discover why you were grieved to hear what I said about perfection. I am not quite sure what we were talking about, but it was something about my bad writing or like it. First of all you will kindly remember that we were *not* talking about Scriptural doctrines. Second, if you think at all it be so, then let me tell you that I was not altogether wrong in asserting that no man can be perfect in this world. Let us first consider what is *perfect*. "Not defective, completed, unblemished, possessing every moral excellence". So says the Dictionary. I ask you if you can say any man can be so. If so, it passes my understanding. I firmly believe in the progressive state of souls. If they be completed here they would want nothing; they would become like GOD, which we know cannot be here, for the Apostle John says : "We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him" and "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be". This clearly shows that, however good, holy or clever a man is, yet there remains something which he has not got yet, and therefore he is not complete or perfect. When our Saviour says : "Be ye perfect", etc. He means, as far as I can understand His words, to try to be like the Father as much as it lies in human power, enabled [by] GOD's grace. But to try to be perfect like Him and to become perfect are I suppose two different things. I think and remember, I did not say that we are not to try to become perfect, but I only said *no man can be perfect* in this world. By the phrase "in this world" I mean before our trials are over, before we see GOD face to face. In short before the Last Day. If we understand "Be ye perfect", etc., literally and in its fullest sense, then "As the Father" also must be taken literally and full which I know according to Christian teaching cannot be. For it we were to become *like* or as or equally perfect with the Father, we should undoubtedly be so many supreme Gods, as the Vedantists say. There would not be any difference between us and the Father in perfection. Such a thing is an impossibility to me at least. I do not at the same time say that we shall not be perfect like the Father in a certain degree, but I object to saying that we shall be as perfect (not defective) as the Father is. Now permit me to ask if you mean perfection can be had in everything. I remember I said something about talents or skill in something. Does not St. Paul tell us that everyone had not all gifts? We are to perfect or complete the Church of

God by doing everything to which we have a calling. If you have a gift of prophecy I have it not; if you have a gift of good writing, I have it not; am I then to pursue after the thing which I cannot get even after trying? If not, I of course am defective in this thing and therefore am not complete or perfect as you would say.

On Sunday I had a talk with Miss Beale when she asked me what were my future plans to which I replied I did not yet see my way; again, she asked me if I were going away from the College after this term or I wanted to stay [a] little longer. I said, 'I heard from Sister Geraldine that you (Miss Beale) thought I had got sufficient teaching in this College, therefore, if you think so I of course cannot stay. Secondly, I do not know if the Sisters can afford to stay [keep] me here. So this must be considered', etc. I think she will let you know what she thinks.

Please write and tell me how your health is getting on. I must stop here as I have got to go to the College.

With much love and honour to you,

I am,  
Ever yours,  
MARY RAMA

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47    *Letter from SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., to the DEAN OF LINCOLN*

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
July 1st, 1885

I have been feeling very anxious about Ramabai and I should like you to know a little of the state of affairs at Cheltenham. It is a long story but I will to put it into [a] few words. I enclose four letters out of a lengthy correspondence, which will, I think, give you an insight into matters. First, let me remind you that before we sent Ramabai to Cheltenham, we felt it right to refuse Miss Beale's pecuniary offer of help for Ramabai's education; we did so because we foresaw that unless we were in the position of placing Ramabai at Cheltenham as her guardians, Miss Beale would claim a position which we did not wish her to hold. I wrote to her before sending Ramabai that we wished Miss Beale to consider us in the light of parents or guardians placing a pupil under her care; and that we hoped all matters relating to her would be reported to us for decision. Notwithstanding this, Miss Beale returned the first remittance and since then has paid Ramabai's expenses out of the Queen's Bounty Fund sent by Mr. Gladstone, and Ramabai's own earnings, and now when some difficulties have arisen with Ramabai, and we think it most advisable for her to return to Wantage, Miss Beale most injudiciously gives Ramabai the rein, and let her see that she is altogether independent of us, and that if she desires to remain at the College another year, she will undertake to pay [her] expenses.

From Mrs. Poole's letter (the lady with whom Ramabai is lodging; she is a clergyman's widow and a nice educated woman) you will see what her present opinion of Ramabai is.

I also enclose Ramabai's last two letters which I received on the same day, and you will see from these that she is altogether off the lines. I have numbered the letters that you may see in what order they come, as I have referred to them in this. I have striven to write lovingly and tenderly, but at the same time I felt I must not shrink from saying to her what I felt right.

Miss Beale hardly realises the position she is placing herself in. She is undoubtedly misunderstanding and mismanaging Ramabai—and when Ramabai has thrown us off [as] she is



certain to do if Miss Beale continues the attitude she is at present taking with her, Ramabai will at the first rub with Miss Beale throw off her authority too.

This will cause and open scandal, which will not reflect well on the part Miss Beale has played in the matter. She did distinctly say to me and others [that] she considered a year at Cheltenham enough for Ramabai, and now recalls her words. Mrs. Poole's letter I sent you in confidence as it was written to me. I beg you to make no allusion to her in any communication you may have with Miss Beale.

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48 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Cheltenham, to CANON BUTLER, Wantage*

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Ladies' College,  
July 3rd, 1885

Dear Canon,

Thank you very very much for your kind letter. I am sorry if I have imagined falsely what you thought or said about my being under the influence of the Devil, but I will give you the reason that led me to imagine so. Last time when I saw you at Wantage, I suppose you remember that your conversation with me opened with a parable of a sick man, his good friend and his enemy, and when I asked you the meaning of it, you said it was about me and my good Friend the Saviour, and the Devil my enemy (I do not put here your words exactly what they were but they were something like these).

And why did you open your conversation in such a manner? Because I had felt some doubt (and even now I am not free from it) about the doctrine of our Saviour's Deity; and you imagined that this doubt was not mine own but the Devil, my enemy, was encouraging me to think that our Lord was not God Almighty, and according to his (the Devil's) advice I began to ask this sort of questions, and would not accept humbly what the church or rather church people taught me.

Let me tell you (and I say it from the bottom of my heart), my dear Canon, I am indeed very grateful to you for all your kindness, and to others who are like you to me in Christ. I have not forgotten the lessons which my dear parents had taught me in my childhood, *i.e.* to honour and be grateful to those who led to the life immortal. I honour and am grateful to those my parents first, and next to them, I honour those who are my spiritual parents and who brought me to Christ and to God. But at the same time, I should never (at least ought not to) hesitate to ask them some questions and to tell honestly to them that I could not agree with them in every point of faith. I must be allowed to think for myself. God had given me an independent conscience, not to accept everything slavishly that other people say, but "hear and see" for and by myself. May I not then ask some questions and discuss about matters which I do not quite understand? It is indeed very true that we do not understand everything; we are to accept some supernatural things which pass our limited understanding, with faith; but still we are bound to consider things and consult with the Scriptures, before we accept them fully. This freedom of thought I honestly say I was not allowed to have by my Wantage friends. The moment I asked any questions they would either mistake me or say that I was sinning against such and such commandment of God. Consequently, I dared not to ask you of Sister Geraldine any question concerning the doctrines taught by the church, and so laboured for a time, and underwent many afflictions of my troubled conscience. After I came here, I found a friend in Miss Beale, who has gone through many such difficulties and who could therefore sympathise with me, so I placed my difficulties before her, which I had never mentioned to Sister Geraldine or to you before, fearing that you would mistake me. These my questions reached Sister Geraldine through Miss Beale, and from her to you. Now Sister Geraldine imagines (for she told me so) that I accepted the faith of Christ because I was impressed much with the holy unselfish life, which the followers of Christ — the Sisters — lead; and had nor any difficulty in believing in such a faith which makes [one] so unselfish and holy. But after I accepted it, I wanted now to prove it, and make sure of its truthfulness, so I am

experiencing these difficulties, etc. but at the same time should accept humbly what the church people say. This is her opinion.' I held my silence when I heard this, thinking that it was not of much consequence to discuss upon such points of question but now I see that the misunderstanding is growing too formidable not to be corrected.

I was indeed impressed with the holy life of the Sisters, and their sublime unselfishness, and am so impressed to this moment, but I must say for the sake of truth that their life was not the cause of my accepting the faith of Christ. It was Father Goreh's letter that proved that the faith which I professed (I mean the Brahmo faith) was not taught by our Veda as I had thought, but it was the Christian faith which was brought before me by my friends disguised under the name of Brahmo religion. Well, I thought if Christ is the source of this sublime faith, why should not I confess Him openly to be my Lord and my Divine teacher? And so I did, and do confess Him my Saviour. I believe Him to be the Son of Most High and His Messiah. But this confession does not mean that I believe also all the doctrines taught by other people, unless they be proved to be true from Christ's own teaching. Yet to ask questions to my Wantage friends was something dreadful, because it led them to think that I was sinning against some commandments of God, so I was obliged to keep silence while I was staying there, and even now I shall not ask any questions to them unless I be convinced that they do not mistake me.

When Miss Beale told Sister Geraldine that I was experiencing some difficulties in accepting the whole faith taught by the English Church, she thought that these difficulties are newly arising in my mind, and perhaps led you to think so. And when I came to see you, my thought was confirmed when I heard your parable that it was no use asking questions to my Wantage friends, either directly or indirectly. They would always misunderstand me.

You, my dear Father in Christ, and Sister Geraldine, and my other Christian friends, are too learned, too spiritual, too wise, and and too faithful to your faith which you profess from your childhood, to understand my difficulties in accepting wholly the religion taught by you. You have never gone through the same experience of choosing another religion for yourself, which was totally foreign to you, as I have. You, wise and experienced and old as you are, you cannot interpenetrate my poor feelings. You will, I trust, not be offended if I say so, for no man is omniscient. You do me injustice if you apply such parables to me as you did last time when I ask you questions and say in a roundabout way (or lead me to understand so) that I was not humble and in a teachable spirit when I came to you. If a Hindoo theologian—however learned and holy good he may be—comes and tells you that your religion was a false one, and that you were to accept humbly everything that he taught, could you do it?

If every question that I ask and everything that I say to you lead you to think that I was not humble and that I did not come to you in teachable spirit, how could I ever ask you, and even dare to mention anything to my friends about this? So I thought it better to hold my tongue than to run such a risk as to lead you to make mistakes.

I am very sorry to observe that even my common speeches of no consequence lead people to think otherwise. For instance, the other day I was talking with some of my friends about my handwriting or something, and I said to silence a friend who brought a charge of imperfection against me (and in joke too) that no man can be perfect in this world (and I believe it is true, for St. Paul says he is not perfect, but is pressing on towards perfection). But my dear old Ajeebai (Sister Geraldine) took this speech of mine and wrote a very dogmatical letter which was too learned for me, saying that I was very wrong in saying so, and that I was not as earnest to glorify God as I used to be in the early days of my conversion, and that she was not surprised at my conduct, because (she thinks) the Devil is always trying to get hold of us, i.e. me, etc., etc. This remark sounded in my ear just like the echo of your parable of the sick man, etc., which you were kind enough to apply to me, and I wrote a letter in answer to Sister Geraldine's letter, that it was not right to of you to say or imagine that I was under the influence of the Devil ---to say these words under the disguise of a parable!

This I say without fear, and without any such suspicion as exciting your displeasure towards me. If you lead me by such reasons to believing that you or Sister Geraldine are determined to misunderstand me, you and she must never expect that I should ask any questions or say anything to you about my faith or of my difficulties. But for all this, my respect, and love, and grateful feelings towards you are not the less, and please God, it may never come to this end. Let me again tell you plainly that I believe in Christ and His God, and as one of His disciples—though least—am bound to do and believe in His teaching, as I have promised in my Baptism. But at the same time I shall not bind myself to believe in and accept everything that is taught by the church; before I accept it I must be convinced that it is according to Christ's teaching that you teach me.

And as long as I am led to think that my asking questions to you leads you to misunderstand me, I shall not say one single word to you about it, but shall read the Bible by myself, and follow the teaching of Christ. I have full faith that the Holy Spirit of God will lead me on toward the true faith.

With all honour and love to you,

I am,  
Your humble child in Christ,  
MARY RAMA

Please do not misunderstand my words. I have written to you very plainly what I thought, and without any intention to offend you, and I trust you will excuse my freedom in speaking to you.

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49 *Letter from the* REV. CANON WILLIAM BUTLER *to* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE,  
*Cheltenham*

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The Home, Wantage,  
July 5th, 1885.

Dear Miss Beale,

I have had a long and interesting letter from Mary Rama. She had quite misunderstood me. She imagined that I either could not or would not sympathise with her various difficulties, whereas I only was vexed that she did not lay them before me. What I crave for her is a *humble* heart, and the real danger to her lies in the *courting* she receives. I do so much wish that all the good Cowley people and heaps of worthy persons and women of all sorts would let her alone. It is really wonderful that she is as good as she is. The Indian native is prone to vanity, and she had done so much and gone through so much that it is not surprising if she is also very self-reliant. But to a neophyte in the Faith that self-reliance is intensely dangerous. I hope that she will shew you the letter which I wrote to her in reply to hers. You would, I am sure, be able to enlarge upon it to her very helpfully.

My address till Friday inclusive is : 4, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

Yours most truly,  
WILLIAM BUTLER

Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
July, 1885

Dear Canon Butler,

I am very grieved at the tone of Ramabai's letter. Everyone who knows you must be sure that what you said had received a twist. I think however that one ought to make great allowances for Ramabai's imperfect hearing and knowledge of English, as regards what she says about the Devil; and a little temper distorts one's view. Still as you say, it is not so much the matter as the tone which makes the letter so painful. It shows she is alienated from her friends.

I do not know what Sister Geraldine thinks but of course *I* naturally think that this is *not* the result of her coming to College. Up to the Easter holidays, she was the same as ever. When she came back, she was quite different. I was not well enough to see her for some days, but Mrs. Poole sent me word she was very cross. I found she thought some sort of tyranny was to be imposed on her, and I was very anxious Sister Geraldine should come to remove such an erroneous impression. After that we trusted all was well. I felt sure the influences under which she had been brought in the holidays had been the cause of this change, and when Mrs. Gilmore came afterwards and spoke with evident regret of her being at Wantage, I wrote the enclosed letter, with which I should not have troubled you, excepting for this occasion. I cannot help feeling that Sister Geraldine considers it would be better for Ramabai to leave. Now if she does so of her *own* accord, and returns *freely* to Wantage, it might be well; if against her will, I feel sure it would not be. The phase through which she is now passing is one, I admit, to cause much anxiety. But it was inevitable that one who had passed through so much, and been all her life accustomed to question and debate the deepest questions of philosophy, should desire to "approfondir" Christian philosophy. A little impatience on our part might throw her back into Unitarian teaching of the Brahmo Samaj. I assure you I have spared no pains in trying to help her. I have written small volumes of letters in reply to hers, for printed books do not exactly meet her wants; one has first to *learn* her thoughts, and then apply *argumentum ad hominem*.

I think we must have utter faith for her, that God is leading her, and that when she emerges into a clearer light, she will be stronger and able to help others.

I trust that the summer at Wantage may win her back to feel that that is her English home, I am sure she does feel for it a real affection. She must have written that letter in a state of irritation. I am not anxious to take upon myself the responsibility of helping or guiding, but it does seem as if she had been in some sense led here, and I cannot help thinking that if she wished to return to us, it would be best for her to do so. I am deeply interested in her, and while feeling myself incompetent would trust that if the work is given me, God would help me to do it. I was so glad Mr. Gore was able to have a talk with her the other day. She will never perhaps think exactly as we do, but if she did, she would not so well be a teacher for India. I am now beginning to see, for instance, why she does not so readily accept sacramental teaching as we do. She is afraid of its being confused by native thought with their own pantheism. And so other things, she sees dangers, which would not occur to us. If St. Paul needed three years of retirement, we need not expect her to be ready to teach as yet. Her deafness is a disadvantage in some ways; if she could hear sermons, she would I fancy more easily get into the atmosphere of sympathetic Christian thought. I hope she will remain here for Canon Mason's Quiet Days. I think we could put her where she could hear him in our school-room. You will be tired of reading this volume.

Yours very truly,

P.S —I may add that I think one ought not to attribute too much to Mrs. Gilmore's influence. I believe she is really a good woman, though with rather strong "Protestant" sympathies. I believe Ramabai's questions and difficulties came from a *native* source, and that in answering her questions, we answering those which come to her from her Indian correspondence. They are naturally vexed at losing her, and I suspect taunt her with accepting what they regard as false on the testimony of her new friends only. She has to justify herself, and show *why she* believes. She often recurs to that—saying such things as "I must know not for myself only". She needs so much tenderness when we consider that she has to pass through this trial of being thought by her old friends something of a fool. Such a trial tends to develop some self-assertion.

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51 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI *to* REV. CANON WILLIAM BUTLER

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21, Lansdown Crescent,  
Cheltenham: July 1885

Dear Canon Butler,

I was very much pleased with your kind letter, but I am sorry to say I have not been able to read it easily. There are still some words which I have not been able to make out. (I hope you will not be vexed with my saying this. You know very well how clever I am in reading English letters).

To tell you the truth, my fears are not quite over yet. You say you are so sure of young ground that if you were speaking only to an "honest heart" you could show the rightness of what you advance, and you also advise me to "wish rather to agree than to disagree" —while you remain unbound by this rule. If you could not make me agree with you, do you mean that you will be content by saying or thinking that you did not speak to an "honest heart"? Far be it from you. I could perhaps, my dear father in Christ, agree with or obey you at once in other matters; but religion is such an awful matter that both parties are responsible for what they say or prove. It is not a rule of Arithmetic, Algebra or Chemistry that we may prove it by experiments. If we are on the wrong way make another poor brother of ours agree with us, we shall be guilty of leading him in a wrong way and must answer for it before the awful seat of judgment on the Last Day. So if you agree not to be a lawyer but a searcher after the truth in all your arguments, I will most gladly bring my difficulties before you. But I shall be afraid to do so if you are determined to prove what you say to be true. A great many people are sadly apt to be God's by saying--- "Thou shalt believe in and do what I say, or what my party thinks is true".

I believe the Bible says in detail all that is necessary for the salvation of mankind. There are in the Bible all the essential articles of faith to be found. The examples that you give about which the Bible has not said anything in details seem to me not to be of great consequence or essential to the faith. All days of a week are as much holy on God's sight as the first or the last day of a week. Is the Sabbath for God or for man? It is I suppose for man that the Sabbath was created, and not for God. So it is in prayers. An honest and contrite heart and true words are acceptable to God, and not outward ceremonies. Inspired books are proofs of themselves, their own honest words prove their truthfulness. And so a great many things which are not essential are left to man's choice.

But a doctrine which is essential to faith is not left unnoticed by the Bible, and I am not prepared to accept an essential doctrine which I shall not find in the Bible. I hope you will not be vexed with my freedom of speech.

With honour and love to you

I am,  
Your humble Child in Christ,  
MARY RAMA

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52 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, Cheltenham, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.,  
Wantage

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21, Lansdown Crescent,  
Cheltenham,  
12th July 1885

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I have just received your letter and am very much pleased with it. Among the reasons why I did not write to you one or two may be mentioned. I was writing voluminous letters to Miss Beale in answer to her letters and to ask some questions, etc. After writing to her doing my own, I felt something half dead, and could not bear any longer to write or to think. You can scarcely realise how hard I have been working this term. I have been preparing and taking notes, and reading a great deal about the lessons which I think most important and after working very hard, I have scarcely any time left for myself. There are so many letters to be answered, but I shall not be able to do until I come to Wantage.

I do not exactly know when the College breaks up. Miss Beale expressed her wish to come to Wantage and spend a week while I am there. So I hope you will send her an invitation from the Mother Superior. Also she wants me to stay here for a day or two after the College breaks up to spend the Quiet Days with her i.e. to say Retreat which she thinks I had better spend here and see if I can hear the Clergyman's sermons, which I shall never be able to hear in churches or chapels. She said she will put me somewhere near the preacher, so as to make me hear him better, etc. If you would permit me to do so, I shall be very much obliged to you.

I want to show the Bishop of Bombay's letter to Miss Beale first and then I shall send it to you. I have after a long time (nearly a year) received a letter from my dear Aunt, in which I find that she was very ill but is getting better now.

I don't know what else to write, so I had better stop here. It is indeed very fine weather. One can scarcely realise the comforts and beauty of this weather when one is saying in hot India. We have extremes of a great many (if not all) things in our country, which make it very often difficult for us to recognise beauty and comforts of different seasons. I sometimes go to walk with my friends here; and when I see the field full of flowers and the pretty scenery all round how happy and glad I feel, but my happiness is not [an] unmixed one. My heart cries for those poor prisoners in the Zenanas, to whom even the comforts of Nature—which God in His goodness has bestowed alike on all creatures—are denied by almost all of my selfish countrymen. I feel myself unworthy to enjoy this great comfort and happiness while my dear sisters are almost all so unhappy and miserable, shut up in the eternal darkness of ignorance and crushed under domestic slavery. Can we ever feel, my dear Ajeebai, happy or comfortable while millions of our fellow-creatures are groaning in endless agony? Can we—if we be not formed like hard stones—receive a kind word, a kind act, or breathe a breath of comfort, without one sigh of sorrow, without one drop of tear of sympathy for those millions who are, like us all, the children of the Supreme Father, and all like us have claim upon His mercy and bounty? Can you English women who are blessed with freedom call yourselves free, or happy while millions of your fellow-creatures agonised with chains of ignorance and slavery? Oh! it is so hard to bear; but let us humbly ask the All-Merciful Father to have mercy upon us and to do what seems best to His Will.



Let us try with all our might, soul and mind to free our fellow-creatures by bringing them in light in any way that we can, and let us feel always unworthy to enjoy the comforts which God in His goodness has given to us unless we try by our comforts to comfort those who have none.

May it please the Great God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that He may make us worthy of the gift that He has given to us. Amen.

My love and kisses to my Mano and to all my friends at Wantage.  
With love and honour to you.

I am, ever Yours,  
MARY RAMA

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53 *Letter from* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., *Wantage to the* REV. C. GORE

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Dear Mr. Gore,

It is very kind of you to be willing to help Ramabai, and to offer to go and see her. We shall be very grateful to you to do so, and Miss Beale, I think, will herself give you an invitation. I send by the same post as this letter a copy of the correspondence between Miss Beale, Ramabai and myself. From what I saw of Ramabai during the Easter vacation, I felt that her tendency was to take up an independent line which was my reason for writing as I did. I fear the love of popularity is a very great snare to her, and that she has been of late in correspondence with some of her old Brahmo friends and has some idea of working with them in the future. A diluted Christianity without Christ is what I feel she is in danger of drifting into.

I went to Cheltenham on Friday; I left her, I trust, more like her better self. Miss Beale does not recommend her return to Cheltenham after this term, and so there will be no need of the vexed question being brought up again. We shall have to consider what is best for the after she leaves. Though Father Goreh might perhaps give her more help in her present difficulties, yet the dangers which will be set her in her return to India would be greater than those which surround her in England, and it would, therefore, be most desirable that she should be more settled in Faith than she is at present.

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54 *Letter from* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., *Wantage to* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Cheltenham*

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July 3rd, 1885

My dear Ramabai,

I have thought over your letters, and as I think they were written in the heat of the moment, I shall not allude to anything you have said. We will talk over many things, I hope, during your vacation and in conversation it will, I hope, be easier for you to understand me than by letters; our hearts went out to each other, and it cannot be that where we found so many chords of sympathy, they should now cease to exist. They are there still, I am sure, and will sound on to all Eternity, but in our present state of imperfection, our instruments are not always capable of giving out harmonious sounds, and so need retuning. The great Artificer alone can do this. Let us each place our instrument which He had created in His Hands that He may by His Life-giving touch, restore it and reform it, that it being henceforth a well-tuned instrument, may give forth such sounds as are well pleasing to Him.

Your loving,  
AJEEBAI

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55 *Letter from SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage to REV. C. GORE*

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July 3rd, 1885

Dear Mr. Gore,

I quite think England is better for Ramabai in her present state of mind. Were she now to return to India, Christianity would, I fear, lose its hold of her entirely. I had thought Miss Beale at one time peculiarly fitted to help her, but she has lately been carried away by enthusiasm, and has been, and is, unwise in her management of her.

Yours, etc.

SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

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56 *Letter from Charles Gore to SISTER GERALDINE, Wantage*

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July 5th, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I have seen Ramabai to-day. I think she needs very sympathetic treatment. I fear the re-establishment of her faith will be a difficult task. I am sure she can only be *led* and slowly. Father Goreh would not, I feel sure, help in her present state of mind much. I should think England is better for her, and I do not feel sure that Miss Beale may not be, what she thinks she is, her best help. At least I feel sure it is no good trying to keep her out of the way of freethinkers, more or less. Her difficulties lie in herself and her own knowledge.

Yours faithfully in our Lord,  
CHARLES GORE

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57 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.*

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Wantage, Sunday night : September 20th, 1885

My dear Ajeebai,

I waited for you in my room, thinking that you would come to have a little talk with me before supper, but perhaps you were too busy to come. Still I did not go downstairs, for I cannot talk over these matters anywhere else but in my room. I do not know if you will be able to give me a little time tomorrow. You have promised to have a walk with me, but I should not like to say anything to you when walking, so I am writing this letter. I have told you the end of Mano's naughtiness of the evening, but the beginning was this.

As it was getting time for even-song, I desired her to say her prayers to me, but she refused to do so, and said that she would say them to Ajeebai. Whereupon, I told her that as long as I am staying here, I should like to hear them. She said, but Ajeebai wants to hear them, and I will *not* say them to you and that Ajeebai said her prayers should be the last thing before she went to bed. I had told her to beg Ajeebai to make an exception to this rule as long as I was here, but she would not listen to any of my entreaties. At last I told her that it was my duty to hear her, no one else can take her mother's place, and though Ajeebai wants to hear her, still she should comply with my request first, and secondly with that of Ajeebai; then she got cross. You know the rest of this story.

Now I am going to tell you about my opinion and desire, but first of all I ask you for truth and conscience sake not to be angry or vexed with me, for I will tell you plainly what I feel.

You know that every human creature has some weak points, and I am not an exception to this rule. I am sometimes very much afraid of vexing people who are kind to me and mean to do good. I know full well that I ought not to be afraid of it when my duty calls me to do or say some things which are not pleasing to my friends. Yet sadly enough I fail sometimes to obey the inner voice, but I shall try to do better, and God will help me in it. Long ago, I felt the necessity of examining my child's early religious education but as she was too young to understand any deep mysteries, I let her alone so long, and I also confess that I was rather afraid of vexing you by interfering abruptly in this matter. But now as she is growing older, I had resolved to seize the earliest opportunity that I could find to see about it. For this purpose and other reasons, I had asked you to let me have her in these holidays, but for the Sister's illness, I had to hold my peace as well as I could. When you went into Retreat, I asked as my right to her Mano's prayers, and you were kind enough to let me have the privilege. When I heard her say the prayers, I was rather shocked to find that she had already got into those mysteries—as you call them—instead to saying her simple prayer to God as she used to do; before she began with : “In the name . . . & c” and ended with “May God the Father, God the Son”. This mode of prayer is not found in the Bible; therefore I do not like it. (I shall say more about this at the end of this letter; for the present, I relate the story as it happened.) Next time when she said her prayers to me, I told her not to begin with “In the name . . .” etc. and not to say “God the Son . . .” etc. and to pray to Him, but to pray to God in His name, and to say “God the Father and His Holy Spirit”, etc. instead of “God the Holy . . .”, etc. As she did not know what I meant by these changes, she insisted upon keeping to Ajeebai's version of the prayers, and appealed to Ajeebai's teaching. I was pleased and not vexed with her for this objection, and said to her that though Ajeebai is very good and kind and means all good when she teaches, but I do not as yet agree with Ajeebai in saying certain things, and that I feel quite right in telling my child to say what I believe to be true. And that God has made me her Mother, and as long as she is not old enough to think for herself, it is her duty to say and do what I think to be right, and it is my duty to tell her to do what I believe to be good. She was quite convinced of it and said her prayers as I desired her to say. So it went on very well till you were in Retreat but after that I hear that you had told her to say her prayers to you and that you made her begin her prayers quite at the beginning (*i.e.* In the Name, etc.), but I told her that I want to hear them; she said (I do not know if it be true) that you had said that I was (too) learned for it, and at another time she said you told her that I was just learning these things. I quietly said to her that I was never too learned to perform my duty, and it does not matter if I am learning these things newly, I am quite able to teach her. I did not like to hear such remarks through her so I asked her to tell you (next time when you would speak to her about her prayers to you) that : Please say yourself to my dear Mother about this. Still till this evening, I heard nothing about it, and as usual I asked her to say her prayers when the time came. Here is the end of this story.

Now, my dear Ajeebai, you may think me doing wrong, if you like, when you hear my remarks, but I feel quite sure that according to my conscience I am right. I desire you and other kind friends with all love and honour not to teach my child anything about the mysterious Trinity, and about the deity of our Saviour, until you quite convince me that these doctrines *are* according to the Bible. It has pleased God to make me Mano's mother, and it is my duty not to let her learn anything which according to the inner teaching of God, I do not think to be right, until she is old enough to think and judge for herself. I again ask you not to be vexed with me for saying so. Suppose that if you

were in my place, would you let your child to be taught by others the things which they, and not you, thought to be right? Would you not feel guilty before God and man if you had let it be so, though you were a thousand times assured by your friends that your doctrines were wrong? Such are my feelings at present, and I shall not feel happy until I am assured that my child is taught as I desire her to learn. You know very well what my faith is. I do not object to her saying the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and any other prayer to God *through* Christ, and for Jesus Christ's sake, but I do object to praying to Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, as a person separate from our Heavenly Father. I am not commanded by Christ (in the New Testament) to address my prayers either to Himself or to the Holy Ghost alone.

I have marked Mano's Prayer Book and a little Hymn Book. Those passages which I have not marked she may learn and say, but those enclosed in lines she must not be taught to say. I should also like to read through the religious kind of books given to her and taught by the teachers; I will mark and enclose the passage which I should not like her to learn.

You and my other friends will, I trust, excuse me for doing so.

With love, I am,  
Ever yours,  
MARY RAMA

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58 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage

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22nd September night : 1885

My dear Ajeebai,

I shall be too busy to have a long talk with you tomorrow, so I think I had better write what I have to tell you. You know very well how solemn and serious a matter one's religious belief is. No God-loving human being will dare to act otherwise than what he or she is commanded to do by the voice of the indwelling Spirit of God. You are quite right in refusing to do anything against your belief, but at the same time I feel sure I am not wrong in not consenting to what I do not believe to be true.

About two years ago it pleased God to give me the true light by removing my difficulties about the truthfulness of Christ's religion, and as far as it lies in my power I have not hesitated or delayed to obey His Commandments given to me through Christ, namely to know Him to be the only true God, and Jesus to be the Christ Whom He hath sent, and in believing that only in receiving Christ to be His Son and His sanctified Saviour for mankind, we obey Him. I had before my Baptism told plainly to Mr. Coles (before you) that I cannot believe in the Trinity or the deity of Jesus Christ. But after that time, as long as I was staying here, I never said anything about it or asked any question, and I had reason for doing so. Yet I have not felt myself guilty by deceit or false profession by entering into Christ's fold by receiving Baptism in the English church, for Baptism and the solemn oath which we take before GOD do not belong exclusively to one person or to one church with particular belief or customs. They are Catholic, *i.e.* universal. Any one who believes in Christ and His God, has a right to have these. We are told that Christ had given the "right to any person to become the sons of God that believes on His Name, which were born not of flesh nor of the will of man but of God".

Be it in the Roman, Greek, English or Dissent Church, if a person believes with all his heart Christ to be the Son of God, might he not say with the Eunuch: 'Behold here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?' Since Baptism does not bind a person to obey certain rules laid down by uninspired men, it only binds him to obey Christ and His God in Whom he really believes. But at the

same time, I have not neglected the duty of a student of religion— a student not of letter alone but also of the spirit of the religion. I have tried hard to enter into your thoughts to realise your Trinitarian belief, and have sometimes gone so far as to be resolved to believe blindly what I was told, not caring [for] my doubts and reproach of conscience. [I] have prayed again and again to God that faith might take root in my heart, yet to this moment, I am not able to believe in it; on the contrary, my faith in One Single person of God is more and more strengthened. I have now left off praying that belief in the Trinitarian faith may be given to me. I only pray for increasing light, knowledge of God's eternal truth and spiritual and bodily strength to follow it; and I am sure my voice, feeble as it is, will be always heard by the All-Merciful Father for Christ's sake. I believe in a progressive state of soul and of its knowledge. I cannot ever expect to come to the highest perfection of belief and knowledge. Our minds as well as bodies and souls are all changeable. But still we have faith in God. We may be quite sure that if we continue to pray humbly to Him, "it shall be given to us what we shall speak" or do. Human minds are never free from doubts, yet there is a higher power which leads us to do and believe things without doubt if we are willing to obey it; and when we are told by the inner voice 'Thou shalt not do anything contrary to what I say' we must meekly obey it or else *we can never do anything good*.

I *honestly* tell you, I am now standing between this voice and you. Will you blame me for obeying this voice? You may if you like. The Athanasian Creed may pronounce its sentence—"Which faith except any one believe wholly and undefiled..." etc., etc.—upon me if it likes to do so. But I believe there is a higher justice which is milder than that of any man or man's writings. The God of Mercy Who freely forgives sinners like me will not be too hard upon creatures like myself if they could not understand or feel called to accept that Creed "wholly and undefiled". Therefore as you consider yourself doing wrong if you were to teach a God-child of yours anything contrary to your belief, so do I in allowing my child to be educated in things which I do not believe. If I do allow her being brought up as a Trinitarian, I shall be guilty of neglecting the double duty of a mother and a guardian. This therefore, I must not do. And as I know you are doing right according to your faith, I cannot ask you for or blame you in not accepting my condition. And if I were to take my child with me to stay at Cheltenham, a great confusion will befall my study; besides there is the scarcity of both time and money. Then when I am caught between these two impossibilities, there remains but one thing for me to be chosen and that is to leave Cheltenham. I shall be very sorry to do it, for it is my greatest happiness to study under Miss Beale. But my duty to my God and to my child is greater than any of my own happiness. So now I go to Cheltenham, not to stay there, but to take leave of Miss Beale and my friends in the College. I shall not stay there longer than I can help, and come back here after that. If our Mother Superior desires me to go away, I will not delay in going to India. But perhaps you remember I had told you I wanted to start a sort of Sisterhood for helping the widows and helpless women of India. Though we cannot at present keep such strict rules as you keep here, it is desirable that there should be some rules in a working body of women. I cannot say what the rules will be unless I go to India and see what sort of women I get to work [with]. But as I am to start the body, I must first of all be disciplined for some time. I do not think I shall have a better place for that discipline than Home of yours. Although I do not believe in the Athanasian Creed, my respect and love for the Superior and you is not a whit less than it was and I hope it shall not be less hereafter. I will most gladly and willingly submit to be disciplined here for some time, if the Superior does not object to this proposal. I shall, therefore, hope to get a definite answer from you before long and also hoping that my letter will not offend you in any way,

I remain,

Yours humbly,

MARY RAMA

St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
October 5th, 1885

My dear Ramabai,

I have not till now been able to consider your two letters, having been incapacitated during the past week. My head is still weak and is not up to much efforts, but I will endeavour by the help of God's Holy Spirit to give you such answers to various statement as are in accordance with the inspired Word of God; and I pray God Who has chosen one so weak and imperfect to help you that He will make his strength to be perfected in my weakness.

In your first letter you speak of being bound to follow your conscience in the matter of Mano's spiritual education. Have you well considered what conscience is? Conscience is that faculty within us by which we judge of the good or evil in ourselves.

If man, as the heathen, has only natural law as his guide, by that law the voice within him passes judgment on his actions. But as a man is drawn closer to God and receives the revelations of the Truth and is admitted into His Holy Church by holy Baptism, and is sealed in Confirmation by the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, the inner voice is then illuminated by those seven-fold Gifts, and man is able to see and know as he has never seen before. He is brought into a region of Faith; then only as he lives that of Faith, lifted up above that which is of nature, will that voice continue to judge and speak truthfully in matters of Faith. St. Paul exhorts St. Timothy to "hold *Faith* and good *conscience* which some having put from them have made shipwreck concerning the Faith". And to Titus he says: "To the pure all things are pure, but to them that are defiled and *unbelieving* is nothing pure, but both their mind and *conscience* are defiled".

So you see, dear Ramabai, that in order that our conscience may speak truthfully, it is absolutely necessary that we should hold fast to the Faith once delivered to the Saints. We have only to take a glance at history to discover to what lengths of wickedness conscience would lead men when darkened by self-will and pride, e.g. the Anabaptists in Germany in the sixteenth century. They taught polygamy and an entire freedom from all subjection to the civil as well as the ecclesiastical law and committed frightful excesses. They were finally suppressed with great slaughter. As with a watch when the machinery is out of order, it will not keep correct time, so it is with our conscience. If the light of Truth is lost and reason is substituted for it, conscience will not speak clearly, for we can only depend on reason in spiritual matters when it is illuminated by the light of Faith. At first the lamp of Faith shone brightly in your heart, and your intellect bowed before it. We might say to you as St. Paul said to his Galatian converts, "Ye were running well, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion came not of him who called you". "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump". Yes; whatever you may now say, the fruits of a good Faith were at first apparent in your life. Humility, child-like simplicity, obedience, truthfulness and trustfulness were there and daily developed themselves in your life. But gradually these graces which gave such hopeful promise for the future faded from sight. Who and what did hinder you from growing in grace and in that life of Faith which you had embraced at your Baptism? "An enemy hath done this". Yes, the enemy of our souls always on the watch, has assailed you in your weakest, but which the natural pride of your heart led you to think was your strongest point—your intellect. As he assailed Adam and Eve, he has assailed you; he bid you taste and eat; and promised that you should be *wise*, knowing good and evil. How rapidly in their case did sin spread. Self-will and pride was soon followed by murder, and then such a succession of wickedness that the whole world was drowned to purify it from the evil. And with you the desire to be wise and to know good and evil has been followed by disastrous



consequences. The germ of the new life given to you in holy Baptism which at first sprang up and gave such fair promise, has been over-grown by rank and poisonous weeds of heresy.

Books have been put into your hands which were contrary to the teaching of the Church of Christ and those who do not believe in our Lord's Divinity, have done all in their power to poison your mind against the teaching you have received, and against those who have been instrumental in imparting it. You argued, it is right for me to be armed on all points in order that I may be able to have an answer to give all who attack the Faith which I have embraced. You were urged to put aside all anti-Catholic literature until you were rooted and grounded in the Faith, and then, if necessary, to read books; but you have followed entirely your own course. Self-will and pride are the barriers which intercept the seven-fold Gift of the Holy Spirit from illuminating your conscience, so that it can no longer be a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

Therefore you are spiritually not in a condition to judge in spiritual matters for your child. As a Christian mother living under the clear light of the Gospel dispensation, in meekness and obedience to all that the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church into which you were baptised teaches you, you would have been able to judge, and your wisdom would then have been during your stay in England to have entrusted the sacred charge of her education to those who have spared nothing on her account, but have brought her up in the loving fear of the Lord. You surely cannot be blind to the present results of such an education. Compare her with others of her country's children, and see how grace has moulded and beautified the gifts of nature. And you now mar this work. You would take a lamb of Christ's fold, who hitherto form her implicit trust in those around her, has not known what distrust is, and consequently has not had to contend with the freezing blasts of distrust to nip the fruit in the bud, and you would let her know at her tender age that there are differences of belief. Her confidence and trust will be gone forever; and if you yourself are by the mercy of God led back to accept fully the true Faith, you will have the terrible pain of knowing you have blighted your child's youth, and perhaps life. Remember our Lord's words about causing a little one who believes in Him to stumble (St. Mathew, XVIII : 6).

You say Mano ought to obey you. God grant you may never give her cause to feel that your authority is contrary to that of her Heavenly Father. The same episodes which teach the duty of children to parents teach also the duty of parents to children, i.e. "Provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord", and these social duties are based upon and are the outcome of a right Faith.

Hannah, who lived at a distance from the place where the God of Israel was worshipped, sent her child at three years of age to reside in the family of the High Priest in order that he might be rightly instructed in the duties of his Faith, and be a worthy offering to the Lord to do His Will. Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother of St. Timothy having been themselves thoroughly grounded in the Jewish religion, and being converted with the Old Testament Scriptures themselves instructed him from his childhood. "The unfeigned faith which is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice"; and again "From a babe thou has known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus". (From this you see that without faith in Jesus Christ we are not able to understand even the Old Testament Scriptures.) But how can you, barely two years old in the Faith, and going through a time of trials, and beset with doubts, feel yourself competent to instruct your child in what you are unstable yourself? You would not do so in other learning, you would as far as lay in your power give her [the] best preceptors; then why in matters of Faith would you do otherwise?

I think what I have already said fully answers your question. "Would you let your child be taught by others the things which they and not you thought to be right?". You further say, "I do not wish Mano to be taught the mystery of the Trinity or the Deity of our Lord, until you quite convince me that these doctrines are according to the Bible". I went through with you all the prophecies of the Old Testament, as well as through the discourses and miracles of our Lord and the various passages in the Epistles which teach these doctrines, and I begged you to take the notes I then gave you into

Chapel and make your difficulties a frequent and earnest matter of prayer; for I told you, as I have never ceased to tell you, that your reason alone could *never* lead you to the Truth, but illuminated by the lamp of Faith, which lamp will shine ever more brightly as you ask to be enlightened by it, you will come to understand those deep truths of God which to you now seem to be darkness and foolishness. If you would only say that suffrage in our Prayer Book Litany several times daily, I am sure that before many months the mists of darkness and error would roll away and light would be given you.

“From all blindness of heart,  
from pride, vain-glory  
and hypocrisy,  
Good Lord, deliver me”.

When once you believe in the Divinity of our Lord and of the Holy Ghost, there will be no further difficulty to you in addressing your prayers to either of those two Blessed Persons.

When our Lord taught His disciples to pray, they were being instructed by Him in the first letter, so to speak, of the Christian Faith. All the Old Testament Prayers are addressed simply to God as the Supreme Being without attributing to Him any Personality. Gradually, as they apprehended Christ to be the Son of God, He led them on to apprehend the Father through Him. “I am the Way . . . . No man cometh unto the Father but by me”. “Whatsoever ye ask the Father in My Name, He shall give it you”. But even this is conditional; it is only by abiding in Christ, grafted into Him as we are at Baptism as a branch is grafted into the vine, and when bringing forth good fruit that He promises that the Father will grant our prayers offered to Him in the Name of His Son.

But he does not stop here in His teaching, for He says, “I am the Truth”. And what is the Truth but perfect goodness, and “none is good save One, that is God”. Perfect Truth too is Eternal, for it could not be Truth if it could be embraced by time. Again “Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ”, but if Jesus Christ not being the Truth said, “I am the Truth”, then Grace and Truth could not have come by Him, but falsehood and this must for ever cut at the root of Jesus Christ being a good man, and our example; unless *He as God says*, “I am the Truth”. And the only way to know Him as the Truth is by continuing in His Word. “If ye continue in My Word, *then* are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free”. Well then, when we know Jesus to be God and the Redeemer of the world, we can address our prayers to Him. But until the Redemption was accomplished and Jesus had returned to His Father this could not be. This was the teaching which the Blessed Spirit gave to the Church after His outpouring on it on the Day of Pentecost. Our Blessed Lord had promised, “He shall teach you *all things* and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you”. And he has remained with the Church ever since, developing the teaching which our Blessed Lord began. The human capacity is so small and we are so slow in receiving the Truth that the three years of our Lord’s public ministry, and the instructions of His disciples would have been too short a time for the fullness of the Christian revelation to have been received by them; but the great outline was given, and it was left to the Third Person, the Sanctifier, so to continue that teaching that in and by it His work should be carried on, and the Church as well as its individual members should be sanctified.

So the Blessed Spirit taught the Church to make prayers and supplications and to give thanks and to worship those three adorable Persons separately as well as collectively. And in whatever portion of the Church that worship has been carried on most purely and fully, there in a very special manner has the fullest blessing been poured out.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that very shortly after that wondrous gift on the Day of Pentecost, Saint Stephen the deacon, so full of the Holy Ghost that his face shone like an angel’s when being stoned to death called on Jesus in prayer, and said “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”, and

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”. In the Epistles also are prayers offered up to the Lord Jesus, e.g. “Now the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God even our Father who hath loved us and given us Everlasting Consolation through grace *comfort* your hearts and stablish you in every good word and work”. And again, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ”. And the Apostles distinguished the faithful from Infidels and Jews in that the former “called on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”.

And Jesus said further, “I am the Life”, and so He leads us on another stage in the Christian Faith; not only knowing God as the Father, and Himself, the Son, as the Truth, and consequently God, but He also teaches us that He is the Life. We can have no true life apart from Him. And this life which He has once given us in Baptism, He keeps continually renewed by feeding us with His precious Body and Blood in Holy Communion. Not only in this one passage does our Lord speak of Himself as the Life, but many besides. “I am the Bread of Life”, “I am the Resurrection and the Life”, etc. And the Apostles take our Lord’s words and speak of Him as “our Life”. “When Christ who is our Life shall appear, etc.” And, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life”. “For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and shew unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us”.

One more reason for addressing our Blessed Lord in Prayer. He Himself says, “Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them”. “If ye shall ask anything in *My Name*, I will do it”. Think of our Blessed Lord standing in the midst of us, ready and willing to grant us whatever we ask, and we ignoring His Presence, never addressing Him, making all our petitions to the Father, never offering Him an act of love, or of adoration, or of thanksgiving for all His mighty work of Redeeming Love!

What would be the feeling of a loving mother if her child were to pass, were always to pass, over her acts of love, never show her one token of affection and gratitude for her love, but give all its affection to its father? Would not that child’s character lose much from a one-sided appreciation of its parents’ love?

If it had not been for our Lord’s own words about the teaching of the Holy Spirit, “He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance”, we might say ‘what our Lord has not taught I will not believe’, but now we cannot. Our Lord foreseeing the troubles which would come upon His disciples, and how soon the frailty of man would cause errors and divisions, left power with His Church, (which He Himself founded), to arbitrate in matters of discipline and doctrine, and the Church has ever claimed that power. In the Matthew 18 : 17 we read how the Apostles and Elders came together to consider a matter of doctrine and discipline. “If he refuse to hear thee, take with thee two or three other witnesses, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the Church, and if *he refuse to hear the Church* let him be unto be thee as an heathen man and a publican”, are our Lord’s own words.

And St. Paul in almost all of his Epistles teaches his converts about the authority of the Church and its discipline. In speaking of it, he says, “Other foundation can no man lay than which is laid”. “Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone”. “In whom each several building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord”. And he further says that he was chosen to be an instrument “to make known to the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus which from all ages had been hid in God”. And again, “He appointed Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ”.

Where would be the need of faith, if there was no mystery in the Faith, and if every word were written in as plain language as the Ten Commandments? We should think a mathematical

scholar dull, if he required all the deductions which can be drawn from the problems in Euclid to be set out for him, so that he should not have the trouble of thinking them out for himself. And should we not be justified in saying a person was wanting in faith if after all the teaching our Lord has given us on His Eternity, Equality with the Father, Omnipotence, Omniscience, he were not able to deduce from that that Jesus is God?

You say, “I cannot expect to come to the highest perfection of belief or knowledge . . . Our minds as well as our bodies are all changeable. . . human minds are never free from doubts”. To this, I would answer the Church has defined what is essential to be believed, and as faith grows, doubts on essential points will clear away. Doubts may be allowed to remain for a time, so long as we do not willfully encourage them, they may tend in the end to strengthen our faith. We should always, if faithful, go on growing in knowledge and love, but that does not mean we should undergo constant changes. The blossom of an apple-tree will in due time ripen into a perfect apple, so the germ of a true faith will bring forth fruit to perfection.

I am now come to your second letter. You say in it, “Before my Baptism, I said plainly to Mr. Coles that I cannot believe in the Trinity or the Deity of Jesus Christ”. Now Mr. Coles saw you [in] the middle of June, and it was not until July the 13th that you said you would be baptised with Mano in a month’s time. You were made a Catechuman on July the 23rd and from then until the end of September were under instruction preparatory to your Baptism.

You went through the Dean’s papers for Confirmation candidates— On the Being of God— God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, etc., all of which you understood and answered. I remember your difficulties about the Trinity. The Dean, as well as I myself, instructed *you* in this Mystery, and many illustrations were given to help you in apprehending it. As you made no further objections, and gave me to understand that you accepted the Christian Faith, the Dean baptised you, which I am sure he would not have done if you had told him you did not believe in the Deity of our Saviour; neither would Father Page, Sister Elizabeth or myself [have] been willing to have acted as your sponsors. If it is indeed true what you say, you [have] been guilty of great wrong in the sight of God, and have made us incur guilt also. We were required to see that you were sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, and you allowed us to think you were, through you yourself did not accept what you were instructed in. I could not have believed this of you! I can quite understand that from various circumstances the Faith you *once accepted* is for the present overshadowed with doubt, so that you feel you have altogether lost your grasp of it, but if we are to believe the other, how are we to place any confidence in anything you have said or say in future? I cannot think you meant to say you had neither faith in our Lord’s Divinity or in the Trinity at your Baptism. Your assertions to various people prove that this was not so. Sister Eliza Mary has a very clear recollection of the way you spoke of our Lord’s Divine Nature, in your first interview with Miss Beale. No—faith was there, though it may have been only a germ. I think if you look back to the time of your Baptism, you will find that this was so.

I shall now enter into the question of the vows you took at your Baptism [of] “not belonging exclusively to one person or one Church”, for you are not in a position, dear Ramabai, to argue or lay down the law as to the prerogatives of the Catholic Church. You are, as I have said before, but a babe in the Faith and your duty is to sit as a humble learner in the School of Christ. “Let a women learn in quietness with all subjection”, is St. Paul’s command to the Church. When you have thoroughly grasped the deep doctrines of the Christian Faith, it will be time enough them to seek instruction as to the discipline which exists in the different branches of the Catholic Church. God by His Providence guided you here, and led you on, as we believed, to be baptised in the English branch of the Church, it is, therefore, your duty to learn from that branch the Faith you then embraced.

We might say to you, as St. Paul did to his Hebrew converts when speaking of Jesus Christ, “Of whom I have many things to say and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are still dull of hearing. For when by reason of the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have used of milk and

not of solid food". No one wants you "to believe blindly what you are told", but what we long to see in you is that whilst most anxious to be thoroughly instructed and have your doubts solved, you should ask for instruction in a humble, child-like spirit. I do not, as you think I may, remind you of the condemnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed but I *will* remind you of your Lord's own words: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven". "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child . . . , shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven".

You say, "I tried to enter into the spirit of your religion", I grant that you did; but for how long? Did you not soon become very slack in your devotions? Has not prayer often been neglected, and reason urged to do the work which only faith can compass?

And now I think have answered most of your statements, and therefore, I came to write to you about the proposal which you make for leaving Cheltenham, and returning here. Let me tell you that in writing as I have done, I have done so in consequence of the relation I hold to you both as your sponsor, and the one whom my Community appointed to see after your bodily and spiritual welfare. As your sponsors we have been charged by the Church that it is our duty to put you in mind what a solemn vow, promise and profession you made before the congregation and your chosen witnesses, and that we are to use all diligence that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and live godly, righteously and soberly in this present world.

And now we will consider your plans "for helping the widow and helpless women in India". You ask us "to discipline you for some time in order that you may start this work", and that you "do not think you will have a better place for that discipline than this Home". You further say that you will most gladly be disciplined here for some time, "if the Superior does not object to this proposal".

Have you at all considered what such discipline is? It is that giving our freedom up and putting ourselves into the hands of others, in order that the good in our character may be developed, and the evil in us pruned away. Your work will be allotted to you, as well as your times of prayer and study. Will you be willing to submit both your books and the list of your correspondence to the Superior for her to say what you may keep and what you must give up? Will you be willing, when attending the Services in Chapel, to follow those Services instead of reading whatever portions of the Bible you think well to do? Will you be willing to rise and go to bed at the appointed time? These are a few of the rules which those who seek discipline in this Home have to submit to. One more thing I ought to mention. I am sure no one in the Community would for a moment wish to ask you to take animal food, except when ordered by a medical adviser. We respect in you the aversion with which you have grown up to taking the life of any animal for food; but the matter of eating a pudding made with an egg, or the fruit out of a tart, I look upon in quite another light. I have often felt that little clinging to caste prejudices which ought to have been thrown to the winds when you embraced Christianity have been a fostering of pride which has held you back from accepting the full teaching of the Gospel. "It is the foxes that spoil the grapes". Do think this little matter over and see if there is not some truth in what I say, and not only this, but think over each separate point in my letter, and consider it well. Do not write off a hasty answer at once, but let three days at least elapse before you begin to reply to it.

Always your very loving,

AJEEBAI



Bath

October 1885

My dear Ramabai,

The long letter I wrote you [on October 5th], I thought, would certainly be my last, for the present, on any religious subject. In it I took great pains to answer by the light of the Holy Scripture the various assertions you made in the two letters you wrote me before your return to Cheltenham. Your reply to it was that there was no use in answering it since we should not agree upon such matters. I had not therefore intended either speaking or writing to you again on any religious questions. You yourself began a conversation when at Wantage, and in the letter you afterwards wrote you have shown such a complete misunderstanding of all that was then said that I feel I must very fully reply to it, in order to shew you the statement you have made was entirely incorrect, and to free myself from the most untrue charges you have brought against me.

I will first recapitulate our conversation last Sunday evening. It began I think with your shewing me a chapter in Westcott's *Historic Faith* and asking me to read it. I read some pages and asked who had underlined certain passages in it—you or Canon Westcott; you answered you had. I then referred to one of the underlined passages and said that was entirely what I understood by the Church of Christ. "Looking to this trust in a common Redemption, let us hold fast our belief in one Church, in one Body of Christ knit together by the rites which He Himself appointed, one in virtue of the One Spirit Who guides each member severally as He will, of the One Saviour Who fulfils Himself in the many ways, of *the One God and Father of all and through all and in all*".

And I explained to you that such bodies as the Wesleyans could not be said to belong to the Church because they were not knit together by the rites which Christ appointed. You then asked me who the Wesleyans were. I replied by telling you that about one hundred years ago, there lived two good men, Charles and John Wesley. They saw the need there was for more labourers in Christ's vineyard, and they were filled with an earnest longing to help forward the work of preaching the Gospel to the poor. For this purpose, they trained a body of lay preachers; they were to be nothing more than lay agents helping in the Church's work. The Church, unfortunately, was not ready nor willing enough to accept the services of such a band of helpers, and gradually these lay preachers formed themselves into an independent body and took upon themselves, contrary to the direct command of their founder, the work of the Christian ministry. I then told you that the very fact that since the sect sprang into existence it had split up into eighty different sects drifting farther away from the Truth shewed that their original separation from the Church was in itself a wrong act. This led to a conversation on dissent generally, and I told you what I think I had read in Bishop Patterson's *Life* some years ago, that all dissent was the undue stretching-out of one doctrine so as to hide or overshadow the other doctrines of the Christian Faith. I said that in the Church's teaching, a perfect harmony was kept between all the dogmas of the Christian Faith; each had its due value given and helped to form a perfect texture; whereas in dissent an undue importance being given to one doctrine, the symmetry of the whole was marred. I further said that the main doctrines of the Christian Faith, e.g. the Incarnation, Redemption, Ascension, were held by the Church and dissenters in common, excepting the Unitarians who could not be classed as Christians in the true acceptance of the word, seeing they denied the Divinity of our Lord. This is nearly verbatim the substance of what I said. Westcott has in his chapter on the Holy Catholic Church the same thought embodied in far better language: "He who believes, to take the ground of *the Apostolic message* on the Day of Pentecost, that Christ rose from the dead, he who is baptised into Him, he who rejoices though trembling in a glorified humanity, is divided from the world without, by an interval as wide as that between life and death. In this *one faith one baptism... one hope of our calling* lies an universal fellowship of believers, the symbol and earnest of the brotherhood of men".



There was not a word I then uttered which could be construed by a fair and honest mind as uncharitable, and I do not recollect in any conversation I have had with you saying anything of those who have separated from the Church except in a spirit of charity.

Heresies—*i.e.* false doctrines—are enumerated in more than one passage of the Holy Scriptures among the grossest works of the flesh; they are in the same category of sins as idolatry and murder. And why? Is it not by false teaching that the Devil leads souls astray and murders them? We are further told that “in the last days . . . there shall arise false teachers who shall bring damnable heresies”. Then is the Church wrong in not allowing into her Communion those whose teaching and practice is not in accordance with that given to us by our Lord? We are also told to “mark those who cause divisions and avoid them”. And again : “A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition refuse”—and, our Lord’s own are “if he will not hear the Church let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican”. (A publican being looked upon among the Jews as the most corrupt of men.)

*Note (1).*—You think the Church uncharitable because it does not allow that those who have broken away from her are still to be accounted as part of her. But look at the question from another point of view. Take for example a corporate body of any kind. It may be either a nation, a municipality, a regiment, school or anything you like to name. It must have its rulers, officers and discipline. If any member, or members, refuse to submit to its officers of otherwise set discipline at nought, they would be free to give up the rights and privileges of membership and go elsewhere. Now the Church is an invisible Kingdom with a visible and delegated Government. Christ is its King, and the Government which He has ordained for His Kingdom is that of Apostles or Bishops. We as members of Christ’s Kingdom are not free to choose any other form of religious Government than this. If therefore any set up a self-chosen organization or depart from His teaching, it is they who cut themselves off from the Church our Lord has founded and refuse to be governed in the way which He has appointed, and not the Church which separates itself from them. Are we then uncharitable because we cannot stretch out to them the right hand of fellowship? Or are we narrow because we are walking in the path which our Lord has marked out? But I will not ask you to take this on my authority, but will remind you what we are taught in Holy Scripture about those whose doctrine and practice is contrary to the mind of the Church.

And we have a still more solemn warning against making for ourselves a self-chosen religion. The Jews of old were chosen out of all the Kingdoms and nations of the Earth, to be as it were a treasury or casket of the only true religion. To them God revealed Himself, to them He gave a law moral and ceremonial, and a Government. The first of the tribes who separated itself from the Jewish Church and set up for itself a worship of its own, and opened an evil way for others to follow, was the tribe of Dan. Whenever the tribes of the children of Israel are enumerated we always find the tribe of Dan amongst them with one great and signal exception. In the seventh chapter of Revelation when the tribes are summoned before God’s Judgment Throne to be sealed (the sign of their acceptance), the tribe of Dan is not there, and we cannot be wrong in inferring from this omission, when we recollect in what severe language heresies and divisions are spoken of in God’s Word, that it was for this sin of separation they incurred this judgment. “These things”, St. Paul says—*i.e.* the things which happened to God’s ancient people—“were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world shall come”.

But though the Church cannot, I might say dare not, while outsiders remain resolute and holding erroneous doctrine, reckon them as members of that Heavenly Kingdom which Christ has established on Earth, yet she still has a duty to those in error and that duty she has not neglected. Much has been done by the Church in late years to invite back into her fold those who have strayed from it, and in one diocese alone (there may be for what I know others also), many Wesleyans have been re-admitted to full membership in Christ’s Church. I tell you this to shew you that if the dissenting bodies still remain separatists, it is not the Church which would exclude them from their rightful position, but they who refuse to share in the Church’s birthright.

*Note (2).*—I would here make one more allusion to the same chapter in Westcott's book. In explaining the Catholicity of the Church he says, "The word Catholic affirms the universality of the teaching of the Church. The real sign of the Christian society is not that it spreads everywhere, but that it embraces the whole Truth"; and further on, "the Catholic Bible furnishes the test of Apostolicity for all doctrines, the Catholic Church adds materials of life for their embodiment. Both include elements of contrast and therefore of progress. Because the Bible is Catholic, because it includes complementary aspects of the Faith, *it is possible to construct out of it partial schemes which first become perilous when they are treated as complete.* Because the Church is Catholic, because, that is, *the whole sum of Divine Truth*, the whole sum of all truth is its heritage, it has always some fresh message to deliver. It offers to each age, to each nation, to each person, what each needs most, and grows stronger as they accept and employ its gifts. For us in our day, our belief in the Catholicity of the Church is the *assurance of its growth*, the assurance that its compass is as wide as the Bible and its energy as manifold as life; that it also without inconsistency and without change, becomes, in some sense, all things to all men".

And before I leave this subject, I would here allude to the quotation you made from *Historic Faith*. "One thought runs through all the services not only of our Communion but I venture to say of all Christian Communions, even that of devotion, the transfiguration of life." in this also I see no difficulty. I cannot imagine any body of Christians meeting together for public devotion without having a belief, a hope that the services in which they take part, are a help in transfiguring the lives of the individual members of their congregation. But as the faith of these dissenting bodies in Catholic Truth is partial, so must their ideas of the transfiguration of life be partial also. I will give one demonstration out of many of this fact. The teaching of some of these bodies is this. All that is necessary for Salvation is to profess in the Atonement, and no matter how unholy the individual life be afterward, once having gone through what is termed a process of conversion, final acceptance with God is certain. Now this is a very comfortable doctrine but very untrue to the teaching of Scripture. I send you a portion of an address of one of the Bishops of the English Church in which you will see if you read it carefully that the idea of a form of Church Government embracing bodies of Christians with perfect freedom of Faith and discipline would result in anarchy, confusion, weakness, bitterness, fanaticism.

But to return to your letter. You say in the matter of your religion you are following God's guidance, and a little further on that it is your right to choose your own religion. Is not this a contradiction? As far as my own experience has taught me, if I am following God's guidance, I am giving up my own, having no choice of my own except to make His Will mine. And this is no easy task. It means a complete yielding up to God of all one's natural desires, longings, ambitions, schemes for self-aggrandisement, yes, even plans for the good of others, and making His Will our law whether it pleases us or displeases us. It was when you came to England you said you followed God's guidance, and to whom did He guide you and whom did He give you as your teachers? Members of that Church whose teaching you now reject. Against the wishes and warnings of those whose teaching you at the first accepted you have listened to the untrue statements of the enemies of the Church, and now attribute to me, and this without the smallest foundation, the charge which they untruly make against her. In this last letter your aim seems to be to place others in the wrong, in order to prove that the path you are choosing must be right, but this course of action will not hold good when the secrets of our hearts are revealed and our deeds are weighed in the balance. It has been my duty to teach you and to warn you that your attitude of late has been that that of a teacher instead of a learner; consequently, I feel my duties as your teacher are now at an end. I cannot hope to be able to help you, when, as you say, the letters of one so saintly and able as Father Page are no help to you whatever. My duties as your Sponsor only death can terminate; therefore, I shall not cease to pray for you that you may be led back from error into the full light of the Gospel Truth. It is indeed a grief to us all that you are leaving us as you are doing. We do not grieve because we are disappointed, neither do we grieve because you differ from us; many who have had honest difficulties come to accept fully the teaching of the Catholic Church, but we do grieve because you seem to be following a self-chosen path, which can only end in sorrow to you here and hereafter, and we grieve also for India's cause.

We grieve that one of India's daughters whom we hoped God was training to carry a ray of light back to that benighted land should be returning to that darkness without the light of Truth.

My love to you, dear Ramabai, will remain unchanged, and though I consider all letters on religious matters will be at an end, yet I hope you will still continue to write to me as a friend, and if, as I said before, you come as a learner and ask to be taught, I shall always be glad to help you if it is in my power to do so.

Yours very loving in Christ,  
GERALDINE,  
Sister of the Community  
of St. Mary the Virgin

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61 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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St. Hilda's College, Cheltenham.

October 15, 1885

My dear Ajeebai,

I do not answer your long letter, for I see I cannot make you understand what I mean, nor can you make me believe in all your doctrines exactly as you believe in them. I hope and I am sure that there will be a time when all misunderstanding will be over. A thick curtain which now shuts out our senses from seeing all things clearly, will be torn asunder, until then we will wait patiently and go on searching after truth. Would it be inconvenient to you if you were to come here for a week-end stay with Miss Beale, to consider what I am to do in the future? For then Miss Beale will have time to talk to you at her leisure, but she is too busy to write long letters. And if under these circumstances, I must leave Cheltenham, for this seems to me to be inevitable, I cannot do so, without being sure of my future duty and work. To settle all these things your presence is absolutely necessary. If you have no other things which want your staying at home, please ask the Superior to let you come here for a week or so. I must say one or two things which struck me most in your letter. You say that I have made [or wronged?] you (i.e. the Superior, you, Sister Elizabeth, Father Page, and Dean Butler, etc.) by letting you be my Sponsors and Baptiser, when I did not believe in the whole Athanasian Creed, and if you had known it, you would not have stood to be my Sponsors, nor would Canon Butler have baptised me, etc. You may charge me with this guilt if you like, but I deny it. You say in your letter "I said" so. Will you show me where I have written it? You and Dean Butler must have, I suppose, a greater authority than that of the Apostle Philip to ask [of] me a belief more than is needed to be baptised in the Christian Faith. The regeneration by baptism of persons who believe in Christ must then depend upon the will of man and set those blessed word of St. John at nought. "But as many as received him to them gave the right to become children of God, even to them that believed on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God".

I wish I knew that baptism in your society was depending upon man's will. Since my baptism to this time, I have not repented of my embracing Christianity, but when I see such difference of doctrine between your understanding and the words that I read in the Bible, I regret that I have been the cause of making you feel yourself wrong for the part you acted in my baptism. I wish I knew that your Church required of a person to be quite perfect in faith, doubting nothing in the Athanasian Creed, so that he had left nothing to be learnt and inquired into the Bible after his baptism. You have constantly said before and after my baptism that the Holy Spirit will reveal to me more and more of these doctrines of which I doubt, and that unless people are baptised and confirmed, they do not

perceive the gift of the Holy Spirit. How then can you say that unless you had known that I had fully believed in everything, and had no doubt about the Athanasian Creed, you would not have consented to my baptism? Do all the thousands who are daily baptised in the world become quite acquainted with all your doctrines and are free from doubts? And do all ministers of God wait to baptise them until they had attained to the highest perfection of faith? If not, you may excuse yourself for letting me embrace Christianity before I had understood or believed in the Athanasian Creed.

You have made the word, “pride” almost meaningless by applying it to everything that you see in me. But it is not my business to judge you from what you say. You may if you like trace my pride in pies and puddings, butter and milk, water and rice, shoes and stockings and even in the enormous quantity of coals that I daily burn. I confess I am not free from all my caste prejudices, as you are pleased to call them. I like to be called a Hindoo, for I am one, and also keep all the customs of my forefathers as far as I can. How would you an Englishwoman like being called proud and prejudiced if she were to go and live among the Hindoos for a time but did not think it necessary to alter her customs when they were not hurtful or necessary to her neighbours?

With love and honour, I am,  
humbly yours,  
MARY RAMA

P.S.—If you come here will you bring both of my letters which I wrote to you? Also I should like to have back the letter of Miss Beale which I lent you to read before you went into Retreat.

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62 *Letter from* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., at Bath, to PANDITA RAMABAI

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Bath: October 1885

My dear Ramabai,

I think if you had thought well over my letter, you would not have answered it as you did; every statement I made in it was confirmed by the authority of the Bible. I had not the Athanasian Creed in my thought, and did not allude to it except to answer a supposition in your letter that I wished to judge you by it.

The wondrous teaching of the love of GOD, and the humility of the Son of GOD in leaving Heaven and taking upon Him our flesh, and dying the death of a criminal are lost when we fail to see in Him a Divine Person. That GOD should have created a being for the purpose of our redemption seems to all who have learnt any lesson from the humility and tender love of GOD made man, a religion which contrasted with what the Church has ever held and taught as an iceberg, cold and lifeless, compared to the sun which gives life, light and joy. May GOD in His good time enlighten your eyes to perceive and know that love of GOD which passeth *all understanding*.

I have been very ailing for some time, and came here last week. I am going to see a London physician on Friday; after then I can let you know whether I am able or not to come to Cheltenham.

Your very loving,  
AJEEBAI

St. Hilda's College, Cheltenham,  
31st October, 1885

My dear Ajeebai,

Miss Beale has received £25 for me from the Queen. I want to pay Anandibai's brother the three hundred as soon as I can. I do not know how much money there is in the Savings Bank. The Bank Book is with you; will you look and tell me how much there is? I will send the rest to make up the books, and then you will be able to send it to Sister Eleanor (as you have said you would do) to give it to Anandibai's brother. If you can do this, without taking much trouble, I shall be very grateful to you, but if not, please to take the money out of the Wantage Savings Bank, and send it to me here, so that I may send it to one of my friends in India to be paid to the person.

I hope you are better and taking your rest.

With love and honour,  
believe me yours very truly,  
MARY RAMA

Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
November, 1885

Dear Sister Geraldine,

I am glad Ramabai is to spend a few days with you. I was anxious she should go to Cambridge, Canon Mason had interested the Horts in her, and she was with friends of theirs, and had the advantage of a talk with Canon Westcott. If she does not come to look at things as we do, I feel sure that time will help her to see things more clearly, for she does wish to know and do the Will of God. We must remember, it was after she left India that Father Goreh's teaching bore fruit; and in another way her difficulties are helpful. I have had to search into things for her sake, and so things have become clearer to me. I shall miss her very much, and so will you, I am sure; her affection for you is very strong, though she does in her letters express herself with abruptness.

We were grieved to hear of your continued illness, yet you will doubtless give thanks for this too, since our Father knows what is best.

I am anxious Ramabai should return on Monday as it is the last day Mr. Crofts is here, and I think she ought not to miss the opportunity of seeing him. He is Director-General of Education in the Calcutta Institution.

Please give my kind regards to the Mother Superior, and Sisters Eliza, Mary, Ellen and others whom I know, and with love,

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

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65 Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
November 7th, 1885

Dear Ajeebai,

I want to write and tell you few words today. It has given me very great pain to part with you in such a manner as I had never expected. I do not mind what I feel, but I am very sorry for you. I regret that I have been the cause of your disappointment. I do not mean to disappoint or grieve you in the least; but in such a solemn matter as religion, I cannot but follow GOD's guidance. This perhaps you will deny as you have denied my having [a] clear conscience in your last letter. Say or think whatever you like about me, it is (I feel to be) my duty to explain my thoughts whether you believe them to be true or false. You said you agree with the Canon Butler in that it is no use teaching me, when I do not come to you in a humble, child-like teachable spirit—in teaching what?

In teaching that your Anglican Church is the sole treasury of truth? In teaching that your clergy are the only true priesthood and messengers of truth, and all other bodies of Christians are followers of false imaginations? In teaching that GOD has chosen the Anglican Church only to be His favoured people? Am I to submit to this kind of teaching? Am I to submit to the teaching of the clergy like Canon Butler, who denies that I have a voice in choosing my own religion, or to you who say that my conscience is no conscience at all and who say that outside your Church no truth can be found, and if I tolerated with all the bodies of Christian people, I cannot be truthful? Far be it from me to listen to such teaching. It is not humility but a gross cowardice. You or rather some of the clergy of your church think that they could make many converts to their faith in India by telling them that the Anglican Church only teaches the true religion, but I think it otherwise. Think of me whatever you will, but when you begin your teaching with calling other Christians besides you as sinning against the Church and teaching false religion I cannot hold my peace. I did not want to say anything on this matter, but when in your conversation you spoke unkindly of the Wesleyans, I shewed you the writings of one of your own best theologians to shew you that he did not think that truth was confined to the three branches of the Catholic Church only. You interpreted his word meaning only the three branches, and as usual you would not believe me when I said, I heard Canon Westcott say that by One Church, he meant *all* Christian bodies. If you had taken the trouble to read another page or two from the place which I pointed [out] to you in the *Historic Faith*, you would soon have found your mistake. “Thus the Church is holy in regard to its unchanging Spirit; holy in regard to those who realise its conception. It is holy *also* in regard to its institutions. One thought runs through all the services *not only of our own Communion, but I will venture to say of all Christian Communions, even that of the devotions, the transfiguration of life*”, are the words of Canon Westcott. Does he then mean by these the three branches alone? You seem to be very hard upon the Baptists, Congregationalists, Wesleyans, and among other bodies, mostly upon the Unitarians. . . .

I am no teacher of yours and do not mean in any way to teach you. You know your Bible well and are brought up from your early childhood in Christian faith—I have nothing to tell you. I only remind you what you read continually. You profess to be a Sister of Charity. Do you have a little more charity towards your brethren of all denominations?

You think me to be dishonest because I did not answer your long letters. You may do so if you like, for in doing so you will do nothing more than what you have already said in that letter about me. You seemed to think in that letter that I have falsely professed Christianity, and if you think so,



what remains for me that I shall answer in it? You assured me that you had written that letter under God's guidance. I acknowledge it. You meant well, and had taken so much trouble out of your great love for me. But there are some sentences in it which seem to me to be not inspired by God; they came out of extreme partiality. Still I will no more think of them. I thank you for writing that letter to me. And not for this letter only, but for all your kindness to me and my child.

I shall gratefully remember of your love and kindness as long as I live and pray for you in a true Christian spirit even if you would not acknowledge that spirit to be Christian.

You will, I am sure, pray for me and I thank you for that too. Also, I will not forget to ask your forgiveness for all that I may have done or said wrong to you and yours.

Good bye, dear Ajeebai. I hope you will soon be well and be able to go to India to help the other Sisters in their good work of charity. I wonder if I shall see you again before my journey home.

With love and honour to you,

3 I am always yours very humbly,  
MARY RAMA

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60 *Letter from SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., London, to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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London: January 1886

Dear Miss Beale,

It is so good of you to have written to me when I have not yet answered your two last. I have been intending when Christmas letters were despatched to write to you. There is much I should like to tell you. Though you doubtless have heard Ramabai's version, I should like you to be informed truly, and may not have heard all. Just before returning to Cheltenham in September, she collected all the books which were in use for Mano, and without consulting anyone, marked out anything which bore upon Christian teaching, and then requested that we should teach the child a Theistic religion. This we would not accede to, and it was this which induced her to make her mind she would return to Cheltenham only to bid adieu to her friends, and then establish herself at Wantage for the purpose of superintending Mano's education. She wrote [to] me two letters before leaving Wantage, in which she stated her reason for this plan, and in one she made a most curious request that we would receive her with the idea of training her to start a Sisterhood in India. She knew not, she said, where she could better learn discipline than with us. In answering her letter I asked her if she understood what she asked. (She has been the indulged child of the house, living with comparatively no rule.) I enumerated a few things which this step would involve. I wrote a very full answer to all statements and difficulties her two letters propounded, and we were quite willing to entertain her proposal if she still desired it. The answer to my letter was most unsatisfactory, I think it could hardly have been more so, and she made not the slightest allusion to her former proposal. There is a want of candour and sincerity about her difficulties and I fear she is willingly accepting a religion which has no claim to the name of Christianity, as she thinks it will commend itself more to the intelligence of her countrywomen than the revealed Truth which latter will require for them a higher standard of moral and spiritual perfection than they would be willing to accept. It seemed that to argue with her was only to strengthen her faults of character, so I felt that in the state of mind that she was then, prayer would be a safer and surer weapon than any other so I simply wrote [to] her a loving little letter, hoping to reclaim her affection, and made up my mind that for the present religious topics should not be alluded to by me. This I had intended to adhere to when she came to see me before I left home in November,

but I was prevented by Ramabai's beginning a discussion on the Church. She shewed me in a Chapter of Westcott's *Historic Faith*, which she thought coincided with the erroneous views which she holds. I could find nothing but what I had learnt to believe and accept from the Catholic standpoint, twisted to suit what she desired to believe and accept from her own point of view. I was very sorry that she had entered upon that topic for I feel it would be better for her to grasp those doctrines of the Faith which all bodies of Christians hold in common, and learn if possible those articles of the Creed which related to the Church when she had grasped the earlier ones. After returning to Cheltenham, she wrote [to] me a letter which shewed, I think, her unwillingness to see things except in the way "she chose" as she expressed it and in order to prove herself right, unhesitatingly made assertions which had not the smallest foundation so as to prove others wrong. I answered this letter at length and as she had raised this discussion upon the Church, tried to enlighten her and clear up the difficulties which presented themselves to her mind. One sees with great regret how much her character has deteriorated of late. I should think at one time she was an exception to the generality of the Hindoos; truthfulness was one of the traits of character in which she was an exception to the generality of her countrywomen; but she has both, in word and in letter, proved that she can no longer be accredited with this virtue, and her great lack of this makes one feel that there is great difficulty in the way of a true conversion. There is, however, much that is noble in her character and we must hope even, in spite of much which seems to belie hope, that she will one day come to accept the Truth in its fullness. I trust that the plan for her further stay in England may be blessed to her. She told the Mother that you had suggested another year for her, provided funds were forthcoming. We hope that the friend who is willing to place the money at her disposal in one of those who think that a further stay in England may be the means of re-establishing her in the faith.

I remain,  
Yours truly in Christ,  
GERALDINE  
Sister of the Community of  
St. Mary the Virgin

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67 Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.,

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St. Marry's Home,  
Wantage : February 14th, 1886

My dear Old Ajeebai

I received two of your letters since you went abroad, but my time was so much taken with other works that I could not write a letter to you. I trust you are doing well. You did not tell me anything about your health in your last letter. I am anxious to know whether you are getting better. I asked Mother this morning, but she did not tell me exactly how you were. I must get Sister Mary to tell me. I sail on the 17th instant with my child on board the "British Princess" of the American Line. I hope to be back to this country in June, but cannot tell the future.

Thank you very much for your kind advice. I will whenever [I] find time—and the mind fit—write to you all about Mano and me.

I enjoyed my visit to Fulham very much. I asked Sister Elizabeth what your address was, but it was not easy for her or me to trace the goings about of the Ajeebai. I stayed with Dr. and Mrs. Westcott for two days at Westminster. They are kind and sympathetic people, and have a large family of ten children. I wish you had seen Dr. Westcott. He is so nice, Sister Elizabeth said, that 'she had quite lost her heart' to him!

I shall stay with Miss Livesay at Liverpool for two nights. She had kindly invited me to go and see her at Liverpool about two or three months ago. It would have been very nice to have you on board the ship; I wonder whether we shall go in the same ship to India. I hope I shall see you quite well when I return in June.

As for the matter of the Sister's undertaking to be Mano's guardian in case [of] her mother's death, I do not want to make it legal and put into force. I think I must wait and seek God's guidance before I decide what Mano's destiny shall be in the future. I hope and trust He who has created and preserved her and me to this day will in His good time shew us His will for our future.

While I was in London, I went to see an aurist who gives me some hope of my deafness being cured. He said it was the vascular and not the nervous deafness, and that it came from the blood being poisoned and the circulation being wrong after I had the malaria fever. I am now under his treatment. His name is Dr. Cooper. He lives at 21, Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square, London.

With much love to Miss Fuller and yourself,

I am, your child in Christ,  
MARY RAMA

## VOLUME II

### Chiefly Correspondence between

#### *PANDITA RAMABAI and MISS DOROTHEA BEALE*

*(One letter to an unknown correspondent)*

This Volume contains some very interesting letters. The three from Miss Beale and Ramabai's answer to them are without doubt valuable. The great value of Miss Beale's letters reveal the method she used in her religious training of Ramabai.

She silenced her tone of argument by training her to think on sound lines. Ramabai was asked to state her conception of such truths of the faith she was in doubt of.

"We can object to everything because we fully understand nothing"—wrote Miss Beale to Ramabai.

Miss Beale was peculiarly fitted to help Ramabai in her difficulties. She had three times passed through times of great darkness, when she felt her faith had been wholly swept away; but she never ceased to make her Communions and in time the clouds dispersed and the light returned and her hold on Christian Verities was greatly strengthened.

March 19th, 1917

SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

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68 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI (at Wantage) to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Principal, Ladies' College, Cheltenham*

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
30th March 1884

My dear Miss Beale,

I think you must have a very great patience to wait such a long time for my promised letter. I send it to you to-day, but I am sorry to say that you must send it back to me, for it belongs to the Printing Room of this House. I think you can copy the whole account from it. Thank you very much for the magazine and for that nice long letter. I am going to translate it in several Indian languages and send to some papers to be published in India. I showed it to the Sister and to the Superior and they liked it so much. All the books you gave me are wandering from hand to hand and everybody is admiring them. I read your favourite Browning and was delighted as far as [I] could understand the essay. Sister Geraldine told me that you are coming here to spend the Holy Week. I was so pleased to hear the news. I received a letter from Mary S. Kalokhe. And this time I asked her whether she is willing to give herself up for the welfare of her countrywomen if somebody would pay her expenses and educate her in England, as you desired me to do. And [I] told her that in the College where she is to be educated (if she will) the ladies are only prepared for the B.A. and not for medical women. She is just nineteen years old, she says, **and** is preparing for Matriculation of Bombay University.

Hoping that you are well, I remain with much love and honour to you,

Yours faithfully,  
MARY RAMA

P.S. –Shall I send back the magazines which you sent for me this time?

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69 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE (undated)—probably the spring or early summer 1885*

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St, Mary's Home, Sunday

Dear Miss Beale,

Thank you very much for your kind letter and the essay you have so kindly sent for me. I am quite sure that it will help me a great deal in writing my apologia. I shall try and read Prof. Max Muller's *Grammar*. It seems to be very helpful. I had a letter from Mary S. Kalokhe some 4 or 5 days ago. I am sending it to you. I ought not to speak again about her and vex you, but I cannot resist my nature; I had written to her about what you told me to do. Only a week before you answered me that for the present you have given up the plan of having her here. Never mind, I can write to her as it is convenient on both sides. But it seems to me that if you lose this opportunity to help Indian women—what God has pointed [to] immediately after our discussion—it will perhaps not be easy to get one like this. It is true that I am not acquainted with her, but from letters from herself and her father I can suppose that she is a noble-minded girl and is determined to give up her whole life for the glory of God. Nothing does so much strike me as her mother's noble act in being ready to let her only child come so far from her. Nothing but the love of God could have made her so ready to sacrifice her happiness which is so difficult for an Indian mother. There is no doubt that she is a child of a respectable family, which is very important for a woman who is going to be a teacher. Now your difficulty about having her is that her father is very poor and perhaps a low-caste person according to the social rules of Indians. I don't think that it does much signify. Why should we think others low and ourselves great? We are all the same in God's sight, are we not? Perhaps, the humblest shoemaker is greater in His sight than a proud Brahmin. Our Lord Himself was born a humble carpenter and He did all things for the humble in spirit. Is it no so? We see thousands of such examples that the greatest good deeds are done by [the] humblest people. We cannot say it may [not] be God's all good and wise will that He will produce all good works through humble people for such a country as India which is always very proud of her high-caste-born children, who are perhaps the greatest wretch [es] !

Now the second difficulty about her not being able to pass B.A. In my opinion to be good and useful to her countrywomen does not depend on passing B.A. God's grace and His love are the only things which make us sympathise [in] others' sorrows and raise our spirits to help them. There [are] hundreds of B.A.s and M.A.s who are not even of [the] least use for their neighbours. Sister Geraldine has told me that in one way she knows Mary S. Kalokhe and the Sisters of All Saints have always spoken very favourably about her.

Now I must stop here. You know best and will do whatever seems to be right to you. Our Superior was so kind to tell me that if you are willing to have her in England, and will help her all the other days, the Superior will have her in the holidays.

The Bishop of Lahore's letter is a strange one I think. Who told him that I was going to remain here and turn into an English lady I don't know.

I send a new Sanskrit magazine to you to see. It is very nice and is useful for beginners. If you are willing to put it for the use of the College, I can get it. Please return it to me, for it is not mine. I have to send it back to Miss Manning.

The lady who is so kind to come to see me shall be welcomed by the Sisters.

With much love and honour to you,

I am yours truly,

MARY RAMA

*P.S.* –You said that you enclosed 6/3 for the book, but I did not find it in your letter. And the book (I mean Prof. Max Muller's *Grammar*) was not sent by parcel post so the Superior had to pay 8d. more for it.

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70 *Letter from* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Principal, Ladies' College, Cheltenham, to  
PANDITA RAMABAI

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April : 1885

Dear Ramabai,

One feels afraid to enter within the veil, and to try to utter in words divine mysteries, but we have been given to one another for a little season, that through communion in God's love we may grow in grace, and so I must try to give you some answer to your question. This is I think the way in which Christians have understood the doctrine of the Incarnation.

They have called Christ the Second Adam, and He called Himself the son of Man. Now what must have been the origin of the First Man? That formative power which develops the body and all that is essential to humanity—the self-conscious life (body, soul, spirit) must at some moment of time have been bestowed on man by the Creator. Even if we accept the theory of development, it makes no difference in the hypothesis; there must have been a time when this personality or individuality became his, even if we regard man as in some embryonic state ere he developed into the perfect man. Clearly then, at some moment Adam became by a divine act a man (developed or undeveloped). A man one regards as a distinct personality, clothing itself with body, soul, spirit :

*Body*, the physical,  
*Soul*, the psychical,

*Spirit*, the super-sensuous faculty which we do not share with lower animals, and by which we hold direct communion with the Eternal.

In virtue of his spiritual being, man could exercise free-will, and we know from our inner experience that we are not simple beings. We exercise our freedom when in accordance with the spiritual part, we bring into obedience the psyche. But the spirit is not fully enlightened when man is put into this visible Cosmos to be educated. It too needs development, as the body does; and as the body is developed by the sunlight, so is the spirit by divine communion, by the sunlight of God's Presence. The man, the unity which binds together this three-fold being, sins, when either through disobedience to the Spirit's Voice, he follows the dictates of the flesh, or of the mind, and is not led by the Spirit.

Wilful sin suspends the communion with the divine, which is life, and produces in Scriptural language death. Thus Adam died, and he begot a son in his own image, and through that sinful personality death passed on all men, and none were pure enough to see God. But ever among all nations was there a promise and a hope that a Deliverer would come, able to contend with death, to bring back life, to restore broken communion once enjoyed in Paradise, to make an atonement, to bring in everlasting righteousness.

In the fullness of time, in accordance with prophecy and expectation, at a time when above all a sin-sick world needed it, when a divided world was so far united in thought and intercourse that the



message could reach them, there was born into the world a Man Whose whole Life was different from that of any man seen before; Whom none could convince of sin, Who lived as the ideal Man should in the double life of restored communion :—the pneumatic in perfect harmony with the psychic, the body in perfect subjection to the spirit. (*Vide* the Temptation, first, of the soma; 2nd of the psyche; 3rd of the pneuma.) Whence this sinless personality : He claimed that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God ! Once more in this second Adam we read no sinful personality was transmitted through human fatherhood. Once more, in what is called in Christian language hypostatical union, the divine personality became the central life of the human-three-fold nature, and the divine glory found expression in a Son of Man. He was the *character*, the express image of the Father.

“How shall this be?”, asked the Blessed Virgin. The answer was, “the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee”.

This divine personality tabernacled then amongst us, as one has expressed it —wrapped around Him the creaturely existence, entered into the limitations of earth, and emptying Himself consented to manifest Himself thus. So, as man, He stood in a relation of inferiority to the Father, even acting as man only through the communion with the Father ! “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works”, and yet equal to the Father, since He is the manifestation of the Eternal Son; the utterance of the Divine, since in His inmost Being He is the : “I AM.”

By His outward revelation of God’s glory, He made it possible for man to know and therefore sympathises with God; made it possible therefore for man to receive divine thoughts into his heart, by making him loved, through enlightening him as to the nature of God.

And in some mysterious way, as Son of Man, he is able to become Mediator between the spirit of man and the Infinite.

When the alabaster vase was broken and the divine personality passed out of earthly limitation, and filled all things, still God remains in close communion with the sons of men. Prayer and Sacraments are means of continued communion with the divine personality of Christ, means by which the human is transfigured, the saints clothed with shining garments—the righteousness of Christ. They eat His Flesh, appropriate that eternal Substance by which they are true beings, not dependent on the phenomenal and transitory, but enter into relation with the Eternal. They drink His Blood, they feel pulsing within their life a Life higher than that of earth, a Life which is Divine. So those who have drunk into Christ’s Spirit are able to do the works He did; they grow ever more and more into His image—they can never die—and in them, if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells, the body is dead as regards sin, but alive unto God—all the lower nature is infused by the Spirit, so that the body has no life of its own, it is the instrument of the Spirit; it is transubstantiated as will become apparent at death, as was apparent in the Risen Body of the Lord.

The psychical man thinks, and rightly from his own experience, that all the impulses to action proceed from the selfish motive, from the parts of the being which ought to be subordinated to the rule of the spirit, if the Kingdom of Heaven is to be realised. The spiritual man is animated by the true life, the *enthousiasmos*.

So we come to God through Christ, God’s grace is ours through Him; we call it the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we know the love of God, through Whom we are in perfect communion with the All-Holy.

Thus I think in some feeble and imperfect way, we may conceive the Divine mystery of the Word becoming incarnate; ever incomprehensible, yet able to enter into redemptive relations with sinful and imperfect man, and thus though One with the Father, and therefore equal (*homoiousios*) and not only (*homoiousios*), yet in His state of humiliation inferior to the Father.

I think it is the realisation of this Divine within us which enables us to live the divine life; that until we become conscious of it we are unable to enter into those spiritual relations with God by which all the lower nature is transfigured and drawn into the divine and true relation.

I think the Resurrection Body was the manifestation of this truth, and that when that faded to sense, the Lord's Presence remained as a Presence to be realized; and that this was expressed to the first disciples by the irradiation which is called breathing on them, when for the last time He stood before them, and revealed Himself to sense *ere* He vanished from sight.

He filled all things then in a sense fuller than before the Incarnation. His life circulates in all creation as never before, since to our consciousness it is revealed as never before. And so we, the creaturely existence, lifted up through divine communion and insight to the Throne of God—living creatures there full of eyes, exercising dominion because full of divine life (conf. Ezek :). Above all the Divine Humanity is in the midst of the Throne, for in supernatural language, it is exercising divine power, because it is utterly at one with the divine will—and all in whom Christ the King dwells, of whom it can be said “the Kingdom of God is within you”, are made rulers, able to sit on thrones in God's great mediatorial Kingdom where they shall reign forever and ever.

Yours affectionately,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

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71 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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8th May 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

Thank you for telling me the cause why you refused. I have also had a letter from Sister Geraldine this morning in which she says—“We do not feel we have any case open to us but to accept the opinion of those who from their knowledge of India and its people are far better judges than ourselves in the matter.”

“I think you may perhaps be a little pained at this decision”, etc., etc. There is no doubt I am. Because, it is saying plainly that those people who are not of that country know India and its people far better than I do who am born and brought up in India and among its own people. And that they whoever they are do not trust me and my people and that they are the masters to decide anything for me and I ought not to have a voice of my own to speak against their decision. Is it not so? I know perfectly well that to teach boys is not the current custom for ladies in India for there are scarcely any ladies who can teach. But to say that if I teach boys it would weaken my influence on my countrypeople is simply absurd. I who from about eight years have travelled about, seen thousands of men of all ranks and spoken in large meetings before only men—which is perfectly contrary to the present custom of India—and sometimes have taught grown-up men found no such thing as you or rather the “clearly connected with the Church of India” [feel it]—[do not feel] that [it] weakened my influence among [my] country people.

In such a matter and in all other matters, I shall speak openly and plainly that they have no right to decide anything for me. And I shall not allow anyone to lay hand on my personal liberty. I have taken all matters concerning me in my own hand. Although I am poor and weak in body I have (thank God Who has given me it) a mind strong enough to resist all these meaningless social customs which deprive a woman of her proper place in society.

“This decision”, as Sister Geraldine names it, I consider as a *personal insult* and I shall not act according to it. I am not willing to give pain to anyone’s mind by my conduct for I know what a mental pain is. At the same time, it is everyone’s duty that when they speak or act they ought to take care not to go beyond their proper place. I know that if I act against their decision the Sisters would not like it, and perhaps you also would not think right to do so. But I am very sorry to say that I cannot follow their rules in every matter where they directly or indirectly give me the least little hint that the Sisters do not trust me or my honour. Therefore I must say good-bye to them and if you like to you too. I am not in the least ungrateful for all this; I shall long remember the great kindness they and you have so generously shown to me and my little child. I shall soon write to Sister Geraldine about it and go on my way to which God, my great and only Guide, will lead me.

I hope you will soon be well enough to come in the College. It looks so dull here without you.

With my love and honour to you,

I am,

Yours very truly,

RAMA

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72 Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, *Cheltenham*

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Cheltenham : Friday,

June 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

After thinking over the subject a long time, I have at last made up my mind not to come back here again to study at your College. It is not without pain and disappointment that I leave your College. This was the happiest time in my life that I spent here as a student. It is not the study here that I shall be sorry to leave, for, to study I am wedded for my life, and study is my immortal husband that shall not be robbed from me like the mortal one. It is the person in whom I have—if I am not mistaken—a sympathetic heart and a generous soul who can feel and see with the hearts and souls of others. You must not think me a mere flatterer, for I am not such; and indeed if the love is sacred and reverent, it must be dumb of words. Here I stop from this subject and give you my reason for my decision.

I left my native land and crossed the seas, from whatever motives I shall not tell, and should have braved any danger and difficulty by God’s help to carry out my intention. The way in which I wanted to step was by Providence closed before me and I am compelled to pass through another. It matters little. So far as I [can] be useful in any way to my countrywomen, I do not mind what the way itself is. When you so kindly offered to have me here, my hopes were again revived—a pious friend of mine called it ambition; it may have been so, I am no judge of it myself. This and such sentiments of others would not have been able to move me from my resolution. But there is one thing before which I [am] the worst coward in the world, and this is forcing others to help me against their will. Let it not be said of me that I stayed even for a moment in England while any of my friends not out of their own free will, but with forced efforts helped me and paid for me. I shall be happier in my own country working for myself and my child than if I stay here and have my conscience troubled with the thought that the Sisters at Wantage were, against their will, obliged to have me or my child depending on them. No, it shall not be so. The meanest hut or the shade of an old tree is better without the above than comfortable houses with it. I ask you not let anyone else but yourself know the contents of this letter and not try to induce the Sisters to have me any longer. Farewell, dear and respected friend, I shall neither write nor talk any more about this subject to you.

Please excuse my pencil writing. With love and honour,

I am,  
Yours very sincerely,  
MARY RAMA

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73 *Letter from* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE to PANDITA RAMABAI *at Cheltenham*

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
June 27th, 1885

Dear Ramabai,

I have been very busy to-day, but will go carefully through your letter, as soon as I can.

One thing I can't make out, and as I cannot meet your thought without understanding it, would you explain to me what you consider the distinction between a created being and the Son of God : the words 'only begotten' certainly imply a radical distinction. If I see *what* you believe, I shall know better how to meet objections.

Did you enter into my thoughts in the last letter I sent you? I want to get at your *conception*, as I have tried to make you see mine.

I do hope that whether or not we are able to take in intellectually something of Divine mysteries, we shall be able to keep in close communion of heart, and truly to love God, manifested in Christ.

Yours affectionately,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

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74 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, *Cheltenham*

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Cheltenham : Friday,  
June 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I have read your long letter carefully and have tried to enter into your thought, but I cannot understand it clearly just yet. I think the absence of the so-called childlike faith in my mind prevents me entering into your thought at once. However, I shall try to explain the distinction between a created being and the Son of God, as much as I can. I must tell you that the language of Mr. Gore and of the elergy such as—"Jesus Christ emptied Himself of the divine Omnipotence and Omniscience, and suffered Himself to be ignorant in certain extent and to be powerless, etc., for a little while", lies at the bottom of my misunderstanding or mistaking the doctrine taught by them.

What a created being is I understand not. This is a difference between the divine Son and ourselves which is put before me by the Church people. They say man and his soul was created or made, a little or long time ago by God. He [Jesus Christ] is self-existing as God Himself is but man is not. He [man] is a finite being, *e.g.*, not omniscient, not omnipotent, not omnipresent, neither

incomprehensible, not eternal, etc. This is their explanation of a common son and of the Son of God. But when they say that the Son of God, although equally powerful, wise and eternal with the Father of [the] Universe. He emptied himself of these (if not all, some at least—such as almightiness, omniscience—qualities) and became of his own accord, *i.e.* was not created by God—a man, was born like ourselves, grew in wisdom and in stature, suffered all the weakness (except that which is from sin) of human nature, was dead, etc., they [say some thing which is] exactly opposite to their own assertion. Why and how, I now proceed to tell you.

According to a certain Hindoo philosophy, God is said to be omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, not subject to birth or death, and because all wisdom, all truth, all power, all fullness are the substance of His essence, He never parts with them. He is One, not subject to division, etc. But when He pleases He suffers Himself to be subjected to Maya, He becomes either incarnate, or becomes *One* but into many persons (just as you told me of the Trinity that they are one), but as the air being one fills up different rooms, so the three persons being one fill three persons, yet they are one, and that at last these different vessels or bodies will be broken up and the whole essence of God will be again united. When Christian teachers hear this explanation from the Hindoos they laugh at them and say—”How can your God be Almighty and be subject to Maya? How can He be omniscient and become for a time at least ignorant, so as not to be able to distinguish good from evil?” If you have read Father Gore’s tracts, you will, I think, remember that they are full of such arguments. And it is true that omniscience and ignorance, omnipotence and subjection or servitude are as opposite to each other as light and darkness are. Well then if these Christian teachers laugh at the Hindoos because they want to reconcile these two opposite natures, on what ground, may I ask, they can establish their doctrine which distinctly tells us that Jesus Christ although omnipotent and omniscient emptied himself for a time of his qualities and became . . . .

(remainder wanting)

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75 *Letter from* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE *to* PANDITA RAMABAI

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Ladies’ College, Cheltenham,  
July 5th, 1885

Dear Ramabai,

I think that the strength of your letter of June 30th lies in this,—that you challenge us Christians to show that there is an “essential” difference between those whom we regard as creatures and the Eternal Son.

Well of course we all, you and I, and every philosopher, however great, has never been able to define this. We say perhaps that which is transitory and phenomena, as distinguished from the eternal and underlying. But then we feel that the phenomenal is the manifestation of the underlying essence.

It seems to me that the imagery of the visible world, which is the alphabet of thought, whilst clearing some things obscures others. What is the *essential unity of spiritual substance*? It would seem to me better shadowed out by music than by material substance. The utterance is one when the beats are the same.

Suppose throughout a spiritual essence there be utter unity, utter harmony of thought, will, desire, but there be different functions. Suppose the absolute goodness be manifested in the soul of a man, so that there is absolutely no discord but perfect union with the Divine will—utter harmony—that would seem to me a criterion of His divinity (not deity), and beholding in Him the perfect image of God, I should say in His spiritual being, the imperfect, the limited, the creaturely, was identified

with the Divine, because I regard goodness as the *very essence* of God, not omnipotence, or omniscience, though these are necessary to His being as the Absolute. I should not think there would be danger of worshipping a multitude of Divinities, because in Christ alone is the perfection of Divine Goodness manifested. Jesus is not the manifestation of the omnipotence, but the moral, spiritual perfection, the Divine—that is how I understand and worship Him.

We Christians care so much about His divinity, because we think that He could not be, if He were thus one with God, our perfect example : we could not come to Him for grace.

Then again, it seems to me that if the grace of God comes to us through Christ, that worship of Christ is inevitable, and that wisdom and power and grace must come to us through the Son seems to me a necessity of thought. Your argument of the Personification of Mercy had not struck me.

I should like you to define your thought of God—your conception. It seems to me impossible for the human mind to conceive God, except under the form of a threefold Being: the Absolute, the Manifested, the Bond of Union—if I may dare to put these things into language other than the inspired.

The highest manifestation is through an intelligent human soul, and goodness is the manifestation that is (? Christ, or? what: uncertain writing), the Christian thought.

I do so much want to get as much of the positive as may be: we can object to everything because we can fully understand nothing.

Yours affectionately,

DOROTHEA BEALE

This is too hurried: I have not time for more.

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76 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage

July 28th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I do not really know how to express my thanks to you for all your kindness towards me. You have already been so kind in all things, but the greatest of all that I consider is that you take so much care that I should hear you speak. You can hardly imagine what a great joy it is to me to hear your lecture. To-day I have been almost overjoyed to hear the Canon preach, how many times I thanked you for placing me so near to him. It is the first time that I heard a Christian preach before a congregation, and eagerly devoured his words as they fell from his from his lips. I am indeed quite content with my lot of deafness, since it comes from the loving Father, and for some good purpose though unknown to me; yet it is difficult for a human creature not to feel sometimes the defects severely. To-day, however, I felt I must not let the opportunity pass away without thanking you for this particular kindness of yours. I cannot say all that I feel even in a letter, much less in words when I am speaking to you, but there is one who knows hearts and feeling, to Him be the glory and thanks for ever.

With love and honour to you,



I am your humble pupil,  
MARY RAMA

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77 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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August 15th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I have to tell you a sad story which happened yesterday: I think I had better write it in a letter.

I was asked by Dean Butler to go and see him in his room, here, and I did so. But instead of finding the Dean as I found him in his words in his letter to me who could not be impatient or unsympathetic, I found him to my great grief saying, “I shall never again speak to you, unless you should like to come to be taught, and never have a voice of your own before the decision of the Catholic Church in religious doctrine”. He had in his letter (I think you have seen it) most generously told me to bring *all* my difficulties before him, and that he would answer all, but as soon as I went before him he did not wait till I could give my reasons for not believing in the deity of our Lord, but showed me some passages as his proofs against my conception. When I told him that I could not say anything in answer just yet—and how could I do so in five minutes, and especially when I had to read the Bible in a foreign language and compare it with the Greak Testament, as well as other passages and think them over?—he simply said he could see plainly that I was determined not to accept the teaching of the Catholic Church, and that I was denying God Himself when I denied our Lord’s deity. I told him that I was not determined to deny our Lord’s deity or not to accept the Church’s teaching, but that I should like to prove if the Church doctrines and the deity of Christ are founded on the Bible teaching. He said that I should never be able to prove it, but that I must accept the teaching of the Church only for the reason that the whole Church (composed of millions of people) believed in this doctrine for about nineteen centuries, and this should be a sufficient proof for my believing in its doctrine.

When I asked him if I should not have a voice of my own in proving and choosing the doctrine in which I am to believe, he said : “Decidedly not ! You ought humbly to accept the Church’s teaching, you are not cleverer than the Church”, etc. I was of the opinion that I could not rely on the centuries or number of people for the proof of the truthfulness of the Church doctrine. This might be a proof for those who are born and brought up in this religion, but it certainly is not so for me, who am to leave off my old religion and accept a new one. But he paid no attention to this my appeal and was quite sure that I was denying God and His guidance. There was something, [a] very contemptuous expression [on his face] when he said, “Go and work or stay with the Brahmos, or do what you like”, etc., and that he was very sorry I was denying Christ, and that he had hoped a great deal of me, and that now all was over, etc. I do not mind any of his remarks and exclamations, but I feel very sorry to see that a man in Mr. Butler’s age and capacity should be so uncharitable as to say that I was denying God and His guidance and Christ, because I wanted to prove the truthfulness of the Church’s teaching. I am very sorry to displease him and be cut off from his affection. How severely I feel it you can well imagine. But it matters little when my conscience is clear and does not blame me for it. I knew very well how impatient he was in argument, and did not say a thing to him until he himself asked me to place *all* my difficulties before him. But when I had just begun—or rather intended to do so—the result was this unfortunate event.

What would become of us all if our Heavenly Father had not the infinite forbearance, and had not the patience of hearing their complaints more than five minutes? I ask you as a disciple of Christ and a teacher, a person bound to be a missionary, if your Lord and Master has ever commanded his ministers and disciples never to listen to the objections of people belonging to other religions, and if

he had ever approved of such a thing as never to let others have their voice in choosing a religious faith for themselves? Has he or his disciples (I mean the apostles) ever said such a thing as [this] : if a person did not like to accept the doctrine of Christ's deity without proving it from the Bible, she is denying God and His guidance, and Christ? After I have rejected the Brahmo religion and have firmly believed in Christ, and His teaching, confessing Him to be the Son of God and made by God, Lord and Christ, how does the Reverend Dean feel justified in contemptuously telling me, "Go and work or stay or mix with the Brahmos", etc.? And then when I said I will do as God will guide me, say that I was denying God and his guidance? He perhaps is doing right according to his faith, but I pity this venerable old man, and am very sorry for him. I do not hate the Brahmos as he does. I shall if it be God's will and shall have to go and live and work among my people, though they be hated and called humbugs by some pious Christians because they are either Brahmos or Hindoos, and are not willing to submit to the Church doctrine, without proving its accuracy. But what Dean Butler [does] mean when he tells me to go and live among them is manifest from all his sayings. He perhaps thinks me depending upon Church people and maybe he thinks that to please them at the cost of my conscience is my duty; and this is how I shall be acknowledging God and His guidance. God forbid that I should ever be so, and accept religious doctrine only to please men, and thence obtain my necessities. I felt bound to tell you all that which happened yesterday because you know all about the correspondence between me and the Dean, and I felt it more so because the Dean mentioned your name when he said, "I am very sorry for it" — (for I do not at once consent to accept the deity of our Lord) — "and so is Miss Beale". But I sincerely trust that Miss Beale does not mind arguing with me, and so far as I know she has never told me that she would not even talk to me if I come to argue with, and not simply to be dumb before her when she teaches Scripture. I cannot even suspect this of you. But dear Miss Beale, if you do mind it, and are sorry because I do not accept the Church doctrine without proving it, please say it quite openly, and I will tear to pieces the letter containing seventy-six pages, which I have just finished writing, and never say to you even one word about my difficulties. But this shall not stop me from studying the Bible and proving this doctrine of the deity of Christ, if it be true or untrue. Other people may call me an infidel if they like, but I trust in Him who alone is my God, Father and Guide, and [Who] will surely shoe me His ways.

With love and honour to you,  
I am your humble pupil,  
MARY RAMA

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78 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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(In another hand : "Summer vacation")

Friday: 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I tried to read and copy your friend's letter yesterday, but could not make it out, so I had to stop after copying half of a passage. Also I have been, after long labour, able to read a little of Canon Butler's letter, in which he says, "Wish *rather* to agree than disagree", and "I am so sure of my ground that if only I have to speak to what the Lord calls 'an honest and good heart' I could show the rightness of what I advance".

To tell you the truth, I am rather afraid to speak to Canon Butler. And not only to him but to all those who think all that they advance is true, and that if they could not make others agree with them, they are of course ready to think that they spoke to dishonest 'hearts'.

While he advises me to “wish rather to agree than to disagree” he of course remains unbound by this rule. When I set to argue with people I should not like to have my opponent (I mean in argument) obstinate and full of prejudice, and of an opinion that whatever he thinks is true, and there can be no other way of salvation but his, and people who do not agree with him are not honest. He is apt to be a second God by commanding “Thou shalt believe and do what I say”.

Argument in religious matters ought not to be like that of lawyers in courts of justice. Lawyers think it right to adhere to their own opinion and try to establish its truthfulness in any manner that they can find. But religion is such an awful thing. Its triumph is not of this world; if we in [a] wrong way and according to our obstinate belief, bring another poor brother to believe what we do, it is dangerous not only to us but also we are guilty of leading our brother in [a] wrong way, and we must answer for it before the judgment seat.

The Sisters at Wantage have always been very kind and generous towards me, but I was and am afraid to speak to them in this matter of religion; because I see that their whole tone is that they are right, and what they say is right, and if I ask any question they are apt to say : “You sin against such and such commandment of God”. So I think I had better not open my mouth before any good people who are too sure of their ground. In other matters I will obey my elders, and accept at once what they say, but this religious matter is not Algebra or Arithmetic, so that all its rules may be proved by experiments. Neither have I a faith in Christianity which comes from my childhood. The good Sisters and people like them have perhaps never questioned its truthfulness, but I do, and I must, so it is quite natural that they should think anyone who questions the truthfulness of their belief is sinning.

I shall do my best not to keep to my own, but to accept readily what shall be proved to be true, though it may be very hard. But I should at the same time expect you or any other with whom I may argue [to] be generously prepared to acknowledge the truth if it be proved on my side. I hope you will not be vexed with this proposal. I am not writing (whenever I write on religious matters) to the Lady Principal and to her authority but to Miss Beale, who if she thinks like myself has not yet quite found the truth, but is searching after truth, and is a fellow-labourer with me.

I hope this my saying will not sound unpolite.

Your very humbly,  
MARY RAMA

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79 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage  
1st September 1885

My dear Miss Beale,

I was very much delighted to get your letter this morning and have been trying to enter into your thoughts. Although I cannot yet fully enter into them, I must try to tell you one particular thing which I am perhaps wrong taking in that light in which I see it. I was reading your letter over again, when it occurred to me that if “the entering into limitations does not”, according to your conception. “affect the essence”, why should the stream of Light which flows from the Father through His Word into all human beings—the little channels—not be as pure as that which is in Christ? I am sure in your simile you do not mean the stream of Light and Life is ever defiled or made impure because it flows into some sinful beings. No, if that were so, you would be teaching the same Hindoo religion which teaches that God's essence is so much degraded, when it comes into human nature that there does not exist much difference between those two. What do you mean then by the Stream's remaining pure in

Christ? To my understanding, it seems impossible that the boundless and most pure essence of our Heavenly Father should ever be limited or mixed with the impurities of the lower human nature, though it is everywhere and in every limited thing it is boundless and pure. Is not the same God who dwells in Christ dwelling in you and me, yet can we ever say that our lower nature can touch Him? No, the Upanishadas—the revelation of God to the Hindoos, if I may call them so—teach that the Great Brahma which is in a manifest atom, yet is in His nature unbounded, and most pure, dwelling in everything, yet untouched by the lower nature, just as the lotus leaf, though it grows in water, yet is not wetted by the water. If we do not agree with this teaching, we must either say that God is not omnipresent or that His essence can be defiled by or mixed with the lower nature of creatures, which is against Bible teaching.

What are we to understand then when we read the sayings of Christ : “I and my Father are one”, and “No one knoweth the Father save the Son”, is the question to be answered. It is manifest from some other sayings of Christ that being one the Father, and knowing the Father are no proofs of being the Deity itself, for He desires His disciples to be one with the Father, and He tells us that it is possible for any man to know the Father whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Please do not think that I am answering the question to you; but I am telling you what I at present understand by the two sentences above quoted.

Christ was one with the Father—one in will and design—because He *knew* the Father. We are not and cannot be one with the Father, as long as our sinful nature is alive in us. This is the difference which I see between other men and Christ. If we knew the Father, we should not differ from Him. This thought is I think most beautifully and plainly put into the mouth of the psalmist in the 95th Psalm, which we sing at morning prayer. “It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways”. Whenever we depart from God and cease to know Him or His ways, we err, and the eyes of our mind become blind and do not see Him. The mystery of man’s two selves of which you were speaking seems to me to be nothing but man’s being conscious of the awful and holy presence of God which makes him shun unrighteous works. This, I think, is like a mirror put before man in which he sees himself exactly as he is, and is then able to find what is wrong in him, and the grace of God is the power by which he judges himself and tries to put things right. When we see ourselves in a looking glass, we fancy we are seeing another person exactly like us, or a second self; but as we know very well it is our own shadow and not a second person, so we should know that the self which judges the self of man seen in the mirror of conscience is nothing but itself reflected in the consciousness of God’s presence. Didn’t you think it is so? When we sin and depart from God, that state of miserable darkness is called the hardening of the heart in the Biblical language. It is true, and I know it by my own experience. At the very remembrance of that dreadful time my soul begins to faint. I have several times felt as if there were no light or life in my heart, all was dark and hard and myself could not be reflected into it. I was as it were dead to myself without any consciousness of the Holy Presence of God before which I dare not even think of an unrighteous act. When, through my own sinful intention, the glass of conscience is dimmed and the darkness prevails I go astray, not being able to see the right path. But sometimes God is most gracious to let His light shine in the thick darkness, then the mirror of conscience is cleared a little and myself is reflected where I can see all its impurities and [I] am sorry. Don’t you think this is the mysterious second self which sees itself reflected? I cannot think of anything else. Our Saviour being a sinless man, never ceased to be conscious of God’s presence in Him, which made Him so utterly one with God in will that His human will almost disappeared in the Divine, and his soul was absorbed as it were in the Divine Spirit.

This is how I understand Christ being one with the Father, and so far I agree with you. But I shrink from calling Christ the Supreme God, and from worshipping Him as God. To give the title and worship which belongs only to the God of gods to a man, and a created being is, to my understanding, nothing but idolatry. Christ’s not being Almighty and Omniscient is not to me a proof of God’s coming into the limitation of creaturely existence, but it is a proof of His [Christ’s] perfect and limited human nature. And Christ’s goodness is the manifestation of the Divine Light which dwelt in Him, for which I thank and glorify God, because He has given such hope to men. I believe that as God’s

dwelling in me and you does not limit His power or holiness, so His dwelling in Christ did not bring Him into limitation. But the difference is in being conscious of His presence only.

I am not quite sure, but I take it for granted that St. John's Gospel is authentic and so is the whole Bible; all that I want you to do is to prove the deity of Christ by reasonably explained words of the Bible, and then I shall be able to believe in it---if it be so---with the help of your philosophical explanation. But until then I cannot accept philosophy as my sole teacher. The definition of Christ's object which I want to find in the Bible if I am to believe in it; explained and written as clearly in the Word of God as in the word of the 3rd and the 4th and the nineteenth century.

It is too late in the night and I must go to sleep. With much love and honour,

I remain,  
Your humble pupil,  
MARY RAMA

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80 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage, Berks,  
September 3rd, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I have answered your kind letter of August 30th. You wonder I do not speak about the spiritual guidance, but there are very few things which I can express in words. All the words that I can collect seem so imperfect and so few to describe the inner feeling [that] I dare not speak about it. Then when I desire to pour it out as it were all that passes in my heart, I feel as if I am held back by somebody. This is really an awful state of mind which I am experiencing from a few months. I wonder if you have ever experienced it; but I am almost sure you must have done so, or else your thoughts could not flow so rapidly. I remember seeing the stream of the Ganges near its source; as it was advancing, huge rocks and peaks of the Himalayas seemed to stop it, and block its way before it. The little stream hesitates to advance, and finds it very difficult to make its way through the rocky part of its cradle; but as it goes on it is joined by some other sister streams, and its rapidity is increased and finally it is so much widened that it looks like a little ocean and flows calmly into the sea. I think you must have experienced this growth and state of the Ganges in yourself. I am but a baby stream and have to make my way through the rocky part of my life, and am at present stupefied by the immensity of [the] difficulties before me. I was reading the 8th Chapter of St. Mark this morning. I thought I was the blind man whom our Saviour was leading out of the village. I am really blind and resolve blindly to follow the Master. I do hope my eyes will be opened by the grace of God.

This is all that I can tell about the spiritual guidance. Today my spirit is very heavy. I try and do my best to suffer anything as calmly as I can, but sometimes it seems impossible.

Good-bye,  
Yours humbly,  
MARY RAMA

St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
September 21st, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to put a new difficulty before me, for which I think Him, and tell you what it is. When I first went to Cheltenham, it was settled that my child should stay here under the care of my kind friends, the Sisters; so I left her here, but now I cannot do so. It is not because the Sisters are not willing to have her. They are willing to have her and they are most kind to both. I could not have found better friends to leave my child with. But the difficulty is that they being orthodox believers in the Athanasian Creed, they want to give my child an early religious education according to their faith, but I cannot conscientiously consent to it as I do not believe in that Creed. At the same time my child must not grow to be a godless creature without any religion at all. But to leave her here to learn the Creed in which I do not believe is not right. For it has pleased God to make me her mother and it is my first duty that I should bring her up teaching her those things which I believe to be true and right, as long as she is not able to think and judge for herself. So I am come between two impossibilities. As it is impossible to leave my child here, so I think it is impossible to have her with me at Cheltenham. Now the only thing which is left to me is to leave the College and go my way by which God will lead me. I shall, as you know, be very sorry to leave your teaching so soon, but I feel my duty to my child is greater than any of my own happiness in this world. If I neglect to do it, I shall be guilty before God and man. The Sisters say it is impossible that they should teach the child according to my faith, and so it is with me impossible to let her be taught against my belief. Let the only wise God settle this question Himself. Meanwhile, with my best love and honour to you,

I am,  
Your humble pupil,  
MARY RAMA

St. Hilda's  
Monday : October 12th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

It was very good of you to come here last night to assure me of your sympathy. I think Sister Geraldine is very good, and so are all the Sisters at Wantage. She is not wrong in saying what she thinks to be true and right. It is very true that I never questioned her about the validity of the Athanasian Creed. I once understood that my asking questions offended her or she misunderstood me, for I knew then almost nothing of the English language. And after my baptism, for nearly a year, I have tried hard to follow all her instructions to believe in her faith so that she had no reason to think that I did not believe altogether or partly in her faith. I myself remember those times with much sorrow how I used to struggle with myself, not being able to express my doubts to anyone, nor having any external help to illuminate my understanding and to comfort my weak heart. I remember to have asked a friend to believe simply what he was told and not to bother himself about proofs. My head seemed for a time to have lost all power to think and [I] know I had to give up all learning and reading books for six months. But thanks to God and to the kind care of the Sisters, my head was



strong again—strong to think upon these matters, though not much. God does not neglect even the least of His children; He has given me spiritual strength to pursue the (search after) truth, and to exercise my understanding as well as reason, and revelation in religious thoughts. I regret to hear people saying sometimes hard things against reason. Has not the same God given us our reason, Who has created us after His likeness, and Who gives us revelation and all other blessings? Are we not right in making use of His gracious gift, the reason as we make use of other gifts? And I believe revelation is not a store of gross absurdities that cannot stand the test of reason. If we had to give up reason even in matters of faith we would be no better than some lower animals. As you have not much time to spare, I will abstain from writing [a] long letter about my belief[s].

St. Stephen's request to Christ that he should receive his spirit was, I think, not a form of prayer, but he was bearing witness of Christ's resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and the Lord appeared to him as we are told in the Acts. When the Master appeared to him, it was but right and natural that he should say, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit" (or rather myself), for he was being martyred for Christ, and saying so he assured his enemies that his witness that Christ was exalted to the right hand of the Father was true. So has St. Paul in many places wished that the Lord under God should guide the ways of his fellow-Christians. We have good reason to believe that in the Apostolic time the Spirit of the Lord appeared to the first Christians and told them where to go or what to do. The Lord had appeared to St. Paul, and in other . . . (. . . wanting. . .). . . So, now, he may certainly have thankful remembrance of Gordon, but can he offer thanks to him as an act of prayer?

Sister Geraldine charges me with ungratefulness to Christ because I do not offer my sacrifice of thanksgiving to Him as God, but she would not do so if she had understood what I meant. We in our Communion service give thanks to God for sending His Son to redeem us, and we partake of the bread and wine in thankful remembrance of His Son's death. And by living [a] Christ-like life we show our thankfulness to Christ and to God. What did our Lord say to His disciples? It was not by addressing Him Lord, Lord, that we show our love toward Him, but keeping the commandments of God [and] living according to His teaching.

I meant to make this letter as short as could be, but this is come to four sheets and I hope you will not be tired of it. I shall be more careful next time. One more thing which I could not tell you last night is this [that] I cannot bear the thought of leaving Cheltenham and go somewhere else if I stay in England for education. I am so very well used to the teaching given here and to people, but if I go to some other place, it will be very long before I could get settled and apply my mind to study. And perhaps by that time it will be time for me to leave England. And also another thing which is extremely painful to me is the thought of leaving the Sisters and to stay with other people only because I could not agree with them in all things. It seems to be [a] very ungrateful act toward those who have been so very kind to us both. Let the differences of our different conceptions be what they may, but as far as it remains in my power I do not intend to hurt their feelings; in religious matters where I must do what seems to me the right thing I cannot help hurting their feelings to a certain extent, but this is quite a different thing. I would much rather that I go to India than stay in this country to give pain to my friends and to myself and to give a cause to those people who do not like the Sisters to think that they had been unkind to me or that I had quarreled with them. I hope you will understand me as you have always done, and think over these matters at your leisure.

Yours humbly,  
MARY RAMA

(Undated : Probably  
the summer of 1885)

Dear Miss Beale,

It was very good of Mr. Gore that he came to talk to me, but I am sorry to say that his explanations did not satisfy me. He gave the following passages to establish the deity of Jesus Christ. St. John : XII, 41 referred to Isaiah VI : 1-6; St. John XX:28; Acts XX : 28; Phil. II : 5-8; Col. I : 16, 17 and Rev. V : 13 St. John XII : 41 which is referred to Isaiah does not assist to assert Christ's deity. Because first of all we have to read the passages very carefully and see if it (John XII: 41) really does refer to Isaiah VI: 1-6. He seems to think the verse which is alluded to that of the ninth verse of 6th chapter of Isaiah has in it the phrase: "He saw his glory" which glory is described from 1-6 Isaiah VI, therefore it must have been applied to (he meant the glory) Christ. It does not appear to me that St. John means here the glory of Almighty God, but the glory of Christ which is described in Isaiah (Chapter LIII : 2-13) and which was seen by Abraham in his prophetic foreknowledge as we are told by Christ himself (John VIII : 54-56). And indeed it is more consistent if we take it so, because the Almighty God had the Glory in Himself with which He was glorified by "His God". For it is evident from the Psalmist's words: ("therefore God thy God has anointed thee") that Christ was anointed and glorified (from Christ's own words too) by the Supreme Father, *His God*, Christ's Glory after he had been perfected through passion and trials was derived from God, and here the receiver is of course inferior to the giver, as appears from "My Father is greater than I". As far as I can understand, St. John did not believe Christ to be the Supreme God or con-substantial, co-equal with God, the Second Person of the Trinity; but even if we suppose that he did so at first, still we have his own witness in Rev. 22 that he was corrected by Jesus in his love and grace. This I will show at the end of this letter.

Secondly, even if we suppose that John alluded to the glory of God, I at least cannot be satisfied about the accuracy of the quotations of the Evangelists if I must take them literally and fully applied to Christ. For example, let us consider two passages which are quoted by St. Matthew if they are literally and fully applicable to Christ. First of them is Matthew I : 23. St. Matthew refers to the 14th verse of the 7th chapter. . . . (something is missing here..) which is said in the very next verse about the son whom God loved and brought out of Egypt, but "they sacrificed unto the Baalim". Was Jesus Christ ever guilty of such a thing? God forbid that we should ever be driven to think so!

There are a great many prophecies which are by the Apostles applied to Christ which were only partly fulfilled in him. The passages in Heb. 1 : 5-8 were first fulfilled in David and then in Christ as it is evident from Psalm 89 : 19-28; 2: 7-10 and Psalm 45. This Psalm is made wholly "touching the king" David. If we take it not so, there will be a greater difficulty in reconciling the thought of Christ being God's begotten son before the foundations of the world, with the words of the Psalmist where he says he (the Son) had been begotten on one particular day in king David's reign.

I cannot think [why] we should apply to Christ one phrase or verse which if we apply to David or Hezekiah or Israel would sound disagreeable in our ear, and all the rest [of the] verses to Israel and to their kings which if applied to Christ would not agree with our established doctrine of His Godhead. And this is really the case if we were to follow the explanation given by the clergy. Because there is the same phrase in Isaiah VI and XII, "his glory" we must take it applicable to Christ and think that he was God the Almighty while in Hosea XI : 1 [it] is only applied to Christ, and the next verse to Israel. So all the good thing said about other people, if they can only in any way be brought about to agree with Christ's life, movements or words, they are applied to him only, and nobody else must have least share with him. Is not the same thing done with the prophecy of Isaiah, and poor king Hezekiah is deprived of his titles "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Ever-lasting Father, and Immanuel", which titles justly belong to him? When I hear such things said

by the clergy, I cannot help comparing them with the old Hindoo theologians who always try to prove the deity of their incarnated God in the same way.

The second passage given by Mr. Gore is St. John XX : 28, in which Thomas says to Jesus Christ, “My Lord and my God”. I think this is only an exclamation, but Mr. Gore thinks it to be the confession [of] Christ’s Godhead by Thomas. This, however, cannot be proved. We find nothing like confession in this phrase. For in several other passages, where Christ desires his disciples to say what they think of him, they say, “Thou art the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16 : 16); “Thou art the Christ” (Mark 8 : 29); “But who say ye that I am?” And Peter answering said, “The Christ of God”, (Luke 9 : 20), and so on. Here in St. John XX : 28, neither Christ desires Thomas to tell him what he thought of him, nor other disciples understand (at least they do not say so) that it was the confession of Christ’s Godhead. On the contrary St. John in the 31st verse tells us that “these (things) are writing that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”, etc. But he does not say “that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ through living God, “or the second person of the Trinity co-equal with God Almighty”! On seeing a very wonderful thing such as the risen Lord it is not very strange that the amazed disciple, who refused to believe such a thing unless he should see it, should exclaim “My Lord and my God”. This sort of exclamation is not unfamiliar either to Jews, Mohomedans or to Hindoos. Mr. Gore thinks if it (the phrase “My Lord and my God”) were not fully applicable to Christ, Christ must be reckoned as guilty of encouraging Thomas to say so. We however cannot bring this charge against Christ, without making him guilty of encouraging people to say a great many things that were not true, e.g. John 18 : 30. Here the Jews say that Jesus was an evil-doer; but Christ did not correct them, and so in a great many other places we find that some dreadful charges were brought against him, but he did not correct the people. Are we to derive from these instances that if Christ did not himself say any wrong thing, he at least encouraged other to do so, and therefore he was guilty? There is not to be found in his discourse one instance where he did not correct people who misunderstood his nature (I mean when there was any chance of taking him to be God Almighty). He always corrected them, in principles, doctrines where they misunderstood. For instance, John 5: 18-30 where the Jews thought that he was making himself equal with God, but he openly denies the charge by saying that he himself could do nothing, and that all authority was given him by the Father, and he executed the Father’s commandments, etc. Thomas’s exclamation had nothing to do with his deity but it is evident from the context that Thomas had not believed in his resurrection, and this was the only thing that was to be proved on that occasion.

The third passage mentioned by Mr. Gore in Acts XX: 28— “To feed the Church of God, which he purchased with his own blood”. Here he lays stress on the words “God” and “his own blood”. But I find, both in the original Greek and in the revised version of the New Testament, that the word “God” in this passage is disputed. Many ancient authorities read “the Lord” or *Kuriou*. According to this assertion we may read “the Lord” instead of “God”; and indeed [the] passage sounds blasphemous if we read it with the words “God” and “his own blood”; we shall then be driven to acknowledge that God has blood in his veins as we have it, and that He was “crucified, dead and buried”. Can we reconcile this sort of language— which if applied to Almighty God becomes blasphemous— with the notion of God, the Spirit as it is revealed in the Scriptures.

The fourth passage referred to by Mr. Gore is Phil. 2 : 5-8. Here the first phrase is “being in the form of God”, and may I not ask, were [we] not created in God’s “own image”, and are we not like God? “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*” . . . . “And God created man *in His own image*, in the *image of God* created He him; male and female created He them”. The translation “to be on an *equality with God*” is not a correct one.

As it is found in the original Greek [it] means, “*to be like God*” and not to be an *equality* with God. In John 5 : 18 the word is used which signifies equal, But does not mean equal; as I find in the lexicon, it means *like* . Well, then, being in the form of God, Christ did not count it robbery or prize as it is translated by the Revisers, neither should *we count it* robbery to be like God, because we are told that we are not mere animals, but are created *in God’s own image, and after His Likeness*. On the contrary, we should be ashamed to do anything which is not in God and which is not like God’s

image—I mean sin. But because we are formed after God’s likeness, are we to be so proud and lofty that we should shrink from serving our fellow-creatures? And this is the advice of the Apostle, though we may be very rich, learned, powerful or lofty, but humble ourselves as Christ our Master humbled himself by emptying himself of all the glory and greatness which he had received from the Father. Christ emptied himself (St. Paul does not *say of what* but we imagine) of his greatness and glory which he had with the Father before the world, “Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world but was manifested at the end of the times”. But still all this does not establish His Godhead. He was no doubt “the first and the last” and he was anointed as Messiah from time immemorial, but he is nowhere said to be co-equal with the Father as our divines assert.

The fifth passage shown by Mr. Gore is Col. I : 16, 17. Here St. Paul asserts that “all things have been created through him and unto him”. What has this passage to do in establishing Christ’s deity, I cannot understand. Perhaps he means because all things were created through Christ and unto Christ, he must be God. It does not however assist to prove this. God has used Christ—or rather the Word which is personified and manifested in Christ—as an instrument in creating things, but he is after all a creature, though “first-born of all creation”. (See Col. III : 10— “Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that *created him*.” This new man I presume is no other than Christ. Also Eph. 4 : 24). In Rev. 3: 15 as well as in Col. 1 : 15 Christ is Said to be the *first-born or the beginning of God’s creation*. So no wonder that God gave him glory and honour that which was due to the first-born, but it does not establish his Godhead. As he is the first-born, God has given him all things, but at the same time God has not deprived us of the things which were really created for us or unto us in some extent. Is the whole universe created only for its own sake, is it not “unto us” in (to) some extent? Certainly it is, so we see and experience in our daily life. But it does not in any way establish our *Godhead*, though we are His images created after His likeness, and have dominion on earth at least, if not in heaven, but in the next world we are called to be His heirs, and to reign with Christ for ever and ever.

The sixth and the last passage mentioned by Mr. Gore is Rev. 5 : 13. Here Mr. Gore thinks that because “blessing and honour and dominion” is pronounced to him for ever and ever he must be God. But first of all let us think and see if this power, etc. come to the Lamb as his Own—I mean had he them of himself? No. He plainly says everything, power and authority, glory and honour are given to him by the Eternal Father, because he kept all His Commandment; and the Scriptures assert that they are not given to Christ only but to all them that keep God’s commandment. Christ was glorified by God Himself, then there is no reason why all created things should not give glory to Him. We are bound to honour and to give glory, and to be subject to them, whom God has appointed to be superiors to us. Is not Christ as first-born of all creation superior to all creatures; why then, should not all creature give due honour to him? But in giving honour and power and glory and dominion to him we must remember that the glory and worship which is due to God only is not given to the Lamb by the creatures and the elders. Just notice the difference between the grand song of praise sung to God and praise sung to the Lamb in Rev. 4 : 8-11. “And when the living creatures shall give glory and honour and *thanks*”, etc. — Chapter 7 : 12, “Blessing and glory, wisdom and *thanksgiving*” etc. Chapter 11 : 17 “We give thee *thanks*, O Lord God Almighty”, etc, Chapter 15:3-5 “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying— Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear O Lord, and glorify thy name? *For thou only are holy*, for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been manifest”. (Don’t you love this grand and beautiful song of Moses and of the Lamb?) And chapter 19 : 5-7 “Give praise to our God”, etc. “Hallelujah”; for “the Lord our God the Almighty reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us *give the glory unto him*”, etc. From these and from many other passages we see that the honour and praise which is due to God only is never given to anyone else but to Himself. Though our Common Prayer Book says of Christ, “Thou only art holy . . . O Christ” this honour and the title “The Lord our God Almighty” which are due [to] God only are nowhere given to the Lamb in the whole Bible. When I mentioned to Mr. Gore he said that, “Thanksgiving” was much less than honour and glory. I ask you if you can honestly say so. I am sure I cannot agree with Mr. Gore in this respect. We are commanded by God to

*honour our father and mother*, and He *honours them* who honour Him, He gives glory and honour and power to whomsoever He pleases to give these, but Thanksgiving—I mean in worship—and the song “Holy, Holy, Holy, Thou only art Holy O Lord our God Almighty”, is due to Him and Him only (I wish I could sing His praises for ever; but may we not hope if it pleases God, we also— imperfect as we are—we shall be made perfect in Christ and join our feeble voices to those of the Heavenly Hosts, and the company of Christ’s followers!). Now let us turn once more and hear what Christ Jesus says to St. John (see the whole of the Chapter 23 of Revelation) after he had shown all things to him; this Jesus our Blessed Lord who is “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end”.

Revelation, Chapter 22: 8-9 “And I John saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen I fell down to worship before the feet of the Angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy *fellow-servant* with thee and of thy brethren the Prophets, and with them that keep words of this book : worship God”.

“And he saith unto me”..... “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches”. — (Verse sixteenth).

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the Prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this Prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book”, — (Verses 18, 19).

In this last chapter of the Revelation, the pronoun “He” goes through with an unbroken string, and that same “He” says “He” is the Alpha and Omega, etc. and he cometh to render each man according to his own word, and the same He says to St. John that “See thou do it not, etc.....worship God”. Can we do otherwise than that which he forcefully commands us to do, and dare we add to or to take away any words of this Book of Prophecy and case our lot among those unfortunate men upon whom the dreadful curse (in. verses 18, 19) is pronounced? God forbid! When I showed this passage to Mr. Gore he said that there was not any commentary written on it (or something like this) but I said I am not bound to believe in comments, I believe in the Word of God only and in the testimony of His Prophets. I am a disciple of Christ—though one of the least—and not of the commentators.

So here I must stop. I am very sorry to vex you again with such a long letter and with my still more incorrect language. But you will, I trust, forgive me. I could not help writing it because you will not have time to have such a long talk with me.

With love and honour to you,

I remain,  
Your humble pupil,  
**MARY RAMA**

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84 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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St. Hilda’s : Sunday

Dear Miss Beale,

Here is a letter from Sister Geraldine which I received this morning. It will speak for itself. I need not say anything about it. The three things which are the great points of this letter strike me more than anything else. They are : —

**Contents**



*First* : That Sister Geraldine endeavours to prove that I have not a clear conscience left in me to judge for myself and my child

*Second* : That the childlike faith consists in not reading books what she calls are against the teaching of the Catholic church. And not reasoning with yourself or friends but simply to say yes, and, I believe, when told to believe in the Athanasian Creed.

*Third* : She would charge me with having made a false profession of Christian Faith when I did not, or did for a time, believe in it. And refers to my first intercourse with you.

I do not recollect—as far as I remember—having said to you anything which I do not believe even to this moment. But perhaps you remember it also; will you kindly tell me in what I have differed with my own sayings since that time?

Did I say to you I believe fully in the Athanasian Creed? What I have said was that [the] Hindoo religion gave me teaching but not an example. The Hindoo religion brings Supreme Being, the Holy God to the level of a creature like myself but Christianity lifts man up to God. What is the lifting up of a man to God can be better understood by reading and imitating the life of Christ than by describing it in my defective words.

I do not think I have ever hesitated to tell and ask you about my doubts. I have never asked you one single question about the truthfulness and superiority of Christ's teaching. I would not have accepted Christ's religion as mine if I were not convinced of its beauty and superiority. But I have from the time since you began to teach me Scriptures asked you to explain to me the mystery of the deity of Christ, and of the Athanasian Creed, which I hope you will remember from the first term after I came to study at the College and you began to give me some time for myself, and I have given you my reasons in asking questions about that matter; that if I believe in this creed without any foundation and good reason, I shall not be able to answer my adversaries; therefore, I must be thoroughly instructed. But because I cannot believe (after trying hard) in the Athanasian Creed, can I be justly charged with false profession of Christianity when I do not say one single word or even think of saying anything against Christ's teaching? Is Christianity the teaching of Christ or the teaching of a certain body of men? I should like to know. If it is taken as the teaching of a certain party, I can with a good conscience say that I have never believed in that teaching, and am not bound to accept it.

There is, however, one point which is: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church". So I do, but what is [the] Catholic Church? Is it the English Church? Is it the Lutheran Church? I understand by it the Church Universal, the multitude of men and women believe in Christ and in his teaching, consciously or unconsciously, in any country, tribe or sect. A certain body of men cannot claim to be the only Catholics in the world. In this sense alone, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church", and regard any person belonging to this Church as the most beloved child of God and disciple of Christ. Under such a condition you would perhaps ask me [why] I have been baptized into the English Church when wisest men belonging to this branch of the Church regard the Athanasian Creed to be the rule of their faith. To this my answer is that if I were baptized into any other Church, people would say the same things; where then should I have been baptized satisfactorily? But what right has anyone to ask me such a question? Does baptism belong to certain men or party—is it not universal? Has not Christ given the right to become the son of God to anyone who believe in this name I might as well say under such circumstances, "Behold here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest", (Acts: 8:36, 37). And I answer with the Church, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*.

So I believe neither I am charged with the false profession of Christian faith, nor the person who baptized me is guilty of doing so, just because I do not accept the Athanasian Creed as my Creed. I deny that I have made the sponsors guilty in God's sight because I was baptized in their presence. I have professed to believe in Christian faith before God and before the whole congregation and believe in it according to the light which is given to me. They have no just cause to complain about it. I



should have made known to them all my objections to the Athanasian Creed if they had granted a fair hearing to my objections. As they would not do so, I took no further notice of it and read what they wrote, repeated in the Catechism what they told me to learn by heart. I repeat thousands of verses of Hindoo religious books by heart, but repeating is not believing them. But I did not believe what they told me, that their doctrines were taught in the Bible but I am not allowed to ask them to show me the proofs out of the Bible, and am still bound to believe in their telling which I do not find in the Bible. Well, there will be a time when all questions will be decided and every creature will be judged rightly according to his or her faith and deed.

Here I stop.

With my love, I remain,  
Yours humbly,  
MARY RAMA

*P.S.* —I think the last page of Sister Geraldine's letter needs a little explanation. When I heard from her that she would not teach my child according to my request, there was left nothing for me but to leave Cheltenham and stay with my child. So I told Sister Geraldine that after leaving Cheltenham, I shall go back to India, but I should like to have some discipline for my future work or rather plan, before my departure. She refers to that: my letter in which I had written it. You will see from her writing that some of the conditions are such as I shall not be able to submit [to]. For instance, the list of books, and my correspondence, etc. I have no objection whatever to other matters but I cannot help reading various kinds of books especially on theology, and it is such books that I have to give up reading. Among my correspondents there are many Theists, and my own countrypeople and dear friends, and I suppose it is with such friends I shall not be allowed to have correspondence. I have reason to believe so because they are the hated people of my Trinitarian friends.

I was very much amused to read the last paragraph of Sister Geraldine's letter. She sees my pride and caste prejudice—as she calls it—even in pies and puddings. (I suppose according to Sister Geraldine's statements I shall be justified in calling some Sisters out in India proud and prejudiced who, for whatever reason it may be, do not eat and like all the things we Hindoos are brought up to like and eat!)

Under these circumstances, if I cannot have my child with me in England, I must start at once for India. The God in whom I have trusted, and who loves me and my child just as much as any other persons in the world, will guide and protect us. Now, I ask your advice for what I am to do. Shall I stay here until the end of this term or shall I go now to Wantage, and make preparations for my departure? I will not answer Sister Geraldine's letter, for there is nothing to be answered in it. She has told me what she thinks, and I will do what my God tells me to do, though she denies that God speaks to me, I *believe* He does, and He always has done since I have trusted in Him.

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85 *Letter from MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham, to PANDITA RAMABAI*

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Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
Undated)

Dear Ramabai,

I seem to be so often conversing with you in thought, as though the same problems were being placed before us. This—why does God give us this restless, inextinguishable yearning to know Him, and then baffles us and let us sink and faint upon the earth, like some lark fabled by the poets to

sing till his heart breaks? Is it not because here and yet we are incapable of comprehending the great divine plan, and each of us has through faith to work out the work God has laid before us with the deep trust of a little child, who cannot conceive the parents as other than wise and good. So we know to enable us to do; and all the yearnings are a prophecy of growing understanding, when bounds of this life are broken—even as the formation of the eye and ear in the unborn child are the prophecy of his entrance into a world of light, and the eye must be developed in darkness; should it be dazzled by light too early, it would be destroyed for ever. Shall we be impatient — even to know God? “Verily Thou art a God that hidest thyself”.

Yes, that is a beautiful and true thought of yours, that we see ourselves and all things in the mirror of divine consciousness; indeed thought is inconceivable, and sympathy, except in the sense of that all-embracing life in which we hold communion. Is not this the thought of St. John XIV-XVI especially—or I should say of the beloved Master and Friend into whose consciousness he entered and translated into us?

Some parts of your letter I must think about more ere I can answer.

Your affectionately,  
DOROTHEA BEALE

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86 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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31st May 1885

Undated)

Dear Miss Beale,

To-day I wanted to ask you a great many things, but as you are not here, I will write you a letter. You know perhaps very well what sort of Christian faith I hold, and will not, I hope, be vexed with me if I ask you one thing over again. First of all, let me tell you very clearly that I have not a faith which is very often called child-like—rightly or wrongly. I wish I had it, but [you] know I had to give up that which really was child-like and which had come to me from my childhood, my old faith, entirely and take a new one, which seemed a more rational, purer and nobler one. But in this new faith there were some things which I cannot take in, and I shall not feel myself bound to do so until I know them as far as my poor understanding will carry me. But I must ever continue to search the Scriptures and never stop until I find the lost piece of silver, either in this world or the next.

To-day I had to write out something in the Scripture lesson that I cannot quite understand. Although I read some portions of the *Defence of Christian Faith* and Bampton Lectures, I cannot induce myself entirely to believe the miracles of the Bible. I do not say that God, and men who have the power given them from heaven, cannot work miracles. But the arguments that are put before us to prove the possibility of miracles take my thought away from them. For instance, such as: if a man can lift his arm or foot above the earth against the law of gravitation, cannot God do something which is perhaps not according to the law of nature, e.g. raising the Flood, parting the waters of Jordan, turning, a rod into a serpent, stopping the sun and the moon, raising the dead, giving the blind his sight, etc.?

To give such a proof as raising a man's hand or foot against the law of gravitation, seems to me quite absurd in such a place. If it is the law of nature that bodies should draw other bodies to them, the movement that is necessary for living beings is also the law of nature, but the result is generally bad brings its own punishment with it. As all the laws of nature are, I believe, established by God, for the good order and welfare of the universe, any violation of them is them is not for good. It seems to

me more reasonable that God Himself should not act against His own Laws. Can I believe that for the satisfaction of a handful of people, or only to show His favour to one single person, [He] stopped the sun on a certain mount or valley? You told me the other day that the miracle of Joshua was only a mistranslation, but it does not seem to be so, for in the Revised Version of the Bible they have kept the passage exactly as it was before. It does not make any difference whether the miracle is of the Old or the New Testament, for if I were to believe in [it]. I should be bound to believe those of both Testaments. . . .

I did not write out the Scripture lesson to-night, because I had to write about two miracles, so I thought it would be better to put my thoughts before you in a private letter than to put them in disguise before the whole assembly of my fellow-students. Last time when I wrote upon a miracle—the healing of the sick—I took the story more in the sense of a parable. And so I do with every miracle. But at the same time I do not like to give you a false idea of my belief. I am no missionary or teacher in this country, but I hope to be so by God’s grace in my own country, where, of course, I shall not teach or speak against my own conscience in this matter. Therefore I want to put all my thoughts exactly as they are before people who will calmly listen to and converse with some sympathy at least. I am ready to acknowledge my faults and to receive the truth when it is proved. I hope you will not think me—as some people do—a vain, proud person who could never listen to others but stick obstinately to her own opinion. I am fully aware of my ignorance in Christian theology but I cannot take everything which is taught by Church people to be an article of faith and, therefore, to be believed.

With love and honour to you,

I am,

Yours very tiresome,

MARY RAMA

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87 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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21, Lansdown Crescent,

Sunday: June 21st, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

You can very well imagine how hard I have to struggle sometimes between the Prayer Book, the Bible and Hindoo religion and my different understandings about them, with no one but my own limited knowledge of these books and the spiritual language of the Spirit of God which passes my understanding to help me. I have of late often been quite disappointed in some people from whom I hoped ever to learn, and who are objects of my honour, but in them I did not find the persons who can see my difficulties. But if I may also join my voice to that of Our Lord in saying “And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me”, to help and guide me, I sincerely trust that He will surely explain Himself his own words to me. But still it is good for me not to abstain myself altogether from communicating my thoughts and difficulties to others, I take this opportunity, which is so kindly granted by you, to place before you a few of my thoughts with a prayer to the Creator of Light to enlighten my mind in which I am sure as a fellow Christian you also join me.

First of all, I shall tell you my Articles of Faith which I am so far able to draw from the Scripture, as my limited knowledge of the Word of God enables [me to do]. I have of late, as you know, after realising the sublime truths of Christ’s teaching, become one of the least of his disciples, and believe in Him as the Messiah of God, and therefore am bound to receive every word which falls from His lips as the command of God which comes to me through His mediation. I am baptized

according to His direction in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; and, therefore, I call myself a Christians, though I do not know if after hearing my creed my fellow Christians would call me so. But that does not matter. It is not for others and for others' opinions that I have accepted Christianity; it is for the salvation of my soul that I come to Christ, and if He accepts me as He surely does according to His promise, I am perfectly happy and satisfied.

My Creed, which I derive directly from Christ's teaching which is strictly necessary for salvation, is as follows:—

(1) To believe in and worship only One God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to love Him with all my mind, soul and strength.

(2) To love my neighbour as myself, for this is the second great commandment, which is given by God, and by Christ as His Messiah.

(3) To believe the Lord Jesus Christ as *the* Messiah who was specially appointed by "His God and our God" and by "His Father and our Father" to save His people from sin, to reveal the sublime love of the Heavenly Father towards His creatures, to us, to judge all men on the last day as the authorized Judge of the Heavenly King, and to be the Mediator of life and light, grace and truth, which came through Him and Him only to the world; and to acknowledge Him as my Saviour and to believe Him to be the Son of God.

(4) For my acknowledgement of the faith which is revealed through Christ and for this reason that I may openly bear witness unto Christ, and to show that I reject any other faith which is not of Christ, I am—according to the instruction of my Saviour—bound to be baptized in the name of God, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

(5) To show my love to the Saviour, for the perpetual remembrance of His death and for keeping up the brotherly spirit between my fellow-Christians, I am according to the command—or rather the last request of our Lord—bound to be partaker of one bread and one cup with all Christians, thus acknowledging the fellowship or Communion of Saints.

This and doing good works with all my might according to Christ's instruction (which is to be found in the four Gospels, especially in St. Matthew's and in St. John's) and to keep away from sin enabled by God's grace is, I sincerely believe, sufficient for my salvation. (If necessary, I will give you the proofs on which my belief of the sufficiency of this Creed is founded.)

It there is anything else that may have escaped my attention, in which I must believe to be saved, I am perfectly willing to submit to it, but first of all it must be proved [that] *that particular thing is commanded* by Jesus Christ; if not by Himself, be it that which is told by His disciples, yet it must agree with His own teaching. I acknowledge the authority of His disciples which was given to them by Him, as He also received it from His Father and His Who God; for, if I reject it I shall be rejecting Christ and rejecting Him who sent Christ to to this world; but, again, I say that the teaching of His disciples which I am bound to believe must necessarily agree with His own doctrine.

Now I hasten to tell you those things which at present I do not believe. I take my points of question from the Athanasian Creed.

This Creed says:

That whosoever wants to be saved must first of all believe in all the things (which are collectively named the Catholic Faith) which are put down in it; if anyone dos not do so, he will without doubt perish everlastingly.

I must tell you that I shall for the present confine my letter only to one or two points in this Creed, for it will be impossible to argue upon all of them in this short letter.

Today I shall carry on my argument only about the second person of this Creed; I shall afterwards speak about the third person.

. . . . (here this letter ends abruptly).

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88    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE Cheltenham*

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St. Hilda's

November 29th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

In my last letter, I have attempted to put the chief articles of my belief as clearly as I could. In this letter I want to make another point clear and ask you some questions about it.

I have told you that I believe in the Apostles' Creed and repeat it, and am baptized into it. But there are two things in this Creed of which I have not as yet had a clear conception as I believe to have had of other points. Of these one is : "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary", and second : "He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead".

About the first of these articles, I cannot talk with a man. So I ask you to hear my doubts and make them as much clear as you can. First of all, I tell you why sometimes I repeat it. It is because the two great Evangelists have written it, though I do not believe that they have written it as eye-witness of the fact. I cannot leave the article out without proving it to be either a pious forgery of some person or find some clear contradiction of this in other passages of Scripture; in that case, I will boldly refuse to repeat and believe it, though I have been baptized into it since no vows taken about anything *not known* can bind a person to follow what is proved not to be true. My reasons for doubting this article are these :

(1) As far we know of the history of mankind told in the Scripture, and from other sources, as well as by our experience, we know that no man except the first couple was ever born without the natural course.

(2) Conceived by the Holy Ghost is an extremely repulsive expression to the mind which thinks of God in reverence. It does not only seem to bring the Supreme God to the level of a man, but also of a sinful man as we read that the Virgin was betrothed to a man and was afterwards married to him.

(3) You think that the whole nature of man is corrupted and therefore even the innocent baby is but newly born is sinful and that Christ, if He were born of the seed of a sinner, could not have lived purely; and that though He was born of the Virgin Mary, [He] could not have inherited the sinful nature since a woman has nothing to do with giving life to a child, it follows that Christ does not inherit the sinful nature. And that is why He was able to lead such a pure life. This theory is worked out well so far as this, but it is established at the cost of refusing Christ to be of the Seed of David, the root and offspring of David as Christ Himself says He is.

I remember once asking Sister Geraldine how could Christ be called the offspring of David if He had not a human father, to which question she. . . . (next portion wanting). . . Mary indirectly as if saying: "God is my Father, Why dost thou call Joseph my father?" Whereas Jesus does not seem to

me to rebuke his mother, [but he] looks somewhat surprised at the question : “Why has thou thus dealt with us?”, seeing [that] his conduct towards his parents was always good and hence they could have guessed that he is sure to be now-here else but in the Temple of God. But if we take it for granted that Jesus disacknowledged Joseph’s relation to him by calling God his Father, can we not say on the same ground that he disacknowledged Mary his mother when he said, “Who is my mother?” Shall we reason from this that Jesus had no real mother, but he called anyone his mother “whosoever do the will of his Father which is in heaven?”

Now about the second article: I have no doubt that Jesus is raised by God from the dead; but I doubt of the resurrection of his earthly body. I cannot reconcile the two contradictory passages “Handle me and see for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have”, and “Now this I say brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God”. What is the difference between the “flesh and bones” and “flesh and blood”? I asked this question to Canon Westcott but he did not me a clear answer.

Now I must not take much of your time.

Yours faithfully,

RAMA

P.S.—I forgot to tell you that I cannot understand the meaning of the sentence “He descended into hell”. Will you tell me what it is?

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89 *Letter from MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham, to an unknown correspondent*

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Ladies’ College, Cheltenham,

November 30th, 1885

Rev. and dear Sir,

Just a few final words, as I have had another talk this morning. I think the great difficulty of the Athanasian Creed arises from the words “By Himself God”. She says, “I believe in Christ as the Eternal Son, the Messiah, the Mediator, the Word of the Father; and in the Holy Spirit as received by us through Christ, but not as separate individualities. If each is by Himself God, i.e. complete, then there must be three Gods”. She has been reproached by native Christian friends for (? .. asking baptism?) while she does not understand the Athanassian Creed, but she does feel herself Christian, and accepts Christ as the Light and the Word and the Truth. She cannot get over her old Hindoo philosophy, which teaches that every man is eternally in God, and this is the root of her belief. She says much what Socrates says in the *Phaedo*.

She thinks [that] in preaching Christ in India, we should adopt St. Paul’s method of preaching Christ and Him crucified; the perfection of His human life; His perpetual (..? comission) and His boundless love. Then most to the philosophical teachers we should show the agreement of Christianity with the great fundamental truths in which all who believe in God are one, and show how Christ came to fulfil the law for Hindoos as well as Jews; to develop and spiritualise and show in the light of heaven the truths which the wisest held only in germ.

She thinks the power of Christianity is being ever more felt in India, and those who come to Europe and see what the power is over life, and the “gesta Christi”, are greatly impressed.

Yours, etc

DOROTHEA BEALE



December 1st, 1885

Dear Miss Beale

I cannot tell you how much I am troubled to see you distressed about my last letter. I had no bad intention in writing, and therefore had not in the least suspected that you will be upset by it. So far as I know I have tried not to hurt your feelings, but also have not concealed from you what my thoughts are about the Creeds. You were most kind to assure me that my belief did not make any difference in your kindness towards me, and I thank you for it. On my part, I have never thought of it. I hate the idea of securing people's love at the expense of truth and religious belief. I shall certainly be very much pained to lose my friend's love and confidence in me, yet I shall rejoice to give up anything for religion, so please God help me to do so.

You asked me if I were pained from my last visit to Wantage. Yes, but not for my temporal inconvenience. I only greatly regret that I have been the cause of several of my friends' disappointment and grief without the least intention of doing so. I have tried my best not to offend the Sisters in any way, but if they are pleased to think so, I cannot help it. I do hope that you will not misunderstand me. I will not fear any temporal loss or inconvenience, but it will give me an inexpressible pain to see you troubled, and myself be the cause of being so.

I had not meant to write another letter on the matter, but as you have asked me to do so, I will try to put clearly all the causes which compel me either to regard the passage as not written by inspired writers, or to translate the word *gennese* (Matthew 1: 20) as created or made, which translation will put an end to all my objections about that particular article.

Yours faithfully

MARY RAMA

Ladies' College, Cheltenham,  
December 12th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I have thought over what you told me about the gentleman's objection to give me any help if I go over to America. I do not know what his objections are but I will tell you what I have decided.

You know that I do not want to go to America for mere pleasure, though I take great delight in seeing different countries. I think it is my duty to go there, first because the kind people who have given every kind of help to my cousin to study medicine want to see me, and have invited me again and again though I have been refusing to go there for nearly a year. Secondly, if I do not go, I shall greatly injure the cause of my countrywomen, for those kind people will think it very rude of me and the interest which they take in my countrywomen will in some measure be lessened. I have unfortunately not been able to study medicine, but I must not be the cause of shutting the way which is open to my countrywomen in America. We greatly need the help of kind people to multiply the number of Hindoo medical women. So I have determined I will risk everything to clear the way. My

own little interest are nothing compared with this great cause, and if I am doing my duty, I trust God will help me at all times and in all places.

I remain,

Your affectionately,  
MARY RAMA MEDHAVI

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92 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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December 12th, 1885

Dear Miss Beale,

I have told you my chief motive in wanting to go to America in the other letter. I want to tell you about another matter which is greatly weighing upon my mind; as I dare not speak it, I put it in this letter. I do certainly want another year's teaching to be able to enter upon my work as teacher. But I fear much if I stay another year in England, my expense will be very great. And as I am manifestly penniless it means to oblige you or your friends to spend money for me. Even if you succeed in collecting £ 100 from the India Office, that sum will not be enough to keep my child and to pay for our passage. You have been very kind to me as long as I have been staying here, but I cannot feel happy if I go on taking money from you. I do feel it is better for me to begin to work and study as well, wherever I find the place and opportunity for it. It is a shame to live as a beggar when I have sound health and strong limbs to work with. It does not matter if my friends at Poona will not have me. There is plenty of room and work in India. If I cannot find a place for teaching, I will do any work which comes before me.

Yours humbly,  
MARY RAMA

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93 *Letter from Professor RACHEL L. BODLEY, Dean, Women's Medical College, Philadelphia to PANDITA RAMABAI Cheltenham*

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Women's Medical College of  
Pennsylvania,  
Philadelphia, P.A.  
Dean's Office : December 28th, 1885

My dear friend,

Your letter, also that of Miss Beale reached me by the same mail to-night. I did know before that you were a student in England and that my plan for you disarranged those made for you by other friends. I regret that unconsciously I have been the means of unhappiness and unrest for you. The responsibility I assume in attempting to reply to your question "Is it not my duty to go to America?" is very great, and I may well hesitate as I write.

We Christians believe that our duty is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Adorable Trinity, and you, I am sure, have already remembered to ask for divine guidance. *If you ask in faith*, the wisdom, will be given (James I : 5, 6).

The impression I have received from your relatives concerning you is that your mission in India is that of an inspirer rather than that of a teacher.

In years past, you have led on and sought to break down barriers and to lift up standards; your countrywomen looking out from their secluded lives have been encouraged to follow on.

This is a grater work than the headship of a school or a professorship in a college.

My thought in inviting you to come to America early in 1886 has been that if the tidings might be sent to India that you braved a wintry ocean to witness Anandibai receive her degree as Doctor of Medicine, you in a certain sense gave your sanction to her act and enfolded her and her work in your own future leadership. Only God knows the work He may yet have for *you* to do in India.

Mrs. Joshee has proved herself a faithful and successful student; if her life and health are spared, a grand professional future awaits her in her native land. Already from two native States proposals for her employment as a Medical Director have come from the highest authority in those States. How far your Christian baptism may for the time being have blocked your among your own kindred and people is unknown only to God. But He has led you safely thus far through the varied scenes of your remarkable life and you must implicitly trust Him and wait ! In His guidance no mistakes are committed.

We have nothing brilliant to offer you in America; I should hope, if you come, that you might stay until about the first of June and address audiences of ladies concerning the women of India.

Should you decide not to come to Anandibai's graduation, there is no other event of sufficient importance to bring you and I do not think it worthwhile for you to plan to come a year later. After the Commencement Mrs. Joshee expects to enter a hospital for a year, and the work will be secluded and unattended at its close by public exercises.

In closing this hastily written letter, I wish you, my dear Ramabai, to understand that I release [you] wholly from any obligation which your acceptance of my invitation may have implied; I understand the whole situation and comprehend how difficult it will be for you to decide what to do. Do not think of us in America as you decide, but only of God and your duty.

With love to the little daughter,

I am,  
Your affectionate friend,  
RACHEL L. BODLEY

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94 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE Cheltenham*

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St. James' Home, Fulham  
January 12th, 1886

My dear Miss Beale,

I do not quite know what you will think of this letter, but I hope that you will rightly understand me. It is very difficult for persons who are in my state of life to understand what their duty is and how they should act. I have prayed and am still praying to God to show me His Will what I

should do. And though you and Mr. Croft and other wise people said I was mistaken in thinking that I must go to America, yet I still feel that it *is* my duty. I received a letter from Prof. Rachel Bodley which I enclose. In it though she does release me from my acceptance of her invitation, her general tone—as you will see—is on the other side. At the present moment, my going to America seems to be unwise to human prudence but I do feel it is my duty. And nothing can ever silence the inner voice which is so strongly and loudly speaking to me. If there is any hope of my getting help from the kind people for my stay in England for another year from May, I shall be glad of it; but if not, I say honesty—that my former weakness and hesitation to follow the inner voice are now vanished. And if I do not follow it still I shall not be happy, for I shall be losing the very first opportunity of following the call after my baptism. And who knows it may never come again in this life. This will perhaps seem very stupid to speak so but it *is* so and I cannot help it. It is very selfish not to think of those in America and of the millions of those in India. I have written to Prof. Rachel Bodley to say that I will come to see them, and with my best love and respect to you,

I remain,  
Yours affectionately,  
MARY RAMA

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95 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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London : January 13th, 1886

Dear Miss Beale,

Yesterday I had a letter from Prof. Rachel Bodley, which I sent to you with a letter telling you what I thought I would do. My letter was posted to Cheltenham which I hope will reach you [on] either Thursday or Friday. But as you want to know what is to be decided I repeat here what I told you in my last letter. I have been praying to God to show me my way, and in answer to that the inner voice tells me nothing but to go to America which decidedly is my duty for the present. I must follow this voice at any sacrifice. I shall not be happy if I do not follow this call to secure my interests at the sacrifice of those of my countrywomen. So you may write to Mr. Fitzgerald that I cannot accept his offer of helping me on condition that I should not go to America. I was thinking of coming to see you instead of writing this letter, but I thought you are likely out to-day. I am going to stay with Mrs. Westcott till Friday morning. Her address is 2, Abbey Gardens, Westminster. If you want to write to me, please address the letter either to Westminster or to Fulham. I shall stay at Fulham from Friday till Monday morning.

Yours,  
MARY RAMA

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96 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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At Sea,  
February-March, 1886

Dear Miss Beale,

I had a conversation with the Roman Catholic lady I mentioned yesterday. I asked her a great many questions. She referred me to a book called “Catholic Belief” by Dr. J. F. de Bruno, (price 6d.

published in England) which I am going to read. I do not like to derive my information of any sect or religion from second-hand sources, so I will do all that I can to be acquainted with the Roman Catholic sect from Roman Catholics themselves. About the doctrine of praying to the Saints, Dr. Bruno says :

If charity prompts us to pray one for another here on earth, may not the Saints pray for us in heaven where “charity never faileth away”? (1 Corr. XIII : 8).

Shall it not be permitted to us who are “fellow-citizens with the Saints” (Eph. II : 19) to ask their intercession that they through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ may obtain for us what things we stand in need of?

He elsewhere says : “they (the Roman Catholics) do not believe that there is any other mediator of Redemption than our Saviour Jesus Christ. ‘For there is none other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved’ than that of Jesus; and when they call the Blessed Virgin or any other Saint mediator, it is not in the sense of Mediator of Redemption attributed to our Saviour, but in the sense of intercessor or pleader, in which sense any Christian may be called a mediator whenever he intercedes or mediates between God and his fellow-man, as Abraham and Moses and St. Paul did, and thus pray for his neighbor. . . . The strong loving expressions used often-times by Catholics, which seems to attribute to the Blessed Virgin more than is here stated, are to be understood in the *limited sense* meant by Catholics themselves, as here explained: that is, in a way consistent with the Catholic teaching and spirit, and not in the unlimited and un-Catholic sense which persons not understanding that teaching may be led to apply to them. These tender expressions, I say, ought not to be judged of by cold or hostile criticism, for they spring from fervent heart-felt devotion, and unmeasured love.

“If it were permitted to take offence at expressions which are only true in a limited sense, surely from those words of Scripture, I have said, ‘are ye all gods’ one might argue that Holy Scripture hold certain men to be really gods. From those words of the Gospel ‘If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children, and brethren and sister. . . he cannot be my disciple’, one might pretend that Christ encourages the hatred of parents and other relatives. That direction of our Lord: ‘If thy right hand scandalise thee, cut it off’ might be taken to justify self-mutilation, and from the words ‘How knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?’ Some might argue that according to Scripture a man can be the savior of his wife.

“If therefore, even in the interpretation of Holy Scripture, it would be wrong principle to take in the full extent expressions that were meant to be understood in a qualified sense only, so still more unjust it would be to apply this wrong principle to expressions found in books of devotion or in religious poetical composition, in which a certain latitude to expansion of a warm heart is allowed.

“In like manner, the title of Worshipful is given to every Guild or ancient Company of the City of London, to Mayors and Magistrates and Justices of the Peace. Thus again in the Marriage Service of the Book of Common Prayer of the Established Church of England, the bridegroom has to say to the bride : ‘With my body I thee worship’”.

I heartily agree with him in his reasons of defending his position, but the one thing that strikes me in his and many other people’s writing is that they all more or less fall in the same mistake, namely when they want to establish the doctrine which *they think* is right, they will give any text a meaning which perhaps was not meant by the author. For instance, this very writer while admitting that in such text as ‘ye are all gods’, ‘If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother’, etc. if taken literally, would seem inconsistent with the whole tenure of the Bible and reason, and therefore must be taken as emphatic expression, defends the doctrines of transubstantiation on the ground that Christ said when he gave the bread and wine to his disciples : ‘This is my body’, and ‘This is my blood’. Here it is maintained that because Christ said, they were his body and blood, and because he is God, and God cannot speak untruth, they are really and truly changed into his flesh and blood. Can we

not say then [that] Christ encouraged his followers to *hate their father and mother*? It was the same person who said 'This is my body', and 'If any one want to come after me and hate not his father and mother', etc. The fact is that the man professing this doctrine *wants* to give the above-mentioned texts meanings which seem consistent with his own ideas. We, if we search ourselves and candidly acknowledge it, none of us are free from this self-deceiving habit, and therefore not fit to judge others for what they say. I do not find fault with Dr. Bruno for saying what he thinks is right, nor am I anxious to find fault with others for the same. But I am partly amused and partly grieved when my opponents are most anxious to impress upon my mind their infallibility in interpreting the Bible, never acknowledging that they are liable [to] making this kind of mistakes while they are loudly denouncing me for it.

I further read in the "Catholic Belief" that the Established Church of England is not acknowledged to be "Catholic" by the Roman Catholics, and they denounce the people who say they "believe in the holy Catholic Church" and do not unite themselves with the Roman Catholic Church and acknowledge the infallibility of the Pope. The Roman Catholics say the Protestant interpretation (including the English Church) of the word 'Catholic' is purely imaginary, that there is no other Church but Roman Catholic and that only is "Holy, Apostolic, one and Catholic".

Ajeebai (Sister Geraldine) ran almost mad with anger when I said that she had no right to call the Dissenters heretics, because she herself belonged to a Church which is but a Dissenting sect of the Roman Catholic. I should like to know what kind of an answer she would give to Dr. Bruno if she heard him saying the English Church is a heresy. I am sure I shall hear the answer will be given in the same way by her to a Roman Catholic as by a Baptist or Wesleyan, if they were called a heretic by her or by Dean Butler. Missionaries who want to convert the Hindoos to their own religion would do well to take care not to call themselves the only inheritors of truth, and all others "the so-called false philosophers", for the Hindoos as a rule will not be content to look or hear only one side, and it is quite natural that they should not.

March 5th, 1886

We are still in the ship. The sea has been unusually rough, and something was wrong with the engine. We arrived here (about seventy miles from Philadelphia) yesterday and the ship stuck fast in the mud at seven o'clock last night. We hope to start to-night and to arrive at Philadelphia by tomorrow morning. With love to all my friends at the College.

My address will be :

1400 North 21st Street,  
Philadelphia, U.S.A.

I remain, affectionately yours,  
MARY RAMA

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97 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, America, to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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1400 North 21st Street,  
Philadelphia, April 1886

Dear Miss Beale,

I was so very glad to get your letter this morning, and I do not say "Out of sight is out of mind". You are very often in my thought so I think people cannot be thinking of someone who does not think of them.



The voyage has truly told upon my child's and my health. My child had malaria, but is better now. I had a little cold and was very much exhausted. Now we are recovering.

I have spoken before several assemblies since I came here. People seem to like my imperfect speeches. If I get any report of these meetings, I will send them to you. I have paid my expenses, and have about fifty dollars left in my hand. All the reports that you hear about the American people have, I think some exaggeration in them. I have not as yet seen any of the extremes in this country; it is perhaps because I am surrounded with good people. The people I have come across have given me great satisfaction. As for the imperfections of manners, customs and characters, I think there is no nation on earth free from all these things. And one thing is sure, that if we once put the spectacles of finding faults on our noses, we shall always find them at all times and in all places.

Will you accept the *Oriental Christ* from me as a token of love?

I had never seen this book until I came to this country. It is written by one of my countrymen, Mr. Muzumdar. I like it very much as for as fifth chapter, and was thinking of you as I read it. The chapter called "The Praying Christ" is truly beautiful. I thought you would like to read as I do. If I were at Cheltenham while reading it, I would have been on my way your house at that very moment!.

There is another book written by a spiritual who does not claim the authorship of that book; he says he heard the words as the spirit told him, and he went on writing as a medium. Whatever the case may be, I have no doubt that the writer was deeply religious and honest . . . . One passage in it, which I like much runs thus:

God is just. Will he not then punish by external tortures those rebels against his laws who living only for self, have delighted in crime and walked in wickedness; who have really acted ungodly as if there were no God? Alas for humanity! It would persuade itself that it is superior to God in mercy and compassion. The most daring rebels are pardoned by human governments, and the Governors are commended for their humanity. *They* have acted upon the preaching of the Messiah. *They* have heaped coals of fire upon the heads of their enemies. They have overcome evil with good. But is God less merciful? Is vengeance more necessary to him? Is the fear of terrible punishment necessarily ever to be held before the imagination of his enemies, to enable him to overcome their evil with good? Is man only to act upon the heavenly teaching of Jesus the Messiah? Is he only to forgive insults and injuries? No ! These teachings are heavenly, because they inculcate God's order, God's laws, God's rules of justice and mercy. When Jesus taught these doctrines their novelty was startling. He taught as no man ever taught. Now we commend the teaching, we glorify those whose actions accord with it. But do men believe themselves generally capable of acting in accordance with them, or do they not rather put them off as beyond their nature, as being too God-like, as pertaining too much to heaven to be practiced on earth? . . . . How then will you not permit God's justice to be reconciled with mercy? Has God need to protect his station by punishing rebels with eternal torture? Not so. The action of men can impair their own present happiness, but God who sees to the end, does not feel annoyed by the evil or sin. Thou fool ! Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Cease to impute to God actions you yourself would be ashamed of, you yourself feel incapable of inflicting upon your own children. You seem even to desire that God should be unforgiving in his nature, if only you, selfish creatures, can be saved by the sacrifice of an innocent victim. (pp. 12, 13).

And on the sixth page it is written that:

"He, the servant of God," is always resigned to the dispensations of God's will; because he feels and knows that God loves him, and does not afflict him from hate or revenge, but that *pity and compassion are the nearest approach to wrath of which God is capable.*

There are many deep philosophical thought in this book. I should therefore like you to read it if you will find time to do so.

## Contents

Now comes the hard thing on my part which I have to write to you. Though I have profited by staying in your College as I should never have done by staying anywhere else, I find that I must for the present not expect to return to Cheltenham. There are some very good and learned people here, renowned for their management of school and teaching little children especially, of whom Mr. McAlister and Miss Hallowell may be mentioned as the best. Mr. McAlister is the Public School Superintendent, and Miss Hallowell is the Superintendent of about twenty-one kindergartens.

How to teach the children and their mother is *the thing* for me to be learnt at present. I therefore intend to stay here some time and learn this art, I cannot say how long, I shall at the same time continue my mathematical studies. Miss Hallowell has promised to make some arrangement for me, as she knows I cannot hear in classes; she will, I hope, make some special arrangements for my study. I send the following list of books that Mr. McAlister has recommended for my special studies. I intend to attend some classes and to see the work carried on at the National Kindergarten Training School as well as to study privately with Mr. McAlister and Miss Hallowell. I hope you will approve of my intention.

The magazine did safely arrive. Dr. Bodley sends her kind regards to you; she wants to have a number of that magazine containing "The Hindu Woman's Life". Will you be able to send a copy to her?

My cousin has very successfully passed her examination, and received her diploma on the eleventh of March. She is going to stay one more year in this country to gain some experience by practicing at women's hospitals at Boston and elsewhere. I am afraid I must stop here, as I have to write some other letters for this mail. I enclose a note for Miss Holmes, and a note for Miss Lumby.

Hoping soon to hear from you, I remain,

With love and respect,  
Your humble pupil,  
MARY RAMA

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98    *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, *Cheltenham*

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553, North 16th Street,  
Philadelphia, U.S.A.  
October 7th, 1886

Dear Miss Beale,

I received your kind letter just after my return from the Niagara Falls, where I went to spend a few days with my cousin. I have seen one of the most beautiful and grandest sights of the world; no words are sufficiently expressive to describe its beauty and grandeur. There I thought of you and many other friends who would have been delighted to see the Falls. One morning I roamed alone on the Goat Island in the midst of the Niagara River. A very fine view of the Falls can be obtained from this island. I went and stood at the foot of the great precipice from which the American Falls roll down, and thought how little man was! I do not wonder that the ancients were moved to worship the Almighty Being manifested in such objects. I stood there stupefied with wonder. Death, Life, Eternity seemed to stand before me. If a David were standing there in my place he might have exclaimed in his sublime poetical language, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth" and then proceeded to describe the Falls. We Saw the Falls from [the] Canadian side. The beautiful rainbow appeared over them as a halo of glory! We could hardly tear ourselves from such a place.

I regret I have not with me a book called "A Century of Dishonour", which contains a beautiful passage describing a North American Indian youth while he was staying at the Niagara. He worshipped the Great Spirit there according to his national custom and threw in the stream all his ornaments one by one as the best things which he had to give to the Great Spirit. I will in my next letter copy the passage for you. I hope you have by this time received the *Oriental Christ* which I sent with Mano.

I am busy making preparations for my cousin's departure, who sails for England on the 9th instant. I regret to say that she is ill, and not able to go to Cheltenham. Her physicians say that she must not stay in England. She has got [a] bad cold and cough, [and] has to be extremely careful. She sails for India on the 28th instant from London. After all, I shall have to go home through England, for I cannot send my child with Dr. Joshee to India as I had hoped before. However, I shall not regret my return to England as I have so many friends there. I hear that Old Ajeebai (Sister Geraldine) is not at all well; I am sorry for her. It is a real disappointment to such an active person as Sister Geraldine not to be able to work.

I hope St. Hilda's is prospering. I was delighted to hear about the unveiling of the statue. I am looking forward to the pleasure of seeing the statue, and the dear old place again.

My books arrived here safely. Please give my thanks to Miss Holmes for the trouble she took in sending them. I hope to write to her as soon as I find time.

With much respect,

I am,  
Affectionately yours  
MARY RAMA

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99 Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham

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Jamaica Plain, Mass.  
May 22nd, 1887

Dear Miss Beale,

I was very glad indeed to receive your kind letter. I am for a few days away from Philadelphia, but I will send you as soon as I return there, an extract from Mr. Joshee's letter that was printed in one of the leading papers of this country, giving all particulars of his experience in England. I too cannot realise that any ship could have refused to take Dr. Joshee on board simply because she was a Hindu woman, but when I remember the daily occurrence of misbehavior of many a short-sighted English [person] toward my countrypeople I do not wonder if such a thing has indeed taken place in England. This we must remember was not the treatment that was offered by good English [people]. The Hindus have sufficient commonsense to make [a] distinction between the good and bad, but unfortunately it is the latter class that are mostly found in India. I would not have been surprised at it if the incident had occurred on Indian soil, for it is one of the daily occurrences there; but to think it took place in England is really remarkable, for whatever may be said of the English in India, I have almost in all cases found them very polite and kind to strangers at home.

I read in both your letters that you sent my manuscript back for my perusal, but it has not come to me; I am afraid it must have been lost on its way. I do not know whether I shall be able to leave this country before next winter. I have not in hand any reports of my speeches published in

papers, or I would certainly have sent them to you. You shall before long receive a little work of mine on the “High Caste Hindu Woman” which I have published with a view to give [giving] a clear idea of the Hindu women’s needs, and in the “Appeal” you will find a statement of my plan for my future work.

I am afraid the imprisonment for six months will not end the RUKHMABAI [case]. Here is an extract from a paper found in the *Indian Magazine* for May. The paper is written by an English person who is well informed on the subject.

‘The Government’, say the *Times*, ‘will not use its power to interfere with social customs . . . The law will give Rukhmabai no help against private persecution. But the resolution which tells her this, tells her also that *when caste or custom lays down a rule which does not need the aid of the Civil or Criminal Courts* for its enforcement, State interference is *not* thought to be expedient’. Just so, yet the Civil Court has been allowed in this case to interfere, . . . and to give its sanction to an injustice revolting to every right-thinking mind. What makes the matter more grievous is that even after suffering the six months’ imprisonment awarded by the Court, Rukhmabai is, it is feared, liable to a fresh prosecution and a fresh term of imprisonment; and this sort of persecution may be repeated again and again, until either her spirit is broken into submission, or death comes to end her sorrows.

Foot-note on **RUKHMABAI** case:

This law is not only applicable to orthodox Hindu women, but also to women converts to Christianity. According to the Hindu law, a woman has no individuality; she “is not independent”, says the law; “males are her master”, and (that) she “is the marital property” of her husband. So you see, a Hindu woman—unless she be a widows and destitute of friends and relatives—cannot follow even the dictates of her own conscience. She is absolutely the property of her husband and must follow the command of the Hindu law even though she be a Christian, simply because her Hindu lord wills it and the English are obliged to fulfill his lordly wish according to the promise that they have made to him. I shall be the last person to urge upon the English to break their promise, but what strikes me most is the remarkable indifference shown by the English in executing this promise when it comes between themselves and their own interests in India. But they wash their hands and prove their innocence to the world for not protecting the defenceless woman’s person and right by pointing to the promise. Any impartial student of [the] history of the English in India cannot fail to see this characteristic in most cases. It is very easy to bring excuses before the world, but they will be poor instruments of defence when we stand before the judgment throne of heaven. I wonder if such outrageous acts of the English Government will be excused by heaven simply because they have promised to please the males of our country at the cost of women’s right and happiness. They have promised indeed to please the men, and they do rightly give their decision in men’s favour! But what of the over one hundred million of women? Were the promises given to women? And what a beneficial Government it is that does not care in the least to defend nearly half of the inhabitants of the country from the tyrannical lords whose marital property the women are said to be ! But is the conduct of the English Government in such cases as Rukhmabai’s at all justifiable, even if it is taken for granted that the English keep all their promises alike? I have no hesitation to say “No” . I have myself studied the Hindu Law, and do not find anything in it that will warrant such conduct on the part of the Government. My own impression is further confirmed by the statement of the writer already quoted :

Nor is this all; for though there is no doubt that according to Hindu custom, Rukhmabai is the plaintiff’s wife, and must incur certain caste penalties for not living with him, yet he could *not* in the pre-English times have invoked the aid of the King’s or Civil Courts at all. Actions at law for restitution of conjugal rights were, as Mr. Justice Pinhey pointed out in his judgment, unknown to the Hindu Civil Law.

So you see this constitutes no part of the English promise, yet we are told that it is the promise that compels the English to do this gross injustice to India's women. I very much doubt whether the English Government will make any change in the Hindus matrimonial law, for it is dreadfully afraid of offending the men's feeling lest its profit and rule in India be endangered. The English would have allowed even the *Suttee* rite to take place if it were one of the commandment of the Hindu religion, for were not the good Christian missionaries who protested against it seventy years ago flatly replied [to] by the east India Company's servants that they dare not interfere with the religious customs of the natives? Had it not been for Raja Rammohan Roy, who laboured to abolish *Suttee* and who pointed out that it was not the religion of the country, the English would have winked at the widow-burning even in these days, just as they do now at many an inhuman custom, excusing themselves with the promise! I say this not because I like it or have the slightest intention to hurt your feelings but because I feel you are misinformed on this subject; and I have no doubt you will not even dream of countenancing or excusing such things if you know the truth. It is not from any earthly government or law that the oppressed Hindu woman must expect justice. The heavenly government alone can give her impartial justice, for it has not to fear any misfortune that will befall it from the displeasure of men in India. I have no doubt that God will enquire into our case in His own good time. It is false to expect any justice for India's daughters from the English Government, for instead of befriending her the Government has proved to be a worse tyrant to her than the native society and religion. It advocates on [the] one hand the education and emancipation of the Hindu woman, and then, when the woman is educated and refuses to be a slave in soul and body to the man against whom her whole nature revolts, the English Government comes to break her spirit allowing its law to become an instrument for rivetting her chains.

I hope you will not be offended with me; I have said the truth, and am not sorry for it. I shall always protest against such injustice; every right-minded person will, and must do so.

I am afraid this letter is getting very long and tiresome, so I must stop here.

With much love and respect,

I remain,  
Affectionately yours  
**MARY RAMA**

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100    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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36, Ruthland Square,  
Boston, Mass.  
December 19th, 1887

Dear Miss Beale,

The enclosed notice that appeared in the *Boston Morning Journal* of the 15th instant will inform you all about our meeting and how the Central Association was formed. The circular will soon be issued by the Association; it will contain the Report of the past work and of measures to be adopted by us in the future. I am very thankful for all this, for although I had some hopes—only hopes—I was not quite sure whether I would be able to do anything in this country when I left England.

I met a friend of my cousin Dr. Joshee's at the meeting the other day. Her name is Miss Borden; she lives at "The Palmerston", Boston, U.S.A. She reassured me that the extraordinary treatment that Dr. Joshee and her husband received from the British India Steamship Company (who

would not take her on board their ship simply because she was a Hindu woman) was quite true. At the time when I heard of it, I could not believe [it] and nobody could; but Mr. Joshee's account of his travel appeared in a well-known Boston Paper, and I of course could not doubt the fact after that, as I know neither the correspondent who gave his full signature nor the editors of the paper could publish anything of the kind unless it was true. When you asked me to give you some proof, I set to work—but in vain—to find out the names of the English lady and her husband who were so kind to my cousin. I met Miss Borden quite accidentally as I did not know that this was the lady who could give me any information about the matter. Miss Borden tells me that she heard of it from the very lady who befriended Dr. Joshee in London. It happened in the following manner.

Miss Borden wrote a letter to her friend telling her of Dr. Joshee and also giving her the address where she might find Dr. Joshee when she arrived in London. The lady called on my cousin accordingly and found her alone at the hotel coughing and fearfully ill. Soon after Mr. Joshee came in and informed his wife and the lady that the

British India Liner Steamship Company's agent had refused to give passage on board the ship and the reason they gave for it; and that it would be impossible for them to sail home, because the special S. S. line (P. & O. Line) that was open for Hindus and all the rest would cost eighteen guineas than they had in their hands. The kind-hearted lady who had called on Dr. Joshee looked rather incredulous and at the same time felt very sorry for the poor little Hindu. She went to her husband and told him of it and they decided to send a messenger to the Steamship Company's office to find out whether Mr. Joshee's story was true. Unfortunately enough they found it all a plain fact. The gentleman then took in the situation at once. He could plainly see the poor invalid was dying of consumption and that it was quite impossible for her to sail without a little more money. He risked the eighteen pounds, took a paper signed by Dr. and Mr. Joshee agreeing to return the money to him as soon as possible and in two days the sick woman and her husband—who got a third-class passage because he had not money enough to procure for himself a first class berth—were on their way home. I am thankful to say Mr. Joshee has paid the money back. While it hurts me to think of the brutal treatment of poor Dr. Joshee by the British India Steamship Company, I shall never cease to be grateful to those two kind people who came to her rescue in her dire need. Their names are: Mrs. S. R. Pattison and Mr. S. R. Pattison, F.G.S. You can write and ask these people whether the above story is true. I have not written to them. The story has come to me through Mrs. Pattison's personal friend, Miss Borden now for the second time. Mrs. Pattison's address is : 5, Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead, London.

I have nothing more to say; only I wanted to prove that the story was not invented by me, and I have no cause to disbelieve Miss Borden who told it to me. I would only be too glad to know that it has not happened so if it really has not. Had Dr. Joshee been well at the time she was refused passage on the ship we all would have accepted the ill-treatment in our cool philosophic Hindu fashion! I am quite reconciled with myself now, and I freely forgive the Steamship Company, just as I expect to be forgiven. But last June when I wrote my letter to you, it was all so fresh, the disappointment was a terrible blow, all my hopes and expectations about Dr. Joshee's brilliant career and her useful life that was to be devoted to the welfare of our countrywomen, had suddenly been buried with her, and to add to all my misery, the news came from India that another precious friend was to be imprisoned and persecuted by a Government which professes to be just. Flesh and blood could not endure it so easily as one might expect. I had no desire to go over this matter again, but I had to comply with your request to give you a little more proof about the Steamship Company. I hope the proof will be satisfactory and that you will bury it all in the past as I will. Please give my love to all the friends at the College and at St. Hilda's.

Believe me,

Most cordially yours,

**MARY RAMA**



St. George's Rectory,  
Toronto, Canada,  
May 25th, 1888

My dear Miss Beale,

Last week I had the pleasure of an interview with Ramabai and after hearing her lecture, I promised I would write and tell you I had seen her. She is looking very well and gave us a most interesting lecture, so clever and amusing. She is very hard on the male sex, and has very extreme views on the subject of women's rights.

We are all very much interested in her work and her *Life of the High Caste Hindu Woman* is eagerly read. It is wonderful to think that she has already \$30,000 and expects to have as much more before she leaves America.

She seemed very sorry not to be going back to England, but I believe she sails from San Francisco in the autumn. She told me she was very anxious to keep up her connexion with the College through the medium of the Daisy Guild, and at her desire. I have sent her address to Miss M. Andrews, and the money for a daisy badge.

I shall always be, dear Miss Beale,  
Yours most gratefully,  
CECIL MAUD CAYLEY

1408, Van Ness Avenue,  
San Francisco, California, U.S.A.,  
October 7th 1888

Dear Miss Beale,

Your very kind letter was forwarded by dear Old Ajeebai, and reached me a week ago while I was staying in Tacoma Washington Territory, about nine hundred miles north of San Francisco. I can scarcely realise that a distance of over six thousand miles lies between you and me, that it is still possible for us to reach the right hand of fellowship to each other across an ocean and a continent. The saying that neither time nor distance can separate spirits can be realized in such cases.

Although I may have seemed neglectful for not having answered your first letter, I do not forget you and I am sure you know the cause of this delay. Since last December my hands have been very full, perpetual travel, attending meetings, writing letters, calling on persons or receiving calls, and a score more duties completely occupied my time. There have been many changes in my plans to suit the circumstances, and I am not quit sure yet which way I shall go.

I left Philadelphia early in May for my travel in the Great West, but I was suddenly called back from the State of Iowa about 1,700 miles from Philadelphia by a telegram which said that dear Bodley was no more on this earth. This surprised and grieved me more than I can tell, for I had a letter from Dr. Bodley only a few days before she died. She was one of my best friends in America and I feel her loss greatly. She has a mother over eighty-five years old who still lives with her sister, but was living with her at the time of her death. I grieve more for that poor old lady than for anybody else.

My work had increased wonderfully, there are over 63 circles now, about \$5,000 annual subscriptions pledged for my Child Widow's Home and about \$11,000 given for the building. Now I am working here to get the remaining \$ 14,000 that are necessary to build the school house; and if I am not successful here, I must go back to New York. In that case, I shall return to England and hope to see my old friends once more before going to India.

I met a "Daisy Guild" girl in Toronto, Canada, when I went there last June. It was so nice and delightful to meet someone who knew you and was at the College when I had the Pleasure of being in the same place. Through this young lady, I sent my annual subscription and also procured one of the silver badges.

How I wish you could come to this wonderful land, so grand and inspiring to the lover of nature, with all its mountains and lovely lakes and rivers. I came across the continent by way of Colorado and saw the "Grand Canyons of Colorado" or Grand Canyons of Arkansas as it is generally called. Also the Black Canyon more grand and beautiful than the former. Crossing the Rocky Mountains, I came on the wonderfully fertile valley of Utah and saw the "Zion" of the Mormons, Salt Lake City, and the great Salt Lake after which the city is named. The history of the rise and progress of the Mormon sect is very sad and instructive. I had thought that the Shakta Sect of India was the worst of all religious sects, but the Mormon sect is worse still.

The city of San Francisco is situated on an arm of land between the Bay of San Francisco and the Pacific Ocean. The Bay, especially the Golden Gate that is the entrance to bay is a wonderful sight. While travelling in the North, I saw five snow-clad mountains ranging from 14,444 ft. down to about 11,000 ft. high Mount Tacoma in the Washington Territory is a very beautiful sight. The mountain has three or four glaciers which are the source of several rivers. Oregon State and Washington Territory are not very thickly settled. There are such immense forests of pine and fir trees and these States are renowned for their lumber. This country is vast and grand in natural beauty beyond all imagination, but as to the beauty in large buildings and houses, there is nothing like England. Houses are built mostly of wood and are but little superior to the Asiatic adobes or flat-roofed thick-walled mud houses. Here and there we see a nice residence of some rich man or a nice little church. In large cities of the East, there are many very large and beautiful buildings, business establishments, college buildings, hotels, etc.

Do you read the *Century Magazine*? Some very interesting and ably written articles appear in it. There was a very excellent article headed "The Industrial Idea in Education" in the September *Century*. I read an essay written by George Kennan on his visit to Count Tolstoy in Russia which interested me in the Count and have since read some of his writings translated in English. His *My Religion* I liked best. I suppose you have seen Mr. Sinett's *Esoteric Buddhism*; there is a great deal that is good and some matter for thought but the more I reflect on it the more I feel inclined to think that it is a very interesting nonsense. Some days ago, I read a book called *Underground Russia* and am reading the account of the Siberian exile system by George Kennan who is an eye-witness of the sufferings of these political prisoners. Having thoroughly examined their condition, he was at last convinced of the fiendish cruelty and injustice of the Russian Government. I cannot but sympathise with the Nihilists and Revolutionists of Russia, though they may have faults. In my travels and active life I find so little time to sit down and read, but I will get the book you mention in your letter and read it, I shall be happy to know of any other book that will be interesting and instructive.

Now my dear friend, I must wish you good-bye. How I long to see you once more and listen to your Bible reading and lectures quietly for a few days before going in among a people who are mine, but who look [upon] me as a foe and a stranger.

The nearer the time comes for my homeward journey, the more I shrink from the thought of what unknown things wait for me there; at the same time, I have the assurance that the Almighty is on my side and rest in the hope that the moral courage and spiritual and physical strength which I need so much everyday will be sent to me from above like the daily bread.

With much love for yourself and for all the friends.

I am ever,  
Yours devotedly,  
Rama

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103    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay, to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,  
Bombay: May 30th, 1889

Dear Miss Beale,

About two months ago the Rev. Mr. Beale came here and gave your letter to me. I was very glad to receive it. Thank you for your good wishes for my success. I called on Father Page and Mr. Beale a few days after I reached Bombay. I will not repeat my old excuse for not writing soon, for it will never come to an end. I landed here on 1st of February and went to Poona the next day. There I found my child with the Sisters and met the gentlemen of our Advisory Board. They advised me to open my school in Bombay instead of Poona. I returned here on the third day and began to work like a steam engine. By the 10th of March, I had finished making all arrangements—hiring and furnishing a house, buying school materials, advertising and a hundred nameless things. On the eleventh, a number of ladies and gentlemen were invited to be present at the opening of “Sharada Sadan”, that is, the “Home of the Goddess of Learning”. We had a nice time on that day; all went well, about 150 people were present, many made encouraging speeches. I was determined to open the school even if I had no more than one pupil, but I had two. I am beginning to understand the value of little things and small openings. It is two months and twenty days since the school was opened, I have eighteen pupils now, most of them belonging to the Brahman caste. Five Brahman girls are staying with me in the school. One of them, Godubai, a child widow, who has been here from the beginning is much interested in our religion. She was brought to know the faith by little Mano. She said she wishes to be a Christian as she sees clearly the difference between a Hindu and a Christian home. She joins us in our morning prayer every day. I read the Bible and pray in the Marathi language [so] that she may understand. I hope she and many more of my sisters may find the “Way, the Truth, and the Life”. There is an American lady who assists me in teaching the school. People criticise me and my work as they please. Some are in favour and the great majority is against my work. I have lately delivered a series of nine lectures on my experience in America. They have done much toward reducing the prejudice some of our best educated men had toward [against] my work. Missionaries as a rule do not like the idea of my school being wholly secular; and the orthodox Hindu finds it repulsive to have me, a Christian outcaste for his daughter’s teacher. I work on quietly as my conscience leads me and the motto “If God is for us who is against us” is a great comfort to me. So much about my school and myself.

It seems very selfish to be talking about oneself, but I thought you would like to hear how I was getting on. I hope you are quite well. How I should like to see you here and take you to the

Himalayas if I could! When I am tired and my mind is burdened with gloomy thoughts, I love to think of the old time spent at Cheltenham, your morning prayers and Bible readings and our excursions on the hill. I am very glad to hear of the splendid progress of your College and St. Hilda's. Please give my love to my friends in the College and believe me with a great deal of love,

Sincerely and affectionately yours,  
RAMABAI

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104 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay, *to* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, *Cheltenham*

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Bombay, January 16th, 1890

My dear Miss Beale,

Many thanks for both of your kind letters. I enjoyed reading the article published in the *Cheltenham Examiner* about you; I shall always keep it. The College Magazine came all right, many thanks for the same. It is always interesting to hear about the College and its students. I was very sorry indeed to hear of Miss Buckoll's death. All the College people must miss her very much, she was such a nice woman.

I am getting along slowly with my work. I have ten widows in this school now. There are eight other girls also. I am thinking of going to Central India and to Madras Presidency on a lecture tour so as to make this school and the work connected with it known to the people in those parts of India. I hope you are well.

With much love and all best wishes for the New Year,

RBelieve me  
Yours most sincerely,  
RAMABAI

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105 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay, *to* MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, *Cheltenham*

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Sharda Sadan, Bombay,  
September 29th, 1890

Dear Miss Beale,

Thank you very much for both of your letters. I was greatly interested in reading the sketch of your life which you kindly sent me. I have been a very bad correspondent, but hope you will forgive me for it. I very often think of you and fancy my spirit in communion with yours. I visited my old home on the south-western coast about three months ago. The old mountains, the tall tree, gigantic forests and beautiful valleys that surround my home looked very lovely. How I would like to take you there, but I fancy the travel in bullock carts will be more than you can stand.

My school is getting on nicely. I have seventeen widows and fifteen other girls in the school. Of these twenty-two girls live with me in the house. They enjoy their school life very much, all are

happy and full of hopes for the future. We have many difficulties and discouragements to face, but the kind Heavenly Father has been helping us on wonderfully.

Our school is going to be removed to Poona on the last day of the next month. The high rate of exchange has made us much poorer than we were last year, and the frightful expenses which we have are more than we can stand at Bombay.

I do not know just how much money you have for me, but I wish to give it to help in the work of our Daisy Guild. So please make it over to the Treasurer as a little present from a friend. I hope you are quite well. Come to India and take a long rest in the Himalayas; won't you do it?

With much love for yourself and for all my friends at Cheltenham,

I am, as ever,  
Devotedly yours,  
RAMA

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106 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to MISS DOROTHEA BEALE, Cheltenham*

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Sharda Sadan, Poona  
February 19th, 1891

My dear Miss Beale,

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I am ashamed to think that I have not answered it for such long time, but intense pressure of work is my only excuse for the delay.

I am glad and much interested to read all about the Ladies' College. How wonderfully it is progressing, and what a great work the people of our Guild are doing. The last number of the College Magazine you kindly sent me must have been lost on its way to India for it has not reached me.

You will be interested to know that I have thirty young widows besides three deserted wives in my home. Twenty-five of these girls have been saved from a miserable death by starvation, suicide and life of shame. I am glad and thankful to see them happy and full of hopes and earnestly desire to do something to help their suffering sisters. We have been obliged to remove the Sharada Sadan from Bombay to Poona on account of the very expensiveness of the former place. We are settled her now and going on nicely with our school work. I have started a class for young ladies desirous of being trained as kindergarteners. I have nothing like a kindergarten starts as yet, as there are no teachers who are fitted to train the little ones according to Froebel's system.

I hope you are quite well and will come over to India some day. Your brother very kindly called here the other day. He is always kind and comes to see me now and then.

With much love, believe me, as ever,

Yours affectionately,  
RAMABAI

Sharada Sadan, Poona

August 5th, 1892

Dear Miss Beale,

Thank you very much for your kind letter and for the money you sent through **Brother Beale**. I am always glad to get a letter from you, though I fancy you have not much time to be writing letters to all your pupils.

I am glad to say that the Sharda Sadan has a house of its own now. The enclosed newspaper cutting will give you the details of the programme of July 26th on which the new Sharda Sadan was formally opened. I will send a copy of the photo of our new house when it is taken. . . .

I shall be glad to get a large photograph of you if you will send one to me. I should very much like to have it to be put into the drawing room of Sharda Sadan where my girls may get acquainted with at least your picture. **Why** can you not come to India for a few weeks and visit our home and see of our mountains?

With much love,

I am, always your loving pupil,

RAMABAI



## VOLUME III

### A STATEMENT BY SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., WANTAGE

When Ramabai landed in America, she became the guest of Dean Bodley of the Women's Medical College, Philadelphia. In her Ramabai found a true friend. It was she who encouraged her to remain and work out her plans in America. Through the public school system, the kindergarten and industrial training, she saw an open door for her work. After studying these systems, she made her appeal to the people to aid her in establishing a school for high-caste widows. Her appeals were to every denomination. She asked that men and women should form themselves into an undenominational association, to be the custodian of the funds that might be given, and to which she would be responsible for the use of those funds.

The question, who could effect such an organization? Was a difficult one to answer. Dr. P. Brooks (afterwards Bishop Brooks) of Trinity Church, with many of his people, was greatly interested in Ramabai and her cause, and would have gladly done it if possible. Similar offers from Orthodox and Methodists were regretfully declined. The Unitarian body was then recognized as the only Religious body that could organize this work and leave it free from sectarianism. It responded to the appeal. They organized a meeting (May 28th 1887). The Hall was filled to overflowing, the audience was moved to tears and laughter by Ramabai's pathos and keen wit. At the close of her stirring appeal a Provincial Committee was appointed to consider Ramabai's plans. The Rev. Dr. E. E. Hale consented to act as President of the Association and Dr. P. Brooks as Vice-President. Out of seven officers appointed, Unitarians, Episcopalians, Orthodox, Methodists and Baptists were represented. On December 13th, a public meeting was held at which a report was read, a list of officers were elected and a Constitution adopted; and Ramabai saw her long cherished plans take definite form.

That night her joy was too great for sleep; when found sobbing in her room, she exclaimed : "I am crying for joy, that may dream of years has become a reality".

Her feelings found expression in grateful and graceful notes. To the Rector of St. Paul's Church who had appeared unexpectedly, and made a stirring little speech she wrote, "As I was passing St. Paul's this morning on my way to the Hall, I did wish that Church might be represented at the meeting when, lo and behold, St. Paul himself appeared ! If the Apostles are going to take up my work, then India will soon be a land of happy homes."

At a meeting in May the Unitarians as a body retired from the field, having accomplished the work they were asked to do.

After the formation of the Association, Ramabai Started on her work of interesting the American public in her scheme, and shewed a degree of mental and physical endurance that was marvellous in the eyes of an American.

She travelled from Canada to the Pacific Coast, lecturing, forming Circles, studying the educational, philanthropic and charitable institutions, omitting nothing that might prove helpful to her people. Her impassioned appeals enlisted the sympathies of ministers of all denominations, as well as of earnest women and businessmen.

In November 1888, Ramabai bade "Good bye" to a land that had grown very dear to her and turned her face homeward, bright with hopes, through her fears were great as to the reception her countrymen would give her.

[On] February 1st, 1889 Ramabai soot on the shores of her native land after an absence 'Sharda Sadan' signifying : A Home of Wisdom.

Ramabai had found it impossible to give due care and attention to her child while in America; she therefore sent her back to England under the charge of the Stewardess of the vessel by which she had gone to America. In the many strange vicissitudes of Mano's young life, this was the First time of three that by the advice of American friends she was returned to the care of the Wantage Community after having been removed from their care by her mother. In America Mano's health and moral care (was) [were] neglected while Ramabai gave herself to the work of interesting the American public on behalf of the schemes for her countrywomen, and consequently when Mano returned to Wantage, August 1186, the early work had to be recommenced, and there was much to undo before the building up of her character could be gone on with.

SISTER GERALDINE,  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin

#### Annotation

SOME of Ramabai's letters while in America are of great interest. They are quite remarkable in their style, when one remembers that the writer is corresponding in a foreign language, and that in spite of great deafness, which excluded for form general conversation and from ordinarily hearing lectures and sermons, she has acquired correct idiomatic expressions. She relates her travels, describes the physical features of the country she passes through, and enters into the varied society into which her work carried her, speaks of her strenuous efforts in behalf of her first enterprise, and constantly refers to Divine assistance sought and obtained in all her undertakings. She also tells of many philanthropic institutions which she visited in her travels. While in America she wrote the book which did so much to make her fame, *The High Cast Hindu Woman*, to which Dean Bodley contributed an admirable introduction.

A letter of September 11th, 1888 is valuable as showing her clear-headedness as a woman of business. There can be no doubt of her warm and generous nature from the many touches of appreciation and grateful love which are to be found in her correspondence, for her friends at Wantage, in which her letters abound.

SISTER GERALDINE,  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin

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108    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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1400, North, 21st Street,  
Philadelphia,  
May 10th, 1886

Dear Old Ajeebai,

You have perhaps been thinking that I have completely forgotten you by this time. It is so long since I have written to you; nevertheless you are very often in my thoughts.

I have been very busy since I came here, and find scarcely any time to write letters or to enjoy myself after discharging my daily duties. You have no doubt heard from dear Superior that I have decided to stop for some time in this country.

I am going to take a special course of study in the Philadelphia Training College for Female Teachers in order to fit myself for my future profession. I am also thinking of studying Froebel and other philosophies on child culture. My course begins in September. In the meantime, I am occupying myself in visiting different public and private school and colleges in Philadelphia to gain an insight into the general educational system and school organization adopted by [the] people of this country. Mr. McAlister, the Public School Superintendent and Miss Hallowell, the Sub-Primary School Superintendent have both offered their valuable time and advice to assist me in my undertaking. I am also visiting different societies of Philadelphia women.

My cousin has successfully passed her medical examination and had obtained her Diploma. She is now for some time practicing in the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston. She intends to return home in September or October. The State of Kolhapur has offered a nice situation to her in Kolhapur where she is to take charge of the Women's Hospital and instruct some Hindu women in medical science. I intend to send Mano with her to Hindustan, but shall not do so if Mano does not consent to it. Mano has had malaria fever after she came here but is well again. After my arrival in this country, I found out that Mano could not bear the bright sun and complained of her eyes hurting her. On this I consulted a doctor who found out that she overused her eyes in trying to see things at a distance which she could not very well do owing to her short-sightedness. The optic nerve was very much weakened. Now I have given her suitable glasses and she does not suffer any more from the weakness of her eyes. The doctor says she will improve her eyes in about a year or two, when she will not have to wear the glasses except at the time of reading books, but for two years she must wear them. She is well and sends you her love and kisses.

Please tell me all about you and how your health is and whether you have enjoyed your journey abroad. I hear that Sisters Annette and Sophia have come home for their health. It must be very hard upon poor Sister Annette to leave her work which she liked so much. I have not heard from Miss Hurford for a long time. I am going to write to Sister Elizabeth. Please do give my love to your sister and accept a great deal for yourself. I should like to know how your parents are.

Now I must stop here. Hoping to hear soon from you,

I am,  
Your humble child in Christ  
MARY RAMA

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109    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to MISS NOBLE at C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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553, North, 16th Street,  
Philadelphia,  
July 6th, 1886

My dear Miss Noble,

I am very glad to receive your kind letter. If your thinking was caused by my own words and if you think that the tie between St. Mary's Home and me can only exist by my holding every single bit of the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church, I must say that I was not aware of this fact either when I came to Wantage or left it for America. Whether I hold the Christian faith exactly as the Sisters hold it or not, it is not what binds me to the Sisters. You know very well how I came to Wantage. I had not made any such pledge as to profess the Sisters' faith in claiming their kindness, nor do I so now. A faith professed only for gaining others' confidence or love or for any other wordly gain is no faith at all. My acceptance of Christianity is altogether voluntary, and without any such

wish as to please the Sisters or anybody else by doing it. I, therefore, do not think that I have severed the tie between me and the Home, by thinking differently from the inmates of the Sisterhood. If you thought that I have severed it, I assure you that there never existed such a tie between me and the Home. It is next to impossible for me to think in the same way as they do, and they themselves are not ignorant of this fact. Each individual has his or her own way of thinking and believing, and this cannot be otherwise in me. What has the love and respect for our neighbours to do with the mode of thinking and believing of theirs or ours? Each one will stand or fall for his own Lord; who are we to judge or to despise our brother for what he thinks or what he believes? It is in this way, irrespective of either religious belief or mode of thinking, that I love and respect the Sisters for their goodness and virtue. And nothing can sever this tie of gratitude and love except it be so through my ungratefulness. I interpreted your letter this way, which caused a great pain in my inmost heart. I have never concealed anything pertaining to religious beliefs from the Sisters except for a time when I thought they could not understand me through my inability to express my meaning, and there is no cause why you or they should think that the tie existed between us only on account of my accepting literally the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church. I marked in the books which my child was learning (not knowing they were yours, because Mary Gailor had told me that those books were given to Mano) that certain things should not be taught to her, and I think it right for me to do so. If I had known that those books were yours, I would not have marked them. I am fully convinced that I or no one should teach religious things mechanically to anyone, that the religious belief of each individual should be independent of anyone's teaching, that no one had any right to load an infant mind with things that even the teacher of them cannot understand. It is therefore that I do and will interfere with anyone's teaching my child certain things which must be learned, thought over, and inwardly digested by herself just as her own food must be chewed and digested by herself if she wants to derive benefit from it. Things or rather dogmas that are taught in infancy will not—even if we wish it were so—last long; for human beings are independent in this matter. I have been taught a great many things to believe in my childhood which I now think are false, and there are a great many examples of things having happened in this way. I, therefore, shall abstain from teaching my child any kind of dogmas. The simple faith in which I am baptized is sufficient for me. My child's baptism is not binding to her whether she will believe in the Thirty-nine Articles or not, nor is it binding to me. Her baptism was simply a dedication of her to God on my part; but her regenerative baptism through repentance and through the spirit remains yet to be a sacramental rite. I have no power to effect it. My duty is to place before her all the Bible and religious treatises and even let her choose her own religion and faith. I am not responsible for what religion she shall profess. I am bound to bring her up in the love of God and love of her neighbour and will try to so as far as is in my power, but will not load her mind with dogmas, nor let anyone to do it. This is the substance of what I told the Mother Superior and Sister Geraldine when I left her with you before I went to Cheltenham, when I found that a most difficult catechism was being taught to her which I did not like. Now if you think it proper to blame me for acting according to my belief, you are at liberty to do so, but I will once more tell you that there is not, there never existed between me and St. Mary's Home a tie of the belief in the Thirty-nine Articles and therefore it has not been, nor will it be severed. I have a boundless religious sympathy with them in common with all other denominations of Christendom which is not a sectarian sympathy. There is no reason why this should be severed or thought to be severed only because I do not cast my mind like a jelly into the dogmatic press. I have no wish to enter into [a] religious discussion with you, but I wrote this long letter to make matters clear, that I thought you did not take in the same light as I did.

I am very sorry to hear that Sister Geraldine is not well. I do hope she will get well and stay at home even if she does not go to India. I should like to know how Sister Rose Emily is getting on, and whether she thinks of returning to her mission of love in India.

Please give my love to the Superior, to Sister Mary, Sister Emma and to dear Old Ajeebai. I will write to her as soon as I find time.

Much love to all the Embroidery Room. With much love and respect to you,

I am,  
Yours affectionately,  
RAMA

*P.S.*—Mano's frock has safely arrived here. I do not see the necessity of sending anything else for Mano unless you are not desirous of having her come to you with the Stewardess in the later part of this month. She sends her love and many kisses to you and to Superior and to all her friends in the Home.

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110    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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553, North, 16th Street  
Philadelphia,  
July 21th, 1886

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I am very sorry to hear that your going abroad had not done you much good. I hope you will soon recover from your illness, and have sufficient strength to stay and work at home even if you are not able to go to India. My child has sailed to—day at 12 o'clock on board [the] *British Princess*. I hope she will arrive at Wantage safe and well. She is looking so healthy and strong. I hope she will not catch any illness on her voyage. Miss Bodley has paid her passage from the money that she collected at my lectures. I did not say anything to her on this matter. I do not want to make any alteration in this matter. Thank you for offering to defray Mano's expenses, etc. and for offering to have her with the high cast girls at Poona, but she shall not go to an orphanage as long as I am living. If Dr. Anandibai Joshee does not take her home, she may stay at Wantage until I come for her. But if it is not inconvenient, Dr. Joshee shall take Mano with her to India, and have her with herself until my return home. It would not be right for me to send my child with anybody else when a countrywoman and a relative of mine is ready to take charge of her and has gladly offered to do it. I hope there will be no difficulty in sending Mano with Dr. Joshee if she comes to take charge of her at Wantage. I hope Mother Superior and you are getting better.

With much love and respects to yourself and to Sister Mary,

I am,  
Affectionately  
yours,  
MARY RAMA

553, North, 16th Street,  
Philadelphia,  
May 20th, 1887

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I am not yet prepared to give any answer to your proposal as to Mano's education in England. You will perfectly understand me, dear Ajeebai, it is very hard to answer it. There are many things to be said on both sides, and you are very kind to care so much for us and I am very grateful to you, though I am not a demonstrating woman; my heart is full of gratitude to those who have been kind to us, but dear Ajeebai, I cannot make up my mind to leave Mano in England; it may be that I shall by and by change my mind. I want her to be one of us, and love our countrypeople as one them, and not a strange or a superior being. We are not as refined and as lofty as the English people are, and if she is brought up in England, she will surely be as an Englishwoman. Even if she comes to me in afterdays, she will be a foreigner and can never occupy the same place in our countrypeople's hearts as if she had been one of them. I do not want her to be too proud to acknowledge that she is one of India's daughters. I do not want her to blush when our name is mentioned. Such being too often the case with those who have made their homes in foreign lands. If I live enough, I will certainly send her abroad to be educated highly after she is about seventeen, for we have not such schools in India for woman where she can be educated according to my choice. But I need not say much about it at present. As I told you I am not prepared fully to answer your letter. I shall think it over. At present she is safe with you and you shall have her if you choose as long as I do not return to England.

Your gifts have not arrived yet, but I thank you very much for them. It is very thoughtful of you to send them to me. Please give my love to Miss Noble and thank her for her gift "Education as Science"; I like the book very much, I shall soon write to Mano and to Miss Noble. Will you please give my love to dear Mother Superior and to all my friends at Wantage?

With much love to yourself and Mano,

I remain,  
Affectionately  
yours,  
MARY RAMA



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*Annotation:* A report on her book [*The High Caste Hindu Woman* by Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, with an introduction by Rachel L. Bodley (Dean of Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania) 1887.] Three specimen copies sent to England of which one was sent here (*i.e.*, at Wantage).

112 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.,  
*Wantage*

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553, North, 16th Street,  
Philadelphia,  
August 10, 1887

My dear Old Ajeebai,

Your letter was received and read great delight and thank you for the most kind advice and the interest you take in my countrywomen. I shall avail myself of the kind offer you make in your letter, namely to look upon St. Mary's Home in Poona as a home and to go there to be refreshed bodily and spiritually.

I send with this letter five copies of my book for my friends. No price shall be taken of them. The two copies in which names are not written are for Mano to give to her friends for I thought they would like it from her more than from me. I wish I had several more copies to give away, but you know the expense is too heavy for me to bear at this time. The books were not bound when I left Philadelphia, I had only three specimen copies to offer and to send (them) all three to my friends in England. I am sorry Miss Beale has got hers, it is lost on its way. It is very strange. I hope you will get these safely. I have not paid the postage, as they are more safe when postage is not paid. I have just returned from my travel in the west and found to my delight several copies here waiting for me; and send some to you. I have not sent yet the 50 copies you order since you thought you could not sell them if they were too expensive. I wait your answer to my last letter to know whether the price 1 dollar 25 cents is too much for you, and if you order them I will see that they are directly sent to you.

With much love,

I remain,  
Yours very affectionately,  
RAMABAI

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113 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., *Wantage*  
On total abstinence

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553, North 16th Street,  
Philadelphia,  
August 27th, 1887

Dear Old Ajeebai,

Your nice long letter came in time. I was much interested in what you said, I respect the Church and its authorities who teach temperance; that is abstinence from all unlawful use or abuse of things God has given us. But I have my own opinion about total abstinence. I think and thousands of my countrypeople think that it is good to totally abstain from intoxicating liquor. We term it sinful to

use it, not because that which God made is bad, but because man has turned it into an evil, a curse to himself and therefore it is bad. Did not God make the opium and tobacco too? Our adversaries ask why not allow a moderate use of opium and tobacco? Are you prepared for allowing this use? Although God made the grape and its juice just as it comes from the fruit, I very much doubt whether it is God's work to corrupt and decay the grapes and similar other things, ferment them and turn them into a poison, namely, alcohol. We have our own reason for wishing that this poison, were prohibited from market. Go into the hearts of great cities and you will find it out. Go into the woe-stricken countries where this trade has been forced and grown rapidly while the Christian missionary work has not kept pace with it in a hundredth part, and you will find it out. The Bible—I am afraid we torture the dear old Bible too much to get all that we want to be in it—although it sanctions moderate use of wines or freedom of will to men (I very much doubt whether it means the modern European wine and whisky) it does at the same time forbid any brother man to put into the wine more than God had originally put in it, it also tells the weak man's strong brother not to put a stumbling block before the weak. Is that not so? And is it not putting stumbling blocks and a strong temptation in the way of the weak to have public shops everywhere, and then sneer at them and call them names because they cannot resist the temptation? If you are endowed with a strong will to resist it, thank God; but you or I have no right to allow an evil the innumerable saloons, to exist in our cities and towns since we know that many would have been happy in the liquor's absence. Do you say that abstinence forced is of no use? Then why not blot all the laws out of all the statute books? Allow every man to use his own conscience in those matters, and let the Church do her best to keep people in order; there is no necessity of police stations and courts of justice, and of the laws that forbid enforced good conduct on many. All honour to the Church that takes care of her children; but like any other fond parents she is liable to mistake one thing for another at times. I think the Mother has mistaken pure juice of grapes which the Lord used and sanctioned for use in the Eucharist, for the fermented alcoholic drink is called wine now. The Church is not infallible, much less are so the clergy who have been brought up to look upon the fermented wine and beer as a necessity of life. It may be all right with you in England to have and encourage the moderate use of liquor; but I know it is not so in my country. It may be an old heathenish prejudice according to your interpretation, but to me it is a good prejudice and I mean to keep it. You who try to convert India to Christianity will have to learn one lesson at least from her, and you will have to yield to it if you would have success in your work. No wonder our people—the good and those who have had this prejudice against liquor—shrink from the missionary who drinks wine and beer. Will not the Church awake to her own and the world's interest before it is too late? There is a general belief in India—it may be a mistaken one—that drunkenness and prostitution are the close companions of Christianity and that these are sanctioned as lawful by the Christians or else why do they grant license to the parties who are instrumental in spreading these vices? Now you know this is not true, but those who profess Christianity and yet think that these evils are necessary will not stand a test before “the poor benighted heathen”. It appears to this heathen to be the Christian's work, and it is high time the Church and Church people tried to remove this horrid enemy by setting the example and show the world that the saloon and the brothel are not included in the “New Creation”. I did not say and do not say to anyone to be proud and think of oneself more than one ought to do by telling one's neighbour that it is dangerous and wrong to use alcoholic liquor. It is so and [the] assertion will bear and has borne the fiery test of science. Is it wrong or proud to tell one's brothers and sisters not to fall into a pit, and when doing so, do we feel very proud because we are thankful we are not falling there, and can this be classed with breach of humility? If so the preacher, the teacher, the parent, friend and neighbour will have to stop saying what is right and wrong. We shall of course have to guard against children getting proud of their virtue, but it is my opinion that if children were taught to live right and a reason for such belief is given, they will make the best teachers in the world and grown-up people will be ashamed to do anything wrong or harmful before the innocent and pure-minded teachers. A good example as good advice is no particular possession of older people. There are many instances in which older have failed while children have succeeded in bringing about the reformation of the apparently hopeless people. We need not be afraid of children getting proud by letting them know what is right and wrong and bring them up so that they may be a help not only to themselves but to their neighbours too.

I do not criticize you for thinking differently, but at the same time I am obliged to differ from you because it is my conviction. I am sorry I have to differ for there is no happiness greater than to be of one opinion with our beloved friends. You know I have been absent from here for two months and the writing-case came while I was away.

Do you think that the money I sent to be paid to Anandibai's [\[Anandibai Bhagat's brothers in Poona\]](#) brothers has reached its destination? If so, will please let me know of it?

Very affectionately yours,  
RAMABAI

The books will soon be sent to you.

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114 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Lekoy, N.Y.,  
November 1st, 1887

Dear Old Ajeebai,

You see I am again on my way round the world but my address is the same: 553 North, 16th Street. I hope you are all well and have received the two hundred copies of my book safely. I have sent a copy with [an] inscription to the Queen through the British Consul, and hope she has got it by this time. . .

The *physiology* was to be kept for Mano. Nothing is farther [from] my intention than that lessons should be given in physiology to the baby at this stage. I had no other book near me, and I was anxious that you should read the destructive influence of alcohol on brain and nerves and muscles, etc. and as I had no other learned book with me on the same subject, I sent that one for your perusal. I am going to send a book called "Ten Lectures on Alcohol" by a famous English physician who is not a temperance fanatic.

Hope my baby is well and happy. Please give my love to all the friends and have it yourself. I must stop here.

Affectionately yours,  
MARY RAMA

*P.S.*—I would like to have the two hundred rupees sent to my Aunt without delay. If they find Anandibai's brothers, I shall send the money again. Please attend to this at once if you can, so I may soon hear from my Aunt. Sorry to give so much trouble, but hope you will take it all gracefully. Have you read my letter in the *London Times* of September 27th, (1887) and one from Frances P. Coobe in the same paper published on October 1st?

On the train for Boston,  
December 7th, 1887

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a very Bright New Year ! I am glad indeed to have such nice accounts of Mano as you give in your letters. As you see I am on the wheels, and the letters are delayed at certain places and do not reach me in time but there is no help for it. I am really getting tired of going about in this way, but raising of the funds for our future school is no easy matter. Had I been connected with any special society, the work would have been done with infinitely less trouble; but this being a new idea does not find much favour in the eyes of those who have always been accustomed to the old ways. Some people have greatly misunderstood my plan; and even called this an un-Christian work, warning Christians not to give a single dollar toward the accomplishment of it! I have no doubt you have already heard of a letter written by a blue-minded man in the *Bombay Guardian*. The brother has certainly misunderstood if not misrepresented the “policy” as he called my plan of work. His words have reached this country and have poisoned many minds, but I feel sure that in spite of all these and other difficulties, my work is going to start. It is God’s and not my plan, I believe. He has Himself pointed it to me, and He is able to carry it on even if the whole world stand against it. I hope I may have your prayers and blessings to assist me at this time.

I am,  
Very affectionately yours,  
MARY RAMA

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116 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A. to her daughter MANORAMA, at Wantage, England*

*Annotation:* Chiefly about Harriet Tubman, the ‘Moses’ of her people, who released three hundred slaves in the Southern States.

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553, North, 16th Street,  
Philadelphia,  
January 8th, 1888

My dear Mano,

I have just received your sweet letter and read it with great pleasure. I was going to write a letter yesterday, but I was so tired after writing many letters that I could not think of holding pen in my hand. I was anxiously and with much curiosity looking forward to see the present that you sent me by the stewardess, and often wondered what it was. I was sure it was something very nice. At last the stewardess came on the New Year’s Eve, and you can imagine how my heart throbbed when I was going down the stairs to see her. She produced one envelope after another from her hand-bag and in my haste to see the nice present, I opened that of Mrs. Brotherton, and oh! how confused I was when the stewardess corrected me. I put it aside at once without looking at its contents and opened the envelope directed to me. And there was the needle-case! How very nicely and neatly it is done. I like it very much and shall treasure it as long as it lasts. Then, too there was another needle-case that was pretty; the Christmas cards and above all the letter written by you; that I love to read.

Will you thank your aged friend for me for her pretty present, the note book and her kind letters. I have so much to write this time that I cannot write to her separately; but I am sure she will be satisfied when she gets a nice ‘thank you’ and a kiss and Happy New year from you for me ! I am glad you liked my letter. You are right in guessing that I cannot write such long letters very often.

Do you remember Mrs. White—the mother of my invalid friend Miss Mary White? She gave me a picture of hers to be sent to you which accompanies this letter.

A few weeks ago, I went to Auburn, a pretty little town in the New York State; there I stayed with some friends. Now I am going to tell you a true story of a Negro woman. Her name is Harriet Tubman; she is getting old now, but I liked her very much for what she did and is still doing for her own people. When you are old enough to read history for yourself, you will know much more about the Negroes than I can tell you in a short letter. You know the Americans call them “coloured people” and you have seen many of them. Some few years ago they used to buy and sell these poor coloured people just as if they were dogs and cats. Some good people said it was wicked to treat them like animals, for they are just as good and loved children of God as any other white persons, and these good people tried hard to set coloured people free and give them all the rights which the free people have. Now this Harriet Tubman was one of the slaves sold in her childhood by her father’s master to some cruel persons. She was treated cruelly, poor child, and was put to such hard work as she could not do, but was forced to do. She suffered very much, she saw no reason why she should be treated worse than horses and bullocks. When she grew old enough to take care herself, her master died, and she was again to be sold in the market; she resolved to run away from the cruel slave-holders and get into Canada, where all people are free under Queen Victoria’s Government. She asked her brothers to go with her but they dared not; for the slave-holders hunted for the runaway slaves in all directions, and they actually kept hounds to hunt these human beings like wild beasts, and when a slave was found, he or she was sent back to her master, who treated her more cruelly then before. There were of course good and kind people even among the slave-holders, but the slave trade was wicked and was the source of so many cruelties that it could not be tolerated by good people any longer. Harriet started without her brothers, and God helped her to get safe in the free country of Canada. She did not do wrong by running away from slavery, because God has made all people free and nobody else has any right to make them slaves.

Poor Harriet was poor indeed, for she had nothing except the few garments on her person, and then she could neither read nor write, she was brought up to be nothing but a slave, i.e. to work for her master and be a drudge. Now you must know that to work is by no means a bad thing, for all people cannot be either teachers or doctors or rich people. God gives us certain talents for our own, and if we are faithful to do our best, and are good, we are in God’s sight as good as any learned or rich people; but howsoever humble the work is, it must be done out of our own free will, so that we may be faithful to our calling. Harriet was resolved to work faithfully for God and for her own people. She worked for some good people as a household servant, and when she had earned money enough to carry her back to her native country, she went there by night and in disguise, so that nobody could recognise her. She could not write letters to her friends for the letters could never reach them except through their masters, and the masters when they knew any intention to run away on the part of their slaves were always on their guard. But the slaves outwitted the cunning masters. They used to sing hymns, and of course no one could suspect them in that. There were many words in the hymns that could be very well applied to the slave’s condition. Harriet and her friends sang such hymns and appointed their place and time to meet and start for the free country. Her adventures as the leader are very interesting, but I cannot tell all of them. She knew the way very well, she could travel by night and in darkness. She led many slaves out of slavery into the free land, like Moses of old, and no one but God could help her in her mission of love and kindness. There were so many dangers. Advertisements were everywhere put by the slave-holders to find Harriet who led their slaves away. They offered as large a sum of money as 40,000 dollars to him who could find Harriet and hand her over to them. If she were not caught alive they said her head cut off from her body would be just [as] acceptable. Was not that wicked? But God was Harriet’s protector and nobody could harm her. She led over three hundred slaves into Canada, there to be free persons. The last were her poor old father

and mother whom she loved to the last and took care of them until they both died happy. At last the day came when all slaves were set free. The slave-holders fought with the people who wished to have the coloured free. These were called Abolitionists, a long name, isn't it? God gave victory to the people who fought for the poor Negro's rights, and joyful songs were sung, and God praised by the freed people. They are poor, but they are happy now because they are free. Harriet still works. She has a little house of her own, where she and her husband live and work together for their own people. I saw some orphan children and old people unable to work for themselves who are taken care of and supported by good old Harriet, who works for them. I called on her twice while at Auburn. She is very good and kind, but not pretty. But you know those whose heart is pretty like Harriet's are far prettier than the pretty looking, but bad people. Harriet is very large and strong. She hugged me like a bear and shook me by the hand until my poor little hand ached ! But oh ! it is so nice to see such people. They are worthy children of God and we should always try to be as good and better if we can. You know, my dear child, there are thousands of little children like you and women like me in our dear India who are as badly treated as the slaves in olden times. I hope my child will remember the story of Harriet and try to be as helpful to her own dear countrywomen as Harriet was and is, to her own people.

Next time I shall write to you about another good man, who *died* in the cause of the slaves.

With much love and many kisses, and best wishes for the New Year,

I remain,  
Your loving mother,  
MARY RAMA

*P.S.*—Keep the little tract. Ask your aged friend to read it to you.

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117 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

Her strenuous labours and results obtained.

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36, Rutland Square,  
Boston, Mass.,  
April 5th, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I do not know if you have any idea of how long and hard journey I had take and to speak in meetings in addition. I was in Washington only the day before yesterday, and in that time, have gone to Baltimore, Maryland, Philadelphia, and now am in Boston, a solid sixteen hours journey by railway. I have to speak here today and am expecting to do so in four more places in this week. I have come here to meet the Executive Committee of our Central Association, who are to decide the time when I may leave this country. The organizing of Circles and raising money for the general school fund is very hard work; and nobody seems willing or able to do it unless I go to different places and speak and induce the town people to do so. I am, however, very thankful and glad to say that there are 32 Circles, and 7 or 8 more will soon be formed, about seven thousand dollars are raised for the general fund; and four thousand dollars annual subscription for the support of the school is pledged by the above Circles. The work is growing rapidly and it seems that God Himself is helping it on. It would have seemed impossible to accomplish so much in twelve months, for it is only in April last year that I came to Boston for the first time to put my cause before the public. At that time it looked as if I were hoping against hope, but thank God all things are going on nicely now. But the main work remains to be done. I hope it will be all right in India.



Now I want to ask something, please do not tell anybody, but tell me what you think of it. Although my friends in England are doing what they can for me, their impression is that no money can be raised for my work. Sir William Wedderburn, Prof. Max Müller and Miss Manning are of the same opinion. They have succeeded in raising only £70.44 in all these eight months since they began to bring my work before the English public. So it seems that all or nearly all the 75,000 dollars must come from the United States alone. I have gone in almost all the large cities in the East, but the West remains unexplored. It may seem advisable for me to go to California and other intermediate States of this country in order to raise for the general school 18,000 dollars. If so, it will be too expensive for me to come back East from California, and go to England if I am in the East. So if I am obliged to go to California, I shall have to sail for India from San Francisco. I shall be extremely sorry if this is to be so, for I shall not see my English friends, or at least not very soon.

With much love, I am,

Affectionately yours,  
MARY RAMA

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118    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, U.S.A., to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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553, North, 16th Street,  
Philadelphia,  
April 20th, 1888

*A Noble Letter*

553, North, 16th Street,  
Philadelphia,  
April 20th, 1888

Dear Old Ajeebai,

The more I think of going to England the greater the difficulties arise in my way. I do not see how I can accomplish all the work that I have to do, go to California and back to England, and then arrive in India early in September which I must. I puzzled my head over it a long while; at last one thought came to me which partly relieved my mind. I thought of asking Mrs. Brotherton to go to England and fetch Mano for me. I did so and she has consented to go. There is really no time for me to go to England after returning from California and if in spite of all that I have to do I hurry on things it will be a terrible strain on my nerves and I shall certainly break down by undertaking to do what is beyond my strength.

I am extremely sorry I shall not see you before I leave for India but I may hope some day to return to England if it is only for a few weeks and see all my friends there if all goes well.

So will you please get Mano ready to accompany Mrs. Brotherton to United States? This dear friend of mine will take the very best care of our darling, so there will be no danger of her being neglected as there would be if she were to come over all alone with strangers. I shall not be here when Mano arrives in Philadelphia, because I must start on my journey West by first of May; but the teacher who is going to accompany me will take Mano in her charge and join me in San Francisco early in July.

Mrs. Brotherton will leave for England by the first of May, and after spending sometime with her friends in Manchester, will come to Wantage for Mano. So there will be ample time for you to make preparations and you need not part with Mano at least six weeks from now.

Now I want to tell you something else, and I hope you will understand it in the same spirit as it is written. I beg to entreat the Mother Superior for me to accept the enclosed cheque for £300.00 for the payment of my expenses while I was in England. I do not think it will pay for all, but this is what I have now, and if you will kindly let me know how much more it cost you to have me and Mano so long as you took care of us while we stayed in England, I will endeavour, God helping me, to pay the rest of the expenses in time to come, if my life and strength are spared to work for it. Please, dear Old Ajeebai, to try and induce the Mother and the Community to accept it.

When I started for England, I had no intention to be a burden to anybody and had resolved to work for my livelihood. But I soon found out the impossibility of the resolve, ignorant as I was of your language I could not expect to earn my money and study at the same time. Had it not been for your generous kindness, I would have been compelled to return to India without accomplishing the things I had set my heart on. Although I cannot help regretting a little that I should not have been able to study medicine, I rejoice that the kind Lord has given me something else to do and that the prospects are so hopeful though nothing is done yet, nor the result of hard labour obtained. But I am extremely thankful for all the kindness of the heavenly Father in raising for me such good friends in your Sisters and many other people as He has. I could have done nothing either in England or in the United States without your generous, kind and constant help in paying our expenses, in taking care of us, and in many more other ways. I appreciate it all more than I can express in words; the debt of love and kindness that I owe you can never be repaid, but you will be abundantly blessed by God for all that you have done for me and my child. Now I want you to be kind and accept the money I send for the love you have for me. I had made a solemn vow that, God helping me, my expenses shall not fall on you, and now it is for you to help me keep it. Don't say no, on the plea that some money was raised expressly for the purpose. I appreciate your efforts and the generosity of the friends who contributed towards the fund, it was all done with such thoughtful delicacy and with so much care not to hurt my feelings that I could not but cry and thank you secretly in my heart in recognition of the kindness; but the time has now come when I must not fail to do my part of the work and I shall not feel comfortable and my mind at ease unless I feel that I have done what I could. There are many more women like me, you need all the means within your reach to help them on, and I have no right to hold back what I can spare. You know me so well, my dear Ajeebai, that I have no doubt you will understand exactly what I mean and I need not say any more; I hope you will not forget to tell me how much more money you have spent in taking care of us, and I shall work on. What I send I have honestly worked for; and you will be interested to know that I have paid all my debts except those which I do not know, and have been enabled to maintain myself without depending on anybody in this country. I have to be greatly thankful for all this and shall look forward to having a useful life when I go to India.

With much love for my darling and all the friends,

I remain,  
Affectionately yours,  
MARY RAMABAI

*P.S.—* I greatly miss dear Anandibai (Bhagat) on the eve of my return home. That dear faithful friend is no more on earth but I hope her soul is at rest wherever it is. It seems very sad to return without her. I wish I could go and see her grave; my heart will always return to the old cemetery of Wantage where the mortal remains of my friend lie in peace.

Any letters addressed to:

53, North, 16th Street,  
Philadelphia, U.S.A.,

Will be forwarded to me as usual. When I leave this country, I will let you know my future address.

RAMABAI

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119 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Boston, to* SISTER GERALDINE, *C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Boston, Mass,  
May 25th, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I was delighted to get both of your letters and that of the Mother Superior. I am very glad indeed that you accepted the cheque but why did you not say how much more money you paid for my expenses and those of my child? I hope, dear Ajeebai, that you will tell me in your next letter, for I am really anxious to know and do all I can to pay it back. I know you do not want to tell but will you not do it for me? My last letter will explain that I am contented to let Mano stay with you until the Sisters go to India in October. There is not much hope of my going to England. At the last meeting of the Executive Committee of our Association, it was again decided that I should go *via* San Francisco. I have however written to my other friends in England to enquire of them whether it will be of any use if I go there as late as August and stay a week or two. But that also is doubtful since the National Indian Association and many other people object to giving any assistance to help forward a scheme which will lead to undermining the faith of our pupils. They ask us not to exercise even [an] indirect influence on them in favour of Christianity which we and they alike know is impossible.

I shall always keep you informed of the work I am engaged in and of its progress. I feel very sorry for you, dear old Ajeebai, and shall pray [to] God to restore your health, and I believe, He will. Will you not do the same? Now that you have tried all the human remedies and have found no relief, let us ask the Giver of Life to give you health and strength that you may do His work.

Please give my love to all the friends and accept a great deal for yourself from,

Always yours affectionately,  
RAMABAI

The Renton House,  
San Francisco, California,  
July 15th, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I little thought when I wrote my last letter that I would be in California by this time but so it has happened. I went to Philadelphia to look after the book business on account of the sudden death of my dear friend. Dr. Bodley. It is a serious loss not only to me but also to the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania. Under Dr. Bodley's management, the college had grown and prospered as never before. Besides, our Association has sustained a great loss in her death. She was our strong supporter and adviser in all matters concerning the work. But I hope it will be all right as I know that the Heavenly Father knows what is best for us.

My affairs in Philadelphia were in much disorder. Dr. Bodley was my attorney with the legal power given to her to represent me and transact all business in my name. I found the book account in much confusion and a debt of about 1,400 dollars waiting to be paid. This also will I hope to be righted by and by. Now I am in much need of money and shall be glad if you will send me what you may have of the money left which you obtained by the sale of my book. Of course you will take what you sent to my Aunt and also paid for photographs, etc. sent to my order out of the sum. It was on the 5th of this month I received a letter from my California friends earnestly requesting me to be present at the time when the National Education Association was to meet here. I had but five minutes to decide and made up my mind to come to California. This is my last opportunity which I must not lose so I made all arrangements in one day, and as I live most of the time in trains, there was not much difficulty in getting ready for the long journey.

I left Philadelphia on the 6th and travelled six days and seven nights across the continent by railway and reached here yesterday morning, making only one stop at Denver, Colorado. I met here good and kind friends who gave me a splendid reception. The Convention of the National Education Association begins on the 18th and lasts three days. I shall then go to many towns in California and other States in the West in the interest of our Association. Dr. Bodley's death has necessarily caused much change in my plans about sailing for India. I do not know yet which way I shall go and when, but let you know as soon everything is decided. Let me hear from you regularly and tell me how you are and if your stay at Brighton has done you any good. I was much pleased to hear that Mano was enjoying herself at your home.

Please give my love to all the friends at St. Mary's Home. You will soon see Mrs. Brotherton of Philadelphia who has gone to England for a little rest and who will surely come to see Mano and all our friends at Wantage. Please give her my love when you see her and ask her to write me a letter. My present address is:

C/o. Mrs. Sarah B. Cooper, 1902, Vallejo Street, San Francisco, California. Any letters sent to me here will be forwarded.

Hoping you are well,

I remain, with much love to yourself and your family,

Always yours,

The Renton House,  
San Francisco, California,  
July 15th, 1888

My dear little child,

Won't you be surprised to receive a letter from me written in San Francisco, California, after what I had written in my last letter that I intended to remain for a while in Philadelphia? I had not thought of coming here at all until I received a letter from my California friends who said I must come here to meet the National Education Association which is to meet here from the 18th to 21st of this month. So I packed up all my things and started from Philadelphia on the evening of the 6th and reached here yesterday. It was a long and hard ride but I got through it pretty well. And what do you think I saw on my way? Why, I stopped at Denver City, capital of Colorado for a day to meet a few friends and started on my journey. The next morning our train went through the Rocky Mountains. I woke in the morning to find myself travelling in the Grand Canyon of the Arkansas. The first Canyon is called "The Royal George" and you cannot imagine how high and grand the rocky walls are on both sides of the river Arkansas. I had never seen anything like it before. There were the solid walls of granite over one thousand feet high rising on both sides as if to meet the sky. The rays of the sun never reach the depths of this Grand Canyon, the river flows merrily between the two walls so cool and fresh. The blue sky makes a lovely canopy of this great temple of the grand beauty of mountains. I wished you and Ajeebai were there with me to see this nice place. As our train went on, we began to ascend what they call the "Marshall Pass". We were literally among the clouds when we reached the summit of the mountain. The train in this pass winds its way round and round the high peaks and looks very much like the grand winding railway of Bhore Ghat between Bombay and Poona. You will see it when you return to India. I felt very homesick when I came in these mountains, they looked so much like my native mountains and reminded me of my childhood. Farther on we came in what is called the "Black Canyon of the Gunnison". The Canyon is more beautiful and grander than the Canyon of Arkansas. The Gunnison river flows between the rocky walls and the canyon rises about two thousand feet high in the air with a grandeur and beauty unequalled by anything in all the country. Then we came on to what is called Caste Gate. Here the several canyons are very beautiful, they are just being formed, and if the rivers continue to flow there for ages, they will be as grand as the Black Canyon in thousands of years hence! As you go on in these places, you see the marks of water which must have flown their ages ago. The rocks are cut as if by heavy iron instruments by flowing water and its winding course seems to have formed a grand castle for the dwelling of wild beauty of the mountains.

When you are older and if we can afford it, you shall come and see these places. I thought of you several times as our train flew on and on. The Rocky Mountains are [the] largest and longest in all the world. They stretch from one end to the other on the west side of both the continents, North and South America.

I am in San Francisco now and a distance of over six thousand miles lies between you and me. The friends who met me outside San Francisco are very kind. They brought me with them across the bay of San Francisco. It is a vast bay girded on three sides by high hills and forms a splendid harbor. There were hundreds of ships and steamers lying in it. San Francisco is the largest city in California. This State is called the Golden State, because there is much gold in California mines. The fruits and flowers of this State are world renowned. I have a cosy little room at the Renton House—a small hotel; my hostess has decorated it with beautiful flowers.

They gave me a reception at the Hotel “Occidental”. The walls were adorned with beautiful roses and other flowers and sweet music was being played. Hundreds of ladies and gentlemen who have come here from all parts of the United States were invited to the reception. The whole affair was very grand and one long to remember, but it made me sick, so I am lying down in bed.

Write to me all about yourself and dear old Ajeebai. With much love and many kisses,

I am,  
Your loving mother,  
RAMABAI

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122 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, San Fransisco, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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San Francisco,  
July 18th, 1888

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I received your last letter yesterday evening. You will of course take every good care of Mano and I have no cause to be anxious about her; still I feel quite uneasy since I received the news of her being sick with measles. I hope it will be all right, and that no lasting injury will be done by the illness. As you say, you have been careful to see that she takes no cold but this time I trace my deafness to the time I had measles when I was about nine, and when the chronic catarrha from which I suffer now and which in the opinion of most aurists is the cause of my deafness in my head as the result of cold taken directly after the measles passed away. Please write to me oftener telling all about Mano and giving her my love and kisses. I am very busy today, have to speak before the National Education Association this evening and so must stop here. It is past five now and the meeting begins at 8-00 p.m. I must prepare my speech.

With much love,  
I am, as ever, yours,  
RAMABAI

*P.S.*—I do not know what to do in regard to the book being reprinted in England. If the Community is willing to act as my attorney in England you shall have the power to reproduce the book through any publishing house, not under any religious society. Had I been present in England, I might have copyrighted the book there, but it cannot be done by me, nor can I arrange with any publisher personally, so if you think it important and if it is going to be of some good use, take the book and do what you choose with it. I would rather that your community or some of my personal friends should look to its reproduction in England rather than let it fall into [the] relentless hands of some strange publisher. I should like to know what you think of it.

Yours,  
RAMABAI



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123      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, San Francisco, to her child MANO at Wantage*

*Annotation:* Mrs. Brotherton's visit to St. Mary's Home : She was a member of the Friends' Society in America. She paid a visit to St. Mary's Home during the summer of 1888 and we mutually enjoyed making each other's acquaintance. She reported very favourably to Ramabai of the care which her child received from the Community.

SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

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San Francisco,  
August 13th, 1888

My dear child,

I am very glad to know you are having Mrs. Brotherton with you now. I am sure you will enjoy meeting her once more. You must tell me all about her and whether you showed all your things to her, and how the rabbits get on. Is Merry Christmas as good a doll as she was and do all your other children mind you?

What do you think I am doing now? I snatch at any moment that I can get and write stories for the school books that I am preparing for children in our country. I have lots of pictures all very nice and beautiful designs for the little pages. I wish you and Ajeebai were here to see them and tell me what you think of them.

I am very tired today. Yesterday I have been speaking four times, and besides talking to people personally. There is a little girl here who is nice and bright, her mother is sick, they both leave us tomorrow.

Please give my love to Mother Harriet and Mother Superior and all the rest of the friends.

With much love and many kisses, I remain,

Your loving mother,  
RAMABAI

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124      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, San Francisco, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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1408, Van Ness Avenue,  
San Francisco, California, U.S.A.,  
August 13th, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I was very glad to receive your welcome letter, and particularly delighted to know that you are getting better. I hope and trust your health will be completely restored for we want you very badly

out in India and you must come to us. Why have you not prayed for your restoration? I think we are quite right in praying for it, just as we are in praying for all other things that we want. Are we not told by the Saviour to ask for anything in His name and that it would be given to us? You were very much in my thoughts yesterday [when] I went to Oakland just across the Bay to attend the Church service. We had a lovely service and Holy Communion. After the service I had to speak four times in different places and got very tired in consequence. I take very little or almost no medicine, have to do a tremendous lot of writing, speaking, travelling and entertaining and thinking, yet I am carried through all this, I believe, only by the strength given me through prayer. Do you remember how I used to get dreadfully sick and have headache on even such a short journey as from Wantage to Oxford or to Cheltenham? Now these sicknesses do not appear very often.

I am very glad your mother likes Mano's last picture. The one that you speak of as having been reproduced on china, I wish you would send it with Sister Eleanor Grace to India. There is not much possibility of my going through England now, but of course, I cannot say of a certain which way I shall go. My friends in the East wish that I would go back to New York, which city has not been around yet. We are carrying on a regular campaign in the West and hope to get the remaining 15,000 dollars for the building. We have nearly sixty Circles by this time, and there is not much doubt of our getting 5,000 dollars for the annual expenses through these Circles. I will let you know how I get on next. Hope you will have a very nice visit from Mrs. Brotherton. I shall be interested to know how you liked her and if she has seen Mother Harriet and Miss Noble and all other friends. It is too late now to send my love to her in this letter for I think by the time you get it, she will have sailed for the United States.

I am sorry to hear that Mano does not seem to you to be a robust child. I had hoped and still hope that she may have strong body and an equally strong mind to carry on the work that is so dear to us. Perhaps, the headaches are the result of weakness caused by measles. I do not know. My great anxiety is how the not climate will agree with her in India. I had a very nice letter from Sister Eleanor from Poona. It is long since I have written either to Mother Harriet or to Miss Noble, but just now my back is incapable of bearing another straw, so I shall wait until I get on board the ship and then write to all whom I have seemed to have neglected so long. I want again to say, my dear old Ajeebai, you are very dear to me, you must get well; I will not cease to pray for you and you had better do the same.

With much love as ever,  
Yours,  
MARY RAMA

Please send your letters to my San Francisco address and oblige.

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125    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, San Francisco, to SISTER GREALDINE, C.S.M.V.,  
Wantage*

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San Francisco, California,  
September 3rd, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

Many thanks for your letter and the cheque for £50 which enabled me to pay off almost all my debts. I have paid nearly 900 dollars within the last six weeks and am once more feeling at ease. I was much pleased with Mrs. Brotherton's account of Mano and of the Home. I hope you are all well, I am very busy, so please excuse this short note.

With much love,

Yours very affectionately,  
RAMABAI

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126      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, San Francisco, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

*Annotation:*    A purely business letter, but valuable as showing the Pandita's business capacity

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1408, Van Ness Avenue,  
San Francisco, California, U.S.A.  
September 11th, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I read what Mr. Bell had to say about the publication of my book. As I have said in my last letter to you about the book, I leave it all to your judgment. If you think it best let Mr. Bell publish a cheap edition, I shall consent to the half profit plan as I find in his printed circular and also in Mr. Ernest Bell's letter.

Now about the copyright business. I find on making enquiries that a book although not first published in British dominions can be copyrighted if a new preface is written for an English edition of a book. Is this correct? I think you can find it out if you will be kind enough to ask some lawyer; in case it is so, I shall write a preface in which I have much to say to the English public. Please let me know it by telegram in case my impressions about the copyright are correct and I shall at once set to work to write the preface.

Messrs. Trubner had only five copies sent to them. When I get tidings of the English edition, I shall not supply anyone with the American prints. Miss Manning has 25 copies sent to her but I will write and tell her not to place them in the hands of any book-seller.

In case a cheap edition is to be produced in England, the portraits will be too expensive for it, as in America they cost 35 dollars per thousand. But if Mr. Bell wishes to have them they can be supplied by Mr. Gutehunst of Philadelphia who owns the negatives from which the photographs are made. If Mr. Bell can produce the portraits from photographs, I can send the letter as soon as I hear. Copies of the American edition cannot be furnished under 5 each, for they have cost me a great deal, the paper, binding, and portraits together with a dozen other expenses cost about 75 cents or Rs. 3/-. The freight expenses are not included in the above.

I wish to find out something about another subject. If it is not too much for you, would you mind enquiring through Mr. whether I can have some electrotypes of engravings (of natural history) from Cassell's and what is their charge for a square inch? I know that I can get the electrotypes, as I have already bought of Cassell's electros worth about 230 dollars. The American agent of Cassell's through whom I ordered these charges more than the London establishment would. It should be understood that these electrotypes are procured to be printed and published in India, but the publication of a natural history book for children in India will not interfere with English books, since my book is to be written in the Indian language and not in English. Several hundred of electrotypes will be bought of Cassell and Co., if they consent to sell them at a moderate price and give discount if many electros are ordered.

I should like to know about this matter before I leave this country, so will you please kindly write to Cassell's directly or to Mr. bell and inquire about it. This has grown into a business letter altogether.

Please give my love and kisses to Mano and tell her that I am going today to the beach to see the seals. I shall write a letter to her as soon as possible after I have been to the shore. I am glad to know that you liked Mrs. Brotherton.

With much love and hoping that you are well,

I am as ever,  
Your affectionately,  
RAMABAI

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127 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Oregaon, to* SISTER GERALDINE, *C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Portland, oregano, U.S.A.  
September 26th, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I was very glad to get your letter and delighted to know that you are much better. I earnestly hope that your strength will return. I was also pleased to know about Mano and her letter containing secrets was excellently written. The secrets were about the concert. I shall be interested to know all about the proceedings. I am staying here for a few days, shall very probably return to San Francisco by next week.

The enclosed came to me a few days ago by my new business manager, the W.T.P.A. I am much puzzled over it and should like to know who the publishers are that have issued the cheap edition of my book. I have written to Boston about Mano's passage money, and hope it will reach you before Mano starts for India. I do not know just how much it will be as I have no means of finding out the passage rates from England to India by the line by which Sister Eleanor Grace will go.

I thank you very much for the special favour you have conferred on me by giving your picture. If you so desire, I shall not show it to anybody but you see people may sometimes see it who may happen to go into my bedroom where you wish me to hang the picture. I do not think yours is an ugly face, I think it is beautiful—perhaps you imagine yourself ugly and imagination has to do a great deal with people's belief !

Please give my love to everybody at the Home and accept a great deal for yourself for ever.

Yours affectionately,  
RAMABAI

*Annotation:* This letter should appear in any biography written on Mano

SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

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1408, Van Ness Avenue,  
San Francisco, California, U.S.A.,  
October 22nd, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I can imagine how busy you must have been making preparations for Mano's journey, so I do not expect to get letters from you as frequently as usual.

October 28th, 1888

I have received your note since the day I began to write this letter. I can imagine how much you will miss little Mano when she is gone. It is so kind and thoughtful of you to take her to London and let her see the wonderful sights there, and how good of Miss Noble to go so far with Mano. All the kindness you have shown to Mano and me will never be forgotten by either of us. I hope I am grateful more than I can tell in words for the pain and trouble that you have taken in taking so good a care of Mano. Mrs. Brotherton told me all about it, and I knew it before she had told me. Please write and tell me all about yourself. Your reply to this letter will probably be the last letter I shall get from you in America. I am thinking of sailing by the last week of November from San Francisco and shall probably arrive in India by the first week of January. You can at present address my letters at the St. Mary's Home, Poona, and I shall ask Sister Eleanor to forward them to me if I am not in Poona. I wish so much I could go to England and see you, but as I have stay here until the end of November, there is not time for such a plan.

Please give my love to the Mother Superior and to dear Mother Harriet and all other friends. With a great deal to love,

I am,  
Yours affectionately,  
RAMA

*Annotation.* — Last letter from America : Christmas Wishes

San Francisco,  
November 28th, 1888

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I have been wishing to write a long letter to you but it was impossible. I am overwhelmed with work. Today, I sail from here, and hope to write from the ship but I must scribble a few lines to wish you a Very happy Christmas and a Bright New Year.

Please wish a Happy Christmas to all the friends for me. I would have written to dear Mother Harriet, Miss Noble, Mother Superior and many other friends but I am sorry, I cannot do so in time for Christmas, so I send a great deal of love through you. I am sure you will carry it to them.

Good-bye, dear Old Ajeebai, and thank you for your kindness to my child and me.

With great deal of love,  
I remain,  
Yours very lovingly,  
MARY RAMA

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130 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, from ss. The City of Rio de Janeiro, to SISTER GERALDINE*

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ss. The City of Rio de Janeiro,  
January 3rd, 1889

Dear Old Ajeebai,

I hope you had a very happy Christmas. I left San Francisco on the 28th of November 1888 on the "Oceanic" and reached Japan on the 19th of December. We had a very rough voyage to Japan; it rained most of the days but now and then the sky cleared and we saw the most splendid sunrises and sunsets on the Pacific Ocean. By the way the man who named this great Ocean "Pacific" must have seen it from some tropical mountain top and on a beautiful day. On such days the sea looks like a vast sheet of smooth glittering glass and he might well have named it *Pacific*. But we voyaging over it in midwinter found it to be *Terrific*! I carry most beautiful and pleasant impressions of Japan in my head and heart. I spent there 13 days, met the nicest and loveliest people in the country, and saw many things in that short time. The Japanese from the highest to the lowest are a most polite, gentle and kind people. Yokohama, the New York of Japan is full of business. The cities and towns have all the characteristics of Eastern cities, the highways and byeways are all clean, and you find everything neatly arranged. One of the characteristics of the Japanese is the love of art. In this they are, I think, superior to any other Oriental nation. They love flowers and beauties of nature; they are very skilful gardeners and train flower tress and evergreens in many quaint and beautiful ways. Tokyo, the capital of Japan has nearly a million inhabitants. The Japanese are very patriotic. You are very likely familiar



with the history of Japan. The present Mikado Mutsuhito (of Japan) is of a dynasty that has reigned over Japan [for] over 2,500 years. About three hundred years ago, there rose another military ruler who made the Mikado a plaything and his descendants did the same thing after him. This ruler was called Shogun, as were his successors. The country was divided into many little principalities and the hurtful feudal system did much to degrade the civilization and lower the dignity of the Mikado. In the latter half of this century some Western nations (United States was the first) tried to get this country open for trade. The Shogun concluded some treaties with these nations without the knowledge and permission of the Mikado. This roused the indignation of the patriotic Japanese people. They stood by the flag of the Emperor and fought bravely for their country's good. The downfall of the Shogunate at the hands of these patriotic people brought a new era, all the feudal princes one after another came and laid their swords at the feet of Mikado and renounced their power in order to bring the country under one single rule. Their noble example was most rightly followed by the present Mikado. He was only sixteen when he came to the throne, but having good ministers he took an oath to rule the country rightly and with justice. This was a brave deed, no other Mikado had done it, for every Mikado thought that he derived his power from heaven and that his subjects were made for his happiness and this alone. He might treat them as he liked, so there was no necessity of his taking an oath to rightly rule the people.

The former Emperors had also the arrogance of deifying themselves and calling themselves the kings of Heaven. The most ancient form of religion of Japan was called Shinto, it was nothing but absolute submission to the will of the Emperor, there was nothing that could be called a religion in it, so when Eastern missionaries came here with their religion of love and humanity, the Japanese welcomed Buddhism most heartily and another form of religion were considered objects of veneration, Buddhism became the dominant religion from the eleventh century and it is so even to this day. The Mikado and his followers still adhere to the belief of his divinity but it has been somewhat modified. The Mikado has a body of counsellors who wisely advise him in the country's administration.

In two years from now the Japanese will have a representative Government modelled after the English Parliament. About eight years ago, the Mikado prepared his people by a proclamation announcing his intention to let subjects have a representative Government. Thus what Russia the largest and most powerful of despotic empires has failed to do, the Mikado's sunrise kingdom will do of its own free will and cheerfulness. All honour to the Japanese Emperor and his wise counsellors and patriotic subjects! No pains, time or money have been spared [in] getting the best things from other countries. Hundreds of young men have been sent out to France, England, Germany, America and other countries to study law, navigation, military art, medicine and obtain other useful knowledge and such men when they had completed their studies and returned home were very honourably received and employed in different departments by the Government.

There are many schools and colleges, and a model university in Tokyo for men. There are also schools for women. The Empress takes an active interest in women's progress and has founded a college for ladies. I was very much pleased to see the handsome college building and many schools for women. Women are treated much more respectfully in Japan than in any other Oriental country. They are kind, gentle and dignified. They are by no means as free as Western women but there is no "purdah" and caste system, the latter having been abolished with the downfall of the Shogunate. They show a great deal of intelligence and all sing point to the happy day that is to dawn upon the women of Japan. They are brave and self-possessed. I was invited by the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Tokyo to speak for them. The women conducted the meeting in a way that was very pleasing and astonishing. Nothing was wanting in it; I have not seen a meeting that was better conducted even in America!

I spoke in at least eight meetings and the young women who acted as my interpreters did their beautifully. Most of the audience were men, but they behaved very gentlemanly and treated women with [the] greatest respect. I was very much pleased with all this and rejoice to think of the great possibilities of progress in Japan. The women are free from the barbarism of loading their persons with jewels, but they black their teeth and shave their eye-brows when married. This custom is

gradually going out of fashion. The Empress has set a noble example by not blacking her teeth and keeping her eye-brows where nature meant them to be.

I also visited some of the ancient and beautiful temples of Japan and went to see the great statue of Doi Busta—Great Buddha. It is fifty feet high and is made of bronze. It is a grand and fitting monument of the great and good man who did so much to humanize a barbarous and cruel world. I saw another large statue of Kannon—the God of Mercy, benevolence and love. It is over thirty feet high and is made out of the trunk of a camphor tree. I was told that two images of the same size were made out of one tree, about 1,500 years ago.

I had a very pleasant Christmas. I met Bishop Bickierstith [\[Pandita Ramabai had been present at the Consecration of Bishop Bickierstith at St. Pauls Cathedral in London\]](#) in Tokyo who kindly invited me to take lunch with him on the day after Christmas. He was very pleasant and kind, showed the church which is under his care; it was most beautifully decorated and reminded me of the Chapel at Wantage. He and a few English ladies who are staying in Yokyo told me they know of the Wantage Sisters; I was delighted to meet someone who knew you. The Bishop, I understand, had been in India for five years and worked in the North with the Cambridge Brotherhood. I also heard that Father Black had been here in Japan.

How I wished you could have seen this beautiful sunrise kingdom! The land of high hills and snowy mountains. I feel in love at first sight with Mount Fujiyama—which being interpreted means “the only one without a second, the peerless mountain”. Its snow-crowned head is wreathed with beautiful clouds and is a perfect cone, I have not seen another mountain so beautiful! Mounts Hood and Tacoma in the North Western part of the United States are the only mountains that rival the Fujiyama in its beauty and grandeur. The vegetation of Japan is most wonderful, the bamboo, palm, fur pine, camphor, palmetto, rose, magnolia and other evergreens and flower trees flourish said by side. Seven-tenths of the whole country are mountains and woods. The beautiful green rice fields and tea plantations remind of the low-lands of India and the hills of the West. To see the sun rise from the bed of the ocean and set over against the beautiful hills and its golden rays adorning the snow mountains with all possible beautiful colours is the chief joys that a lover of nature is rewarded with in Japan.

I visited Tokyo again on the evening of December the 31st. It was decorated all over with evergreens and bamboos and the many-coloured Japanese paper lanterns illuminated the city. This city of canals, large roads, gardens, palaces and of wonderful sights looked lovely in her New Year’s beautiful attire! I love the country and its people very much and was very sorry to part with them this morning. I am on my way to Hong Kong where I take another ship for Calcutta.

I hope you are well and enjoying your English winter. Please give my love to dear Mother Harriet, the Mother Superior, Miss Noble and all other friends with a great deal of love and good wishes for the New Year.

I am,  
Affectionately yours,  
RAMA

*P.S.* —Dr. Emma Brainard Ryder, a lady physician of New York who has made herself very useful and popular in America is going with me to India. It makes the voyage very pleasant to me. She is intending if possible to found a Temperance Hospital for Women and Children. I hope she will succeed in her good intention. She is a noble woman, it is very good of her to go to India entirely on her own responsibility to help my countrywomen. Many such women are needed to help forward our progress.

St. Mary's Home,  
Panch Howd,  
Poona, February 6th, 1889

My dearest Sister,

A large piece of paper for a large piece of news!

On the evening of the Fast of the Purification at about 5-30, we were having recreation, all the Sisters, when a telegram came from Ramabai, telling us she was on her way up from Bombay, and would be due at the station at 7-30. We sent off for Mano from Wanowrie immediately, and with her went to the station. It was very pretty to see the meeting between the mother and the child! I was heartily thankful to find that Ramabai threw herself confidently on us—so she and the American lady (Dr. Emma Ryder) came home with us. It was a very bustling exciting evening, but they got to bed at last. Sister Eleanor Grace overheard Ramabai say constantly to Mano how she longed that you were here, and they said their prayers aloud together (it was a Dormitory Room, so [the] sound came very clearly). The next morning in the first conversation I had had with Ramabai. I was rejoiced to find that her faith in our Lord is strong. I asked what a little badge she wore was, and she said it was the badge of a Guild that she belonged to, one of the rules of which was “to do all for Christ even the very smallest acts”. Oh! how thankful I felt !! And at another time she told me that she was quite sure no real work could be done for her countrymen without Christianity, and she added “we must all work together”, and she told me how every hour she realised more and more the difficulties she would meet with. She frequently spoke of you, and with the greatest gratitude of all that had been done for Mano. She thought her looking very well. She asked for Dr. Ryder to stay her while she scoured the coast, and said of course she should leave Mano with us until she was settled and I quite think it will be for much longer. That she has lost her infidel tendencies is a matter of great thankfulness, but she is evidently to a fog of dissent. However, it may be for us with gentleness to draw her to Catholicity; we must prayerfully do our best.

They went to church with us in the evening. In the afternoon she went out, visited one or two native gentlemen and they advised her to settle in Bombay, so she is there now, looking for a house, which thought difficult to get, will, I expect, be less difficult then to find scholars to put in it !

Dr. Ryder is here. She is such a very pleasant woman, clever, sensible, very good and kind, and very American—very wide in her views and very found of us thought our views are so opposite. She went with me on Monday to see the school of the Epiphany and was so pleased with it; she is going to use all her influence with Ramabai to let Mano stay on. She takes such a very sensible view of the loss it would be to Mano to be changed now to an unestablished school.

Father Goreh and Mr. Rivington called on Ramabai on Sunday. She had asked very earnestly after Father Goreh and Father Page. Mr. Rivington put on his most charming manners for Ramabai, he was very kind.

So you see so far we have much to be thankful for it spite of the dissenting tendencies. Someone said to me “do you think she is true?” I am very suspicious, but it had not occurred to me; I think she is quite true. Doubtless she is a character whose *bias* is do what is polite but there is no doubt that she loves and trusts us. We opened the little case containing your picture and she was so pleased. She very much wants for her house “a picture of the Good Shepherd like the one in the Visitors Room at Wantage”, adding, “I have so often thought of it”; can you send her one?

And, now I must turn to other letters.

Your loving Sister in our dear Lord,  
ELEANOR, C.S.M.V.

Very glad to hear that another box is coming.

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132 *Letter from SISTER ELEANOR GRACE, C.S.M.V., Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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The School of the Epiphany,  
South Wanowrie Line, Poona,  
February 7th, 1889

My very dear Sister,

I am sure you are longing for news of Ramabai and her little darling. About January the 27th, we had a letter from Ramabai, dated December 27th from Japan, and from what she said we thought she would be months before she reached Bombay. However, on Saturday, the February 2nd, while we were having recreation at Panch Howds at about 6-30 a telegram was handed over to [the] Sister Superior. (As she opened it she said "Wafers" I expect are wanted, but on looking again) what was her surprise to find it was from Ramabai, who said we were to expect her at 7-00 o'clock. We sent Miss Mertons to Wanowrie at once to fetch Mano. [The] Sister Superior went to the station and I followed with Mano. Fortunately the train was not due until 7-30 p.m., so we managed to be at the station in time. Mano was very excited, but quiet. We stood on the platform and as the train came in we had no difficulty in finding out Ramabai who stood at the carriage window looking out for her. She welcomed us most warmly, introduced us to her friend Dr. Emma Ryder, and then returned to her dear child, holding her arms, leaving the luggage and everything else to look after itself! It was most touching to see the devotion of the mother and the child. She sat on her mother's knee all the way home looking very happy, and when we got home, only leaving her now and again to give me a kiss. Sister thought it best for Mano and me to sleep that night at the Home, so Mano had a little bed made up in Ramabai's room, and I slept in the next one. You know what Indian houses are! No such thing as a private word to be said except in a whisper. Well, certainly Ramabai did not whisper. I coughed and made a noise but she took no notice and went on talking and try as might, I could not help overhearing a word here and there. First of all, she read her letters to Mano giving her loving little messages from American friends. This went on for some time. In between, I heard several sighs from Ramabai which were re-echoed by Mano for Ajeebai. Then they began to prepare for bed, and the next sound I heard was the mother and child saying their prayers together. I heard the Lord's Prayer, but the rest I could not hear. She then told Mano that when she had her school she was to come to it, and be taught by a very nice lady from America but until she could settle into a house, Mano was to stay at the Epiphany. At about 11.30 p.m. they went to sleep. Next morning being Sunday, we went to Celebrations, and did not see the new arrivals until breakfast time 10.00 a.m. After breakfast, they came to Matines in our Chapel and after service Ramabai had a long talk with the Sister Superior, and I quite enjoyed a talk with Dr. Ryder. It seems she had practiced for ten years and is quite worn out, and her way of taking a holiday is to come to India with Ramabai just to look round, and organize a Medical College in connection with Ramabai's Widows' Home! Truly American!!

I guess they won't find things grow as quickly here as in their own country. This Hospital is, in about twenty years' time, to be carried by Hindoos!! Dr. Ryder, I believe, is only to set it going. She told me all about her visit to Japan and China, and all the speaking they had to do was most interesting. She enquired all about our work and things generally in India. She quite thinks Ramabai

realizes the difficulties of the work she has undertaken. If anyone can get over them, Ramabai is the one. The Sister Superior was very pleased with Ramabai, her manner, and all she said. Her gentle confiding quite won the Sister's heart, and I feel sure Ramabai has found a true friend in the Sister.

We think the doctor does not belong to the Church, and no doubt our little Indian has mixed with all kinds of people. After the conversation with the Sister, Ramabai came out full of zeal, wanted a carriage (at once!) to go and see some of her friends about the school. We laughed at her, and said "not a minute to lose!" "No, no, not one minute", she said, "It is we Christians who must enlighten India".

She wears a little cross, where it can be seen and says "all must be done in our Lord's name whether great or small". Then she prepared to go out, and looking at her European boots, said: "Oh these boots! how shall I manage to take them off when I call on my friends?" Sister Gertrude said, "Would you like a pair of your nice real country ones? If so, I can borrow a pair for you". "O yes, I should". Whereupon Ramabai at once began to unbutton her boots and kicking them off, said: "O my feet have been imprisoned for five years! How glad I shall be to leave them off!".

While this was going on, we were managing to get Mr. Rivington and Father Goreh to Home to see her before the carriage came round to take her out, thinking it a most important stroke for her to see them before her native friends. This was just managed, and all seemed to pass off well.

After this Ramabai, Mano and Dr. Ryder went out to see some of the natives. About the school they one and all advised Bombay. She came home just in time for dinner and went to Church in the evening and then at ten p.m. started off to Bombay "so as to lose no time". Mano came to Wanowrie with me. Her feelings of joy and wonder and uncertainty are very mingled, I fancy. I am sure she was very glad to see her mother, and was very sorry to part with her so soon again, but she rather dreads the idea of leaving us. We think Ramabai will be much longer in getting her school and pupils than she thinks, and then when she has once started, will find the pupils so old, dull and unrefined that if she does take Mano away, it will only be for a time. I don't think you need be uneasy about this within this year. Dr. Ryder spent last Monday here, and was delighted with the school, and said she would do all in her power to persuade Ramabai to leave the child here. She thought the children such perfect little ladies. The "paper" says Ramabai is expected in Poona in a few days. When she does come, the children are going to perform the seasons which I am sure will please her, and sing her a special song of welcome! Mano and Agnes are going to recite "Prince Arthur and Hubert". In fact, we are going to try to take Ramabai by storm, and shew her how her country has improved since she left! She has your photo in her room, nothing could have pleased her more. I hope you are better. Please keep well; you have much to do for your Indian sisters, and Ramabai will look for letters and sympathy from you. I love her very much

With my love,

Believe me,

Your loving Sister in Christ,

ELEANOR GRACE, C.S.M.V.

*Annotation:* Mano joins her mother in Bombay. There had been a suggestion as to how some portion of the money Ramabai returned should be spent. It was not carried into effect.

Bombay: February 14th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I was very glad indeed to get your kind letter and the delightful portrait of yours. It was so very kind of you to give it to me; I shall always value it and keep it in my room where I can see it constantly. Thank you very much for the portrait and the advice contained in the letter.

I do not see my way about what I had better do for Mano. There is much that is true in what you say but the difficulty is to find a school where to place the child. I shall take her with me; at present she will not join the pupils in my school for study and I shall do everything in my power to keep her off all harmful influences. One or two of my assistants will give her lessons separately and she will have a good Christian woman to be her constant companion when I am not with her. I shall try this plan for a while and then if I see it does not work well, I will do the best I can for her well-being. Although the thought of another long separation from my child is very painful, I will try to do my duty by her so long as I am sure it is best for her. I need all the strength that may come from above and from below. The enclosed clippings will speak for themselves. I am very busy making plans and preparations for the opening of my school. The day is not appointed yet. Please give my love to dear Mother Harriet and Miss Noble. I will write to them as soon as I can.

I suppose you have received my letter written on my way to China from Japan. Hoping you are getting better every day. Your suggestion as to donating a font for the new chapel is very good. I do not know what other things are used in your chapel and therefore, cannot name any other. I leave it to you to choose and get something and present it to the chapel from Mano and me.

With a great deal of love to your dear self and to other friends at Wantage,

I am,

Yours affectionately,

MARY RAMA

P.S.—I found Mano very well and quite grown since I saw her last. We had many talks about Wantage and Ajeebai and Miss Noble during the night and day we were together at St. Mary's Home in Poona. I had to start for Bombay the next day and Mano cried at the prospect but she acted like a brave little girl and went to the school with Sister Eleanor Grace. Sisters Eleanor and Eleanor Grace came to meet me on the station and brought Mano with them. They were kind and the Sister Superior invited me to come home and stay with her. I had a very pleasant and happy time with them on Sunday.

RAMABAI



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134                      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

*Annotation:*      The letter she alludes to came to hand. Opening of the Sharada Sadan. Various criticisms.

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Sharada Sadan,  
Chowpatty, Bombay,  
April 11th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

Many thanks for your kind and interesting letters. I cannot think what became of my letter written to you from the ss. *City of Rio de Janeiro* just after I left Japan for Hong Kong. It was a very long letter and would have interested you if you had received it.

I am very busy as usual, my school was opened on the 11th of the last month. Its name ‘Sharada Sadan’ means the Home of Sharada, the Goddess of Learning. We wish to unite home life and culture; that is why I have named it so. I was resolved to make a beginning with one pupil if I had no more, but I had two to begin with; now there are eight girls in my school, two are child widows—six out of the eight pupils are of the Brahmin caste. People are criticising me from on all sides, and saying there is no need of such a school home; many have prophesized its failure; others have said, “no high caste woman will come to such a place”. I had sent invitations to Sister Eleanor and Father Page but neither of them came. The Sister Superior was ill, Father Page was away. We had a very nice gathering of ladies and gentlemen for the opening ceremony of the school. I wished you were here for it, how I would enjoy having you with me.

Many thanks for the pictures that are to come. Mano shall write to you very soon. She has a good deal of school work to-day and I did not have much time to sit and make her write, that is why you have not received her letter in all these days.

I hope you are feeling well. Please give my love to everybody and accept a great deal for yourself.

With many good wishes for the Easter,

I am as ever,  
Yours affectionately,  
MARY RAMA

Sharada Sadan,  
Chowpatty, Bombay,  
June 4th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I got your letter this morning, please excuse me for being so lazy. I hope to behave better henceforth. I think I wrote you a letter about three weeks ago. Since that time I have been greatly occupied with many things—I need not tell how heavy the burden of care is. I fall down on my kness every morning and implore Heaven to send the divine strength, grace and wisdom to carry out the work which the Heavenly Father has given to me to do. I have seven girls staying with me, six of them are of the Brahmin caste. I have eighteen girls in my school. So the first quarter is nearly over and tomorrow I shall be busy preparing my accounts and report of the first quarter to send to America.

I have the beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd hung in the Hall where everyone can see it, and have placed your picture over my desk in my room where I can see it almost all the time.

Everything is going on as well as can be expected, still we are not quite organized. Reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, needlework and English fill our curriculum at present. We soon hope to increase our list of subjects.

The girls are able to study and know more. Mano is getting on nicely with her lessons. She will write to you regularly. I have told Miss Demmon to make her write every Monday so the letters go to England on Tuesday. I suppose you know our foreign mail day is changed from Friday to Tuesday.

With much love to your dear self and to all my friends at Wantage,

I remain,  
Yours very lovingly,  
**MARY RAMA**

St. Mary's Home, Panch Howd,  
Poona: 19th August 1889

My dearest Sister,

Dr. Ryder had some business in Poona, so she spent 36 hours here. She told me some interesting stories about Mano, which I wish I could repeat with the same unction in which she told them. Certainly if prayers for the dear child are heard, [may] the Angles guard and guide her in her difficult way. Within a few days of her arrival one of Ramabai's widows said she wished to become a Christian, as Mano wrote to you. Dr. Ryder says she shall never forget Mano's radiant face when she told her, but Ramabai was a bit troubled (you will be careful that nothing I say about Ramabai gets into print) in case the Hindoos should think that she was going to turn all her pupils into Christians.

However, she had a talk with her and told her nothing was required to make a Christian but truthfulness and honesty, that she might go to Church “with us” and that when her education was finished, she would pass her on to a mission—for something more, I conclude, than honesty and truthfulness. She deceives herself. Dr. Ryder seems to have been present at this interview and then [went] to find Mano, whom she did find seated alone in one chair with Godubai [Godubai later became the wife of Professor Dhondo Keshav Karve and was known as Anandibai alias Baya Karve.] looking at her present from you, a Scripture Picture Book. She looked up radiant with pleasure and said: “I am teaching Godubai Christianity. I do not know much myself but I will teach her what I do know”, and she is doing the same for the second child widow.

Then Mano seems to hear much of Meetings, Societies and Committees, so she has formed a Society for the Children of the School and elected herself President with a Committee! The rules are that they are to be truthful and honest and unselfish and have all things in common, and to inaugurate it they were to have an entertainment. The programme was: first, the Lord’s Prayer with pieces they had learnt at the Epiphany School (second, third and fourth : other items) and the last i.e. the fifth item was “God Save the Queen”. When all was over she led them to her play-room and took out the key and said : “I now unlock it and all that is there is for you as well as me”—a great effort because she did prize them. Dr. Ryder said Ramabai was pleased and said it had been an anxiety to her lest Mano should get selfish over her toys, but she did not like to say anything because she knew they would be at once destroyed among so many.

And now for the less pleasing side—Mano is as dirty as a little pig, hair cut short, only one garment, a frock often open behind, sits on the floor, eats with her fingers. Ramabai erroneously thinks she is doing right in making her like the common Hindoos and, wonderful to say, she does not grasp the idea that more civilized ways would not ruin them as well as education. Dr. Ryder tries to din it into her but she does not success and Mano delights in carrying out her mother’s views. Be sure, dear Sister, not to let them guess that Dr. Ryder has said anything.

I am writing hurriedly, but I know you will be interested in what I have told you of the dear child.

Yours very lovingly in our dear Lord,  
ELEANOR

You will get us some offeratories on St. Andrew’s Day, will you not? That is such good and welcome help.

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137      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

*Annotation :*      Kashi, a child widow thirteen years old is brought by her father. Ramabai’s great happiness and thankfulness for her God-given blessing.

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Sharada Sadan, Bombay,  
October 7th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I was very busy last Friday, so could not get my letters ready for the last mail. Mano is better now. She went to Poona with her English teacher who also is ill had gone there for a change. I had

asked her to take Mano to St. Mary's but she did not as she was sick in bed all that week. Mano did not seem very much better for the change. She came home after ten days. I have begun to send her for her meals where Miss Kemp lives, she goes there three times as a rule, and is looking much better. She has all the flannel undergarments which you so kindly made for her, and wears them regularly. She has most of the frocks made by dear Ajeebai's loving hands; they will last many more months. She need not have any more clothes from England as they can easily be made here after their pattern.

Our work goes on as usual and our home is as happy as ever and growing happier every day. Fourteen girls live here, eight of whom are widows. A new child widow (only thirteen years old) has come to live and be educated here. She belongs to the same division [of the] Brahmin race (caste) as I once belonged to. The history of this child is very sad. She was given away in marriage when quite a little child. She had had no very happy time with her mother-in-law, when unfortunately her husband died about four months ago. This added to the vexation and grievances of the old lady, who with her two sons worse than herself treated her very badly. Her father—a good sensible man he seems to be—not being able to support or protect her, determined to place her in my school. The child came on the Sunday before last, our Baptismal birthday. She certainly seems like a pleasant surprise and a birthday gift a to me from God; for, though I had many applications from the fathers of children, few or none had yet brought so young a child to me.

Kashi—this is her name—looked nothing but a skeleton covered with skin. She had such a sad forlorn look, it made my heart ache and tears came in my eyes to see that child in such a bad condition. I thanked God with all my heart for having given her to me to take care of and asked Him to give me strength and wisdom to nicely bring her up. She had a few jewelleries on her person. I intimated her father that I could not undertake to look after the jewelleries so he came to take them away on the same afternoon. Kashi took her jewels off one after another, when her father had wished that she should keep one or two; but she took every one off and handed over to her father declaring that she did not wish to wear them at all! She looked very much relieved when she had given them away as if a great burden was lifted off her shoulders. This was a strange and new sight to me, for our children are not willing to so easily part with their jewels. Her father told me that she has been so badly treated by her husband's people and so disgusted with them that she did not wish to keep the ornaments that belonged to them. I did not wonder at her conduct after I heard that.

By the afternoon we could see the rapid change taking place in poor little Kashi's look and expression. She did not cry when her father and brother went away. Four days after this [when] I asked her if she liked it here, she said she did and the days seemed quite short to her now. She said she had been counting the days and hours since she knew from her father that there was such a school as this and that she was to go there. She was very anxious to come and stay with me, exclaimed the poor child! Her expression is completely changed by this time, she looks quite like another person, singing and playing as freely as a bird and studying her lessons quite diligently in school hours. Oh thank, thank the Lord Who cares for these little ones, I say to myself each time I see them happily playing together.

There were a good many flower plants in our compound, but no child seemed to care for them for a long time. So one day I gathered a number of different kinds of flowers, showed them and gave a talk on flowers to the girls, told them the uses and varieties, and shewed the beauty of flowers. Ever since that time a day has not passed by on which a flower was not brought to me by one or another child with a sweet look and expression in her eyes. Each new child that comes seems to catch a little love for flowers as though by contagion. Kashi, our new girl, is getting to love flowers too, and is also getting stronger.

Mano likes the big card with the text you sent her in Miss Kemp's parcel; she thanks you for it. Godubai and Lakshmibai liked their cards very much indeed, and they send their love and thanks to you, "dear Ajeebai". They are well acquainted with you through your picture and Mano's description of you. How I wish you were here to see the lovely time we have together with these fourteen children!

One of my letters must have been lost on its way to Wantage, for I remember well to have acknowledged the two books you sent to me and having asked you to give my hearty thanks to Mr. Coles for his kind gift and accept them to yourself. If you have not received the letter, please accept my thanks and give them to Mr. Coles also. I have kept the books quite near my couch and read them whenever I find time to rest and enjoy myself with books. Will you please tell Mr. Bell to send a few copies of his edition of my book; some people ask for it, but I have not many copies to spare. And also, please give my thanks for the money he has sent to Mother Harriet for me. Please send it to me at your convenience.

Will you please give my best love to dear Mother Harriet, to Miss Noble and all other friends at Wantage? With a great deal of love, and hoping that you are better and stronger,

I am as ever yours,  
Most affectionately,  
**MARY RAMA**

Haven't got time to re-read this letter, so please excuse any mistakes.

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138 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan,  
Chowpatty, Bombay,  
November 8th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I suppose you have received my long letter by this time. I am going to write another long letter about another widow who has come to stay with me.

When Mano went to Poona, she had accompanied Miss Demmon, the English teacher of my school, I had particularly requested her to take Mano to see the Sisters and her old schoolmaster and if she were unable to do so, send her by someone else to St. Mary's Home. Miss Demmon was too ill to go herself and she was staying with Mrs. Squires who was requested to send Mano to the Sisters but she forgot all about it. Mano did not like it, and did not like to stay there; so she came down with some ladies that were coming to Bombay. You see it is no fault of ours nor our ingratitude that prevented us from sending Mano to the Sisters.

I must stop here. Mano will write by next mail. I was too busy to get to write this time. A lady, a member of our Executive Committee, is coming from America. I am going to meet her to-day. I had to get things ready for her outside my school. That took my whole time. I hope you will excuse me. With much love from Mano and me,

I am,  
Yours lovingly,  
**RAMA**

## VOLUME IV

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139 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Bombay, to* SISTER GERALDINE, *C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,  
Bombay: May 9th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

A thousand thanks for your kind letter and for the beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd and for the books you have so kindly sent for my birthday present. I should like to know for whom the patch-work quilt was sent and what am I to do with it. I have kept it in a safe until I hear from you; I imagine it was meant to be sent to the Sisters at Poona. Mano sends her best love and thanks to Miss Noble and yourself, Miss Barker, Novice Olive, Sister Emma and all the rest of the friends. Her special thanks and great deal of love and Kisses to dear Mother Harriet for the lovely bag and the big pin-cushion, we had much fun over it. She sends her love and greetings to the Old Pilgrim [\[The Old Pilgrim is Mother Lucy who gave Mano Pilgrim's Progress and wrote in it "From the Old Pilgrim to the Little Pilgrim".\]](#) and so do I.

I was so overwhelmingly busy last week that I could not manage to write a note. I do not remember seeing the gentleman whom you mentioned in your letter; there were three young men at Bishop Mylne's when I went to his house, I do not remember the names of them all.

Your letters are always enjoyed by Mano and me and we quite look forward to getting them, so you kindly send as many letters to Mano as you can write.

Sister Geraldine, C.S.M.V

My school is getting on pretty well, and keeps me very busy. I am sorry I must stop here, I have so much to say but cannot for want of time. I have placed the Good Shepherd just in front of me over the writing desk in my room where we two sleep. We talk of you a great deal and enjoy the picture and the stories connected with it.

With much love and thanks,

I am, as ever,  
Yours lovingly,  
**MARY RAMA**

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140 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Bombay, to* MOTHER HARRIET, *C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,  
Bombay: June 4th, 1889

My dear Mother Harriet,

I was very much delighted to receive your nice little letter some three weeks ago. You will be interested to know that my school is getting on as well as it can be expected. I have six Mrahmin girls



staying with me. One of them, a child-widow who has been here about two months, is much interested in our religion. She sees the difference between a Christian and a Hindoo home. She expressed her wish to become a Christian to our little Mano. The child was so delighted with it and told me the news with [a] joyful heart. She took the widow to her room and showed all the pictures of Christ from a lovely book that was sent to her by Old Ajeebai for her birthday present. The little missionary told the story of our Lord's life as well as she could. Since that time (about a month ago) the widow [has] joined us in our morning prayers every day. I read the Marathi Bible and pray in Marathi. So she understands it all. I have asked a Zenana missionary friend of mine to come here and give Godubai (that is the widow's name) religious instruction. We are all well. Mano and I send a great deal of love to you and to Miss Noble and to all other friends at Wantage.

I hope you are quite well.

Yours lovingly yours,

**MARY RAMA**

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141 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,  
Bombay: June 21st, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I was delighted to get your letter. Mano was not feeling very well and she is not well now. I asked [her] if she wished to go to Poona for a change and she declined to go without me. I cannot possibly leave this school. This is why Mano has not been able to write regularly. We have twenty-four girls in this school now. Two more widows have come to stay with us, so we have five widows living here. Another widow who has lately come to me is also much interested in Christianity. When she saw Godubai praying with us and also by herself, she asked her what she was doing. On hearing that Godubai prayed to God and that gave her much satisfaction, this new widow expressed a wish to join us in our prayers everyday. Now she comes to prayers and hears the scriptures read very attentively. I have a little child of the Shimpi (tailor) caste whose father desires her to be instructed in religion and brought up like a Christian child. I shall send all these three for religious instruction to a lady missionary every Saturday. They need much of your prayer and indeed we all need them. It is so very difficult to know just what to do on so many occasions.

Godubai is not quite independent; she has her father and mother living and has also grown-up bothers. Her brother and father have placed her in this school under my care. Although she is of legal age and may do whatever she likes, she cannot bear the idea of hurting her parents' feelings by embracing Christianity openly. I do not urge upon her, and indeed I never so much as mention the idea to her. I have left the work of her and others' conversion in the hands of God; I can only pray for them that the light may be given them and I have no doubt that the needful strength and grace to take such a step will be given to them in time. This is but the beginning; but in promises much. They are such sweet girls, these two young widows. The name of the other young widow is Vithabai. They are as happy as they can be. The sad expressions they had over their faces when they came here have completely disappeared. God is surely blessing our humble efforts, the prayers of thousands of our friends sent up to the throne of grace shall not go in vain. The Sister Superior of Poona sent me a cheque for Rs. 42. Please give my grateful thanks to that lady who sent them for the Home. The money will be deposited in the bank and our general Treasurer shall be told of the receipt of this sum as a donation for the school. I hope you are quite well.

Please read this letter to dear Mother Harriet and give her a great deal of love from Mano and me. And also please give my love to Miss Noble and Sister Emma and to all other friends at Wantage. I am very sorry to hear that Sister Emma does not feel very well. The box of pins she sent is so very useful that it looks just like the dear Sister to think of sending such a nice thing.

I must stop here. With a great deal of love,

I am, as ever,

Yours lovingly,

**MARY RAMA**

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142 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Bombay, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,

Bombay: August 27th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

How are you feeling now? I have not heard from you for a long while. I hope your visit to Brighton did you good and you are feeling better. My school is getting on nicely. Our first half-yearly term is nearly over, the second will begin on September 11th. I have five windows in this house and three attend the school as day scholars. Three more have applied for admission as resident students. There are three unmarried girls and three married ones staying with me, and the rest of my twenty-five pupils attend school daily.

Godubai of whom I wrote to you last has been the means of interesting another young widow in Christian religion. Her name is Vithabai, she likes to attend prayers and listen to Bible reading with much attention. The lady missionaries have undertaken the religious instruction of these dear girls.

Mano has not been very well these few weeks, she grows thin and weak. I enquired of the doctor and understand that it is due to the change of her diet. It is impossible to have any animal food cooked here, so I am going to try and arrange with some English lady to give Mano her meals for some time until she is built up again. I find the climate of Bombay very oppressive, not at all favourable to hard work.

I am going to start an industrial department in my school pretty soon. We shall at first teach the girls how to make caps with silver embroidery upon them. They will also be taught drawing plans and designs. They are at present taught plain sewing, mending and embroidery.

Our rainy season is almost over. I must stop now, my hands are so full that I cannot write long letters. I must prepare my second quarterly report and accounts and send them to America. So many letters are awaiting an answer.

I hope our friends at Wantage are all well. Please give my love to them all and with a great deal of love,

Believe me,

Yours lovingly,

**MARY RAMA**

Bombay: December 6th, 1889

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I wish I had six pairs of hands and half a dozen heads like some of those fabulous persons of whom we read in our ancient epics, so I might do more work, and find more than one head to think of what I have to do and what I have left undone! I have been trying all this week to get some time when I might write a long letter to you, but I have tried in vain. Today is the mail day. I purposely stopped at home instead of going to do my regular work in order to write a short letter at least—and lo! There was a caller who was writing since 5-30 a.m. in the morning!! He took my time until 8 o'clock. Then came another lady and then another!!! You know what it is so well that I need not say, so I hope you will excuse and forgive me more than seven into seven! I am ashamed of myself to be obliged to say so, but I can't help it.

We are having a very busy time just now. Miss Hamlin has come from America to see my work and meet our people. I have to give much of my time to her as she is going to remain here only a few weeks. Then there are so many other things besides teaching the school. I have eleven widows now, eight of them living here, and three coming everyday as day scholars. I promised to write a long letter about a young widow. She had come here about six weeks ago, but has gone back to her people. Though she told me she would return, I doubt whether she will be coming again. There are two other widows of whom I know and who are very anxious to come to me but their people are opposed to it. I hope someday the way may be clear for them.

Please write to me how you are. I dreamt of you the other night, and it was a pleasant dream.

Please give my love and best Christmas wishes to all my friends and accept them for yourself from,

Your own loving,  
**MARY RAMA**

Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,  
Bombay: Christmas Day, 1889

My dear Mother Superior,

It is a long time since I have written to you. I hope do not think me neglectful, I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Happier New Year.

My school is getting along very nicely. I have eleven widows by this time. Our youngest child widow is 13 years old. You have probably heard her story from Ajeebai to whom I had written. Most of the girls have gone away to spend their Christmas holidays. Mano too has gone to Poona to be with the Sisters.

We are having a very interesting time just now; men from all parts of India come to be present at the National Congress. The meetings of the Congress begin tomorrow. Our representatives in the Congress have asked Sir W. Wedderburn to preside over the Congress this time and he has accepted the invitation. Many other Europeans have come to Bombay to see the wonderful gathering.

I hope you are all well. With much love from me for you and for our Ajeebai,

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

**RAMA**

Please give my love and best wishes for the coming year to dear Sister Elizabeth and to other Sisters whom I know. I should like to know where and how Sister Elizabeth is.

**1890**

Two important letters in 1890, written from the home of her childhood in South Karnatak; the first of them describes its beauty and mentions the good work which her parents carried on in entertaining pilgrims.

The second visit was occasioned by the death of her eldest (half) brother. His widow came in time to be a most trusty and capable helper in the Pandita's work and is mentioned in one of her letters in 1903, when great anxiety was entertained about the health of this relation. Of this sister-in-law, Ramabai writes: "There is but one Mami (Aunt) in the world!"

Another letter of interest should also be mentioned. She had received a copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions* which had stirred her soul and she writes telling with what deep interest she had read it.

SISTER GERALDINE,

Community of St. Mary the Virgin.

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145 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, South Karnatak, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Meal Heranje,

South Karnatic,

May 11th, 1890

My dear Old Ajeebai,

You must be thinking that I have forgotten you as no letter has come to you from me for a long time. I assure you that I have thought of you constantly; I was very busy for the last two months. I have travelled during this time in Central India, Kathiawar and a great part of the Deccan. I have come to my ancestral home to spend a few of my holidays. I am writing this letter from the house of my half-brother. A cousin, my father's sister's daughter, came to see me in Bombay in June last year. On her return home, she told my brother all about my school and work. Both my brother and sister

were much interested in the news and desired to see me. Both are growing old now, as they are the oldest of my father's family. My sister is over sixty years and brother is about fifty-eight. They invited me to come during my visit to the South. This is how I am here. We were much pleased to see each other; I do not remember seeing my sister before this time. I had seen my brother when a little child of three and a half years old. It is about a week since I have arrived here. All this time was spent in seeing different places of interest, such as the old home where my father was born, and where he lived in his childhood. My own forest home is about nine miles from here. I went there the day before yesterday. The mountain peak on which it is situated is a part of the great Western Ghats. It is about 5,000 feet in height, crowned with tall trees called "balghi". They are as tall and as straight as the grand elm trees of England. Some of them are nearly 200 ft. high. I walked about three miles through [a] dense forest of balghis, palms, canes, bamboos, lamals or cinnamon and many other wild trees, tall and covered with thick foliage. No ray of the sun can enter into the thick forest. My father, when he lived on the summit of this mountain, had built a foot-path at the cost of Rs. 20,000 but since he left there about 32 years ago, it has fallen in ruins. Now many pilgrims come and visit the place yearly in November when my brother has the way cleared at his own expense for the convenience of the travellers, for the forest grows rapidly on this mountain path. It is very difficult for people to know their way in this great jungle.

The tableland on which our home was built is about a mile square. My father had the forest cleared and made the ground very nice. The river Tunga which rises about a mile higher than this place, can be seen here in its infancy. It winds its way round the place where our home stood in former days. The banks are adorned with beautiful tree-ferns, some twenty different kinds of ferns are to be found there. The cool water of Tunga, clear as crystal and very sweet, flows through rugged rocks. The beautiful branches of small and large trees, gracefully dropping leaves of ferns bow their heads over the rivulet as if to shelter it from the sun. Tall trees of very green and thick foliage rise on the rocky walls all around this place. Wild beasts such as tigers, wild boars, wolves, jackals, panthers, mountain goats, buffaloes and others live in this jungle. Here for nearly thirteen years lived my father and mother for the purpose of carrying out their intention—i.e. sowing [the] seed of women's education in this part of the country. Some of the flower plants, chumpas and roses which my dear mother loved and which she had planted with her own hand, are still to be seen on the banks of the river Tunga. The whole ground seemed hallowed with the association of my beloved parents. The clear blue sky which looks like a round canopy over this place looked more beautiful than any other sky that I had ever seen. I thought of you there while sitting by the walls of my native place. How I wished you, my dear Old Ajeebai, were there! I would have shown you the grounds and the trees and the creepers I love so much!! We could have lived there for two or three weeks in the summer time. You can see the wonderful sky covered with bright stars as numerous as the sands of the sea. At about nine o'clock in the evening, you can see the wonderful constellation of the Southern Cross rise in the South, and also at midnight the Constellation called the Scorpion adorns the Eastern sky. In daytime you can see the plain on the Western side about sixty miles up and down. The sea which is about 36 miles on the West can be seen on a clear day glittering in the sun like a sheet of glass. The beauty and grandeur of this part of the country is unsurpassed by any other that I have ever seen; but inconveniences of travel makes it almost unapproachable. I have spent this week happily in my forest home. I think of going away tomorrow and shall visit some places of interest on my way to Bombay.

We are having [the] May vacation now. I shall have to be in Bombay by the 28th of this month. We haven't got a home of our own; it was another hired house of which Mano spoke in her letter. It is not an easy affair to get one's own ground and a home in Bombay. There are acres upon acres of ground here that belong to my father, I wish I could carry two or three acres to Bombay to build our school on! I send a bit of fern and a little moss picked on my native mountain.

Yours most affectionately,  
RAMA

*Annotation:* A dictated letter from Ramabai. Her great interest in the *Confessions of St. Augustine*.

Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,  
Bombay: July 21st, 1890

My dear Old Ajeebai,

As I am very much occupied, dear little Mano has offered to write some letters for me.

I was delighted to get both of your very interesting letters. Thank you very much for *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. I read the book with [the] greatest interest and was very much impressed with it. I promise to write a long letter to you in the next month. I am dreadfully busy and have to write a great many letters in the next two weeks. I hope you will be better and rested by the time this reaches you. I am very sorry to hear from Mano that you are not at all well; you must take good care of yourself.

We are getting along nicely and have fifteen widows in the school.

With much love for yourself and poor Miss Noble and dear Mother Harriet,

I remain,  
Yours lovingly,  
RAMA

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS BY SISTER GERALDINE, CSMV, WANTAGE

Pandita Ramabai was wholly supported by the Executive Committee of the Ramabai Association, who endorsed all the suggestions of Mrs. Judith Andrews, saying:

The policy of the school is her own, and the methods of carrying it out have been left entirely in her hands with absolute trust in her wisdom, judgment and piety.

The utmost confidence exists between Ramabai and her Committee.

On March 12th, 1890, the sixth annual meeting of the Ramabai Association, the following cablegram was received from Mrs. Andrews:

Sharada Sadan still lives, and she sends her warm greetings to the Ramabai Association. The anniversary exercises have been successful. There are fifty-one pupils in the school. Thirty-four are widows. The inmates of the Sharada Sadan are now happy and hopeful. They send kind wishes and grateful love.

J. W. ANDREWS

Mrs. Andrews visits India. Difficulties had been increasing between Ramabai and her Executive Committee. [This Executive Committee was the Advisory Board, formed locally, consisting of (1) Dr. Sir Ramkrishna G.



Bhandarkar, (2) Mr. Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade and (3) Raosaheb Chintamanrao N. Bhat.] The conversions of girls in her school and some of the child widows joining her in Christian prayers had aroused bitter criticism. Mrs. Andrews became her patroness on the death of Dean Rachel Bodley and when trouble arose she undertook the journey from America to assist Ramabai in her difficulties. Her presence as Ramabai's friend and representative of the Ramabai Association in America proved a powerful assistance.

SISTER GERALDINE,  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin.

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147 *Letter from MISS SARAH D. HAMLIN, Bombay, to SISTER GERALDINE, CSMV, Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Chowpatty,  
Bombay: August 17th, 1890

To: Sister Geraldine,  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin,  
Wantage.

Dear Madam,

Your letter of May 29th, so tender and gracious, has merited an early reply but it reached me on the eve of my departure for the Interior, from which I returned a few days since. I found Ramabai suffering from a severe cold and general physical disarrangement, I think, but Mano is quite well and is growing rapidly. The mother (Ramabai) has gone to Nasik for a few days and I sincerely hope the change will do her much good.

I must disclaim the kind praises which you bestow upon me in regard to the general appearance of comfort and good conditions Miss Field saw in Mano. I only had the care of the child, by accident, during the summer, when I, of course, guarded her carefully. But I think credit should be given to others rather than to me.

I cannot tell you how strongly I wish Mano could have been left under your influence and that of the noble Sisterhood surrounding you, and have not infrequently said so to her mother, but Ramabai, with grateful appreciation for all your kindness to her, maintains that Mano is best with her own people. But the child needs special and careful training. I find her with a pleasant disposition, quick and eager to learn, but with a total lack of any idea of responsibility in any way. This may be due to Ramabai's method of training or lack of training, and it is largely due, I think, to the foolish petting and flattery so injudiciously bestowed upon her, and in ways and by persons whose proclivities in that direction I cannot check. Ramabai, too, on her return to Bombay was approached by many persons with advice in regard to her child, and in a way that caused her much pain, I fear, and roused a little feeling of resentment. Still, with her mother's strong consciousness and devotion to duty, I cannot believe but Mano will keep to the high path in which you so carefully placed her little feet.

Miss Densmore is a lovely and loving friend to her, and her sweet example is, I think, a bright light to the child. The fact, however, that Mano cannot make the proper progress in this school and with these girls, is causing Ramabai to endeavour to find another school in which she may be placed, which, I think, may be the Cathedral Girls' School at the Fort, if such an institution exists for girls as for boys.

Ramabai's travels were mainly for the purpose of making this school known, and of accustoming her people to the idea of female education. You know, of course, how necessary it is to bring these people into right views and right relations towards any subject of reform, that a people with the intellectual capabilities of these higher castes, and yet with iron-bound customs welded by centuries of spiritual decomposition, must be slowly uplifted, and that we cannot deal with them as we can with people anywhere else. So we have learned, in our association with these people, the educated men, that not only courtesy, sympathy and friendship should be shown but also fairness, patience and tolerance. Advancing but one step in our work, making that advance with care and circumspection, we trust everything beyond to God—the "Father of Light". In the meantime we labour to reach the poor widows and to secure that "one step" by an emancipation from the restriction of ignorance and superstition.

My work has not been school work. I was sent by the American Association for the purpose of aiding Ramabai in the organization of the school and to obtain information which might be of value in the American work, for my people are very ignorant of conditions in India. There has been terrible suspicion felt toward us among the Hindoo people and I have been travelling among them for the past two months and talking with them on the subject of education. The feeling of these high castes towards Ramabai on account of her conversion to Christianity is intensely bitter. They would feel differently toward her, I think, if she were labouring as the missionaries labour mostly with the lower castes, but that she should confine her work to them, and a convert, rouses a strong spirit of hostility. It is difficult to find common ground of sympathy. We are greatly misunderstood and misrepresented, and in a manner of ten times hard to bear, but I know all noble progress requires not only effort, but also the courage to overcome obstacles. I *know* too, that if this work be of God, the very gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; otherwise, do what we may, it will come to nought.

I find in Poona even among the orthodox Hindu such a love and respect for the beautiful women of your noble Sisterhood! Even young men are talking about the establishment of some similar institution on Hindu lines, and for their widows. It may not mean much, but it shows a slight advance that they are willing to make any change of any kind in their system. As far as the religion of Christ is concerned, they are very averse to acceptance of it, and I can only wish that different methods had been adopted at the beginning, but they revere the "Sisters", and from that much good may come.

I go away soon again, but you are mistaken in thinking that my life is here to be spent; I came for a few months, the "Association" urges me to remain two years, but I hope to be able to leave in February or March, and in passing through England, I hope to spend a month in your beautiful land.

Mano is playing on the floor beside me, she looks smilingly into my face as I ask, "What message?" and she says "My love". I can assure you her heart is full of love for the sweetest friends of her life.

There have been two days of sunshine and warm winds; yesterday was the end of Shravana, a month of fastings. By ten thousands the people gathered upon the shores of this beautiful Back Bay, to rush with shout and laughter into the silver grey water and then with flowers and gifts to climb the ridge of Malabar Hill and go down to the monsoon-swept sea to the temple of Mahadevi. Will these hideous idols ever give way to purer worship? I believe so, but how long?

I shall be very happy to hear from you again and give you any information in my power, and in your prayers may I ask for special remembrance of Ramabai and Mano and myself, that we may be guided into the *sure* and *better* way?

Very sincerely yours,

SARAH D. HAMLIN

Karkal Post Office  
[Karkal is a place in South Kanara (Karnatic) not far from Mal Heranje and Gangamool, the birthplace of Pandita Ramabai.]

November 9th, 1890

My dear Old Ajeebai,

I am again writing to you from the home of my brother, but not in the same joyful spirit as I wrote to you last. My brother died about six weeks ago. I have come here at the call of my sister-in-law to settle my late brother's business affairs right; I intend to return soon to my field of work.

Another great change has taken place since I wrote to you my last letter. Our school Sharada Sadan is removed from Bombay to Poona. Bombay was considered too expensive a place for the work to last long, so in accordance with our friends' advice, I made up my mind to change the place of the school. We have hired a bungalow very near the G.I.P. Railway station in the Poona Camp area. It is hoped thus we shall soon have a house of our own in Poona. I have eighteen widows in my school now. The number is increasing very slowly but I hope that we shall have a school full of widows very soon, I was very busy and worried for the last two months since the idea of moving the school was brought before me. Our American teacher Miss Dummond had left the school to get married.

Mano's education, as it was going on, was not satisfactory, so when I went to Poona from Bombay about six weeks previous to moving the school, I left Mano in Mrs. Sorabjee's School as a boarding pupil. I have not had time to arrange things for her as they ought to have been. She is at Mrs. Sorabjee's School now but when I return home, she shall come to stay with me [and] I will then be able to do something for her. I shall then consider your advice and do the best.

I am very very sorry to know that your health is not improving. I hope, dear Old Ajeebai, that you may be spared long to do your part of work for us.

I am expecting to take some widows back with me. I hear there is a child widow only eight years old in this neighbourhood. I shall try to induce her father to send her to my school. How many more destitute children there are of that age, but their parents never for a moment think of sending them to a school.

Mano had been away from me for many weeks so I am afraid she has not regularly written to you. I asked her when I saw her last the reason why she did not write to you. She said that it was the rule of the Victoria High School that the Boarders' letters should be read by the Lady Superintendent before they were sent away. She did not like showing her letter to anyone, so she did not write to any friends, not even to me! Very strange reason to be sure!! I shall see on my return home that she regularly writes to you.

Please give my love to the Mother Superior, to Mother Harriet, to Miss Noble and all other friends. Don't think that I am less affectionate or neglectful because my letters do not reach you frequently; I am so much worried with different affairs that I get neither time nor spirit to write many letters nowadays.

With best love, believe me,

Affectionately yours,  
RAMA

P.S.—The £10.00 sent by Mrs. **Bell** through you reached safely. **I** shall write a note of thanks to him soon.

*Notes and comments by SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

## 1891

The letters of 1891 relate to the second anniversary of the Sharada Sadan and of its removal into more suitable but temporary quarters in Poona. Shortly after the opening of the school in its new home, serious troubles began with the Advisory **B**oard of the school. The letters of 1891 and the Report of the **R**amabai Association of 1894 will explain the position held by this **B**oard with regard to controlling the action of Ramabai within her **H**ome for Widows.

A copy of a letter of September 1891 to a friend in America gives the beginning of a trouble which continued over two years. A history of this trouble and its results can be read on pp. 7-12 of the Ramabai Scrap-Book [[This Scrap-Book of Pandita Ramabai is in the possession of Miss R. K. Dongre of Ahmedangar.](#)]

A letter of December 4th relates to the purchase of a property in Poona for the Sharada Sadan.

SISTER GERALDINE,  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin.

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149	<i>Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage</i>
<i>Annotation:</i>	(i) Second anniversary of the Sharada Sadan. Miss Hamlin returns to America. (ii) The Sharada Sadan removed from Bombay to Poona. (iii) Troubles with Mano's eyes. (iv) Troubles beginning in Sharada Sadan related in detail in the September letter to a friend in America.

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Sharada Sadan,  
Poona: March 20th, 1891

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

It is long since I have written to you; you must be thinking that I have been dreadfully neglectful. The truth is that I was not in the right mood to write any letters to my friends. I had much trouble in connection with the new arrangements and a new Committee. Everything done in Bombay was undone here, and nothing could please our friends. I sometimes wished that I could be saved from my friends! It went very hard with me but silence and patience have at last overcome most of the difficulties. I hope the work will go on nicely hereafter. Miss Hamlin has left Poona to go to America *via* China and **J**apan. The school is recognized, we have thirty young widows and thirteen non-widows in the Sharada Sadan by this time. We celebrated its second anniversary on the 11th of this month, and gave thanks to the **H**eavenly Father for helping us on in [the] most wonderful manner. One of our young widows was married to a very bright and educated young man [[This refers to Godubai's](#)

[marriage to D. K. Karve.](#)] on the 17th of this month. We are very happy over this event; she is the first girl who has gone out of our Home, we hope she will be happy. Twenty-one of the thirty widows are under twenty years of age. Two are nine years each. They are very happy here and [have] made much progress.

Mano's eyes have been troubling her very much; I had to send her several times to Bombay. She has had her glasses changed, and hope now her eyes will get better.

I was very sorry to hear of Sister Mary's departure from this world, and also the death of your sister's husband. How sad she must be feeling! Please give my love and deep sympathy to her when you write to her.

Please give my best love to all my friends at Wantage. I hope you are all well. With a great deal of love and all best wishes for the Easter,

Believe me,  
Very affectionately yours,  
MARY RAMA

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150      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

Annotation:    Troubles thickening in Ramabai's work

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Sharda Sadan, Poona,  
July 2nd, 1891

My dear Old Ajeebai,

Many thanks for your nice and kind letter. I hope you have by this time received the photographs of Mano and those of my other girls, and hope you will like them. I want you to keep them all and look at them sometimes and pray for Mano and for me. These girls are very dear to me. It makes my heart glad to see them together enjoying their life and forgetting the hardships of their past life. How I wished to have you here for the second anniversary of the Sharada Sadan! I never forget that you have helped me a great deal to make this Home what it is now, and I tell my girls to look upon you (by showing your picture) as their greatest friends.

Since this school was brought to Poona many good things have happened, for which I am very thankful. But troubles also have come. The people here insist upon misunderstanding me, and some have and are trying their best to pull this school down. At times the sky seems full of black clouds and it looks as if it will never be clear. But the kind Heavenly Father is watching over us and I am certain that He will never forsake us.

I hope you are better now and your health is much improved. Please give my love to the Mother Superior and dear Mother Harriet also to all my friends at the Home. I forgot to tell you that Miss Kemp is working here and is staying with me; she is a great help to me. Mano has gone to school, otherwise she would have sent her love to you. She has just received the lovely books you and Miss Noble sent to her. She likes them very much. She will write to you on Sunday.

With best love, believe me, dear old Ajeebai,

Yours very affectionately,

P.S. —Mr. Gopal Vinayak Joshi, [He turned out a scoundrel, —Sister Geraldine, C.S.M.V.] husband of the late Dr. Anandibai Joshi was baptized on Monday last by the Rev. Mr. Taylor in the river here. I hope he will be a truly good Christian. But it is rumoured that he still keeps the sacred thread and marks of idolatry on his forehead.

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151 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to a friend in America*  
—a copy of which was sent to Sister Geraldine. A most important letter; it bears upon the causes of the persecution which she received from the Brahmins.

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
September 15th, 1891

My dearest friend,

I revived your letter written on May 31st in due time, but did not purposely write an answer to it up till now. I have written several letters to Mrs. Andrews about the trouble I have had and am having. I hope she will send them on to you (if she has not, please ask her to do so, for I want you to know all about what is going on here). When you read them you will be able to understand the nature of the difficulties which I am having. I do not expect, and have never expected, to get on with this work without facing such and other difficulties. But thanks be unto God that we do not have to depend upon human strength; I know all these clouds will pass away. I am patiently and prayerfully waiting to see what the outcome of this discussion will be. In the meantime I am going to write to you a few of the thoughts which have come into my mind a few weeks since. I want you to keep these to yourself for a little while and think over them; if you feel inclined to do so, tell them to some of your friends and mine who you think will rightly understand me.

You know what I have always said about the educational plan of this school of ours. I have from the beginning intended that it should be a secular one, because if we were to make it distinctly a religious institution the girls whom we wish to reach will not be allowed to come here. But my idea was to indirectly influence the minds of these girls who would come to me, and enlighten them on many points, and if any of them wished to know anything about the Christian religion, they should have perfect freedom to know it. At the same time I did not wish to hinder them from acquiring knowledge of their ancestral religion if they chose to do so. To this end, I had arranged all my plans and was carrying them out in my school until Miss Hamlin came to Bombay; and a little while longer after that, when there appeared a paragraph in a Marathi paper called *kesari* that some of my girls were converted to Christianity. It appears that some of our friends in their overzeal had written a paragraph in the New York *Christian Weekly* to that effect, little knowing what those well-meant words will bring to us in India. No girl of my school had become a Christian; all that I wrote to my friends was that two or three girls were anxious to know something about Christ, and as I could not teach them religion, I sent them to a Zenana missionary friend of mine for instruction. No duplicity or deception was meant in any such act; the girls having been full-grown and able to judge for themselves I thought it right to do so, but unfortunately the story got into newspapers and was much exaggerated in America, and got published in papers. Here it was doubly exaggerated, misrepresented and misunderstood, I was called upon to state the fact—which I did, shewing the falsity of the paragraph in the *kesari* and stating at the same time that I allowed full religious liberty to all the girls in regard to Hindu and Christian religions, and therefore let any girl study Hindu or Christian religion outside this school, with the consent of her guardians if she be a minor. This, however, did not please and fully satisfy the public; but it would not have taken the turn it took when the public came to know that we took notice of everything they said. A meeting of the Bombay Advisory Board was called and the matter was placed before them. In the course of discussion, Miss Hamlin quite unnecessarily



asked the gentleman of the Board whether my allowing some of the girls to join my private devotion could not be called religious instruction. No one would have thought it so but for the suggestion of Miss Hamlin. The gentleman of course said that it was religious instruction, and must directly be stopped, so Miss Hamlin said that Christ had commanded His disciples to pray in their closets with the doors shut up, and that devotion should be carried on privately. And she considered it most effective proselytizing of the girls to allow them to come into my room while I was praying or reading the Bible. When the representative of our Association was interpreting my act in this light, the Hindu gentlemen of the Advisory Board could no be expected to do anything different! I was told by both the Advisory Board and Miss Hamlin to order the girls away when they came to be in my room at the time of prayers. It must also be said that Miss Hamlin told me in the beginning of the meeting before the Board that she had no objection to let me make my school a distinctly religious institution, but that my school could not be called altogether a secular school should I allow the girls to join me in my prayers. So I was practically placed between two fires. I had in all honesty meant that the school should be a secular one, knowing that the high-caste Hindu widows will not be benefited by any institution distinctly religious. So I had never forced religious instruction upon them, neither had I ever said a Christian prayer in the school room, but carried on the school on [a] strictly secular plan. But as I was a resident teacher and had to have my private devotions for my own and my little child's benefit, I thought it would not do any harm to keep my door open when I prayed read the bible. The girls and their parents knew I was a Christian, they had not objected to my being in the school, and I never understood that Christians when they reside in a secular school are to hide their light under a bushel. I did not think our Saviour commanded us to go in our own rooms and shut the door to pray when we live in a secular school!

But Miss Hamlin interpreted that command in this way, so there was nothing left for me but either to shut the school or shut my doors when I prayed.

Even since February 1890, my school has suffered much, false reports of some of my girls having been turned into christens have appeared in the newspapers, resolution after resolution has been passed under the guidance of Miss Hamlin by the Advisory Board to tie my hands and feet so that I can now neither move this way nor that. The effect of all this has proved fatal to the school. Some of the full-grown girls who used to come to hear me read the Bible uninvited and out of their own accord, and who were beginning to improve their conduct wonderfully, have given way to their old nature since they do not hear anything about God and how wholesome His fear is. There is much grumbling, dissatisfaction and mischief growing among them (and) their example is doing much harm to their companions. In short our Home has lost its greatest advantage and most beautiful feature. If you wish to verify this, you can write to the Rev. Mr. Robinson, the presiding Elder of the Methodist Episcopal church of Bombay Presidency, Poona, and ask him if it is not so. It was one of the Zenana workers (who is working under him) who used to teach the Bible to some of my girls who wished to know it. She has seen all the changes in our Home and School, and has told Mr. Robinson everything.

I must also tell you another thing in this connection. You very likely remember the story of a little girl called Lakshmi; she was betrothed when a baby of three years and was most cruelly treated by her mother-in-law and other relations of her husband and finally rescued and sheltered in the Sharada Sadan. Her parents wished me to make a Christian of her immediately and save her from her intended husband. But it was against [the] law of the land, and of God also, so I told her parents to be patient and placed her according to their wishes under religious instruction. But when the article about the conversation of my girls appeared in the *Kesari* and the meeting of the Advisory Board was held at our school to discuss the matter, this matter about Lakshmi was brought before them. I had explained it in the newspaper that we would allow girls to be instructed in religion if their parents and guardians wished us to do so. Accordingly a resolution was passed by the Bombay Advisory Board on February 13, 1890 that "It was also resolved that as regards the religious instruction of the pupils while in the charge of their parents or guardians, the responsibility of such instruction shall rest entirely upon them (i.e. the parents or guardians as the case may be) while they are absent from the Sadan". So I used to send Lakshmi under the custody of her mother on Saturday to the Zenana missionary to be instructed in religion, and this was with the full knowledge of Miss Hamlin and the

Bombay Board. They did not object to it while we were in Bombay, but as soon as we come to Poona, here we found people who would neither countenance nor recognize such an act. The Poona Board would not let me have Lakshmi with us. Miss Hamlin had tried to get too much of the favour of the orthodox party and got some over-orthodox men in the Board. She had placed herself and the school entirely in their hands, and just as she did in Bombay, she suggested such things to the Board here which would have received no notice from them had she refrained a little. The member objected to letting any girl who belonged to our school have religious instruction anywhere, whether with or without [the] consent of her guardians. Miss Hamlin protested, saying that the school authorities do not enforce religious instruction, they will not even allow it in the school boundaries, they will not prevent girls having instruction in Hindu religion at their own home and outside the school if their parents and guardians wished them to have it. Such girls will not be denied admittance in this school, why then should those girls whose parents wished them to be instructed in Christian religion be denied that privilege? She said it was due to the supporters of the school that if any people who placed their daughters here wished that the girls should have instruction in Christian religion outside the school, they should be allowed to have it. But Miss Hamlin's orthodox friends whom she had sought to please all this time [by] giving all power in their hands were not to be moved by her reasonings.

They said that they will have nothing to do with this school if such things were to be allowed here. Miss Hamlin was in a fix. I said that the gentleman can by no means drive Lakshmi out of the school as her expenses were paid by a lady in New York, and that the Board at Bombay had allowed her to have religious instruction outside the school; quoting at the same time the resolution passed by the Bombay Board on the 13th February 1890. But the orthodox members of the Poona Boards were inexorable. They would listen to neither reasoning nor abide by the rules made by the Bombay Board, so finally Miss Hamlin was obliged to listen to them, she advised me to place Lakshmi in a mission school and take money from the school fund to pay her expenses. Even to this, objection was raised; the gentlemen charged us with the crime of making this school a stepping-stone to carry out our intention of converting girls to Christianity, by sending them to mission school and paying their expenses out of our funds. But Miss Hamlin prevailed over them to allow us this privilege for once, as she said the child was placed under our charge before the school was brought here under the government of the Poona Board, and as her expenses were paid by a New York lady, the child should not be deprived of the privilege of studying at the mission school. Accordingly, the following resolution was passed by the Poona Board on November 28, 1890, at 5-00 p.m. This resolution is copied out in the Proceeding Book by Miss Hamlin herself:

## RESOLUTION IV

*As a special case, not to be repeated, the equivalent of 25 dollars (U.S.A. currency) specially remitted for Lakshmibai and received by the The arrangement Board along with the amount for the Sarada Sadan, should be made over by the Treasurer of the Board to Pandita Ramabai every quarter, the said quarter beginning December 1, 1890. The arrangement to continue until a different arrangement may be made by Miss Hamlin in America.*

I have not written anything about this matter to the Executive Committee because Miss Hamlin said they may misunderstand the case, and she said that she would put the matter "all right" as soon as she went to America. Well, I do not know what she has done about it. She must have told the Executive Committee how the matter stands but I have not heard from Mrs. Andrews what "different arrangements" have been made about Lakshmi. I have placed the girl in a mission school nearby and pay her expenses from the money which is handed over to me every quarter since the above resolution was passed.

You will see by this account that our school, so long as it remains under the government of the orthodox Board of Poona, we must never expect to give anything better than food and raiment, and teach a few letters to the girls. I had from the beginning intended in all sincerity to give my girls full religious freedom. I would not prevent them from reading the sacred books of their own religion,

so too I did not mean to prevent them from reading the Bible if they wished to do so, fully understanding what they were doing. I would never have tried to deceive them, not to induce minors to learn my religion against the wishes of their parents and guardians. But now as the case stands, I must (prevent them from reading the Bible) so long as my school is governed by over-orthodox Hindu men (and they are given to understand by the representative of our American Association that I would deceive the people here and would not do right by them unless I was strictly watched over by the Board). I shall be obliged so let the girls have full freedom as regards the study of their ancestral religion and prevent them from reading the Bible even if they or their guardians wish me to let them know something about Christianity. Here my conscience smites me. I had never intended that my school should not prevent the study of Hindu religion, and should positively prevent the study of the Christian religion. How can I submit to remain under such rules and be at the same time loyal to my Saviour? You know that the gentlemen of the Advisory Board here refuse to act as a Board unless they have absolute power. So they have returned the rules which were reconstructed by the Trustees of our Association, and wish to have them changed again. The first mistake was made by Miss Hamlin in February 1890, when she told the gentlemen of the Bombay Board that she considered that keeping my door open at the time of prayer was the most effective religious instruction anyone could give. They of course took it in that light when she said so; ever since the Board has gone on, first at Bombay and then at Poona, gradually encroaching upon our private judgment.

Under the circumstances, I do not think I can remain long in this place, for though I love this school as my own child, I cannot for all that do what goes directly against my conscience. Miss Hamlin, in the name of the American Association, as your representative committed the vital interests of this school into the hands of those well-meaning friends who will in no wise prove true friends to the widows. And it will not be easy for our Association to correct the mistake or change the course of action. If they take hasty action it will prove fatal to the school in one way or the other. Those friends, had they remained simply an Advisory Board, would have been a great help, but a Managing Board having full control over my actions are surely going to injure the true interest of the school. Let me illustrate this statement as briefly as I can.

There are three young girls staying with me, two young widows and one unmarried girl. The former ones have no one to look after them, no parents or guardians to take care of them. One of these has been deceived by a cruel man, led astray and then thrown alone in the wide wicked world. A kind-hearted gentleman helped her out of the immediate danger, and then wrote to me urging me to take and save the young girl of nineteen, who must otherwise go to the dogs. Well, I could not turn my back on her. I invited her to my home, and have kept her these seven months as my guest. She is a dear child; with all her faults, she is the best behaved of all the girls under my care. Where shall I send her now? And what must I do with her? She is not and cannot be received in the school and provided for out of the school funds, for the Advisory Board will not admit a girl of that kind in the school. Had they even done so, she would have been no better for it, for she is in great spiritual need. She cannot go to her distant relatives, as the Hindu religion or society does not give the slightest hope of salvation and comfort to girls of her kind; our Advisory Board has nothing to give to her. If they admit her in the school she must lose all spiritual advantages, which come from the study of the Christian religion, as according to the rules, no girl who is supported by this school will be allowed by them to know anything about Christ. What better thing than His knowledge could I give to her under such circumstances? I have kept her and am supporting her and teaching her about His love outside this school. So shall I do with the two other girls who are in similar condition, though they have not yet been deceived by a man. But if they leave this school (they may be) well-educated mentally, it may be, but very ignorant about the grace of God, which gives the true strength of character which will keep them out of temptation. So I have resolved to support them myself and give to them that which they need. But how long shall this go on? How many girls shall I be able to take under my personal charge and how long shall all this be kept from the public? It must necessarily come to the notice of the public some day or other. I must either leave this school or the Association in America must reconstruct their constitution to help me out of the difficulty.

The letter is getting to be very long; I must stop here. I shall however take it up again and write a few more words.

With best love for your dear self,

I remain, as ever  
Devotedly yours,  
RAMA

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152 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to a friend in America-copy sent to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V. Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
September 16th 1891

My dearest friend,

I cannot rest till I have fully discussed the question about which I began to write yesterday. You had, I believe, asked me about it when the last resolution was passed about religious instruction. I may no be right in thinking that you had asked it, but I am sure someone did. I received a letter from Toronto and one from the United States. The writer had evidently expected that we shall positively prevent instruction in Christian religion; as a proof they referred to the report written by Mrs. Andrews in the last year. Well, I replied to their letters and quelled their fears by assuring them that while we do not propose to, and do not mean to force religious study on your pupils, we do not wish to hinder them from acquiring the knowledge of Christianity if their parents or guardians wish them to have it outside the school. For so I had understood the meaning of the resolution passed by the Bombay Board in February 1890. But here is a body of Advisors who wish to be Managers of the School and wish to prevent us from carrying our original wishes. We might have done better by letting them be an Advisory Board and quietly carried on our purpose without making much fuss about these things. What so you think about the muddle?

There is another question to be considered. The Advisory Board has full control over the admission of girls in the school. I do not object to it any other point except that, when such a girl whose story has been written in yesterday's letter comes to me, am I to turn my back to her? Of course, I must be wise and be advised by people of sound judgment before taking those girls into the school but may I not sometime do thing according to my own discrimination? Considering and looking on these questions from all sides I have come to the conclusion that:

If the American Association gives all power into the hands of the Advisory Board and calls them the Managing Board, this school, which was established on the principle of entire religious freedom, must necessarily gives its favour to Hindu religion and deny the slightest favour to Christianity. Girls like the one of whom I wrote will not find shelter in it in the first place; and it per chance the Managing Board takes compassion on some such girl and admits her, the school will not be able to give her anything better than food and clothe her and teach her to read and write, which alone will not help her to lead a better life; she may turn worse. This goes directly against my conscience; I shall not be justified in being connected with this school under these circumstances. So I am obliged to write to the Association to find another person to take my place or tell the Managing Board here to find some lady who will satisfy them.

When I am released from this school, I propose if possible to start a school similar to this one, only I shall have greater freedom in regard to admission of girls and looking after their spiritual interests. So far as I know my mind, I do not feel called to enter into [the] mission field. My work must be educational essentially, but I do not wish to bind myself with a pledge that I shall not lead my girls into a better way by sending them to the missionaries, should they wish it. If I am expected to carry out my plan and shew good results of my work to my friends, I must have greater freedom in all respects than I have under the present rules and regulations of the Advisory and the Managing Board. If our friends of the American Association will consent to let me carry on my work in *this* school as I wish it, and let the Advisory Board remain simply a body of Advisors and nothing else, well and good. If not, nothing daunted, I shall start to collect fresh funds and begin to work in a fresh field, and I know God will help me. In my last letter to Mrs. Andrews, I have proposed that the American Association accept my resignation; I am waiting to get an answer. I know that you and other friends will advise me wisely. I shall expect to get your opinion on all the points which have been written by me in these letters. Sent them on to Mrs. Andrews please, and let her be acquainted with these facts.

Here I must say that in case our American Association decides not to give all power in the hands of the Managing Board, we shall for the present find it difficult to get girls from the high-caste Hindu families. The present number of pupils will very likely be diminished, but with all these hindrances staring us in our faces, we shall have a better chance of exercising our judgment, and satisfy our conscience by making this school what it was originally meant to be.

Let me assure you that our work will prosper in God's own good time if we follow His rules instead of those made by our Managing Board. He can do for us what all the Hindu world put together cannot. So far as [the] money question goes let some of the Hindu gentlemen who profess to take an interest in the work be asked to examine my accounts and advise me in regard to the amount of money to be spent on salaries, etc., etc., as they were originally meant to do, and let me have the charge of this school and admission of pupils and their training. The American Association can try this plan for some time and see what comes of it. They can easily change their course of action if the one suggested above proves unsatisfactory. But if it places them to give all power into the hands of the Managing Board, they are at full liberty to do so. I hope, my dear friends, you will clearly understand what I mean. I have prayed over these thoughts of mine very often, and am not guided by any selfish motive. I have a wide field open to work in, there is plenty for all the workers in the Lord's vineyard, I am far from wishing to have power and sole ownership of this school. What I meant by these thoughts written in this letter is that I should have freedom to do man's work as well as the Lord's.

Now I must write something in answer to your question about the Circles taking up some girls. Let those Circles who have taken up certain girls go on supporting them, and if any other Circles wish to take up other girls, I shall give you a list of their names. They can also correspond with Circles, but one thing must be understood at the outset—that it is difficult to keep these girls long; some of them are taken away by their parents and guardians whenever anything against our school is written in the newspapers. To keep them as long as we can and give them a taste of acquiring knowledge is all that we can do at present.

You will please think over this question and do what you think is best. Please give my love to your dear mother, sister and all the friends at Canadaigua.

As ever,

Your loving friend,  
RAMABAI



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153      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage.*

*Annotation:*    \* Relates the purchase of property in Poona as a home for the Sharada Sadan.  
                      \* Relates the coming of a young widow with her four-month old baby sent to Ramabai by the orthodox Hindus.  
                      \* Relates a very remarkable incident in the coming of a young widow.

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
December 4th, 1891

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

It is long since I have written to you. I was very busy with the new business that has been added to my usual work. It is the new house we have purchased for the school. We have 3½ acres of ground with two large bungalows and outhouses. Repairs, some alterations and additions are necessary before we move in our new bungalow, which we hope to do (D.V.) by the end of this, month. The house is situated on the Connaught Road opposite the Connaught House near the Bombay Office.

It is only a year since we have been here, but what a long, long year it seemed to me. But thank God, our dear Sharada Sadan has lived through all the troubles and trials and storms which were raging around it during the past twelve months.

Our school was closed on the 25th of October for the Divali holidays. Eighteen of my girls went to their homes and the rest remained with me. I took these girls to Lanowlie (*i.e.* Lonavla) for a change. We walked all round Lanowlie and spent much time in the woods. All the girls went to see the Karla caves. There is grand mountain scenery near Lonavla about 3 miles from the town. An immense granite rock stands about 1,500 feet high against an equally high precipice which is called "Pushicha Kada". People can here the echo of their voice at the place. I took the girls then to see this wonder of nature. They enjoyed seeing it and hearing the echo of their own voice very much indeed. We stayed four days at Lonavla. Our good friend Mr. Modak had kindly let us stay at his summer residence in that place. Our children were delighted with the change so much that they did not care home even to celebrate the Divali festival. They left Lonavla with great reluctance when it was time to return to Poona. The days of excursions like these are red-letter days never to be forgotten. Had some of my friends who support and pray for this school seen the delighted and happy children, they would have felt satisfied, well paid for all the troubles they are taking for our young windows. I forget all my troubles and trials when I hear the ringing laughter and see the delightful expressions on the faces of my children. Their happiness and freedom, their improvement and culture seem to me to be worth more than all the trials and expenses we are put to.

The 24th day of the last month was the last day of the Divali festival. I was sitting on an easy chair in the open grounds before our present house in the evening of that day, very tired after the day's hard work. The sun had almost gone down, when I saw a carriage emerging from the compound gate. As it neared me, I recognized in the occupant of it my friend Mrs. Ramabai Ranade. I was delighted to see her after a long time. Since the last outbreak of popular indignation against our school for some imaginary cause of their own creation, we do not have many visits from anyone. So I wondered why Mrs. Ranade took the trouble to come here on this festival. People in this country do not think of going to see windows and especially the child windows on festive occasions, so we do not expect to be remembered by anybody in the town while the people are celebrating great festivals and making merry. I was not a little surprised and glad when I saw Mrs. Ranade walk in our house with a lovely present of sweet fruits and candies intended for my girls. I gathered all the girls (at her request) around us in the garden Mrs. Ranade divided and gave the fruits to the girls and talked kindly to them.



We enjoyed the evening very much indeed and were grateful to Mrs. Ranade for this deed of kindness. This is the first recognition of the young widows at school. It seemed so very new and strange to me that I could not help saying so to Mrs. Ranade and to some Christian friends of mine who called here in the evening.

Mrs. Ranade did not come here with the lovely present of fruits only; she had something lovelier to tell me. She brought me the news that there was a young widow who desired to come to my school, and told me to call at her house the next day after sundown. Accordingly,

I called at Mrs. Ranade's on the appointed day after sunset. My sister-in-law, Mano and another lady friend accompanied me. Mrs. Ranade met me at the entrance with [a] cordial welcome. We were engaged in pleasant conversation when two of Mrs. Ranade's sisters-in-law offered to go to fetch the young widow. They had not gone ten minutes before we saw a dark short figure coming towards us. This was the young widow whom Mrs. Ranade's sister had gone to fetch, but had crossed in the way. The young widow, although only eighteen years of age, looked about 30 with deep marks of suffering on her face. She carried a wee little baby of about four-months in her arms. Mrs. Ranade introduced me to her, asked her [to] sit down by us. After describing to her the object and actual condition of our school, Mrs. Ranade asked her if she were willing to go to it. "yes", she said very eagerly as if she were willing to rasp any little straw which would save her from sinking down in utter misery for life, "Yes, I want to go, I want to go to that school now". "But", said Mrs. Ranade, "have you considered well what you are doing, Don't you want to go to your home for the night and think it over again? You may have left something which you will need, or perhaps, you would like to get your garments". "No, no", said the poor young widow, "I do not want anything, I do not want to go back, let me go to the school now".

Seeing how anxious she was to come to this place, we lost no time in taking leave of Mrs. Ranade. We brought the widow and her four-month-old baby home to the great joy of every inmate of the Sadan. The girls gathered round her and welcomed her as if she were their own sister. They snatched the baby from my arms [and] went wild in their demonstration of joy at having a baby at our Home. The young widowed mother looked very happy and relieved at the change of her condition. This afternoon, I requested her to tell me all about her life. She belongs to the Brahmin caste, has no father or brother living. Her mother became a widow when she was about 4 years of age and got rid of her giving her in marriage soon after the death of her father. It is scarcely necessary to say that the child did not have a very pleasant life while under the charge of her father-and mother-in-law; she used to have a daily dose of beating, bad words and ill treatment. She grew to be a young girl gradually. She had experienced much suffering but the worst was to come yet. About four months ago her young husband died of typhoid fever. This unfortunate

Occurrence, the worst that can happen to a Hindu woman, embittered her whole life and the cup of her suffering began to overflow from that date. Her father- and mother-in-law began to persecute her with all their might. They abused and cursed her daily, and the father-in-law who is no less than sixty years of age, was so cruel as to actually trample her down under his feet. Pull her hair, and beat her with [a] shoe. The neighbours could no longer bear to see this disgraceful sight. They protested against such treatment of the young girl, and all of them—men and women, young and old—pointed to her our Sharada Sadan as *the* place for her to go to. She has nobody to take care of or support her. The landlady who is a widow and a mother of five children took compassion on her and sheltered her in her home for a few days until we could be informed of her condition. The mother-in-law of the young widow threatened the landlady by sending her [a] message that she would set her house on fire if she did not turn the widow out of her house. She and her old husband wished very much to take the baby away from her mother and send the widow to serve in some family as a cook after disfiguring her by cutting her hair. The brave girl held her own against such cruelties, but did not know what to do. Mrs. Ranade had informed her of the existence of our school, but she could not find her way to come here. At last all the neighbours, even the orthodox old ladies who are no friends of reform, came to Mrs. Ranade in force and requested her to take the young widow to the Sharada Sadan. It was at their request that Mrs. Ranade came here on Wednesday. Mrs. Ramabai's sister-and

mother-in-law who are widows of the old orthodox type, were much delighted in seeing the young widow safely brought and sheltered in our home. She is very happy since coming here and we all delight in her happiness. Our teachers and girls are busy in preparing the baby's garments, and are having a joyful time altogether.

Don't you think it quite remarkable that after all the storm which we had surging around us, after our enemies had tried their best in misrepresenting our motives and thereby trying to pull our school down that some of the orthodox and bigoted persons should themselves send a window to this school?

I send a copy of a letter written by me to the Secretary of our American Association. This letter will inform you of many causes of disturbances. You will see from it that my mind is occupied with many things, I scarcely know how to get out of all these difficulties. But I am certain of one thing, that this work is not mine, it is of the Lord and for Him alone. He is quite able to take care of it. I have just had a letter from Mrs. Andrews, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of our Association in which she says : "Your last letter to Miss Grainger is being read by member of the Executive Committee and the officers of the Association. It is written in such a calm dispassionate manner that it carries conviction to the minds of all who read [it], and thus far there seems but one opinion that your policy prior to February 1890 must be resumed. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon are very strong on that point. Dr. Hale has the letter now. When I get the opinions of all, you shall have them. We begin to see, dear child, the cause of much misunderstanding, why you have been so reticent—and we so ignorant. Let me say here that the case of Lakshmibai has never been mentioned to us! How Miss Hamlin will explain her silence remains to be seen".

I shall remain here on the condition that our Association consent to let me carry on the work according to the original plan; otherwise, I shall be obliged to leave this school. About three weeks ago, I received a letter from Mrs. Andrews which said that the Association would not accept my resignation. But I am still doubtful as to the course the Association will take in regard to the powers of the Advisory Board here.

I have a kindergarten training class of about 14 girls. A young widow who is independent of her relatives and a little money has joined this class. I am delighted to have her. About a year from now, when the younger ladies are thoroughly trained, we shall see our way to open a model kindergarten school. Do you know of any ladies in England who would be willing to donate some sets of kindergarten gifts and material to our school? they will be invaluable in my work. This branch of instruction develops such a generous self-denying spirit in the pupils.

We are having a dreadful famine in madras now owing to the scarcity of rain. I told the suffering of these poor people in Madras to my girls the other day and asked them if they would not like to give something to help the sufferers. Everyone was willing to help us, and do what lay in her power. Some girls gave [a] few pice, that was all they had. Others begged me to reduce their daily allowance of milk and said they would have their meals twice a day instead of three time so that they might save some money to be given to the famine fund. A Brahmin widow who used to be very proud of her caste, and would not even touch my shoes with her hand for fear she should be defiled, is of late so much changed that she offered to do the sweeper's work and sweep the school yard for a month, so that she may earn three rupees to give towards the famine fund. Yesterday all the girls went in force to the new house and for three hours worked like the low-caste labourers to earn money to give to the Madras people. You can imagine how delighted I am to see this great change brought about in the proud selfish nature of the highcaste girls. How good God is to give such beautiful gifts to us! I can never be thankful enough to Him.

You will be tired of reading this letter, so I must now stop. Please read it to dear Mother Harriet, to dear Mother Lucy and Miss Noble and tell them that I meant to write separate letters to them, but find it very hard to do so with the multitude of duties which must at once be attended to. Please give my best love them, with all good wishes for the Christmas and for the coming year.

How good of you to send that picture drawn by my dear Ajeebai No.2 Please give my best love and many thanks to her, for letting me have the picture of the Saviour. I shall have it framed and hang it in my room when I go in the new house and shall always lovingly think of the dear old Ajeebai No. 2 who drew it.

With best love and all good wishes for the Christmas.

Believe me,  
Dear Ajeebai,  
Very lovingly yours,  
RAMA

I have no time to look over the letter, excuse mistakes, blots, scratching, etc. etc.!

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154	<i>Letter from</i> PANDITA RAMABAI, <i>Poona, to</i> SISTER GERALDINE, <i>C.S.M.V., Wantage</i>
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*Annotation :* An account of Saraswati, a child widow with her baby of 1½ years.

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
(Undated : Probably 1892)

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

As promised in my last letter, I send the account of another poor widow by this mail. I hope you are quite well. Mano has come home for her holidays but she is suffering from fever; I am writing this by her bedside. She sends her love to you and Miss Noble and to the Mother Superior. Please give my love to the Mother and accept it for yourself from,

Your loving,  
RAMA

SARASWATI

One of the widows who has lately come to me has a baby girl nearly one and half years old. She is only 18 years of age and her name is Saraswatibai. She belongs to the Vaishya caste and was born and stayed until now in Bombay. Her father died when she was quite a small girl, about eight years of age. She says her mother was young and poor, and as is usually the case with destitute young widows in this country, she went to cook and to do menial work in many people's houses. She there gradually lost her goodness and fell into bad company. Once she had planned to sell her little daughter to a bad woman to be brought up for immoral purposes, and had the price money from that woman and was about to make her little girl over to her wicked customer. But at that time Saraswati, though she understood little the purpose for which she was sold, cried and pleaded hard with her mother and suspecting that she was to be taken to some bad place, entreated her mother to marry her of to some good man instead of selling her to the bad woman. But [the] unnatural mother would not listen to her entreaties and would have give her over to the bad woman from whom she had taken money, had not a kindly old man prevented her from carrying out her intention at that time. He was neighbour of Saraswati and her mother, and hearing the cries of the poor little girl, he arrived there to rescue her from death as it were. He ransomed the child and adopted her as his own daughter. When she was

about eleven years of age, he married her to a nice young man of her own caste. He had no one but a sister in his family, so Saraswati lived with her adopted father until she was fit to take the responsibility of a housewife. About four years ago she went to live with her husband and they had a very happy time for a little while. Her husband, being a good and thrifty young man, had earned some money and made himself and his young wife very comfortable.

Thus the young couple lived happily and had a little child, a girl whom they loved very much. About a year ago, poor Saraswati's husband died of heart disease. She was robbed by her distant relatives and though her husband left money enough on which she might have lived comfortably, she was robbed [of] every cent she possessed. Her cruel relatives took her jewels also, and made her work in their house as a slave for [a] mere handful of rice, since her husband's death, she never knew what it was to rest and to hear a good word or to have enough to eat. Her poor baby too received a very hard and heartless treatment from the cruel people. They starved her almost to death and used to beat and scold her all the time. But poor Saraswati suffered all these wrongs silently and patiently blaming no one but her own 'fate' for all the sorrow and evil which had befallen her. About four months ago, her sister-in-law with whom she was living after her husband's death, took the wicked advice of some neighbour and wished to make money by selling Saraswati to bad people! But the young widow would not consent to do any such thing. She resisted all temptation with her whole might. When her wicked relations found out that the young girl would not surrender herself to sin, they tried every good and evil means to force her into a life of shame.

Poor Saraswati had done her best and would have consented to work like a slave with her sister-in-law for her husband's sake, but she could not carry out her evil wishes. So one day, carrying her little baby in her arms, she fled to her adopted father's house for protection. The old man has grown-up sons and daughters and has lost his wife who loved Saraswati as her own child. He is very poor and unable to work and thought he would very much like to take care of Saraswati he cannot do so. So Saraswati found herself in a very great difficulty. She and her baby were starving yet she feared to work in other people's houses, knowing well what fate befalls young widows when they go to do menial work for livelihood. She could not think what she should do and rather than go into [a] sinful life, she had resolved to commit suicide leaving her baby to be taken care of by some acquaintance of her.

Just at this time she became acquainted with a Christian lady friend of mine who is living in Bombay. Saraswati begged of her new friend to do something for her, and send her to some place where her virtue and her life would be safe. This friend thought of our Sharada Sadan and wrote to me at once stating the case of the young widow and asking me if I would not give her shelter. I wrote back to her requesting her to write [to] me all the particulars about the widow but before my letter reached her, Saraswati came to her one morning in great haste, telling her if she wished to be alive until the next morning, she must direct her to go to some safe place or if she found no hopes she was determined to take a dose of opium. So Manjulabai (that is the name of my friend in Bombay) could do nothing but write a letter to me, and placing it into Saraswati's hand, sent her to Poona by one of the morning trains. Saraswati arrived, got down from the train at Poona station, as she was directed, and finding herself in a strange place among strange people, she was unable to find our house and wandered about for some time. She enquired of many people where the Sharada Sadan was, but no one gave her [a] satisfactory answer. She met some young men who said they would take her to the place where she wished to go, so she walked with them for about half a mile. She had heard from my friend that the Sharada Sadan was very near the Railway station at Poona, and she thought it strange that though they had taken [her] away so far, they were still answering her eager question by telling her that the school was still further away. She refused to go with them and thought she was greatly bewildered and trembling with fear, suspecting that these young men might have some bad intention about her and thought it not safe to trust anyone, she had the presence of mind to ask a policeman to direct her to the Sharada Sadan. He at once accompanied her and brought her as far as the gate of our house. The young men were still following her and when I reached home after returning from my errand in the bazaar, I saw the poor forlorn young girl standing in the gateway, surrounded by those

wicked young men. I took in the situation at once and told her to go in the house. As soon as the young men saw me, they left the place in haste and left Saraswati in peace.

I cannot describe to you how deeply I was touched to see Saraswati in rags in her forlorn state and emaciated sorrowful face, and her poor starved baby who looked more like a skeleton of a monkey than a human child! However, my girls and I did the best we could to make the mother and child comfortable, and for three weeks after their arrival I told her to do nothing but eat a great deal and rest thoroughly. The baby who received nothing but cruel treatment from all people except her mother would not come near us. She used to faint almost every hour and we saw no smile light up her face, no matter what we did to please her. But gradually as the baby saw no one was unkind to her, she began to change a little. I spoke kind words to her now and then, and one day I found that she liked flowers, and won her heart at once by giving her some pretty flowers. Now both the mother and the child are very happy. Saraswati often tells of the hard time and the sad experience she had had, and expresses much gratitude for the kindness she received here. She is a thoroughly good industrious girl and has a grateful loving heart. Her experiences have made her a very tender-hearted and sympathetic woman. She is applying herself diligently to her study and will someday make a very good useful woman.

RAMABAI

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155 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
August 5th, 1892

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

I do not remember if I have written a letter to thank you for the kindergarten material which you sent to me. I opened the box the other day when our school was moved in this new house and found six sets of kindergarten gifts and occupations and I thank you heartily for sending them. They will be a great help to me, when this building is completed and the kindergarten school for children is opened. Our new house was formally opened on the 26th day of [the] last month. I send a cutting from the *Bombay Guardian* which will give you particulars of the day's programme.

With much love and hoping that you are well,

I remain,  
Lovingly yours,  
RAMABAI

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156                      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

*Annotation:*      Mano passed standard V at the Victoria High School, Poona.

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
September 15th, 1892

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for your kind message which you sent in Miss Kemp's letter. I telegraphed to you on the next day after receiving the message. What a nice thing it will be to have a telescope of our own which we can use at any time! But do not put yourself to any inconvenience on its account. The kind of telescope we want is to be had for £ 25.10 at New & Company's Firm, 3, Fleet Street, Temple Bar, London. The following is the description of the telescope in their catalogue:

No. 21 Three-and-a-half feet Astronomical Telescope, best achromatic object glass three inches in diameter, two day and three night astronomical powers 35, 55, 80, 120 and 200. The body of brass, with rack and pinion adjustment to the eye pieces, and Achromatic Starfinder mounted on Mahogany tripod stand, with brass head and cradle and horizontal and rack vertical motions and centre brass steadying rod, and brass bolted folding stretcher for the legs. Packed in mahogany case. Price £ 25.10.

You will be glad to know that Mano has passed the V standard and is to be placed in Std. VI from the next term. She will come home for her holidays for a fortnight.

I have a new widow whose account will be sent to you by next mail. Hope you are quite well. I will send to you a few specimens of Natural History. I have told several friends to get them for me.

Please give my love to [the] Mother Superior and to all my friends at Wantage. With best love,

I am as ever,  
Yours affectionately,  
RAMA

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157                      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to MRS. JUDITH ANDREWS, U.S.A*

*Annotation:*      Story of Yamuna, a child-widow.

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
December 1st, 1892

Dear Mrs. Andrews,

I went to attend a meeting yesterday afternoon. The speaker was Miss Pash, representative of the World's Women's Christian Temperance Mission. She has come over to this country to awaken an interest in women's education among the Hindus and other people of India. She gave an interesting address and everybody was pleased with it. The gentlemen present made long speeches, as they always do in favour of 'female' education. They acknowledged the importance of educating their



women, and said that their salvation as a nation and their future too depended upon the mothers of this country, and that they ought to treat the widows kindly, and make women happy and not to be so cruel to them, etc. etc.

Miss Pash and many others who know very little of the talking-much-but-do-nothingness of these so-called educated orators, must have thought that [the] millennium has dawned over India! O, happy day which will see these words turned into deeds! But, alas, this present time is not at all hopeful. I will mention, for instance, [the] real condition of the mind of one of the eloquent speakers who addressed the meeting last night.

He is a famous man, very learned, can make long speeches, advocates 'female' education, kindness to a woman and prevention of cruelty to widows and child-widows. Yet his niece, his own brother's daughter, was so cruelly treated by her husband's and father's relations that she was ready to commit suicide and would have carried out her purpose had we not sheltered her in our home. She was betrothed to a boy of fifteen when she was only eight years of age. Her father had died a year after her betrothal. So there was no one except this orator uncle to protect and support her and her mother. They had a little money but they needed someone to look after their family affairs. When this little girl of eight, whom we will call 'Yamuna', was betrothed her parents knew well that her future lot would be anything but a happy one. For no one dared to connect themselves with this family. They knew that the boy's parents and other relations were not good people, they were known to treat children cruelly. Still Yamuna's parents did not mind it. They did not love her well enough to take her future happiness into consideration. She was only a girl after all, and must be got rid of as soon as possible. Yamuna says that she keenly felt the injustice of the ill-treatment and neglect of her by her parents even at that age. She wanted to be a boy so that she might be happy and beloved by her people, but as that was not possible, and as the girl was completely in their power, she meekly bowed her head to her fate, and gave herself up for [a] lost soul. Her sufferings began after the betrothal. Her mother-in-law would beat her every day almost, starve and make her work very hard. She suffered much hunger, and over-work, and this state of things continued for over three years when [the] mother-in-law died.

In the meanwhile, her boy husband grew more and more mischievous for want of good training. He made fast friends of bad people, and at the age of nineteen he became [a] confirmed gambler and thief. His father and other relations, instead of punishing and checking him, made it their business to always scold, beat, abuse and curse poor little Yamuna for they said it was her fate which made her husband bad, she was responsible for every action of his, it was she who brought disgrace to, their family. Her own people too grew unkind to her and treated her as if she were a great criminal. By and by her husband took her to live with him in another house near that of his father. Now that he was free and had nobody to check him, he grew worse and worse. He looked upon his wife as a being worse than a slave, and treated her very cruelly. About two or three years passed on. Poor Yamuna was altogether hopeless. Whenever she protested against his conduct, he would say: "our gods committed theft and adultery, they gambled and killed others to get things which they wanted, and why shouldn't we follow their example? The object of life is to be happy in any way, and if stealing, gambling and such other things make me happy, I do not see why I am blamed for pursuing them. I will disgrace you in the eyes of the public, and beat you to death if you ever say anything against my doings. I am your master, and you must keep my secrets, and serve me as a god, for the Shastras say the husband is the god and master of his wife". And so he made her serve and obey him. Once she let one of his secrets [be] known to her family by telling them that an article that was missing in the house was seen in her husband's room. She said it innocently, thinking that it must have been taken there by mistake, but it turned out to be otherwise. Her husband had stolen it, and got a scolding from its owner. He afterwards found out that his child-wife had let his secret out. On reaching his home, he shut the doors and windows of his room and began to curse and beat his wife most cruelly. He would have killed her that day, had not the neighbours forced the doors open and carried his wife half dead, and in an unconscious condition to her mother.

Shortly afterwards she was taken home by her grandfather in the town of Saswad where she gave birth to a baby-child. Meanwhile her husband continued his evil pursuits. He poisoned and killed a bad woman whom he used to visit often, and took all her jewels and money. But he was arrested by the police and tried before the court and was found guilty of willful murder. A paternal uncle of his also had shared his crime but he being a dumb man was sentenced to be imprisoned for life and Yamuna's husband was transported for life. In about six months after the baby's birth, Yamuna returned to her people in Poona where she was received by them as a widow, while their lips uttered evil curses upon her. She had taken no part whatever in her husband's actions and had always protested against his evil conduct, even at the risk of her life. But her husband's relations and her own mother too thought her the cause of all this misfortune. She was like an evil omen in their eyes, it was her fate which actuated her husband. Henceforth she was considered a widow and treated as such with the exception of shaving of her head. She was the slave of the whole household, and though they made her work for them all they found it hard and were very unwilling to give food and clothing to her and her baby. Occasionally she used to pay visits to her mother but her sisters-in-law and the mother did not like to have her with them. The mother simply ignored their ill-treatment of Yamuna.

This state of things went on for three years after her husband's transportation. Yamuna says her misfortune reached its climax during these years. She had not even a particle of comfort no matter where she stayed. She says that the cruel treatment of her by her husband's people looked quite natural to her, but her mother's coldness was more than she could bear. She tried hard to please her people but did not succeed. At last about three months ago her husband's brothers and her sisters-in-law tried to ruin her reputation by bringing some false and evil charges against her and tried to degrade her in the eyes of her nearest relations by making them think that she had done wrong and shameful deeds.

Poor Yamuna had nobody to defend her. She cried to her gods for help but they did not come to her rescue. She could stand this cruelty of her people no longer. So one day she took her three-year old baby in her arms, went to her mother's house, left the baby there and started out in the afternoon, without letting anyone know that she had resolved to throw herself into the well or the river, and thus to put an end to her miserable life. But one of her lady friends happened to meet her in the way; she invited Yamuna to go home and spend the day with her. Yamuna consented to go with her, resolving to carry out her intention the next night. While at her friend's house, someone told her of our school and directed her to go to it and ask for admission. She knew of this school some time since and had asked her brothers and her orator uncle about it, but they gave no information to her, they never lifted a finger to help her nor did they care to make her lot a happier one. But now that she had got definite information about it, she thought of making one more attempt to save her baby and her own life. She came to our place one Sunday evening and asked for admission. I was not at all sure whether to admit her or not, since I had learnt that her husband was a thief and a murderer. I thought it not safe to admit her at once into the school before I could make [a] thorough enquiry about her own character. So I told her to go away somewhere for a few days until I could consider what I should do, but the poor girl said she could not go to her mother or her husband's people. She had started from home with the intention of committing suicide, and if she must go anywhere it will be to throw herself in a well or in the river which is not far from here. Here I was put in a very difficult position. I had no room where I could lodge her and keep her separated from the girls of my school. Fortunately I had some very good friends in the town, I directed her to go to them, and make all necessary arrangements for her support and safety. She was kept with them for about three months, and I had ample time to make enquiries about Yamuna's character. I found from trustworthy friends who also were her distant relations and from the experience of my friends with whom she stayed all this time, that she was a girl of pure character, and a thoroughly good gentlewoman. Now I have at her request allowed her to come and join my school. She has been with me now about six weeks and has proved herself not unworthy of the support and kindness she is receiving. She is very happy and grateful. Her daughter is a sweet little pet, very good and gentle. I am simply astonished and grieved at the cruelty of her people and especially at her mother's and uncle's coldness. And such are the so-called educated men who talk much about improving women's condition, but never lift a finger to help the oppressed and needy.

(Here ends the story abruptly)

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158      *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

*Annotation:* Stories of child widows: money wanted for the completion of the new Sharada Sadan.

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
December 23rd, 1892

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

I have got a few Natural History collections for your little nephew, which I shall pick up tomorrow, and send them by Sister Phillipa who is going to start for England in a few days.

The other day I heard a very sad story of a young child widow from two friends who know all about her. She is the daughter of a Brahmin who lives in a village about 25 miles from this place. About four months ago her father and mother who together with other members of the family used to treat their daughter very cruelly—just because she was a widow—thought of disfiguring her by shaving her head. The child could not bear the thought of being disfigured. She had suffered much already but this coming trial was more than she could stand. So one day, just the day before she would have been shaven and shorn had she remained at her house, the deed would have done—she started for a Mohammedan Nawab's house who is the owner of that town. She took shelter in his house, and begged of him to protect her which he promised to do if she would embrace his religion then and there. The poor girl not knowing what else she would do, consented to his proposals and became a Mohammedan by repeating the Kalamen or the Creed of the Mussalmans. The Hindu inhabitants of that town made much noise and protested against the Nawab's conduct, but he said it was his duty to protect a girl who came of her own accord as she had come to him and embraced his religion. They could do nothing after that. The Nawab said he was willing to send her back to them, if they would eat the food which she would she would cook. But they refused to do so, the parents would not take her back for she had broken her caste. So she remains in the house of that Nawab, probably to become a concubine of his or of one of his friends. I tried to rescue her and sent a message to her through some friends but they could not get near her. I hear that she is in this town, staying with that Nawab.

Another sad story similar to this is that of a young child widow who was in a like condition and was disfigured against her wishes. She suffered much physical and mental pain, and was persecuted and nearly starved and worked to death by her relations. She was at last forced to throw off the yoke of her people, only to be in a worse state and to take up the yoke of Satan on herself. She left her relations, went to Ahmednager and not being able to endure the pains caused by hunger, she began to lead a life of shame. How sad shameful it is that we should be obliged to see and hear such things and not be able to protect and help the poor helpless victims from the heartless cruelty of Hindu religion and society. We can do nothing but pray for these poor souls! Our school building is not yet finished, I need about Rs. 5,000 more to finish up the whole work. The Americans have given much and I am ashamed to my Indian friends to help me out of this difficulty, but you know how apathetic they are. They are not paying heed to my appeals for help so I do not know what to do or how to get the required sum. I am earnestly praying to God to help me, and I hope you will pray for me and if you have some generous friends who are likely to take interest in my work, you will not fail to speak a few words to them for me.

Mano is getting on nicely; she sends much love to you. I gave your message to Saraswatibai. She told me to thank you for your loving interest in her child and in herself and to send her best love to you.

With warmest love best wishes, I am as ever,

Very lovingly yours,

RAMA

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### THE STORY OF TARA\*

I received a little letter written purposely in a very bad hand on the 7th of April 1892. It was addressed to me by a poor little child widow, who begged of me to deliver her from her intensely sad and horrid condition. The letter contained no address, nor the name of the child's guardians. It tells of the child suffering in a few words, which though not elaborately written brought tears of sympathy to my eyes. I did not know what to do and how to go work for her so I prayed to the Lord to shew the way to me by which I could reach and rescue the girl. For six weeks more I heard nothing about her, and could not find any clue to the place. One day about the middle of May a woman arrived here from one of the towns of Southern Maratha. She said she wished to live and study in my school. I did not admit her in the school at once, but kept her in our home for two or three days. The woman, when talking about her town and its people, happened to speak of a child widow. I asked the name and address of the child which she gave me very unwillingly. The next day I sent my clerk and one of my assistant lady teachers to the town where the child lived, to make enquiries about her on the spot and to rescue her if possible. For two or three days after that we had no news of these people and I was beginning to be quite anxious about them. I continued to pray and felt that somehow or other God was going to answer my prayers. In the meanwhile, the woman who gave me the address of the child began to show her true nature; she became restless and found the rules of our school very hard to keep. She attempted to speak bad things to some of my girls, so was separated from them and kept in confinement. She attempted to run away but was brought back by my watchman; I had no other purpose in keeping her at my house than that she may not return to the town from which she came and cause some mischief there by putting obstacles in the way of my friends who had gone there to make enquiries about the child whose name and place of dwelling she had told me.

With great effort and much coaxing I kept her till the next day. On that day at 11.00 a.m. my friends arrived home with the child whom they had rescued and brought disguised in a boy's garments, as you will see her photograph in the picture. When they were just entering the gate of our compound, the woman happened to see them all and recognised the child at once. But I made haste and hid her for the rest of the day, and had her photographed in the afternoon. In the evening. I saw the woman safely lodged in the train hoping to see her never more, and also praying to God that this woman may do no harm to the child who had just come to us.

The child's name was Radha, but we call her Tara and I hope she will someday be baptized by this new name. She is a Brahmin by caste. When only 5 years of age, she was sold by her parents who took Rs. 100 from a man of 45 years of age and gave her in marriage to him. He died within a year after this miserable marriage leaving a baby widow of six years behind him. The child's parents never took her home after they parted with her on the day of her marriage. She lived with her husband's mother, his brother and sister-in-law. From the time of her husband's death, she began to be treated most cruelly by these people. On her face and body she bears scars and bruises of cruel beating, pinching and burning, etc., which she got from her cruel brother- and sister-in-law, for whom she used to work all day long without any rest or a kind word. She never knew what it was to love and to be loved. Thus she was hated, persecuted and made to work harder than her strength could bear to do. They are poor people and wanted to get money by different means. Her brother-in-law is a servant

of municipality and gets only nine or ten rupees every month, which is not enough to support his family. So he kept a hotel for Hindus, in which Tara was forced to work from early in the morning till ten or eleven in the night. Some eight or nine months ago, they had her head shaved—though she is but eleven years of age—and forced her to work for the family and for the strangers who came to take meals in the hotel. She had to carry some thirty or forty times one or two pitchers full of water to her house from a pond, which is about [a] quarter of a mile from home. You will see in one of the photographs how she looked carrying water for her relations.

The poor child could bear such hard treatment no longer, so she began to look for a way of escape. Some of the neighbours, wicked men and women, advised her to run away and go to some place of ill-fame and she would very likely have been forced to follow their advice had not God shewn us the way by which to rescue her. One of the gentlemen who at that time lived in her town took compassion on her and wrote the letter for her which was addressed to me in the beginning of April. Just before that time, a young woman who was in this school for some time had gone home to her parents, and as her home was very near where Tara lived, was acquainted with her and told Tara of the existence of our school. The child took courage at this and begged of the gentleman to help her by writing a letter to me, promising at the same time never to tell anyone of her intending to come to this school. When I received the letter I was at a loss as to how to work, but God sent that very wicked woman who had once advised Tara to go to the house of ill-fame, to inform me of her address. When my friends reached the town where Tara lived, they went to the house of the young lady who had returned home from our school. They stayed there about four days. During that time, they managed to get an interview with Tara and know of her wishes. She was so anxious to come to me that she said she would accompany them that very day. They waited for her until midnight but as she did not come, they gave up the hope of bringing her here. But the next day morning, she came running to tell them that she had tried to escape during the previous night but could not. As she was getting ready to start, some 20 or 25 guests came to the hotel and she had to cook for them all, which work kept her busy until midnight. But she assured them that she would surely come on that evening and begged that they should not leave that place without her.

She kept her word and came to my friends at about nine o'clock at night. They made arrangements to start and dressed her like a Mussalman girl, and took her to the railway station. You can imagine the anxiety and intense fear which filled their hearts when they saw Tara's sister-in-law accompanied by four men who had arrived there to look for the child. Tara was almost like a dead person and my friends were dumbfounded when they saw her sister-in-law and her four companions lift Tara's chuddar and unveil her and hold lanterns before her to look at her face. But the Merciful Father so blinded their eyes that they did not recognize her. In a few minutes she was safely started in the train comfortably sitting by my lady friend. Her pursuers followed her for some distance in the train thinking that if she were in the train, she would surely get down at the third station where her sister lived. As she did not get down there, they went back to their place and Tara was brought home safely to me, in the morning of the 27th of May.

You may have some idea of how happy and joyful I felt when I held Tara in my arms and kissed her. I wept for joy as I thanked the good Heavenly Father [for] so wonderfully rescuing her and bringing her home to me. I do not remember ever before feeling so happy as I did on that day! How I wish you were here to see Tara enjoying her new life. She often tells me she never had anyone to love her and was never so happy as she is here. She is like a bird of cage who has just got its liberty, and it is quite a treat to see her running about, laughing and playing happily with the girls of her age. It is just possible that her people may find out where she is, and take her back to make her more miserable or even kill her. We cannot protect her against the law which allows the guardians of a minor to do whatever they like to with her. But I hope they will never find out anything about her, for I trust and hope and pray that the Good Lord who so wonderfully rescued her will take care of her in the future. I will, with His help, be faithful and try to do good to her so long as she is under my charge, and bring her up and teach her to serve God and do good to her sisters who are in a like condition. I need the help and prayers of my friends to strengthen me in this purpose.



Please give best thanks to Miss Noble for the nice picture of Mother Harriet which she so very kindly sent to me. I like it very much indeed and shall always value it. The picture which you said you sent has never reached me, perhaps it was lost on the way, but no matter. I would have written a separate letter to Miss Noble but my other duties prevent me from doing so. Please tell her this and give my best love to her. I hope all are well at the Home. Please give my love to the Mother Superior and to the Sisters whom I know.

With love to your dear self,

I am as ever,  
Yours devotedly,  
RAMA

*An Interlude by SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

## 1892

*Dr. Pentecost*

Valuable, first, in that from the teaching of Dr. Pentecost, Ramabai was led to a clearer understanding of the great doctrine of the Atonement than she had previously held. And, secondly, it led to her making a statement of her conversion when in England, which statement was made to counteract false reports which had gone abroad by loose statements made by Dr. Pentecost, in which he asserted that England had given Ramabai the cold shoulder, and she had consequently turned from England to America.

The able article "PUNDITA RAMABAI" which appeared in *The Christian Patriot* of February 9th, 1893 gives a true account of the Pandita's coming to England, and of her conversion and baptism while there. Of her visit to America and its results, the visit of Dr. Pentecost to Poona and Pandita Ramabai's letter to him, and a statement of hers extracted from a private letter, will be found on pp. 4 and 5 of the Scrap-Book. And pp. 6 and 7 give the article from *The Christian Patriot* above referred to.

## 1893

In March the fourth anniversary of the opening of the Sharada Sadan was kept, and Ramabai was able to announce that the appeal she had put forth for an additional £500 to complete new buildings had been responded to. The re-marriage of the first young widow Godubai who had come to her in 1889, took place early in the year and brought her much gratification.

A letter of June 28th is a most important one. It tells of a Quiet Day which she kept with some of her children who wished to join her in it, and of the blessing which rested on it; also of the troubles which immediately ensued. Ramabai comes out in this as a true missionary and a work is begun with Mr. Gadre [[Mr. Gangadharpant Balkrishna Gadre after his baptism became the right hand worker of Pandita Ramabai.](#)] and his family which bore fruit after many years.

Sharada, Mr. Gadre's daughter, the innocent cause of arousing the indignation of the Brahmins against Ramabai, was for a time removed from the care of Ramabai. She was subsequently allowed to return. But the mental strain which the girl went through at this time undermined her constitution, and she succumbed to phthisis (I believe) within a few years. Mr. Gadre lost his wife from plague not long after his daughter's death. These trials prepared the way for the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart and the visible answers which he daily saw to the prayers of Ramabai and her



fellow-workers brought conviction to his soul. By 1897 all prejudices against Christianity had gone and he, with his younger children, was baptized at Kedgaon.

Ramabai's goodness to this trusted agent (Mr. Gadre) should not be passed over. He was, without doubt, the cause of all Ramabai's troubles in 1893. She had placed too much confidence in him. Not only the material interests of buying for the building and furnishing. Etc. of her Home were in his hands, but he knew too of the more intimate concerns of its inmates. He had knowledge of the names and addresses of the parents and guardians of her pupils, and these he delivered over to the members of Ramabai's Advisory Board. The treachery of these gentlemen with regard to his unhallowed knowledge has already been told.

Ramabai so far overlooked Mr. Gadre's defection that she retained him in her service, but having learnt wisdom by her sufferings and experiences, she limited the power she had hitherto allowed him. Mr. Gadre proved grateful to her for her generosity and continued to be her valued and faithful agent and secretary for many years.

The Quiet Day, kept in the Sharada Sadan, was the cause of the first thunderclap of a severe storm which broke over her school and for a time threatened to sweep her work completely away. The powers of darkness had been confronted by the Kingdom of Light and the ruler of those powers could not suffer his kingdom to be invaded.

Perhaps no other circumstance of her wonderful life brought out the strength of character as did this. Attacked by most of the vernacular papers (whose editors were either heathen or belonging to the reformed Hindus), she went steadily on with her work and took no notice of anything which was said or written of her, until the storm had well blown over, and then she read up the articles of the *Kesari* (the organ of the orthodox Hindu people) as well as those of other papers.

The members of the Advisory Board had tendered their resignation, and issued a circular letter to the parents and guardians of the pupils requesting them not to send their girls to the Sharada Sadan. Some twenty-five girls were withdrawn, and of them some were, alas! Carried off to certain persecution and lives of misery!! In one or two cases as Ramabai knew inevitable moral ruin was their lot she resorted to measures to save them.

The case of one of these latter, a young Gujarati widow (Gomatibai), added fuel to the fire. She had been sent into the Cama Hospital in Bombay, and friends of Ramabai's in that city visited and watched over the girl to see that her unscrupulous friends did not get possession of her. Ramabai was purposely left in ignorance of her and her whereabouts. Renewed abuse was poured out on Ramabai by the native papers, with the one noble exception, *The Christian Patriot* which stood by her, and encouraged her by words of wisdom and sympathy throughout this time of strain and anxiety. It was not her own reputation that she cared for, but she feared the total ruin of her school, and so entreated her friends to give her the name of the missionary friends who had taken charge of the young widow. The case was brought into the Court and Gomatibai was allowed to return with the Christian friends who had the care of her. The subsequent knowledge that the girl had been baptized, protected her from further molestation from her Hindu relatives; but for a time the storm which raged around the Sharada Sadan threatened wholly to annihilate it. The leading Hindus in the Presidency seemed determined that they would never rest until they had stamped out the last spark of its dying embers.

Ramabai who kept her American Committee fully informed of all that was taking place, was strengthened and encouraged by their generous support. They refused to sanction the rules with which the Advisory Board desired to restrict the liberty of the Pandita, and they left the matter of religious intercourse with the pupils entirely to Ramabai's honor and discretion.

*The Christian Patriot* entirely approved of the principles on which the Sharada Sadan was being conducted, and considered it immoral to force religious instruction on the inmates by taking

advantage of their helpless condition. But they also recognized that the Christian influence at work in such an institution would assuredly bear fruit, and that so doing this would rejoice the heart of every true Christian. The Sharada Sadan did not die, but the strain which Ramabai went through nearly killed her; but before the end of the year, she was to have the comfort and happiness of having her good and true friend Mrs. Andrews with her. Mrs. Judith Andrews, the Chairman of the Ramabai Association of America, at the age of 68, crossed the seas in order herself to investigate the troubles of the Sharada Sadan and after a voyage of five weeks arrived in Bombay at noon of Christmas Day 1893.

The letters of this year tell of the troubles and give some news in detail of Ramabai's child widows.

Before proceeding further, it will be well to make an interlude in the history of Ramabai's work, and introduce three personalities with whom she came into touch on her return to her native country and who have perhaps done more than most of her friends in giving shape to her work and colour to her religious views. The first of these is a remarkable woman compatriot, Soondrabai Power.

Soondrabai Power sought Ramabai out on her arrival in Bombay in 1889 and before many weeks had passed she was working (as an outsider) in connection with the newly opened Home at Chowpatty for child widows. She is a woman of remarkable ability and power; one who has made several voyages to England and back as a missionary to protest against the Opium Traffic, which is the cause of the demoralization of so many thousands of India's people. In 1889, she was connected with the Episcopal Methodist Body in Bombay and was allowed by Ramabai to visit the pupils of the Sharada Sadan and to talk to them about the Bible and Christianity. Soondrabai was an earnest, eager missionary and her great aim in life was to win souls for the Lord. It was her influence undoubtedly which gave impetus to the work of Christianizing Ramabai's pupils, though its initiation was that of Manorama who, as a child of scarcely nine years of age, shewed her scripture picture-books and told the young widows the Gospel story.

Early in 1892, Ramabai was joined by Soondrabai who became her right hand worker in all domestic and practical matters connected with the inner life of the Sharada Sadan. To Ramabai she was a companion and friend and her strong religious influence was felt among the pupils in a remarkable degree. There can be little doubt that mainly [due] to her influence Ramabai and her work have received strongly the impress of Methodism.

In the spring of 1893 Ramabai and Soondrabai invited any girls who would like to forego a proposed day in the country to join them in a day of religious exercises. Thirty of the pupils elected to remain and join in the devotions and Bible study. Before the end of the day twenty declared themselves inquirers after truth and some from that day shewed hopeful signs of conversion. The result was the promotion of a Christian Endeavour Society and a little upstairs room set apart as an oratory. In 1895 the Christian Endeavour meetings had drawn the majority of the pupils to attend the Christian morning and evening prayers of the school. The result naturally was that those really in earnest desired baptism. This Ramabai did not favour, but Soondrabai pushing on the work of conversion got them prepared to make their own arrangements as to their baptism.

Soondrabai's influence was not wise and good. She did much harm to Ramabai's work by injudiciously pressing Christianity on the inmates of the Sharada Sadan. She was ambitious and insincere and after some time Ramabai realized the harmful influence she exercised and they parted company.

Soondrabai's practical gifts were a most necessary complement to Ramabai's ardent eager and enthusiastic nature, and without so powerful a co-adjutor, it would have been humanly impossible for Ramabai, in the early days of her work, to have built up in strength and solidity. A lady who paid occasional visits to the Home writes: "There is a charm about life in the Sharada Sadan that always captivated me. I learned more about ways and thoughts of genuine Indian life by a few days with

Ramabai than in months and years of ordinary European experience in Bombay". Again, "The Sharada Sadan was 'Liberty Hall' for guests".

*Mr. Alfred Dyer and Mrs. Helen S. Dyer*

The other two friends of Pandita Ramabai were Mr. Alfred Dyer and his wife Mrs. Helen S. Dyer [Mrs. Helen S. Dyer is author of several books and has published two large beautifully illustrated biographies of Pandita Ramabai.], joint Editors of the *Bombay Guardian*. They were most useful friends to Ramabai in always being ready to print any matter she needed and to insert articles and letters from her in their weekly paper. They were also most hospitable, both to her and her fellow-workers, making them welcome whenever business brought them to Bombay or any of them needed a rest or change, and their kindness in providing for them according to their native dietary made the open house of these friends a welcome resort.

But alas! in many ways their friendship was undesirable. Mr. Alfred Dyer was a self-educated man, and though this would not necessarily nullify the virtue of true friendship, in his case it most certainly did. He had failed in the world-wide school of life's education to counteract the narrowness and bigotry of his early deductions, and consequently never gained that priceless virtue of a sound and true judgment which brings peace to a man's soul and adds dignity to his life. Mr. Alfred Dyer stands out as a man of soured life, and constantly posing as the opponent and maligner of Government, more than once got himself imprisoned for political offences.

Ramabai's plastic mind was easily moulded to his views and in her he found one who could, when occasion needed, be the mouth-piece of his denunciations of Government and his paper, the *Bombay Guardian*, alas! served as the organ of her utterances!!

Mrs. Helen Dyer and Soondrabai Power were among the so-called friends of Ramabai who did her bad service. Her troubles with the Brahmins were aggravated by them. Mr. Dyer also used Ramabai as a mouth-piece in his hatred of Government and brought her into such disfavor and suspicion with the ruling power that her institution still bears the stigma which has been set upon it by them.

From these last we turn to a happier and more bracing outlook.

Mrs. Judith Andrews had been warmly welcomed by Ramabai when the history was broken off to introduce a trio of the Pandita's Indian friends.

Though America stole Ramabai from England, yet I can never contemplate the work America has done for Ramabai and for India's women, nor recall the touches we have had, from time to time, with American women, on the platform of mutual friendship with Ramabai, without my heart enlarging at the thought of their generosity, right-mindedness and kindness of heart.

I feel we own them a deep debt of gratitude, for on three occasions and by three separate individuals, the work done by the Community of St. Mary the Virgin in the education of Manorama, was recognized by them and their influence brought to bear on Ramabai in placing her child again under their care.

March 20th, 1917.

SISTER GERALDINE,  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin

Sharada Sadan,

Poona: March 30th, 1893

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

It is long since I have written to you. I was very busy with my work. The days seem to be too short to finish all that I want to do. Tomorrow being Good Friday, I am going to spend a Quiet Day at the Lonavala groves and shall start early in the morning. Before I go however, I must write a few lines to wish you a Happy & Peaceful Easter.

You will be glad to know that the good and merciful Heavenly Father has answered the earnest prayers of my friends and me in sending the required money for our new building. Four-fifths of the whole amount needed was sent by our friends from America: and small contributions towards the building fund are coming from several friends. The rest, about fifteen thousand, will soon be raised if our friends keep sending small donations as they are doing now. It is delightful to think that everything which is really wanted is sent to us from some place or the other. My heart may well overflow with gratitude to the good God and towards the friends whom He has raised for me. He is continually sending His blessings and helping us in with material and spiritual gifts. Twenty young girls out of the 53 attend the Scripture reading and our daily prayers. Our cook, a bigoted orthodox Hindu though she is, sometimes reads the Bible and prays with me. Please pray for her that her heart may be turned towards God and she may be regenerated very soon.

March 11th, the birth-day of our school, seemed a peculiarly happy day to us all. The first child widow who came to us at its opening was happily married on that day—just after four years of her school life—to a noble-minded young man of her own choice. We greatly rejoiced over the happy event on that day and thanked God that he permitted us to see this lovely fruit of work which was begun in His Name and for His Glory.

She came to us a hopeless despised widow with her head shaven and without any prospect of ever being happy. She was quite illiterate and leading an aimless life. Now the case is quite different. She is fairly educated, and has great hopes for the future. Although she is married and has gone in the town to live in her own home, she still continues to study in this school daily attending her class. She is studying in the fifth Marathi and third English standards and has completed her first year's course of the kindergarten studies. She hopes to do much good and help other poor widows. She entertains a true filial affection towards this motherly institution and is very grateful to her friends who have helped her thus far. Her husband, Mr. Dhondo Keshav Karve, is a bright young man, very honest and upright and loves her very much. He is Professor of Mathematics in the Fergusson College—one of the most prominent educational institutions of this country. Do you not think that we have great cause to rejoice and be thankful at such an event!

With much love and all good wishes for Easter to you and to the Mother Superior and to all friends who know me,

I remain

Very affectionately yours,

RAMA

Sharada Sadan, Poona

June 28th, 1893

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

I have been very busy indeed all through the summer holidays and busier still since our school reopened on the 12th instant. So I have not had much time to write to my friends. I hope you are quite well and so are all my friends at Wantage. I hope Miss Kemp is well after her long voyage and I know she will tell you all about our school and the manner of our daily life. I send two copies of our annual report to you, one for yourself and the other to give to anyone you may desire to.

Our school is prospering by God's help. There are forty-eight widows and fourteen non-widow girls studying and boarding in the school now. The new school building too has made good progress. In answer to your and my earnest prayers, the Lord sent to me the money required for the completion of this new building. I am very thankful and glad to recognize His kind dealings with us.

During the holidays we all went to the Baneshwar woods for a change. We stayed there nearly a week and had a very happy time bathing in the river and walking over the hills and in the woods. Only sixteen out of the fifty-five girls had gone to their homes for holidays so we had a goodly company of thirty-nine girls with us. We all returned home from the woods greatly refreshed and then busily engaged in getting ready for our next term's work—storing grains, etc, and preparing and mending house linen and doing such other things which we would not have found time to do when the school should begin. A few days before the opening of the school, I determined to have a Quiet Day, so I planned an excursion and a grand picnic for such girls as would not be willing to stay at home on that particular day. I placed the matter before my girls on one Sunday and told them that they might go to the picnic or stay at home if they chose to do so to enjoy the spiritual feast which I was going to have. Some twenty-five girls remained at home on Tuesday the 6th instant, and the rest went away to see the Mundhwa Paper Mills. We who remained at home had a really blessed time praying and reading the Bible and enjoying spiritual communion with God. We are greatly refreshed and strengthened and since that day the girls who join me in prayer and reading the Bible have become more earnest. Fifteen of them have given their hearts to God and believed in Christ as their Saviour and are ready to confess Him before men at any time. But of course they need to be strengthened and thoroughly instructed in the Bible before they take a further step. A missionary lady friend of mine has the charge of the Bible Class opened for these girls since Sunday the 11th of this month.

Some five months ago Sharada, our clerk Mr. Gadre's daughter was taken ill and had to be sent to the Cama Hospital in Bombay. While she was there, she met Mrs. Prautch, a missionary's wife, who talked to Sharada about religion but she did not like it. Sharada said to me a few days ago that she hated to hear about Christianity, so Mrs. Prautch gave up attempting to speak to her about religion. But while at the hospital, Sharada read some stories describing Christian life, and began to think what it all meant. When she returned home after six weeks' stay at the hospital she began to come and sit by me in the morning to hear me read the Bible and pray. She became more and more interested in hearing the Scriptures read. On Mano's last birthday, I had a little prayer with her in her room, Sharada came there too without my inviting her. I prayed for both the girls and thanked God from the bottom of my heart for their deliverance from dangerous illness and dedicated them both to His service, and asked them if they did not want to be His children always and live for Him alone. Both were very much moved and said 'yes' with tears in their eyes. Since that day a marked change took place in Sharada, she never neglected her prayer and Scripture-reading. And on the 6th of this month, when we had a little time together between the services, telling each other the experiences of our hearts, Sharada declared herself a believer in Christ and we were very glad and thankful to hear her simple declaration of faith.



For some days things went on as usual but the marked change in her conduct could not but be perceived by her parents. Her Father is a staunch Brahmo and her mother an orthodox Hindu and are both adverse to [the] Christian religion. On Thursday last, just one week ago, her father called her to him, asked her if she prayed to God. She answered in the affirmative. He then asked her how she prayed and whether she prayed in the name of Christ. She did not answer for some minutes but there was no getting out of it. At last she had to say 'yes' much to his surprise and discomfiture. He again asked her whether she believed in Christ as her Saviour and if so what were her reasons for doing so, why didn't she believe in all good men as her saviours. She simply answered him that she thought other men were good but they were not holy as Christ was, and therefore were not able to save sinners from their sin. Christ was both holy and able to take our sins away and this was the reason why she believed in Him. When I heard her say this, I felt like repeating "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes". For Sharada is but a babe as yet in faith and she is now over seventeen years of age. She is very timid, but somehow God enabled her to bravely tell her father what she thought was right and believed. Mr. Gadre was much troubled in his mind and said to her that he would give her instruction in his religion every day, and that she must go home to her mother every Saturday and stay over Sundays, and not remain here on these days as she was wont to do. He then asked me if he might take her home and give religious instruction to her. I said he could certainly do so, if he thought it necessary. That night I knew some great storm would burst on us, but I laid the whole matter before our Father in prayer and was comforted and assured that everything will be all right.

Sharada went home on Saturday as desired by her parents. Her mother was very angry with her and her father displeased at her conduct. Though distressed very much, she listened to all their talks very quietly. On Monday, just before coming to school her mother spoke to her and scolded her very severely and said that Sharada must submit to be given in marriage now, or must promise at once that she will never become a Christian or she would not let the girl go to school. By and by our carriage went there to fetch Sharada to school. For an hour or so her mother had tried her best to extract a promise from Sharada but could not. When the carriage went there, she very reluctantly let the girl come to school charging her at the same time to go home on Saturday. Sharada was dreadfully distressed and pale for fear that her parents had determined upon marrying her off or extracting a promise from her never to confess Christ as her Saviour. As soon as she came here she told me all about it, and wanted to know what she should do now. I thought the matter over for a while, and asked her to tell me whether she really believed in Christianity and whether she would be willing to suffer any pain or trouble in her conviction. I said, in that case, I would stand by her and do all in my power, God helping me, to defend her at the risk of my school's interest. For you know well that it will go very hard against our school as soon as the people around us come to know that some of our pupils are converted to Christianity. When I saw that the girl was firm in her belief, my friend the lady missionary, Sharada and myself dropped down on our knees and prayed to God to give us guidance to take the right course in this matter.

In the afternoon Mr. Gadre arrived here as usual to attend to his duties, and I prepared myself to talk to him on behalf of Sharada. For some time I did not know how to begin, but at last, at 5 o'clock that afternoon, words were given to me to speak to him. I related to him the whole history of circumstances that led to Sharada's conversion, and shewed him how God Himself had brought about this change, and then solemnly warned him against fighting with God in forcing Sharada to do things which her conscience would condemn as wrong. I told him plainly that I had never attempted to draw Sharada or any other girl in my circle who believed Christian religion; that they had all come of their own accord and nobody but God taught them to believe in the religion which I had embraced. Then I spoke out my feelings in regard to Christianity and what it had done for me, and how I thought it can work wonders. He listened to me very attentively and said little during all this talk. I then put to him some searching questions about his religion and the truths in which we are all called upon to believe, and asked him if he thought himself fit to give religious instruction to his child while he was so ignorant himself about things pertaining to God. He confessed he was not, but Sharada should know all sides. I said certainly she should know what we think is the truth. I asked him if he had ever read the Bible, and on being told that he had not, requested him to read it and search for truth for himself.



My last question to him was whether I should allow Sharada to join me in prayer or not and whether the copy of the New Testament belonging to Sharada, which I then held in my hand, should be returned to her as he wished to take it away and prevent her from reading it; telling him at the same time that he might do whatever he thought best on his own responsibility. I laid great stress on this last sentence. He hesitated a minute and then returned the New Testament to me and said that I might give it to Sharada and that he did not wish to prevent her from praying to God in the Name of Christ if her conscience dictated it !

You can imagine with what joy I returned to my room to tell Sharada that her father had given his consent to her to read the Bible and to pray with me. The child was greatly moved and very thankful. She almost danced around the room with joy and I rejoiced with her. I then told her to directly go to her father and thank him for his kindness to her in allowing her to follow the dictates of her own conscience. At her request, I accompanied her outside the room and saw the father and daughter meet each other with much joy and so differently from the manner in which they had met in the morning. I left them alone to speak to each other for a few moments and went away where I could hide my own emotion. Sharada told me afterwards that her father spoke to very kindly and said that he would also think about [the] Christian religion which he had never done before. That night we returned our grateful thanks to God for the wonderful way in which He had brought deliverance to us and the unspeakable joy He gave us in kindly inclining Mr. Gadre's heart towards his daughter. Yesterday I gave Mr. Gadre a copy of the New Testament and Psalms with a request to read the book very carefully. He thanked me most heartily for the 'invaluable gift'. I am earnestly praying for his conversion and hope you will be one with me in this matter.

What a long letter I have written! I must stop here. Mano is at school and hope she writes to you regularly. Please give my love to the Mother Superior and to all my friends at Wantage and write to me how you are.

With a great deal of love to you,

I am as ever

Very affectionately yours,

RAMA

*P.S.—Please give my love to Miss Kemp and tell her that I was glad to know of her safe arrival at Wantage from the letter which she wrote to her friend, Pritabai. I send a copy of the report for her. All the girls and teachers send their love to her. Please do not print the letter anywhere. Sharada desires me to send her love to you*

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161 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,

August 10th, 1893

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

I must write to you a few lines about Miss Potter. I would very much like to have her to teach in my school, but I cannot pay £100 a year. I shall however pay £80 for the year in English money. as she desires it. She will have to board somewhere outside the school. You see there is no room for an English resident teacher in our house. Miss Kemp made herself at home with us and ate 'Dal-Bhaat' with me, so we could accommodate her; but a lady fresh from England and unaccustomed to our ways of living will find it impossible to live in this school as we do. If Miss Potter agrees to work in our

school for £80 a year and to bear all her own expenses, I shall be very glad to have her for my assistant. Let her try this work for a year or two; only, I cannot find myself to have her longer if I do not find it convenient. Now I want your opinion in regard to Miss Potter. Do you think she is *the* person, fit to be a teacher in my school? If she has very high notions about things around her and a very low idea about us Indians, she will not be of much assistance to me, so please consider this question very seriously and then write to Miss Potter what I said, about the salary, &c.

Sharda's father is shewing much displeasure at Sharada's new belief and both he his wife have circulated very bad reports about our school in the town, so I am expecting another dreadful storm. But God is for us, and nobody can be against us. Please pray for my girls and me. My dear love to Miss Kemp, to the Mother Superior and to all other friends at the Home.

With best love to you dear Old Ajeebai,

I am,  
Affectionately yours,  
RAMA

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162    *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
December 11th, 1893

My dear Old Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for your most kind letter; your sympathy and your prayers are most valuable at this time. I wonder you never got my long letter to you written in August. I had sent in it a copy of my letter to Mrs. Andrews, and a printed copy of the resignation of the late Advisory Board and the comments of some papers thereon.

About twenty-five girls have been withdrawn from this school since August, but I have no doubt that God will take care of us and our Home and School will prosper in spite of all the difficulties. Four new girls have come to us lately. Our enemies are trying their best to destroy our school and the big people are all found on the other side. But the Lord is on our side and that is quite enough. This new and terrible trial has done me a great deal of good and has freed our home from the bondage of tyrants. God has been very good to us during these few months of troubles and I am very thankful to Him for all His goodness.

I wish you a very Happy and Joyful Christmas and a Bright New Year. Please give my best love and good wishes for Christmas to the Mother Superior and to all the Sisters and friends at Wantage.

I have not been very well lately; my head is aching and [I] cannot remember what else to write. All the girls who have heard about you send their best love good wishes to you.

With much love, I am,

Ever yours lovingly,  
RAMA

P.S.—I enclose a printed copy of the reply of our Executive Committee to the letter of resignation of the Poona Advisory Board; Mrs. Andrews, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, is coming to see me and will probably reach Bombay by the end of this month.

*An interlude by SISTER Geraldine, C.S.M.V.*

## 1894

Mrs. Judith Andrews' early time in India was given to a careful investigation of the affairs of the Sharada Sadan. Her visit was opportune and came at a time when Ramabai greatly needed the support and counsel of a true and wise friend. She saw that the harassing oppression of the Advisory Board could not be supported and moved that Ramabai should be left to act with freedom.

And so the year 1894 opened happily for Ramabai, who was comforted in being able to pour out all the woes of the two stormy past years into the ears of a truly sympathetic and wise friend. Some of the details of the fierce persecution she underwent at the hands of her Brahmin friends, or rather bitterest enemies, which shew how her life was constantly threatened and in danger, are given in the Reports of the Ramabai Association for 1894 and 1895.

The former Report further repeats the meanness and selfishness of the Brahmin gentlemen, who, while posing as advisers and supporters of their noble countrywoman and controlling the affairs of the Home she had inaugurated, never gave so much as a pice towards its support. A widowed relative of one of the advisers with her child who had received for more than two years education, board and clothing at the Sharada Sadan entirely free of cost, was withdrawn at the crisis, without a word of apology or gratitude.

Throughout the year the Sharada Sadan struggled up again into vigorous life. Though it day by day spread out its branches, it had barely recovered its prestige at the end of the year. Still it had ambitions of its own and, nothing daunted, looked forward to the time when it might be accounted a High School. That however, was not its highest aspiration. Ramabai never failed to keep before her mind the one object of its existence, that of making it a "*means of helping and uplifting some of our down-trodden sisters and making them happy and hopeful*". And her heart was ever full of gratitude to her American friends as also to others who had so helped her and her staff to bring this about.

Mrs. Judith Andrews was with her to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Widows' Home. The invitations for this as for the dedication of a large and beautiful school room were sent out with many fears and misgivings by Ramabai. She could not presage what the response might be. There was however little doubt at the time the guests assembled. Every seat in the hall was filled. Mrs. Andrews occupied the chair as officer of the Ramabai Association. At the close of the entertainment given by the pupils Mrs. Andrews gave a brief review of Ramabai's work, her phenomenal success in raising interest in her plans in America, and the five years' history of the Sharada Sadan, emphasizing and explaining the policy of the school, *neutrality* and *liberty*. The audience was both attentive and interested.

At the close of the Chairman's address several native gentlemen spoke warmly of Ramabai and her school and though regretting that it was not conducted on strictly Hindu lines, were convinced that Ramabai had acted in good faith, and prophesied success.

But the storm that Ramabai had weathered had left her sick in body and in heart and she was sorely in need of thorough rest and refreshment. Mrs. Andrews, who hoped to see something of the northern cities of India before leaving the country, prevailed upon Ramabai to accompany her, and so together they visited cities and places which woke up many keen and early memories in Ramabai, for she had not seen them since her pilgrimages with her parents and her brother.

“It was a rare privilege”, wrote Mrs. Andrews, “one worth a journey to India, to visit these places a learned, gifted native like Ramabai, who, *though a Christian, is a Hindu still*, loving her people with all their faults, and with a love unutterable, giving her life for her suffering sisters. Even in the midst of her sight-seeing, the cry of the poor widow, however distant found an echo in her tender heart”.

At Benares Ramabai received a letter giving an account of a deserted wife, with an entreaty that she would rescue the girl from the life before her. Within a week the girl was safe among friends at the Sharada Sadan.

Mrs. Andrews, on this tour, saw sights missed by the generality of travellers—sights calculated to give a more just idea of the lives really led by those who once peopled the marble halls of India than is generally carried away by tourists.

The account written by Ramabai of this visit may be read:

“At Agra, we went into the fort, to see the grand palaces of the Moghul Emperors. There we saw the great Rhas Mahal or the Emperor’s private palace, where he used to keep hundreds of beautiful women shut up for life.

“The guide showed us the Rani’s private rooms, the gardens and grand marble buildings once occupied by the kings and queens. He also showed us the beautiful pleasure-tower called Saman Burj. Visitors are shown all that is beautiful there, and they go away carrying very pleasant impressions of Agra with them. I was not satisfied with seeing the outside beauty of those ‘poems in marble’, but wished to see the dungeons, and the place where the unfortunate women used to be confined and hanged at the pleasure of the king. The guide at first denied the existence of such places in the palace; but, finally, on obtaining a promise to get a little more money for his trouble, consented to show the dungeons. He opened a trap-door on one side of the palace, let us in, and guided us about, showing us the many small and large underground rooms where the queens who had incurred the king’s displeasure used to be shut up, tortured, and starved, until it pleased his majesty to set them free. The guide then lighted a big torch, and took us to the farthest end of the prison into a room underneath the Saman Burj, or Jasmine Tower. The room was very dark and octagonal, with a deep, dark pit in the centre, and a big beam placed on the walls right over the pit. This beam, beautifully carved, served for hanging the unfortunate women who once occupied the throne of the king as his queens, but had by some unknown cause fallen under his displeasure and had to suffer such a cruel and ignoble death. Their lifeless bodies were let down into that dark pit, whence a stream carried them to the waters of the Jumna, to be eaten by crocodiles. Thus the poor, miserable wives of the Moghul Emperors suffered torture and death in the dark hell-pit under the pleasure-gallery while their cruel masters and rivals sang songs, enjoyed, life and made merry over their grave in the beautifully decorated grand Saman Burj. I think but little of those lovely palaces, but always remember seeing that dark room, and compare it with similar places of torture which exist in many sacred towers of India. If the walls of that horrible room had the power of speech, oh, what stories of human cruelty and misery would they tell to-day!

“I beg of my Western sisters not to be satisfied with the looking on the outside beauty of the grand philosophies, and not be charmed with hearing the long and interesting discourse of our educated men, but to open the trap-doors of the great monuments of ancient Hindu intellect, and enter into the dark cellars where they will see the real workings of the philosophies which they admire so much. Let our Western friends come to India and live right among us. Let them frequently go to the hundreds of sacred places where countless pilgrims throng yearly. Let them go round Jagannathpuri, Benares, Gaya, Allahabad, Mathura, Brindaban, Dwarka, Pandharpur, Udippi, Tirupaty and such other sacred cities, the strongholds of Hinduism, and seats of sacred learning, where the Mahatmas and Sadhus dwell, and where the ‘sublime’ philosophies are daily taught and devoutly followed. There are thousands of priests and men, learned in sacred lore, who are the spiritual rulers and guides of our people. They neglect and oppress the widows and devour widows’ houses. I have gone to many

of the so-called sacred places, lived among the people, and seen enough of those learned philosophers and possessors of superior Hindu spirituality who oppress the widows and trample the poor, ignorant, low-caste people under their heels. They have deprived the widows of their birth-right to enjoy pure life and lawful happiness. They send out hundreds of emissaries to look for young widows and bring them by hundreds and thousands to the sacred cities to rob them of their money and their virtue. They entice the poor, ignorant women to leave their own homes, to live in the *Kshetras*—i.e. the holy places—and then after robbing them of their belongings, tempt them to yield to their unholy desires. They shut the young, helpless widows into their large *maths* (monasteries), sell and hire them out to the wicked men so long as they can get money and, when the poor, miserable slaves are no longer pleasing to their cruel masters, they turn them out in the streets to beg [for] their livelihood, to suffer the horrible consequences of sin, to carry the burden of shame, and finally to die a death worse than that of starved street dogs! The so-called sacred places—those veritable hells on earth—have become the graveyards of countless widows and orphans. Thousands upon thousands of young widows and innocent children are suffering untold misery and dying helpless every year throughout this land, but not a philosopher or Mahatma has come out boldly to champion their cause and to help them! The teachers of false philosophies and life-less spiritualities will do no good to our people. Nothing has been done by them to protect the fatherless and judge the widow. If anything has been done by anybody at all, it has been done by those people who have come under [the] direct influence of Christianity. Education and philosophies are powerless before the caste rules, ancient customs and priestcraft. That is why our educated men and our learned Sadhus are so indifferent towards their own brothers and sisters. The educated men and learned priests do not like to move about. They don't want to take the trouble to go about to see how dreadfully the widows have to suffer, and how many thousands of lives are destroyed by their priestly brethren. They mourn over a few women who have the boldness to declare themselves as free women and to follow their conscience; but they say nothing of the thousands who die every year or lead shameful lives. I earnestly beg the women of America and England to come to India and live in our sacred cities, not [living] in European and American Fashion, but [living] like the poor beggar women, going in and out of their dirty huts, hearing the stories of their miserable lives, and seeing the fruits of the sublime philosophies. Let not my Western sisters be charmed by the books and poems they read. There are many hard and bitter facts we have to accept and feel. All is not poetry with us. The prose we have to read in our own lives is very hard. It cannot be understood by our learned brothers and comfortable sisters of the West". (Ramabai, Jan. 31, 1896).

Barely a month sufficed for the tour and the middle of April found Ramabai again at her post preparing with a heavy heart for the school examinations. The most promising pupils had been withdrawn, but her fears were happily unrealized. The examinations did credit to teachers and scholars, and thirty-two out of forty-three were promoted.

The first kindergarten teacher trained in the Sharada Sadan left after the May holidays with the expectation of opening a private kindergarten school in the town in which she was to reside with her husband.

It must have been the crowing pleasure of Mrs. Andrews' visit that three weeks before her departure the Sharada Sadan was honoured with a visit from Lord Harris, the Governor of Bombay Presidency. The school she had found all but swept away by the hurricane which had broken over it was now not only on a fair road to regain its early prestige, but was chosen out to be favoured by a friendly visit from the highest in authority. The account of the visit and the testimony bestowed on that occasion is recorded in the Report of the Ramabai Association for 1895.

August brought Mrs. Andrews' eventful visit to close. She left India not only with the blessings of the Sharada Sadan following her, but of many other friends whom she had made in that country. But before we bid her adieu, we must record with thankfulness another good work which was wrought by her influence with Ramabai.

Ramabai, as early as 1892, realized that her hopes were not likely to bear fruit regard to the support of the Sharada Sadan by her countrymen. Her American friends had undertaken to provide the



money for ten years, and she had been over-confident in her expectations that the Hindus would become convinced of the benefits of education for women and would willingly subscribe to her Home. When, however, Ramabai began to perceive this would not be, she conceived a plan of trying to make it self-supporting. After two years of thought and prayer, the way was open to her to start her scheme. During that time she had made it known to her friends in India and in America, and by the autumn of 1894 sufficient money was in hand to purchase several acres of ground.

Kedgaon, about forty miles of south of Poona, was the place chosen for the development of a farm. Here a hundred acres of land, close to the railway station, was obtained. Ramabai planted a portion of this property with some thousands of orange, lime and mango saplings. A fine well was dug, from which water was raised to irrigate a portion of the property; a vegetable garden was made which in a few months supplied vegetables to her school.

The re-organizing of the school, which had been so nearly annihilated, and Mrs. Andrews' visit took much of her time, and she had little for correspondence. Five letters in all were received by me during the year. By one of our Sisters, who returned home invalided, the sufferings of Ramabai had been brought vividly before us, and we had been made aware of how great was the crisis from which she and her school had emerged.

It was through the advice of Mrs. Andrews that Manorama was for the third time sent to our Sisters' care at the Epiphany School. Here seems to be the fitting place to comment on some of the difficulties in the bringing up of Manorama; and this is undoubtedly a sad and perplexing matter to handle.

English women, to whom well-ordered homes and tender motherly watchfulness were matters of everyday experience, could not but be alarmed for a delicate child, who in a foreign land and treacherous climate was subjected to the unwise treatment the child of two years of age met with at her mother's hands. It was true that Ramabai had not the ordinary experience of the best of Hindu homes, for from her earliest days she had led a Bohemian life. It is true too that Ramabai had been trained in the school of hardness; but the austerity of her early life which she had survived had killed off every other member of the family. Father, mother, sister, brother had succumbed to the hardships. The photographic group taken of the family in 1866 shews an intensity of purpose on the countenance of Ramabai, then a child of seven, which was not apparent in any other member of this group but that of the old father. Ramabai's child, though inheriting many of her mother's gifts, was neither physically nor mentally as strong as her mother.

It used to be thought among us that Ramabai was wholly devoid of motherly intuitions and certainly in the early days of her coming to England, it was almost impossible to trace any germs of these. Christian surroundings and Christianity, brought home and accepted by her, helped these in a measure to germinate but at her best she was decidedly wanting in virtues of Christian motherhood: that this is evident, her letters written from Cheltenham go to prove.

Still, what I did not apprehend for long is that Ramabai had clear in her mind the ideas of the upbringing which she desired her child to receive. She feared a too foreign education for Mano; she desired that she should be rough-hewn as she herself had been. She distinctly desired that she should become acquainted with the ways of her countrypeople, that her sympathies should go out to them in her childhood. Ramabai had her own studies to pursue and she could not give herself to the care or education of her child, and for a time she was glad to have these duties fulfilled by others. They were fulfilled to the utmost of our power, as all who saw the little Mano testified. She developed in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. There surely is no lack of reverence in using these words which describe the perfect manhood of our Lord in His childhood to any well-brought up and devout Christian child. Few children are so naturally courteous, so readily adaptable to their surroundings as was this little Indian child, and few children combine so pleasurable an interest in work and play with a real spirit of devotion. Her nature was plastic and pliable, and it was realized by those who dealt with her that this interesting and beautiful nature was one which would need the greatest care in its



development. Sweet, gentle, winning, she needed strength of purpose, and determination to make her the instrument in the good of her countrypeople which her mother and all her friends desired her to be.

There is no doubt that Ramabai's conduct towards Mano was often unnatural and generally most unwise; that this was so was known to the teachers and visitors of her school who regretted the sad mismanagement of her child. Through her American friends persuaded Ramabai on three occasions to send Mano back to our care, the strong counter-influence which Ramabai kept up to the religious education of the Catholic Church made it a doubtful matter whether it was not prejudicial to Mano to be at the Epiphany School. It is not my intention here to follow all the many changes which took place in Mano's education. Suffice it to say that but for the wholehearted desire of her mother that she should be trained for the good of her Indian sisters, and still more for the many and continual prayers which went up for the child, the experiments practiced on her would doubtless have been disastrous. While a pupil at the Epiphany School, she was again and again brought back to truer principles of Christianity and to a higher and purer standard; and if the result was not wholly what her early friends desired for her, it was, however, much more favourable than could have been hoped after the years of mismanagement which she met with from her mother.

Is it well to seek to analyse the causes of what became in time [a] stained relationship between Ramabai and her friends?

I think only a whole-hearted desire to seek in charity to disentangle right from wrong could justify this action. Jealousy has doubtless its right side. It is a kind of armour of defence, a necessary part of the equipment of all who hold any office either in the natural or spiritual order. And surely, where it is rightly used and not exaggerated, we may perceive in it some reflection of the Image of the Creator. But alas ! in frail human nature we more often perceive it in its exaggerated form, acting offensively and not within its circumscribed limits, and then wounding unnecessarily. How often do we see mothers, who ought gladly to welcome a valuable help which they, from limitations of one kind or another, are unable to supply to their children, denying them the highest gifts of God! They not unseldom act as if they alone were the Providence to their children.

Can it then be wondered at if after generations of Christianity in our land Christian mothers are still so little truly educated and so short-sighted to their children's best interests, that an Indian woman just breaking through the tyranny of Hinduism with all its enthralling associations and with a strong heredity of heathenism clinging to her, should act as Ramabai acted?

Jealousy is said to be very specially a characteristic of Indian women, often leading them they attain to power into very terrible sins.

But imperfect natural causes were not the only reasons for Ramabai's strange action. Individuals and nations who reject Catholic teaching, or who are only half-hearted or half-educated Christians are terribly afraid of the influence of the Truth fully set forth in teaching or lived out in Christian lives. They fail to reason this out, but they are aware that given a free hand the teaching and influence of the Catholic Church are irresistible.

The Church is the Truth, she teaches the Truth, she sets forth not a pittance of the Truth, but the whole Body of the Truth, and just because many hold to their own opinions and will not honestly search into the Truth or give themselves time to study and apprehend it, they shrink from its influence and desire to keep those dependent on them from its knowledge. Doubtless this was the paramount cause which led to the long sequence of difficulties with regard to Mano's education and which did so much to overshadow her young life after her mother's return to India in 1889.

It is not my intention to go into matter beyond its bearings on Ramabai's story. As there is no correspondence between her and myself with regard to the grievous mismanagement which went on during the time Mano was in England from 1896 to 1898 it could not be withheld if Ramabai's history is to be written truthfully.

SISTER GERALDINE  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin

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163 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharda Sadan, Poona  
June 14th, 1894

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

I have not written to you for a long time. Had you known all that I have to do here, you would blame me for not writing so long.

Our summer holidays have ended, and the school is reopened with fifty-five pupils of whom thirty-eight are widows. Mrs. Andrews from America is staying with us, she will remain here until the end of July and then leave for the United States. The last Report written by her will give you an idea of what had been happening here during the past twelve months.

I wonder what makes you think that I am going to send Mano to America with Mrs. Andrews. I would very much like to send her to that country where she will have all the advantages of [the] best education, but she is not old enough to go away now. She ought to grow up here and know and love her people well before she leaves this country, so that she may devote her life to do them good not as a piece of charity but as a part of her duty out of love them. So you see I have very good reasons for not sending Mano to a foreign country just now. She is growing very rapidly; the doctor said she was growing out of her strength and needed rest, so I kept her at home nearly four months, but she has gone back to school.

I thank you very much for sending the box full of nice things. The girls liked them very much and send their hearty thanks and love to the English Ajeebai who loves them very much. I hope you are well and not overworking yourself. How is the Mother Superior? Please give my love to her, to dear Sister Agnes, to Miss Noble and to all the Sisters who know me. With a great deal of love and kisses, I am,

Yours lovingly,  
RAMA

*An interlude by SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

## 1895

Before proceeding with Ramabai's story, Miss Samuel must be introduced. She was a Jewish maiden who became a pupil of the C.S.M.V. at St. Mary's School, Poona by special permission of the Committee. The first Jewess in the Bombay Presidency to be educated, she was a good specimen of her race, and always proved grateful for the education she received in Diocesan High School. Matriculating from the school early in the eighties, she and a companion were the first two women who asked to be allowed to graduate at the Deccan College. Having taken a good degree, she became the Head English teacher in the Epiphany School at a salary of £100 a year. At the end of 1894 we were able to supply her place by a teacher from England, willing to work at a very much smaller salary.

Miss Samuel then being free, Ramabai immediately engaged her, and from that time her school became a High School. Mano was again removed from the Epiphany School, and Miss Samuel who had taught her there, continued to be her teacher at the Sharada Sadan. Miss Samuel's letters show how she watched over her promising pupil and tried to shield her from every breath of harm that she might encounter from heathen surroundings. The advent of Miss Samuel considerably raised the status of Ramabai's school. The matriculation standard was added and the teachers, with a good leader, worked well.

It was a great happiness to Ramabai to be able to record, at the end of the year, four of her happily re-married and sixteen employed in education or nursing.

The Sharada Sadan, however, was again suffering from a storm of misrepresentation and abuse. The baptisms which had taken place in the school gave the Hindus a handle to say that she had broken her faith. Ramabai had warned these twelve girls that she could not allow them to remain as pupils in the school unless the American Committee consented that they should stay. The girls themselves were prepared to leave, or to accept the most menial positions in the school, if allowed to remain. Letters of sympathy and encouragement, which cheered her on her way, were received by Ramabai from the Committee and the Christian girls were allowed to remain as pupils in the school. In spite of this storm, the Sharada Sadan re-opened in June with sixty-six pupils.

The awful background to Indian life, the marriage of so many children to the gods, which so tends to the demoralization of India, filled Ramabai's soul with the deepest sorrow. About this time, she learned something of the terrible misery of the women in Mathura and Brindaban in North India, lured there from all parts of Bengal by the priests of Krishna. Her heart was filled with pity and indignation, and she resolved to make an effort to rescue some of them. The account of her famous journey was given in the October number of our Quarterly Mission Paper of April 1896 and will be found on page 15 of the Scrap-Book.

The Mango farm, under the care of an experienced farmer, flourished. She appealed for another £400 to lay out upon it. Her American Committee could not legally hold this property, and the generous friends who provided Ramabai the means to purchase it wished it to remain in her hands. It is secured by her desire for the benefit of the school after death.

SISTER GERALDINE,  
Community of St. Mary the Virgin

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164 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharda Sadan, Poona,  
January 9th, 1895

My dearest Old Ajeebai,

How shall I thank you enough for the kindness and love you have for Mano and me. It was very kind of you to write such sweet letters, and send the beautiful gifts for our spiritual birthday and for Christmas. I was very busy all this time and could not write much. Hence the delay acknowledging the receipt of gifts and letters.

You will have heard from [the] Sister Superior by this time, that I have been obliged to keep Mano at home on account of her eyes. The doctor told me to be very careful of her health and eyes and so I have kept her here. Besides, since last October they have stopped teaching Latin at the Epiphany High School and Sister Gertrude Agnes told me that Mano will not be able to learn enough

of Latin to take it for a second language in the Matriculation Examination. So I have to teach her Marathi and Sanskrit here. Miss Samuel had left the Epiphany High School since last October I think, and she was seeking some employment here in Poona. I was in need of a very good teacher for the higher standards, and found it convenient to employ Miss Samuel in my school. So Mano has the advantage of being with one of her old teachers, and I am very glad for it.

I was very sorry to remove Mano from the Epiphany High School, but could not help doing so on account of her eyes and the difficulty in getting proper instruction in the Marathi language for her. I must go to see Sister Gertrude Agnes before she sails for England. I shall be so delighted to see Sister Elizabeth again. When are you coming, I wonder, and I shall not be surprised to see you here one of these days. I hope you have completely recovered from your illness.

Now about my school. It is going on nicely but as I wrote to you before, the path to be trodden is not altogether smooth. If I have less troubles from outside, I have many more from inside, but I am very thankful to the Lord for all these trials and thorns in the flesh, for the more I am beset with trials and difficulties, the closer I learn to draw to and love Him, and experience what a truly blessed life is, "the life hid in God with Christ". This has been my experience for the last four years and it is a great joy to me to find out daily what a truly wonderful Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you, dearest Old Ajeebai, for all the prayers and your love for me. Please give my love and all good wishes for the New Year to the Mother Superior and to all the Sisters and friends whom I know at Wantage.

With my warmest love and all best wishes for the New Year,

I am, as ever,  
Very affectionately yours,  
RAMA

*P.S.—I am sending a large picture of mine for you with Sister Gertrude Agnes Please put it in your own room and pray for me whenever you look at it.*

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165 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharda Sadan, Poona,  
December 13th, 1895

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

I have not replied to your letter until now, for I was very busy and absent from this place. Then too I did not know how to answer such a letter. But you may be sure, dear Ajeebai, I love you just the same and am no less grateful to you and shall never forget how very kind you have been to Mano and to me. I shall not say anything in answer to your letter excepting that all things whatever are necessary for my salvation will be shewn to me. "Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come He will guide you into all Truth" is the promise of the Lord, and I believe in it. You can safely rest on that promise so please do not be uneasy about me. As to the course Mano is taking now, I want to say this much that I have very little or nothing to do with it. She has a mind of her own and can think for herself. I do not teach her, I pray to God to guide her rightly and leave the matter there. I took her away from the Epiphany High School only when I found she could no longer pursue her studies there. I was very unwilling to take her away, both Sister Eleanor Grace and the Sister who succeeded her as

the Superintendent of that school know what was in my mind. Mano is prevented from studying much now, and I submit to God's will, and rest satisfied.

I had been away to [the] North-Western Province when the Sister Superior fell ill and was taken away to Matheran. I heard of her illness on my return home, but was too ill to move about as I had a very bad attack of influenza. I went to the Convent to enquire about her as soon as I was able to go out, but that very day she had passed away from this world and I heard the sad news within half an hour after her death. I felt so sorry to hear it; it seemed so very sudden, one could scarcely realize that the Superior who was looking so well and bright a few weeks ago had gone forever from this world in such a short time. I deeply sympathize with you all in the loss you have sustained in her death. It is not [a] loss to her, but our poor country needs all good people at this time and it is a great loss to us to be deprived of such a good Christian worker.

You will be glad to know that twelve of my girls have confessed Christ in public and as many more have professed faith in Him and I am having a right good time in the storm of public indignation that is raging over my head. Thanks and praise to God for that. I have never had such a peaceful good time before this.

I hope you are quite well. I have not fully recovered from the effects of my last illness, but I am much stronger than I expected to be in such a short time and trusting God for the health of my body as well as for that of my soul.

I hope you will have a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year. Please give my love and sympathy to the Mother Superior and my good wishes for Christmas to all my friends. With grateful love,

Believe me, dear Old Ajeebai,

Your devoted child,  
RAMA

*An interlude by SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

**1896**

It was a self-evident fact to all who had intimate knowledge of the Sharada Sadan that Mano never thrived in her mother's school. Either her health was bad and she was unable to study, or she was harmed by contact with undesirable influences among the pupils.

After rather more than a year in the Sharada Sadan, and not many months before Miss Samuel had hoped to send her in for the Matriculation Examination of the Bombay University, Ramabai suddenly resolved to send her to England to complete her studies. Her passage was taken on a sailing vessel and she was sent under the escort of Mr. Alfred Dyer, who received from Ramabai the authority of guardianship of Mano. A letter from Ramabai informed us of this departure; and she promised that Mano should pay us a visit shortly after her arrival. Nine months elapsed and much correspondence intervened between Mano's landing [in] England and her promised visit, and when at length permission was given by Mr. Dyer it was granted only on condition that she was accompanied by a friend of his. The correspondence will shew how lacking in the barest rudiments of courtesy and civility this friend of Ramabai was. Were these the only charges we have against him they might have been allowed a decent burial, but when one learnt from Mano the wicked, venomous and foul lies in which there was not the smallest grain of truth with which he had filled her young mind, for the purpose of wholly weaning her affections from the friends of her childhood, such righteous indignation is kindled as cannot be extinguished until true and deep repentance shall bring tears of sorrow from the offender.

This instance of the want of honour among those who oppose the Truth has weight in shewing the falsity of the stories circulated at the time of the spoliation of the Religious Houses in 1535. To these stories the enemies of the Church gave such free circulation that for three centuries they became a tradition which only the revival of Monasticism in England could effectively prove a fabrication, invented to cover the sins of the spoilers.

In April Ramabai accompanied by fifteen Christian girls attended a camp-meeting at Lonavla. The celebrated Lonavla woods is an ideal spot for such a gathering. The shelter of the closely planted trees gives protection from the noonday sun and the grandeur of the Western Ghats, rising on all sides in mighty ranges, is uplifting and inspiring.

People of many kindreds and tongues assembled for this meeting: missionaries, people in business or Government employment, teachers, and Bible women, Brahmin and Parsee converts. Christian schools also sent contingents of boys and girls old enough to profit by the occasion. The presiding Elder of the Poona Methodist body was the leader of the meeting. Ramabai went there with a heavy heart for she had had a good deal to discourage her at this time. Only forty-nine girls were pupils in her school and things seemed to be going much against her institution. But she rejoiced much to think of the fifteen souls whom God had given her as her spiritual children. One morning she went out early and saw the sun rise in all its glory, she then lifted up her heart in prayer that the Sun of Righteousness should arise with healing in His wings and give light to her people who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Her heart seemed overflowing with joy and peace, and she gave thanks for the fifteen children given to her by the Heavenly Father. Then she was led to pray that God would square the number of her children within a year. When she thought this prayer might be presumptuous and felt doubtful, she was encouraged by the words (Jeremiah XXXII: 27) "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh, is anything too hard for me?". Six months passed away and her numbers decreased to forty-one and doubt filled the minds of the Christian girls who seemed to think the fulfilment of her prayer an impossibility. They knew nothing then of the terrible famine in Central India. Tidings of the sufferings of the people in the Central Provinces reached Ramabai in October, and this she took as a call from God to go forth and rescue some of the starving young widows. At that time she was suffering from illness and it was not till the last week of December that courage was given her to obey the call. She foresaw many difficulties; her exchequer was low, and then she had not accommodation sufficient to shelter the girls when she had got them. A second time she was reproved for want of faith, and she stepped forth without an answer to her questions. As soon as Ramabai's errand was known money flowed in from various sources.

Ramabai took with her a wee-tested Bible woman to whom she committed the rescued girls and sent them in parties of ten to twenty to the Sharada Sadan.

Doubtless the most difficult part of the work was the receiving and tending of these poor creatures after their arrival. Soondrabai Powar and [the] Christian girls devoted themselves to the cleansing and civilizing of these victims of starvation. All were miserably dirty. Many were suffering from loathsome diseases consequent on famine; some of them were skeletons. All were clamouring for food, which to have given them in sufficient quantity to appease their hunger would have been certain death.

SISTER GERALDINE,

*Community of St. Mary the Virgin*



Matheran,

May 4th, 1896

My dearest Sister,

Another dear letter from you this morning, although I have not yet answered the one that came at Easter. I do love your letters. They are so full of sympathy and encouragement and often brace me up when I sadly need it.

I was sorry to hear from your Easter letter that reports about Mano had been written to you which have distressed you terribly. We did hear a great deal about her that was exaggerated, and knowing how stories get about, I did not write about her to you until I had an opportunity of hearing from Mano herself how matters stood. In my Easter letter I told you a little of our interview, but I cannot remember whether I had time to write fully just then. Mano told me that she had *not* been formally admitted into the Methodist Society, also that she very much prefers the Church, but that she feels bound to obey her mother by attending the dissenting Chapel. Mano laughed at the Methodist services, and said "There are 'Amens' all over the Chapel in the middle of the prayers !" She also told me that she cannot respect the ministers, who are often uneducated. As far as I could make out, the reports about her *preaching* in the city were quite untrue. Ramabai has some schools there for Hindus and Mano helped with the teaching in one of them until April, when she returned to her own lessons with Miss Samuel. Mary says that Mano is greatly in need of sensible girl companions. She associates chiefly with Mrs. Sorabjee's daughters, who are not quite the companions for her, and she has besides a girl friend—Satya Keskar by name—who left the Epiphany School because her parents would not allow her to be confirmed in the English Church.

Mano is thus at a great disadvantage,—seldom seeing anyone but these dissenters, and she is not old enough to stand against their influence, even if she did not stand in such awe of Ramabai. I feel for the child very much, and you may be sure I shall do all I can to help her. We must keep constantly before her the duty of returning to the Church as soon as she is old enough to act for herself, and my impression is that Mano will only be too glad to do so, if she has courage enough for it. But there will be the rub, for she is not a strong character. Still as you say, she is the child of many prayers and I firmly believe that she will come right in the end. Strange to say, the person who uses the greatest influence in Mano's daily life to bring her back to the Catholic Church is Mary Samuel ! Although she will not come in herself, Mary likes to see other people in the Church, and fulfilling their duties there too. She dislikes the dissenters, and is quick enough to see that their influence is not good for Mano, and love for us makes her think that if people are Christians, what we do must be the proper thing for them to do. It is from Mary that I hear most about Mano, and Mary says, "Sister, tell me what you want Mano to do, and I will try to make her do it !" Is it not amusing?

When Mary was at the Epiphany School, she would never let me be late for an office. If she thought I was not hurrying off as I ought to be doing to my religious duties, she would listen for the bell and come and tell me it was time to be going.

I am glad you believe still in dear Mary. I shall always do so, and I feel confident that even if we do not live to see it, someday, she *will* become a Christian. Sometimes when I have prayed for her specially, the answer has come so clearly that I have had no doubt it is only a question of time; and I have been comforted by thinking of the story of Abraham and the old man. God does wait so patiently for people, and we are tempted to give up our prayers so soon! I am sorry Mary has been left out of the monthly intercession papers, and should like to see her put in again. Whilst her mother lives, I am sure she will never leave her. They are wrapped up in each other. If Mary goes home half an hour

later than usual, her mother is anxious and is fretting for her. Their devotion to each other is most beautiful and touching but it is *the* barrier in the way, and Mary cannot bear to face the thought of what may be when her mother is taken. I think that will be the crisis. It is a comfort to know that you will never give her up.

What a hopeless state of confusion dissent brings people's minds into ! I have been having long talks lately with a young man from Nagar (an Indian) who belongs to a society called "The Church of the Lamb". It has been founded by the rich people of Nagar, and what is to be believed or not believed is laid down by them. One would scarcely believe in such presumption unless one came across it. The young man in question is debating in his own mind between becoming a minister in his "Church" with the prospect of a comfortable income, or putting himself under regular instruction at Panch Howds, Poona, with a view to entering the Catholic Church. The latter alternative would involve a pecuniary sacrifice, and it will be a great triumph of grace if the victory is won.

Your loving Sister in Christ,  
BENIGNA MARY, C.S.M.V.

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167 *Letter from* MISS MARY SAMUEL, Poona, *to* SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.  
*Wantage*

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Convent Street, Poona,  
May 6th, 1896

My dear Sister Geraldine,

I have forwarded your letter to Mano who is in Bombay preparing to sail for London in a day or two. I cannot tell you how surprised, disappointed and grieved I was when Ramabai without any warning or preparations told her to get ready for the voyage. I am justified in telling you the true cause of this sudden and hasty determination but, dear, dear Sister, keep it strictly *private* till Mano or her mother confides in you. Though the interference of one of the girls, Ramabai found out that some of the girls were not fit companions for her daughter and that they indulged in gossip and careless talk and fearing lest they might influence her, she decided to send her away at once to London to complete her studies. Mano is in no way to blame. She does not mix up with the girls nor is she likely to be influenced by them for she is far too sensible and upright. I feel so sore about it all; if she had passed her matriculation this year, the disappointment would not have been so great, for I also wanted her to complete her studies in England. Perhaps after all, it was better for her to leave us. As regards her alienation from the Church of England, I understand that she was obliged to associate with the Methodists and attend their meetings but she has not actually joined this Church. The girl is too young now, but when she grows older we shall be in a better position to form a correct judgment of her character. I shall be so glad and thankful if you will from time to time send me any information about her—I am deeply interested in her.

Your very affectionate pupil,  
MARY SAMUEL

Sharada Sadan, Poona,  
May 11th, 1896

My dearest Ajeebai,

I thank you very much for your nice kind letter. I am sorry to hear about dear Sister Agnes' departure from this world, but there is a great comfort in knowing that she is now in a world where there is no sorrow nor weeping, happy with the Angels and with God.

I was sorry to read your last letter to Mano—I did not know anything about what she wrote to you concerning her studies. I did not prevent her from studying. I hope it is all a misunderstanding and not an intentional falsehood. Now I must say a word about her spiritual interests, I know, dear Ajeebai, that you love her very much and want her to do whatever is right. But I would request you kindly not to press her to be confirmed. You know very well that she has not had the experience which would form a strong character in her. She may yield to strong pressure but may have something different in her mind, and it will lead her either to be a hypocrite or unsettled. Let the Holy Spirit do the work of converting and sanctifying her and let us all pray that she may be kept spotless from this world. I therefore again request you not to press her in any way.

I found difficult to keep her among these girls. So I sent her to England with Mr. Dyer of Bombay and told him to place her in London or somewhere else where she will get the kind of education which I want her to get. I have told him to take her to Wantage to see you as soon as it is convenient for him to do so.

Our new Report will shortly be sent to you. I hope you are well and strong again. Pritabai who was a teacher in my school has, I hope, safely arrived in England. I am very grateful to the Mother Superior and to you all for taking her in your charge. Please be very careful and have a sharp eye on her—this is strictly private—she is a fine girl but spoilt in many ways. It will be the salvation of her to be among you and under your training and I was very anxious that she should go to Wantage. Please do not let Mano be alone with her when the child comes to see you.

I am, ever yours affectionately,  
RAMA

St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
July 11th, 1896

Dear Mr. Dyer,

I thank you for your letter of the 10th ultimo which has crossed mine of the same date.

I am writing without delay hoping that you will kindly do your best to make arrangements for Manorama's visit to fit into our convenience, I would not only remind you that we are busy people and that however willing we desire to be to accommodate ourselves to times you may name, it is not possible to put off previous engagement. I would also refer to the Pandita's letter of the 3rd May in

which she promised that Manorama should pay us a visit as shortly as possible after her coming to England. Seven weeks have elapsed since her arrival and we have been patiently waiting to fit our plans into her coming. Surely, dear Sir, you cannot know what love and grateful affection the Pandita has ever expressed towards the friends who took her by the hand when she was friendless and offered her a home (which she accepted for three years), sent her to College, and educated her little daughter for six years, asking nothing in return. It cannot be the wish of the Pandita that so little consideration should be paid to her oldest friends, nor can I believe that when you realise the relationship we have held towards her and her child, that you will not do your very best on behalf of Ramabai to recognize and respect that tie of affection, which, true woman as the Pandita is, she must ever feel towards those friends those who stood by her and shielded her in the gravest and saddest sorrow of her life.

The lines I sent you are written by St. Ignatius Loyola, the great Missionary to India and China in the 16th century. They should have his name affixed to them if published. They express the yearning of a soul which, realizing its union with a crucified Saviour, desires to yield up his whole being in His Service.

I remain,  
Dear friend,  
Yours faithfully in Christ,  
GERALDINE, Sister, C.S.M.V.

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170 *Letter from* MR.ALFRED S. DYER, London, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.,  
Wantage

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Rose Street Corner, E.C.  
July 13th, 1896

Dear friend,

I have received your letters of the 10th and 11th instant. I find, in talking to Manorama, what I was previously unaware of, that while it would please her to see you and Miss Noble, she dreads a visit to Wantage, believing that she would be subjected to remonstrances for her alleged religious defection, such as were contained in a letter she received at Poona from yourself.

I believe that Manorama is a true child of God and disciple of Jesus Christ. I also believe that her mother is not dissatisfied with her religious state. As the terms in which Pandita Ramabai committed Manorama to my charge cause her to stand in the position of a ward to me, I therefore, feel that I cannot undertake the responsibility of allowing her to go anywhere where she would be subjected to pressure to change the religious views which she holds with her mother's consent.

That both the Pnadita and manorama feel deeply grateful to the Sisterhood at Wantage for their past kindness is beyond question. But I cannot regard that as sufficient to outweigh other considerations in the responsible juncture which has now arisen. And I must consequently ask you not to expect Manorama pending my further communication with her mother.

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
ALFRED S. DYER

St. May's Home, Wantage,  
June 3rd, 1896

My dearest Ramabai,

I cannot understand why, having once brought your child to the Font to be Baptized, and having heard the solemn exhortation "Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be Confirmed by him so soon as she can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism", you should now sweep aside your act and refuse your child that further Gift of Grace in Confirmation; namely, the sevenfold Gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby her intellectual faculties will receive illumination in the mysteries of the Faith, and her will be strengthened to act in accordance with the Will of God for her. You say Mano's character is weak: Confirmation with careful training and preparation for it, and followed by the regular participation in the Body and Blood of Christ, will impart strength to her to will rightly and carry that will into effect; and also to bear bravely the manifold trials and adversities with which this mortal life abounds.

But since you withhold this inestimable privilege from your child, I would be the last person to put her into the difficulty of urging her to it contrary to your wishes. I am willing with you to leave her to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this matter, but I hope that it is your wish also that no human agency shall be allowed to come in and use arguments against Confirmation; and that if Mano desires it and asks your permission to be Confirmed, you will be willing for her to be so.

I do not, however, understand, how in the matter of her following the Methodist persuasion you consider that she is old enough to judge for herself, and yet in the matter of her Confirmation you do not consider her old enough to make a decision !

You say nothing about her making a stay with us. You know how pleased we shall be to welcome her at any time. I cannot but think that in a foreign land, where she will not have the happiness of frequent intercourse with her own mother, the old friends of her early childhood may be those to whom her thoughts will naturally turn, and that it may be a happiness to her to visit us from time to time. You know, Ramabai, that Mano is really a delicate girl; if she should feel lonely and sad in a foreign land and among strangers, this may greatly affect her health. Visits to her old friends and unrestrained intercourse with them by letter may do more help to her to accomplish the purpose for which she is sent to England than perhaps anything she may do. You may be sure we shall use our influence with her [to] overcome the slothfulness of her disposition and to fit herself for a life of usefulness among her own countrywomen, and to be loving and dutiful towards you. I shall look forward to seeing your Report, and to hearing from you of any of your many interests you can tell me.

Pritabai seems a promising girl. I should like you to tell in what way you consider she wants watchful care. My observation leads me to think she has had little grounding in the Faith; and beyond her secular studies it will be of advantage to her to have religious instruction. We have placed her at St. Katherine's School, where she will, I hope, study for two years.

Now I must say adieu, and with loving earnest prayer to God that you and Mano may be guided into the knowledge of God's Will and into all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

I remain, as ever,  
Your very loving and devoted,  
AJEEBAI

You will not, I hope, forget that we shall have to give an account of all our actions; and I hope you will weigh well those awfully solemn words of our Lord about offending one of Christ's little ones that believe in Him.

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172 *Letter from PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage*

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Sharada sadan, Poona,  
November 25th, 1896

My dearest Old Ajeebai,

You are no doubt wondering why I did not write to you so long. I was very ill at the time when your last letter came—indeed, I had not thought I could live through that illness—but the Lord is very gracious, He has raised me from the dead as it were; I am well and strong now. But I am sorry to say I never read your last letter. I could not bear to read letters in my illness, so I let many of them remain sealed. I was looking for your letter to-day but did not find it, still hope to find it somewhere. I can guess a little what was written in that letter. It must have been about Mano not going to see you—I had told her to go and see you as soon as she landed in England. But I hear she is afraid. Why I do not know. She holds a little different opinion from yours, but for all that she should not be afraid of you. I know she loves you and Miss Noble as dearly as ever. I have always taught her to be loving and grateful to you. Let the differences of opinion alone. We serve the same Master and believe in the same God wherever we are. She has joined the Methodist Church of her own free will and I do not want to disturb her in her belief and unsettle her mind. It is very harmful to unsettle the minds of the young—I have suffered a great deal from it and I do not want her to suffer in the same way. But I have written to her in my letter a few weeks ago that she must go and see you and ask your forgiveness for giving you unnecessary pain by refusing to go to Wantage. I have told her that we must never forget that we owe a great deal to you—and through you we were led into the Saving Light of the Gospel Truth.

Now my dearest Ajeebai, you know that I love you and respect you as my own mother and I shall never forget your love and kindness and care. I cannot but love you and be grateful to you—always. And I do hope that you will forgive me and Mano if we have been wrong and forget all our shortcomings. I shall never feel happy unless I know that you have forgiven us. I do not want to say much about our belief in the Church. I believe in the Universal Church of Christ which includes all the members of His body, and am not particular about others being the members of different sects. The dry discussion about sects and differences has never been an attractive one to me since I was converted. And now I enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding and do not trouble myself with small matters of opinion and its differences. So please let Mano alone in this matter—pray for her and for me as you always do—and the God of all grace will lead us into all truth. If He sees fit to convert us to your own particular opinions He will do so. I have written [to] you more than once that I am not prejudiced against any sectarian belief. I only want to do the right thing and believe the right thing. I am trusting the Lord for everything and He knows how to teach and lead us in the right path. So I humbly beseech you, dear Ajeebai, not to be offended with Mano or me for holding a little different opinion.

I hope you are well. I do hope you will get over your nervous prostration. Will you allow me to say a few words in regard to your health? Why don't you give up all medicine and doctors [\[In faithful pursuance of this belief, Pandita Ramabai had once ordered the dispensary at Mukti, Kedgaon to close down with the result that Dr. Bhaskarrao Govande and his wife \(who was a nurse\) were obliged to leave and go away from the Pandita's employment.\]](#), and look to the Lord for the restoration of your bodily health? Oh, I feel so happy and free of all care ever since I learnt this truth from the Word of God : "I am the Lord that healeth thee" is the precious assurance given to one and all of us. So I request you to take the Lord for your Healer and trust Him wholly and you will find yourself cured very soon. I have been trusting the Lord for my health for the last three



years and He has worked wonders amongst us. Many of us in this house have given up all medicine and simply pray to God to cure us when we are ill. We get well in very little time. This wonder-working power of God has been the means of converting many Hindu girls and the promise in Mark XVI: 17-18 has been literally fulfilled to us. So I take leave to trust in Him for *all* things.

Will it not be nice if you are quite restored to your health and return to India to work here? Nothing is impossible with God and it is not His will that we should be ill and suffering all the time. “*I will, be thou clean*”. These words are as true to-day as they were 1,800 years ago. Try Him and you will not be disappointed. It is His will that you should be made *whole* and labour in His field.

I went to see the lepers of Poona to-day. I had been to see them before. Oh, how my heart ached to see so much suffering among them—I read the fourth chapter of St. John’s Gospel to them and spoke to them as [it] gave me utterance. I told them my experience with you—how I saw you working among the fallen and poor suffering people and how it touched my heart to see the Sisters living the true Christ-like life, taking the fallen women and bringing them home and caring for them. I told them I had not seen such a sight in my own land among my own people. The test of the true religion is this, that it converts the wicked and lifts up the fallen to the high estate of being the children of God. I thought of you when I was sitting in the outskirts of Poona surrounded by leprous men and women, talking to them of the great love of God to us fallen creatures. They listened very attentively and requested me to go and visit them whenever I got time. I was led to go to them by a strange providence.

The other day, when at Church, listening to the Holy Ghost preaching through a lay preacher, I was moved to consecrate myself anew for the service of God. Quick as the electric message, came to me then and there the call to go and work among and preach the Gospel to the lepers in the outskirts of Poona. I had a great dislike to see the horrible sight—it always sickened me to see lepers and I used to avoid them as much as possible. So God shewed me that I was wrong, that I must follow the footsteps of my Master and be willing to go wherever He calls me to go. A young Brahmin widow who had been in my school for some time and rejected the love of God, never heeding my entreaties not to go away left this school and followed the devices of her own heart. The poor creature fell into horrible sin and is now numbered among the lepers ! Oh what a dreadful thought that she who once so despised other people because of their low-caste birth and rejected our love, should now be numbered among the outcaste people ! It was she who sent me the message to come and see her, and her message was delivered to me by a Christian at the Church as I rose from my knees. So, that was how God called me to go to the lepers.

Well, I went to see the poor girl. She cried as though her heart would break. I was very much moved at the sight and promised to go and see her often. About forty leprous men and women are living in that place. I read the Bible to them and prayed with them. Please pray for those poor creatures that they may find the way of salvation and peace. I trust that they will give their hearts to God and be cleansed body and soul.

Now, dearest Ajeebai, I must close this long letter, but before doing so, let me assure you that I am never ungrateful and unloving to you. The more I taste of the love of God, the more I love you because you have been means of leading me into the light at first. Can I ever forget the pain you took over me and my child? And I am sure you are always the same loving patient dear old Ajeebai and will not be offended with me.

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and joyful New Year. Please give my respects and love to the Rev. Mother Superior and to the Sisters whom I know, and to dear Miss Noble. I hope to write to her very soon. Please give my love to Pritabai and tell her I saw her mother the other day. The old lady is quite well. I shall call on the Sister Superior and Sister Mary Grace who has two of my boys in her school. She has perhaps written to you about them. She has such a nice school for little boys and she loves them with a true mother’s love. I thank and praise God for raising such friends and mothers

for the poor orphans of this country. Please give my dear love to Sister Eleanor Grace, Sister Eleanor, Sister Emma, Sister Rosa and Sister Laura.

With very best love for yourself, dear old Ajeebai,

I remain, as ever,  
Your loving child,  
RAMA

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173 Letter from SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V., Wantage, to PANDITA RAMABAI, Poona

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St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
December 14th, 1896

My dear Ramabai,

Your letter has caused me great pain, and I feel in replying I must use the freedom of friendship and truth to you in love, and I trust you will receive in love and humility what I feel called upon to write.

And first, if you did not read with your own eyes what I wrote in my last letter (June 1896), you have either had it read to you or have been told the contents of it, for you could not have written the letter of November the 25th without having known the contents. It would have pleased me if you had written a straightforward answer to that letter, instead of shielding yourself under the cover of having "let many letters remain sealed during my illness".

It is not *I* who wish to unsettle Mano's mind : it is you who *have already done so*. Had you left her to the training of the Community into which you and she were guided by Divine Providence, your child would have grown up with a simple faith in the teaching of God's Holy Church; that Faith which was once for all delivered to the saints; a faith free from the adulterations of Methodism and every other pernicious ". . . . .". [The word here is missing in the original copy].

Pritabai's faith also has been unsettled, and but for her having left your school, she would probably have lost it altogether. If this is the result of undenominational teaching, it is a sorry result indeed!

You ask me to forgive Mano. If it is with regard to having erred from the Faith, it is for God to forgive her, and not for me. I hope she may someday so realize her loss that she will humbly ask His pardon for her sins, for which, poor child, she is less to blame than others. And you ask me to forgive you. You have need to ask forgiveness both of God and man. You already know from experience what [the] Holy Church teaches about the reconciliation of sinners, so I need not repeat this to you. With regard to my forgiveness, you have deeply wounded a friendship which was *cemented* under very sacred circumstances, and a friend who has watched over you with unwearied love during the last fourteen years of your life.

The same arrogance and wilfulness which characterized your life when you set up your own opinions against the Ministers of God's Church, and which led you to choose a path for yourself which those who had your truest interests at heart were unwilling you should enter upon, and from which (I quote the words of one lately speaking to me about you), "all the disasters in her life may be traced"—the looking to America for help, when all that you needed both for body and soul would

have been given you by England had you had the patience and trust to have waited—that same arrogance and wilfulness characterizes your life and the present time.

You set yourself up for a teacher and interpreter of God's Word, when you yourself need to be taught over "again the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat". You interpret the Holy Scriptures according to your own private judgment, and not as the Church interprets it, forgetting that the Church existed before the Bible, and that it is from the Church that we receive those books which we accept as inspired writings.

What you term "your own particular opinion" is the Faith which has been believed by the Church of Christ for nearly nineteen centuries. The most learned as well as the most ignorant have held in it every age, and Princes as well as slaves. It needs the humility of a little child to grasp fully, and it calls forth the intellect of the learned to prove and defend it. It is not "Sectarian" for it was given by Jesus Christ, the Chief Corner-Stone, and handed on by the Apostles who are the twelve foundation stones of the Catholic Church.

I should never be offended with you and Mano "for holding a little different opinion" from myself; it is *not* in the matter of opinion, but in the "first principles of oracles of God" about which we differ. It is that I *hold* the Faith which the Church has taught for nearly nineteen centuries, and *you choose* for yourself a spurious production : that *I have been willing to learn from the Church*, and you are unwilling to "hear the Church". And our Lord says of such : "if any man neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and publican".

The passage from St. Mark you build your doctrine of faith-healing upon is allowed by all commentators to be an interpolation and is found in none of the ancient manuscripts. If you look in the Revised Version, of which you gave me a copy, you will see a note to that effect.

The Holy Spirit speaking by St. Paul says : "Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, and is sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer".

Then again, we are told to "Honour the physician with the honour due unto him, for the uses which we may have of him; for the *Lord hath created him*". Again, "The Lord hath created medicine out of the earth, and he that *is wise will not abhor them*".

And again : "Give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him; let him not go from there, for thou hast need of him. There is a time when in their hands there is good success". I fear, Ramabai, that those people who refuse to be spiritually healed and fed by the means provided for them in the Church of Christ, are the same who would lead you to refuse the help and relief of medicine and physician, which are God's appointed means for the cure of the diseases of the body. And because they love to flaunt their faith and prayers before the world, they prefer to refuse the everyday means which God has promised to sanctify if used with prayer and thanksgiving, and leaving their daily duties and avocations, they run presumptuously into selfchosen ways. Such walk on the edge of a dangerous precipice, and it will not be a matter of wonderment if sooner or later some great evil befall them. Our Lord, Who was always most tender with sinners, was only severe and stern with one class of people; those who made a *parade* of their religious earnestness, and of their long prayers, etc. Beware of such and do not be led by them.

It is a great danger, Ramabai, which you are running into, that of picking out single truths and interpreting them after your own liking. "I am the God which healeth thee", applies to the miserable state of moral degradation into which the Israelites had fallen in their slavery in Egypt : and just as all sin and disease, and most of all loathsome leprosy is a type of the foulness of sin, so every kind of healing is a type of the healing which the Great Physician or Healer works on souls, if we repent and sorrow for our sins. The Healer or Health-bringer is the Saxon word for Saviour, and healing means in its original use saving from sin. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed, save me and I shall be saved", is part of our daily Office.

God has appointed work for all to do in life, and He chooses also the means with which we are to do it. To you He gives bodily health, and says, "Use it in My service". To me He denies bodily health, in order to teach me many precious lessons. It may be that He has blessed my ill-health and made it the means of doing more for your people than had I been given health to work in India. One out of many of the lessons ill-health has taught me is : "When I am weak then am I strong", for "My strength is made perfect in weakness".

I could say much more on the difference of opinions and convictions, but will only add a few texts on the importance in which clear and definite doctrine is held by the Apostles and their successors. St. John, who is called "the Apostle of Love" and whose Chief teaching in the latter years of his life was "Little children, love one another", insists on a right discernment between the spirit of truth and the spirit of the word.

Cf. 2 St. John 8-12; and St. Paul's teaching, Romans XVI : 17, and Galatians I : 8-9. I have for some time past desired, as you know, to *avoid controversy*, but your letter—so full of erroneous assertions—left me no choice. May God guide you into all Truth.

You admire our schools. Why is it that they commend themselves to [the] approval of others? It is [because] we concentrate our strength, and do not dissipate it. We give ourselves to the particular work to which each is called, and make it strong with a background of a life of devotion. Intercessory prayer occupies a portion of each day. We never hope to see the result of it in this life, but we are thereby laying up treasure in Heaven which we shall find at the Great Revelation of all things.

Let me earnestly entreat you to look well into your heart and search its depths. There is a great snare in good works, and we need to be continually on the watch lest "they steal our heart from sober following in true Gospel ways". Your *want of faith* in the teaching of the Catholic Church may arise from your loving the praise of men. Our Lord said, "How can ye believe which seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?" It is well to look carefully to this, for this may shipwreck our Eternal Salvation. Our Lord said of such : "They have their rewards". The reward was popularity, the honour which men bestow, and not the quiet hidden honour which cometh of God. I suppose we all wish to hear at the close of our life the "Well done" from our Lord; but we must be careful to make sure that our motives are simple, humble, and pure, else we may really miss that beautiful welcome from our Lord. A safer method than any faith-healing is : "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart".

One thing : let me ask you—to pray for daily and even several *times* [a] day : a thing most profitable and essential if we would walk humbly with our God; and that is, "Lord, shew me myself". Say it with all earnestness and diligence and you will in time learn the most necessary lesson of life, which is : "Mortal, know thyself".

I am sending this to the care of the Sister Superior, because as you do not get the letters sent to the Sharada Sadan, it will be safest to have them delivered to you by a *trusty hand*. Will you ask her to shew you the prospectus of Holloway Training College? You may like to know of it for Mano. We expect Mano tomorrow.

I am, very sorrowful,  
AJEEBAI

## VOLUME V

### INTRODUCTORY NOTES

There was another letter of grave import which I wrote to Ramabai about this time; I think it was in 1897, the first great outbreak of plague, when Government made regulations to endeavour to stop the spread of this terrifying scourge.

The ignorant lower caste people worked by malcontents and unable to apprehend the value of the work being carried on to prevent its spread showed great displeasure at certain restrictions.

Ramabai was like most people somewhat inconvenienced by the rules of cordon, etc. and wrote and spoke words smacking of sedition. These were sent to the Foreign Office and were read in the House of Commons. It resulted in the measures taken to stop the spread of plague being rescinded.

Ramabai lost a great opportunity by her impetuous and ill-advised words of educating her people and she justly incurred the ill-will of the British Government. She was also led on in such disloyal ways by the evil counsel of [a] so-called friend who used her as a catspaw to stir up sedition.

I do not remember whether Ramabai answered my letter. Miss Dorothea Beale and doubtless other friends wrote to her with loving anxiety as to the wrong course she was pursuing. Probably she felt it wisdom not to reply to their letters.

Government officials were marked down for murder by the Brahmins : one was killed and the other escaped because another man was shot in mistake for [the] intended victim. These deeds probably showed Ramabai the wrongness of her action.

Before long one of the worst Indian famines visited Western India. Though Ramabai incurred the censure of her American Committee for her actions at this time, she aroused the sympathy of thousands of people in all parts of the world not only by her super human efforts to rescue women and children, but also by the appeal she made for the victims of the famine.

When some sixty girls had been rescued Ramabai returned to Poona for a few days and, while there, wrote a rapid sketch of the work, prefacing it with the story of her own early experiences of starvation in 1877. This was published in the *Bombay Guardian* edited by Mr. Alfred S. Dyer.

It was indeed a pathetic story, which touched many hearts. It was purchased in quantities by missionaries and sent home to their friends in England and America. The Community of St. Mary the Virgin reprinted it in the form of an illustrated pamphlet and circulated it amongst their friends. It was said to be the keenest description of famine suffering which had yet been depicted and was no mean factor in rousing sympathy in the hearts of Western Christians for suffering India. . .

(An extract from a letter [dated February 21st, 1897] from a teacher in the Sharada Sadan, Poona, addressed to Sister Geraldine, C.S.M.V., Wantage :

“Quite a large number of natives are through the famine being brought under the influence of Christians. Ramabai is helping to relieve some of these poor suffering creatures, who come in so weak and terribly thin, just skeletons, you will be surprised to hear that there are now over a hundred famine-stricken women and children in the Sharada Sadan. The dining room is being enlarged and two *mandaps* just opposite to the school house and another near the dormitory have been put up.

“Those women did not all arrive together, but in companies of about thirty at a time. The first came on the 20th of December, when instead of going with lessons till the 23rd we had lessons put away, and all who could sew helped make clothes for the famine-stricken comers, and by the time the

school opened, we managed to have quite a number of skirts and jackets ready. The old girls are very good and so anxious and willing to help to work for the new arrivals. There are now nearly two hundred living in the Sharada Sadan. As soon as the famine girls are fit to come into school Ramabai sends them. Some of them are very intelligent and are getting on nicely. Those who are too old to learn, help in the house work.

“February 23rd: Ramabai returned to-day with about thirty more famine women and children.”)

Money flowed into the Mukti Treasury from all classes and communities in answer to the appeal Ramabai put forth in January 1897. So abundant were her resources for a time that she passed on no small portion of her receipts to several other missions needing help in this time of emergency. To me she £30, again asking me to go out and see her. Bad health made this out of the question and, considering the suffering in India, I could not feel justified in keeping from them one pice sent to India to relieve the sufferers, and so forwarded the cheque by the next mail to the Rev. C. King, who with a body of native priests and evangelists, was struggling with the famine in the Ahmednagar District.

1897 : In February of this year, Ramabai again started off on her rescue work, determined not to rest until 300 widows were saved. But a summons brought her back to Poona within a fortnight. Bubonic plague, which had been raging in Bombay, had spread to Poona, and the authorities were introducing stringent measures in their endeavours to cope with it. Ramabai's house in the Cantonment (Poona) was surrounded on all sides by high-class dwellings, inhabited by Europeans, Parsees or Mohamedans. It was not therefore likely that the authorities would allow her to import miserably diseased, famine-stricken people into her institution. The City Magistrate issued an order to the effect that the permanent inmates of the Sharada Sadan should not be increased and eighteen of the famine victims were ordered to the Hospital to be under observation. This caused a stoppage of the buildings which had been commenced for the housing of fresh pupils.

What was to be done? Ramabai proved equal to the emergency. She hired tents and sent the whole of her establishment into the country some thirty miles away. She then cabled to America and in three days permission was received to use as a temporary home for the famine-stricken the Kedgaon property. The famine girls were transferred to grass huts erected on the farm, and a large barn was speedily built with the view of giving them good shelter during the rainy season.

When the rains began, she transferred the most intelligent of her girls, who had sufficiently recovered from the effect of starvation, to a house in Poona near enough to the Sadan for school purposes. The older women remained at Kedgaon, and a few small children, some almost babies, were there also. An appeal from Ramabai to her pupils to tend these poor little starved waifs was eagerly responded to. One bright Christian girl of fourteen chose the most weird-looking baby of the number. Subhadra, who had begun to learn the lesson of Divine love, replied to her companions, when railed for choosing a monkey-faced child : “Not to take a pretty and attractive child, but to take a wretched and unattractive one, is love.”

In the midst of Ramabai's arduous work of this year, she was cheered and encouraged by a visit from Father Page.

The Rev. Father Page who had been on a visit to India early this year, in his address at the May meeting of the Cowley-Wantage Missionary Association tells of his visit to Ramabai and gives some account of the visitation of plague in Poona :

“I had the pleasure of speaking with Pandita Ramabai on two or three occasions at Poona, and she asked me to address the famine children whom she [had] brought from the Central Provinces. It was exceedingly interesting to speak to them (although I had to do so through an interpreter) and to see how attached they were to her. The way they were so kindly cared for and their good order



attracted my attention and I asked how it was that they managed such wild children, with so few teachers. The reply was : “It is our old girls who take care of them”. There is great kindness shown by the older girls for the new-comers and they are immediately made to feel at home. I received a letter from the Pandita before leaving Poona, in which she sent messages to the Mother Superior and Sisters at Wantage and added : ‘It is doubtful if ever I [shall] go to England again, but I shall always be grateful to you for bringing me to the Light in which I live. The Sisters here are always willing to help me’.”.

“The plague has affected Poona more seriously than the famine and all hope of escaping it was precluded by the numbers of people who poured into it by road and rail from the plague-stricken city of Bombay. The distance from Poona to Bombay is 119 miles. Some died on the journey and some who reached Poona, died there and thus propagated the fatal disease amongst others.

“At length vigorous measures were taken by the Government to subdue the plague and all the houses in Poona were searched and the plague-infected persons removed, after which the plague was somewhat subdued.

“It is remarkable that no persons in our missions at Poona were attacked by the plague.

“The Heathen recognised the plague as God’s visitation, and they at once set to work to fast and pray. Mohammedans killed goats and the Hindus offered sacrifices in order to appease the wrath of God. May we not reverently enquire what may be the cause of this visitation? And may not the answer be the persistent idolatry and rejection of Christ by the peoples of India? A friend of mine, a missionary of many years’ standing and experience in Bombay, speaking of the people says : ‘There is a want of depth and earnestness of any kind. The people treat the most solemn considerations of religion as a great joke. There is no loyalty to conviction, no sense of principle about anything’. There is great selfishness; the upper classes have no care for the amelioration of the lower classes. The Brahmins for ages have done nothing for the sake of the poor. There is wholesale double-dealing and duplicity. Everything is brought down to the level of sordid self-interest. Revenge is deep-seated and widespread. Their leaders of thought have truckled with their convictions and have failed to become an example to the rest. Trifling with conscience seems to be a leading sin in India at the present day. The Mohammedans are a most hopeless class; they never progress educationally or otherwise, and no race in India causes the Government more anxiety. The Parsis are sunk in worldliness and are vain and self-satisfied; their religious books are very nonsensical in parts.

“The difficulties of mission work are better appreciated when we think what antagonism to Christian teaching all this means. So when we think on the one side of the city given up to idolatry, vice and crime, and when on the other we think of the all-loving God, yearning that His creatures should come to Him and know Him, surely it is not too much to say that this plague has visited the city because it has gone on in its pleasures and enjoyments, thoughtless and indifferent to the claims of God and religion which have been preached there for so many years.

“But if it is true that a country resisting God will go further and further from Him, it must also be remembered that in the vast population of India there are many souls only waiting for the religion of Christ to come to them in order to embrace it.”

During the next six months the rescue work went forward at intervals. Ramabai with her faithful Bible-woman, Gangabai, visited poor-houses, relief camps and mission stations and gathered from them six hundred starving women and children. After having chosen three hundred of the most suitable cases for the Sadan, she passed on the rest to various mission orphanages.

During the early months of this year, plague was virulent and the authorities were at their wit’s end to cope with it and allay the panic consequent on it. Ramabai, a leader among her people, gifted by God with good sense, nobility of purpose and high courage, ought to have been the one to have striven to allay, rather than to increase the resentment to sanitary measures instituted by Dr.

Beveridge. She, however, added fuel to the fire by a childish, sensational and seditious letter written to the Editor of the *Bombay Guardian*. Mr. Dyer was at that time back again in Bombay, and it was easy to trace his hand in this sad matter. The *Christian Patriot*, always Ramabai's good friend, warned her that she was walking along a dangerous precipice and had an unwise friend as her adviser. Sedition quickly spreads and hardly a month had elapsed after Ramabai's letter, when on the night of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, returning home from a Government party, two of the officials, Lieut. Ayerst and Mr. Rand were murdered in cold blood by a Brahmin. Excitement naturally reached a great height, and Ramabai's letter was referred to by Lord George Hamilton in the House of Commons on July 26th.

It was said by one who was interested in the Pandita [that] "Ramabai ought to make a written recantation of statements made in her letter."

She received kindly though gravely warning letters from Miss Dorothea Beale and other true friends. I do not know that she replied to any of her friends with regard to this sad matter.

This utterance of Ramabai was as ill-judged as it was foolish and sensational. It placed her at a disadvantage with Government and her Brahmin fellow-countrymen, many of them embittered by her having embraced Christianity. They being in the employ of Government as Sanitary and School Inspectors, were not backward in meting her out hard measures when occasion offered.

The letter referred to can be read on pp. 16 and 17 of the Scrap-Book and on pp. 21 to 23 of the scrap-Book will be found an account of the plague in Poona of 19th March 1897, taken from the *Quarterly Mission Paper*—July 1897 (of the C.S.M.V., Wantage) in which are shewn some of the grave difficulties which Government had to face in their dealings with it.

Miss Parsons of the Poona and Indian Village Mission spent a month in the autumn with Ramabai at Kedgaon and helped in instructing these rescued women and girls for baptism and in October many of them who showed signs of a real change of heart were baptized in the river five miles from the settlement at Kedgaon. Encouraged by the blessings, material and spiritual, showered upon her during this year of trial, Ramabai began to see great possibilities from the point of view of Evangelistic work to the neighbourhood with such a settlement as Mukti in their midst. But she realized that she needed an experienced helper to come and live among her girls to lead them to their Saviour and train them in the Word of God, so that they should be prepared to carry the Gospel to all the region round about. Ramabai spoke of this need to whom she thought suitable but no one responded. In October a call came to one who had had ten years of experience, first in a girl's school in Bombay and then in itinerating work in the villages around Poona. A repeated inner call, "Go to Kedgaon", left a deep impression on the mind of Miss Minnie Abrams; she felt specially commissioned to enter upon some work there and was warmly welcomed by Ramabai as a helper, sent in answer to prayer. Miss Abrams is an American and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Body.

A fortnight from this initial visit Miss Abrams was settled in at Mukti and entered on the spiritual training of the girls, a work which has grown remarkably under her care.

By the end of the year a hundred and sixteen child-widows and women were baptized at the Sharada Sadan. This was the outcome of special services held for ten days together. At Kedgaon the women had been prepared by regular daily teaching from the time they entered the Home. On November 15th, one hundred and eight women and girls and a boy of twelve were baptized. Mr. Gadre, whose prejudice against Christianity had been overcome by the wonderful answers to prayer he continually witnessed, was baptized with his younger children, and confessed his faith in Christ. His conversion more than doubled his usefulness to the Institutions.

A great Camp-Meeting was arranged for in December, which was attended by many missionaries and Indian Christians who joined with Ramabai and her large family in giving thanks to God for all His goodness to them. The settlement at Kedgaon was then dedicated to

God, by the name of MUKTI, *i.e.* “Salvatiion” in reference to Isaiah IX: 18, “Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise”.

Tidings reached me some time after this that Ramabai had been baptized by immersion. When I wrote and asked if this were so, I received an affirmative answer, and the time she indicated made it fairly certain that she had been baptized at one of those great baptisms in the river at Kedgaon. There seems to have been undue excitement on these occasions and Ramabai, carried away by emotion, allowed herself to be re-baptized...

Mano had been nearly eight months in England before she had been permitted to re-visit her friends at Wantage... The physical care of a delicate Indian child [Mano] was almost wholly neglected and her education was nearly as badly provided for as the care of her body. At one time she was in a second-rate boarding school where the wife of the Principal was out of her mind and Mano and another girl were continually sent for by this lady to be her companions! The last term of her stay in England she was a day student at the North London College, and she greatly appreciated the good teaching given there. But one thing marred her progress: she received orders from her mother not to wear her glasses, and such pressure was put on her with regard to this that it was the cause of much suffering to the poor girl. Still Mano persevered with her studies and looked forward in hope to pass the Matriculation Examination of the London University the following year. She was again doomed to bitter disappointment, as further orders from her mother bid her leave the North London College and go to be trained as a missionary with people at Brighton. There she was not to have intercourse with her friends without special permission. It was a heart-breaking trial for the poor child, as she felt she was never allowed to have a chance with her studies. Mrs. Unwin, with whom she was placed, was a woman of a loving, motherly nature, and comforted Mano and helped her to look hopefully on her disappointment. Before the end of the year, she again received news from her mother telling her that she was to be prepared to go with her to America early in January 1898.

I cannot leave this part of Ramabai's history without a comment on the neglect of health and general want of care, as well as the mismanagement of her only child's education. During her sojourn in England within a year and a half she was in four different schools! The money which was paid annually for Mano's education, viz. £100 by Mr. E. T. Lelunan of Philadelphia, U.S.A., was ample to provide her with every necessary comfort and with a generous education. Mano's education in America was given to her without cost, as was also that of the five Indian girls with her in the Seminary, by the liberality of Mrs. E. S. Roberts, the Lady Principal.

SISTER GERALDIN,  
*Community of St. Mary the Virgin,*  
*Wantage.*

St. Mary's Home, Wantage,  
Advent: December 1897

My dear Ramabai,

Your best friends are greatly grieved at the line you are taking in bringing up your child. And if I write you a very grave letter, it is because the circumstances which call it forth are very grave also.

I desire now to reason with you on what anyone who has given time and thought to the education of the young would tell you was an act of very great injustice and one which may injure both bodily and mental health. The more you educate the mind of the young, the more you have to take into consideration that you are dealing with reasonable beings. If you move them about like you would unreasoning things, e.g. chairs and tables, it is an absolute necessity that the mind of any young person so treated will resent injustice. And perhaps the less that is said by the one suffering the injustice, the deeper is the wound inflicted. It is a very awful thing to say, but it is true, such a wound would probably only be healed by the death of one or other of the parties concerned.

Then, Ramabai, you who have claimed for yourself freedom of intelligence and set aside the Catholic Church as the teacher in all matters of Faith, should surely not be the one to deny your child freedom of choice with regard to her work in life. You who denounce with loud voice the cruelty of caste cannot have taken into account that your action is even a much crueller one than the caste rule which requires everyone to follow the calling of his ancestors. You have yourself trained Mano up from her infancy to consider that the medical profession is to be her work in life; and this in order to benefit her countrymen. And just when the girl has passed through the drudgery of the early years of education, and is beginning to take up her studies with zest and delight, she is told that they are to be at an end for ever.

Cramped, thwarted and warped, would it be to be wondered at if that young and promising life were to grow up soured and stunted, and be neither a happiness to herself nor to others?

A year ago a lady told me that her eldest girl (one just the same age as Mano) was unresponsive and unwilling at home. I asked her whether she were guiding and advising instead of as formerly ruling her young life. A year after she told me that she had changed her line of conduct towards her young daughter and all the difficulties had vanished. The girl was now loving and willing, kind and helpful, where before she was unyielding and rebellious.

Canon Holmes who conducted a Retreat for our Exterior Sisters in our Chapel this October, impressed strongly on the Mothers who were in it the great necessity of guiding and not commanding girls when they had attained to years of discretion.

The more you bring out and develop responsibility in the young, the harder and stronger and more loving their nature will become. You would never go and lop off all the boughs of an oak just when it was growing from a sapling into a fine tree. Neither ought a young person to be warped and thwarted in body, soul or spirit.

When Mano wrote and told me of her sorrow in giving up the work, in my answer I reminded her of what the Catholic Church teaches, "Children, obey your parents", etc., and I must also remind you that the continuation of the passage is "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged".

Education is a fine art, which, to be rightly carried out, needs great study and very great care, and prayer. I trust, dear Ramabai, that what I have said will weigh with you and induce you to reconsider the step which you have lately taken with regard to Mano.

And then lovingly I would urge you to beware of the danger of bringing any work which God has committed to our care too prominently before the world. Where it is supported by funds received from the public, a Report is a necessity, together with a carefully drawn-up balance sheet; but further than this reticence is the safest and best rule to work and live by.

Advent is here, with its special lessons of preparation for the Second Coming of our Lord. Whether that Coming will be to us in death or in some other way we cannot say. But this we know that it is for our eternal weal to keep carefully drawn-up balance sheets of our lives, and see how our debts stand with regard to that good God Who blesses us with such rich blessings. Yes, if we are true to ourselves we shall find so many neglected opportunities, so many closed doors which can never be opened again—the door through which we may pass to be washed through repentance, and made white in the blood of the Lamb (“Wash you, make you clean, put away the iniquity of your doings”, says Isaiah); the door which we enter when our souls are fed with Angels’ Food at the Eucharistic Feast. What can you say about these two doors? Look well to yourself, and ask yourself if you have made the right use of these two great doors which have been opened to you by your baptism and Confirmation. And listen to that voice which so often speaks to your heart in pleading tones saying “Return, O backsliding Israel”.

Your very loving,  
AJEEBAI

## INTRODUCTORY NOTES

*1898*

At the end of 1897, Ramabai was fairly spent and needed a holiday.

The ten years for which the Ramabai Circles in America had pledged themselves would expire in March 1898, and Ramabai’s American friends were urging her to come over to consult about the reconstruction of the Association in view of the recent developments of the work.

With Miss Abrams’ capable help at Mukti, and Soondrabai Powar in charge of the Sharada Sadan, Ramabai felt able to leave. She had, the year before, sent three of her best pupils to America, and she now took two others with her. In England, she was joined by her daughter Manorama whom she took with her to America. These six girls were placed under the care of Mrs. Roberts, Principal of the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary, North Chili, N.Y.

Ramabai received a warm welcome on her arrival in America. Her old friends extended their hands to help her with renewed enthusiasm. Mrs. Andrews, then aged 73, and Miss Grainger, who had so long and faithfully served the Association as its chief officers, again consented to work for the Sharada Sadan. The new Committee pledged themselves to work on the same lines, to support the Sharada Sadan as before, and to encourage Ramabai in God-given developments of the work at Mukti. They wished her a hearty Godspeed.

Ramabai’s reply was throughout a happy inspiration. She spoke of herself as “the first scholar of that school standing before you to-day, who had learnt a lesson in it, to thank and praise God—for this work has not been done by human strength alone. The Eternal God is behind it and at the foundation of it; and as there is no end to Him, there will be no end to His work . . . In these nine years, we have erected a monument—a monument to the Saints. Let us call this All Saints’ Day. It is



that to me; and I thank God for the Saints He has given me for my friends. There are those dear departed friends, who are now no more in this world. . . The Sharada Sadan stands as a monument to honour their memory, and also to the honour of those Saints here in the Church Militant—you, all of you, everywhere in this country, and many who are working for us all over the world”. Then she sums up the progress of the work and the value of the property belonging to the Association, which she estimates at £12,000 and she finishes up with a strong appeal for renewed and increased help.

“Last year”, she says, “God sent £6,000. He is as rich to-day and He will send us £4,000—not for one year, or two, or ten, but so long as India and its needs exist”. Then to her poorer friends she says, “Are you too busy to pray for us? No, because you are members of that royal priesthood whose privilege and right it is to pray”. And to the aged she said, “I was getting very tired and wished to rush out from school and give up my work. But I have read the story of a prophetess who is called Anna—Mrs. Anna, the Prophetess, let us call her; she worked for eighty-four years, and did not give up her work in the temple service all that time, and God said to me ‘If you live to that age you must work till then’. And I bring you that message, my dear friends, and it is a glorious thing for you to look forward to”.

Ramabai remained in America a sufficient time to see the new Board legally constituted and the property duly vested in the hands of Trustees. She received weekly tidings from Miss Abrams and Soondrabai Powar of all the concerns of the Institutions. At Mukti the work of building was progressing. Three large wells had been dug which furnished stone for the buildings. Miss Abrams was instructed to stop the work if the funds were low, and on two occasions the work had to cease for short periods. The recrudescence of plague in Poona added greatly to Soondrabai’s anxieties. Ramabai’s work in America brought her no rest; she was called upon to speak in various Centres, to arouse fresh interest in her cause. The distances she had to go were often so great as to require night travelling, followed generally by two addresses a day. To her own bodily and mental fatigue was added the anxiety for her fellow-workers and children at home. Her braver, strong spirit and faith in her Heavenly father’s care sustained her for some time, but at last her over-tired body and mind gave way and she longed to return to her country to suffer and die, if need be, with her dear ones there. During that day pain and fear, she poured out her heart to a loving friend.

The story was told to Mrs. Quiny Shaw, a generous lady of Boston who had already helped in the purchase of the farm and who now became the chief helper of the Ramabai Association, and gave over £800 a year to the support of the Mukti schools. But her generosity did not end here. She took a personal interest in the work and sent out a supply of plant to help forward the industries: wash-tubs and boards, irons, wringers, milk-cans, churns, etc.

A cablegram in June from London requesting her immediate presence decided Ramabai to leave New York early in July. She did not remain long in England, but sufficiently long to take part in the Keswick Convention. On neither occasion of her visits to England in 1898 did she make an opportunity of seeing either Miss Beale or any of her friends of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin. They would have gladly gone to London to see her if only she had given them the opportunity. The year 1898 was the first that we received no tidings from her.

The end of August found Ramabai once more with her own. On September 24th, the new buildings were sufficiently advanced for a dedication service to be held; missionaries from Poona, Bombay and elsewhere assembled to join with Ramabai in praising God for blessings, temporal and spiritual. Soondrabai, with the Sadan pupils was also present. The Home was then only partially completed and much was yet needed before work could go forward with order and method. Still Ramabai could enumerate many and great subjects for thanksgiving, and above all she rejoiced at the change which the Holy Spirit had wrought in her girls. “The Saving Light of the Gospel has enlightened their once dark hearts; their faces have lost the sad, forlorn look, and wear joyful smiles, and they are happy in their several occupations”. And then she goes on to tell of the advance made in their education. All who could learn at all were taught the three R’s and the more intelligent pupils went on to the Anglo-Vernacular standards. The less intelligent combined industrial with ordinary



education. From the earliest beginnings of the Mukti its Home Industries have been one of its best features.

All were taught to earn an honest living. Weaving of various kinds, laundry work, dairy and field work, gardening, care of cows and buffaloes, cooking, grinding, running an oil mill, and general housework form branches of their education. Many are trained as pupil-teachers and several were told of [taught] to help in nursing the many sick girls brought in from the famine districts.

The girls engaged in domestic work rise at 4 a.m. Washing, dressing, sweeping the dormitories occupies them till five. Then one class goes to cook another to grind, another to general house or garden work, another to overlook the bathing, etc. of the younger children and washing their sarees. Another class has two hours' field work before breakfast. All gather at the eight o'clock bell for breakfast. At nine the roll-call, followed by prayer and half an hour's Bible study. The better instructed girls receive their Bible lessons from Mr. A. Norton who came over from America to help in the spiritual work of the institution.

Most of the girls have three hours a.m. lessons. The mid-day meal is at one o'clock. School again from 2 to 4 p.m. followed by industrial work in garden, field or laundry, etc. till the bell rings for supper at five. At 6-30 prayer and preparation of Scripture lessons, followed by preparation of other lessons, after which all retire to rest.

The work at first was necessarily very rough, but as more helpers volunteered from England and America to be Ramabai's assistants, it gradually shaped itself and before long the roughness gave place to more comely and better finished work.

## **1899**

Quite early in the year a volunteer band for training for Evangelistic work was formed at Mukti, thirty-five of the elder girls giving their names as members. In a few months from that time several of these were regularly employed with other Bible-women in visiting the villages. The Collector of the District, when visiting Kedgaon, was astonished to find how strong Ramabai's influence for good was amongst the villagers. Besides providing them with work in needy times, she was their benefactress in other ways. The ground on the opposite side of the road to the Mukti buildings was owned by a liquor-dealer. Rumours were afloat that a liquor-shop was to be close by her property. Ramabai secured from the Collector a promise that no license should be granted to anyone to sell liquor in Kedgaon. To make surety doubly sure, she purchased the liquor-dealer's farm, containing seventeen acres. Then she invited the villagers to establish a weekly bazaar on this roadside. This proved to be not only a boon to herself and her neighbours, but opened out a fresh opportunity for Evangelistic work on every bazar day.

The heathen workmen employed on the buildings were given opportunity to listen to the Gospel message, and the thought of the providence of God was brought home to them in a very practical way, for when the work had to be stopped for want of funds they were told that work would be started again when God sent the money. Nine hours was their time of labour, but they were allowed to work only eight hours daily, and were called together for the last hour to hear the Gospel preached.

In the autumn of the year another great famine visited India, and the country round about Kedgaon was deeply affected by it. Ramabai felt herself obliged to help her starving neighbours, some with work and the more helpless with alms. As the weeks passed the famine increased in severity and great anxiety was felt by the scarcity of water. During those anxious months of the autumn of 1899 and the spring of 1900, the Mukti treasury was never quite empty and the wells never gave out.

The funds raised in England in the autumn of 1898 for the new reserve buildings, Krupa Sadan, or Mercy Home, were doubly welcome. It brought occupation for the famine-stricken villagers

and prepared a shelter for the women whom Ramabai hoped to rescue. The famine extended widely over the Bombay Presidency. Here organized relief work met, to some extent, the needs of the people. No famine had visited Gujarat and Rajputana for over a hundred years, and in these States a terrible condition of things existed. Ramabai felt she must go and gather in some of the poor, starving women and girls, for she knew the emissaries of evil were busy amongst them. Reports of the wicked traffic in souls reached her from many sides. Her funds were very low and she questioned whether she were right in making the venture. She committed all to her Heavenly Father. The very next day a cheque for Rs. 272 was sent for Mukti, so the work was begun at once. Workers were stationed at different places to search for young girls. Ramabai, though she paid at least three visits herself to the famine districts, was unequal to the strain which she went through in 1896 and 1897, but she was happy in having three excellent women to share with her this errand of mercy. From Ramabai's report of 1900, we get an insight into the splendid work they did. "Gangabai, who has been in this work from the beginning, has gone through many hardships; she has spared neither strength nor time, to do all she can for the famine girls. Kashibai and Bhimabai are both converts from Hinduism.... These three simple and almost illiterate women, protected by the strong and mighty hand of God, have travelled alone for hundreds of miles in jungles, villages, cities, on highways and byways, in search of starving and dying young girls. They have walked for miles in the burning sun, gone without food and rest; worked incessantly for the salvation of dying hundreds. Their work will be recorded in the Book of the Lamb; for no one who has not borne the hardships of work among famine-stricken people and been with them for days and nights can appreciate their labour and know what they have to endure.

"I see the Gospel declaration (I Corinth. 1: 26-29) [I Corinth. 1: 26-29.—"My brothers, think what sort of people you are whom God has called. Few of you are men of wisdom by any human standard : few are powerful of highly born. Yet, to shame the wise, God has chosen what the world counts folly, and to shame what is strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness. He has chosen things low and contemptible, mere nothings, to overthrow the existing order. And so there is no place for human pride in the presence of God."] verified when I see these and other simple Christian women used of the Lord for His service. They are doing a work from which many a mighty man would shrink.

"It is but a small thing to fight a great battle and win a victory with many titles, compared with the heroism of such women. They must be truly blind who cannot see the strength and high courage which the Spirit of Christ gives to the most timid and despised women of this country. I have more than one hundred noble young women in my school alone, who are noble sacrificing their comfort, even their lives in the service of their sisters. Since their conversion to Christ, they are so changed that one who was acquainted with them before they were Christians could hardly recognize them now. God be praised for His wondrous love which can turn the selfish and devilish heart, and reflect into it the beautiful image of His meek and loving Son! It rejoices my heart to see some of the girls saved from the last famine going into the famine districts with my workers to save the lives of their perishing sisters in the present famine."

Ramabai's experiences during the earlier famine led her to perceive that a separate Home was needed to shelter some of the women whom she had rescued. There were some whose experience in evil prevented their being placed among the Mukti girls. These she drafted off to the care of the workers in the Salvation Army Home. Ramabai had conceived a great desire to do something for this outcaste class of women but her chief need was workers specially trained in this work of mercy. Early in 1898 two American ladies came on a visit to Mukti. These friends helped Ramabai to give shape to this thought. Sheds for the Krupa Sadan were erected early in the year and before the end of the month, thirteen of these poor women were housed under the care of Miss Edmonds and two other workers. To these were added a fourth in a Mrs. Baker from America who had herself trained Miss Edmonds. A permanent Home was in building in March, and when the foundation stone was laid with a religious service some hundred workmen were present.

Miss Edmonds remained nearly a year with Ramabai and nursed many of the girls back to health, and left to establish a rescue Home of her own in another part of India. Mrs. Baker returned via England to America and worked for some months in both these countries and raised half the money needed for this new building.

## 1900

The influx of new-comers sent from the famine camps was a very severe strain upon the resources of the school, as well as on its discipline. Several women and girls were brought in apparently possessed by evil spirits. The influence of those under demonical possession was, of course, terribly bad on young neophytes, who were only learning to fall into line and to accept school discipline. Several, for a time, were unsettled, and there was without doubt, a certain amount of dissatisfaction among them. Ramabai, trained in a school of hardship herself, was perhaps unable to make due allowance for the weakness of others. Some of the girls ran away, and spread evil reports of the Home which had extended to them so motherly a shelter. In the Report of 1901, Ramabai says, “Although life at Kedgaon is hard, the girls look fat and healthy and are full of spirits. I find that hard work makes better women of the girls. The easy and comfortable city life is, of course, preferred by the flesh, but life in places like Kedgaon, with fewer comforts and harder work, is more conducive to bodily and spiritual health”.

Few people could have made such a venture as Ramabai made in bringing some 1,200 undisciplined girls and women into her family of 300 who had not yet had three years of training, without reaping grievous disaster. At one time it did seem as if Ramabai’s ship might be going to sink, but it weathered the storm and her “gallant 300” coming to her aid, wondrously helped her in restoring order among her very large family.

A missionary visiting Mukti in 1900 spoke very favourably of the manner in which Ramabai had reduced this great horde of new-comers to order. She herself tells how they were employed. “My aim is to train all these girls to do some work or other. Over 200 of the present number have much intelligence, and promise to be good school teachers after a few years of training. Thirty girls have joined a training class for nurses. Some have mastered the trade of oil-making. Others have learnt to do laundry work and some have learnt dairy work. More than sixty have learnt to cook very nicely. Fifty have had some training in field work. Forty girls have learnt to weave nicely. [\[In 1906 the work of the weaving school had made such great advance that four hundred girls were employed in it—the elder girls spinning and working at the looms and the younger ones winding bobbins.\]](#) And more than fifty have learnt to sew well and make their own garments. The rest, small and large, are learning to do some work with the three R’s.

“One of the smaller girls rescued in the last famine is taking charge of a few blind girls. Miss Abrams very kindly taught her to read the blind characters. The girl herself is studying hard and is also engaged in teaching these blind girls to read the Scriptures, mental arithmetic and geography in her spare hours. She sees to their bathing, taking meals at proper times, and can be seen going about her work with her family of blind and feeble-minded. Her heart goes out to the weak and friendless; and as soon as she sees one who is not loved by other girls, she befriends her and takes charge of her at once. She is a truly converted Christian girl trying to follow in the steps of her Divine Saviour. This and other instances of converted girls endeavouring to do what they can to alleviate the sufferings of their sisters, while yet at school themselves and busy with their own work, are a great encouragement to us workers who thank God for being so good as to let us see that our labours are not lost.

“Some girls who are not intellectually bright have a mother’s heart which is full of love for children. They are appointed as matrons, and have small groups of children under their charge and love and care for them. These very girls who are so gentle and loving now were very wild, greedy and selfish before their conversion to Christ. One could hardly have believed that they could ever be so changed and become what they are now. . . God’s love has won their hearts and He has made them new creatures in Christ”.

And here it will be well to speak of the nursing of the sick at Mukti. Ramabai was fortunate in having among her helpers a trained hospital nurse who was a true Christian woman. To nurse Marybai Aiman’s care were committed all the terribly diseased; the weakly ones, those prematurely old through suffering, children with infectious diseases; some with pulmonary troubles and the others in decline. All these were lodged in temporary sheds and were cared for and tended by nurse Mary and

her band of willing helpers. These helpers had themselves been rescued and trained and converted in Ramabai's Homes, and it would have been impossible for them to have cared for these repulsive and loathsome cases if their own hearts had not been influenced by Divine Love.

No time, labour or money was spared to save life and make the sick comfortable, but weakness produced by prolonged starvation, and the extreme heat caused by want of rain, were difficult to cope with. Yet hundreds of lives were restored and raised up to be honourable lives of usefulness.

On August 3rd, Ramabai writes that she had received 1,550 famine cases and that they were still coming.

Strong, durable and suitable buildings were rapidly built and more were this year in course of erection. The plans were all drawn up by Ramabai and under her own superintendence the grounds round the institution were well laid out. Ramabai has an intense love of nature for she is a child of the forest and an enthusiastic lover of flowers; she tries to kindle in her girls a like love of the beauties of Creation. She had laid down good paths and planted palms and other graceful trees, shrubs and flowers. In one part of the garden she had an artificial pond with water lilies in it, and ferneries on its banks; she has spared no pains to make the grounds beautiful and attractive. She repeatedly failed in getting her ferns to grow, but nothing daunted her; she hired two bullock-carts and went off on a journey of twenty miles to a riverside where she knew she could get what she wanted. She brought back quantities of beautiful maiden-hair roots and soil and planted her fernery which is now a beautiful one. She had been most successful with her garden at the Sharada Sadan, but then Poona is famous for its gardens and Ramabai's was not inferior to some of the best in the Cantonment. She secluded it from the road by draping trellis-work screens with creeping vines, and planted the gold mohur, the plumeria and others. Roses, lilies, jasmine, elemanta abound in the garden; variegated crotons, caladiums, bougainvillea and other tropical plants are to be seen in perfection there. And she always loved that her friends should share the blessings. A Sister who had the care of the Alter of the Holy Name [[The Church of the Holy Name is situated in Guruwar Peth, Panch Howd, in Poona City.](#)] in Poona City was always free to go and gather roses from Ramabai's garden. Here is one of Ramabai's notes to her: "My garden is always at your disposal. Don't think of asking me when you want roses, but come and take all you find. A very hearty welcome is always waiting for you".

To do the work required for nearly 2,000 souls, Ramabai had only sixteen paid teachers from outside. Besides these, eighty-five of her own women and girls helped her in the three institutions; of these thirty-three were teachers, ten matrons, and forty-two workers in different industrial works. The Sharada Sadan in eleven years had trained nearly eighty girls to earn their own living. Eighty-five trained girls are employed in their mother institutions; and sixty-five are either married or are earning their living as teachers and workers in different places.

How did Ramabai provide for the daily needs of this vast army of starving people and put up buildings ample enough for their accommodation? Money flowed into Mukti from all parts of the world. Ramabai's name was truly a name to conjure with. She had money enough for all the needs of her vast family and to spare, and, as in the famine of 1897, so again now, she shared her riches with other less fortunate missions. I had not heard from her for over a year, when, to my surprise, I received a letter containing a cheque for £40, asking me to be Mano's escort out to India, and inviting me to visit Kedgaon. She moreover proposed that Mano should break her journey and spend over a month in England, and visit us. Manorama had been allowed the first real chance of study since she left our care in the spring of 1889, and she amply proved what she could do when an opportunity was afforded her. Instead of being the continually ailing girl which she was when in her mother's school, she was strong and able during the two years and a half she was in America. She entered upon a course of three years' study but at the end of the first year she had so strong a presentiment that she would not be able to remain three years at North Chili that she asked permission to put the next two years' study into one; this was considered impossible, but she was firm in her request and was allowed to attempt it. Her labours were crowned with success, and to God she gave all the praise. She

felt she had special grace poured out upon her, and that the long discipline of disappointment through which she had passed was her preparation for the success that was now allowed her. One ought to add that she rose at five and spent her first half hour in prayer and Bible reading before beginning study and thus claimed a daily blessing on her work. She left her Seminary having gained the goodwill of all her fellow-students and the highest commendation of her teachers for the quite and unobtrusive influence she had exercised. The five other Indian girls were her special charge while in the Seminary; she overlooked their studies, and was referred to by her teachers if any difficulty arose with regard to them. The examinations shewed that she had gained the first place of the year in the Seminary, and out of some ten subjects had gained honours in all but two. She also took extra science subjects. And to this must be added instrumental music. As a pianist she was brilliant. She graduated on June 19th and sailed early in August for England. She had many friends whom she felt she ought to visit, but happily for us, not one of those who had been so anxious to keep her from the harmful influence of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin was willing to welcome her in the month of August, which left her free to remain with her earliest friends until she sailed in September. We found her the same happy, simple, loving and lovable girl whom we knew and loved so well as a child. She was commissioned by the Ramabai Association and was empowered by them to take full charge of the Sharada Sadan. The American Committee were evidently not fully satisfied with the working of these two large institutions under one headship, and felt that it would be better for the Sharada Sadan to have a residential head, and Mano was sent out with full powers to work this institution as their agent.

This brings us to a most difficult part of Ramabai's history—the years on which, without doubt, the deepest shadows lie but, thanks be to God, the sun was behind the heavy cloud, and, in time, lit up that cloud with brightness.

Mano reached Poona about October and entered upon her work. Miss Samuel's letters will testify how she took it up and carried it on. Plague continually recurring made the work difficult, but she had wise and loyal helpers and things appeared to have gone fairly well.

## 1901

It was from Mano herself that I learnt how she had been commissioned by Dr. Donald, as President of the American Ramabai Association, to take the headship of the Sharada Sadan on her return to India. I have means of knowing in what way this was communicated to Ramabai, or whether she fully understood that Mano held this position independent of her mother's control with regard to this institution. That Mano had to report (quarterly I believe) to the Association and send in her accounts is certain.

Many complaints had been received from India as to the pressure put on the pupils of the Sharada Sadan to become Christians, and the Association justly felt that if this were so their good faith with the people of India was impugned. They therefore sought to drive the impetuous Ramabai with a tighter bearing rein. In the way they elected to carry this into effect, I think they erred.

Manoramabai undoubtedly, as Principal of the Sharada Sadan (though when she entered on her duties was only nineteen), did her work admirably; Miss Samuel, though head teacher of the school, and all the subordinate teachers bore testimony to this, she ruled all with a firm and loving hand. Her mother also reported most favourably of her work as Principal. But her mother did not approve of Manoramabai holding this position without an elderly friend or relative at her side to advise her. And in this undoubtedly Ramabai was right. Mano was not yet out of her teens, and she had not the experience of life which could enable her to meet aright the difficult problems which daily, and not unfrequently hourly, meet one in a heathen country. The moral atmosphere of an avowedly heathen country is so totally different to that of a nominally Christian one. The personality of the evil one is felt much more powerfully than even in a penitentiary. Satan in some form or other meets the Christian worker every hour of the day seeking to upset, hinder or undermine the work in hand, and there is not the counteracting power of the ordinary moral standard, such as a so-called



Christian society would command, to curb his malice. In a country like India with so many false creeds, evil is many-headed and needs a very experienced Christian worker to deal with it aright.

I cannot find that Ramabai urged the unadvisedness of this procedure on the part of her Committee from the first, and she did not work fairly on the fresh lines which they had laid down. She used Manoramabai constantly for correspondence and accounts and at least once a week she was expected to be her mother's right hand at Mukti. The travelling in the heat and a long day of close work, with perhaps undue friction attending it, was a very great addition to her own heavy burden as Principal of the Sharda Sadan. Then too Poona was at this time suffering from a yearly visitation of plague which added much to the anxiety of work, and it was necessary in October that the School should be dispersed or closed for a time.

The heavy strain began to tell upon Mano's health; early in the hot weather of 1901, she had a daily recurrence of fever which only a change to Mahableshwar dispelled.

On her return, she writes from Mukti and seems surprised at the advance that work had made in her absence. "I was hoping that you would soon be well enough to come out and see your grandchildren. Their number is steadily increasing for there are in all 1,850 in our schools. I wish you could see the work at Kedgaon. It is so wonderful, and there is usually something new to see whenever I come".

Miss Abrams, Ramabai's right hand helper in the spiritual training of the girls, was away on furlough this year and when she returned late in the autumn, she made a short stay in England. Both [while] going to America and returning she tried to see me, but unfortunately at neither time was I within easy reach of London. She had moreover two of Ramabai's girls with her on her return journey, and these tied her so that she could not well leave them for more than a few hours.

Monoramabai writing from the Sharada Sadan [at] the end of September, a year after her arrival in India, tells of having 180 girls in that school. She had among these nine blind girls. "I have them in a school room by themselves, thus making it an entirely separate department of the work. They are learning reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, knitting and music. They are not very advanced in any of these subjects, but I hope I can teach them better when I get more materials from America".

In this letter she speaks of her mother needing a rest and change. "I am hoping she may be able to go away in November after Miss Abrams returns from America. But I very much doubt if she will agree to do so. The work is so extensive and the number of girls is increasing so rapidly that you can understand her reluctance to leave the work even for a month."

Shortly after this letter was written the plague again broke out in Poona and the inmates of the Sharada Sadan were removed to Kedgaon.

As Ramabai had room only for two teachers of the Sharada Sadan at Mukti, the younger classes had to be taught by elder girls. [By] the end of November Miss Abrams with the two girls who had training in America returned.

But before their arrival a very singular incident occurred, so singular [that] but for the evidence on which it is based, one might have thought it a fabrication of over-active imaginations. But viewing it now from a distance, and occurring at a time of very great strain, one cannot but think it was probably intended to be a warning to shew that though Christianity was making great [headway] at Mukti, yet the power of the evil one was ever present among them, ready to wound and to slay souls, and therefore it behoved them to be ever watchful.

These people might be compared to the undisciplined masses of the children of Israel in the wilderness with Moses as their leader, and as then, so now with Ramabai and her people God speaks to them by sings of wonders, as encouragements and warnings.



They had then been four years at Kedgaon and when they at first settled there, before good buildings were provided for their use they had been marvelously protected from the noisome creatures which in a tropical land abound. No one had been bitten by snakes though many had been seen close to the women's huts. Suddenly early in October 1902 eighteen girls were bitten in a few successive nights. These girls suffered from all symptoms of snake bites, and in many cases the snakes were found and killed. Two of these left their fangs in the girl's legs, so there was no room for doubt. The most singular part of the story is that of the victims only one died, for the cases which recover from snake-bites are very rare and the snakes were venomous.

### ***1902 and 1903***

Christmas and New Year's Day were spent by the pupils and workers of the Sharada Sadan at Mukti, and early in the year (I think) the High School returned to its own institution at Poona. On all sides the problems which arose were weighty and difficult to deal with. Mohammedan neighbours were the cause of great annoyance to the Sharada Sadan, and this strengthened Ramabai in her opinion that it was undesirable for Mano to be in sole charge there. At Mukti she was experiencing much annoyance from Government officials. Her former unwise utterance against the Government, and her holding aloof from Government inspection naturally aroused suspicion of her actions, and Brahmin officials were not slow in causing her great annoyance. Then reports which reached America, whether true or untrue, made her American friends firmer in their opinion that her power needed to be limited. They saw she was working to get the Sharada Sadan wholly under her charge, and this they were determined to prevent if possible. All these heavy trials, added to the care to such a settlement as Mukti, increased the strain Ramabai was already suffering from, and when a cablegram was received from America refusing permission to sell the property of the Sharda Sadan in Poona, the jealousy and bitterness of Oriental character broke forth. She summoned the whole school from Poona and dismissed her faithful Miss Samuel who had done more than any other to bring the school to the point of excellency it had attained, and the strained relations between Ramabai and her daughter made her fellow-workers very anxious on Manoramabai's behalf. Her health had suffered much during the year from the overstrain.

There was without doubt a desire in the minds of some to cut the links which bound these institutions with America. The two great famines had shewn Ramabai her estimate with the world at large, and the possibility there was of raising funds from other countries besides America. [\[Nearly £17,000 had flowed into her treasury in 1897 and probably much more in the greater famine of 1899.\]](#)

Some of Ramabai's most influential workers forwarded this plan. It did not come to pass, and I have not the Report of the Association which would help in telling accurately how things righted themselves with regard to the Sharada Sadan and the American Committee, but the suggestion was mercifully used by Him who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, and who knows how to deliver His children out of temptation.

At this point a letter from Miss Samuel will tell the tale, and also extracts from letters of Manoramabai. [On] July 6th, 1902, the letter writes:

"Many difficulties surrounded me, and no amount of fighting on my part can possibly remove them. God alone can do this, and I am waiting for Him to do so whenever He sees fit. Mother has removed the Sharada Sadan to Kedgaon and I shall not have a chance to go to Poona for some months. I am writing this letter in our large school room at Kedgaon and am keeping order. It is necessary for someone to be here during school hours, for there are more than one hundred and seventy girls in the room at one time."

August 22nd: "With regard to the school (Sharada Sadan) it has not been given up on account of finance. There are some difficulties connected with the situation of the building. Mother thought it better and safer for us all to come and live here until the difficulties could be settled by the American

Association. I hope we shall be able to return to Poona in a few months. Mother has gone to Bombay to buy materials for the industrial school.”

Miss Samuel’s letter of September 12th tells the sequel of Ramabai’s visit to Bombay. Within ten days of Mano’s last letter, she and Miss Abrams were on their way to Australia with the purpose of Mano representing her mother’s cause in Australasia.

One thing must still be mentioned before proceeding with the story.

Mrs. Lelunan of Boston, United States, had provided £100 a year for eleven years for Mano’s education. This money was placed by Ramabai in a Provident Society for Mano’s benefit when she came of age. Ramabai at one time had thought of marriage of her daughter. At this juncture Ramabai called on Mano to sign away that large sum of money in favour of her mother, which she did.

Here Dr. Donald’s letter should be read, also the questions which he asks Ramabai to answer. In his letter he distinctly states that the Sharada Sadan cannot be removed from Poona, and gives reasons for this decision. Ramabai’s printed reply and answers to Dr. Donald’s questions will be found in the Scrap-Book p. 23 and p. 25. In this letter Ramabai makes no mention of Manoramabai being out of India and still further, in the Annual Report of the Mukti School, and Mission, which is dated November 1902, she inserts a paper of Miss Abrams, and one of Manoramabai, as if they were at Kedgaon and on her staff of workers there.

SISTER GERALDINE,  
*Community of St. Mary the Virgin.*

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175    *Letter from DR. E.W. DONALD, President, American Ramabai Association, Boston, U.S.A., to PANDITA RAMABAI, at Mukti, Kedgaon (District Poona)*

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233, Clarendon Street,  
Boston, U.S.A.,  
July 25th, 1902

My dear Ramabai,

You will have received our cablegram, telling you that the property cannot be sold, and that the school must not be removed. It belongs to me as President of the Association to state clearly the following reasons which led us to sending the cablegram.

On July the 2nd, a meeting of the Board was held at Trinity Church; there was a quorum present. Your letter and that of Miss Couch were read. After a full consideration and discussion of the point involved, it was urged that the property of the Sharada Sadan could not be sold. The reason for inability to sell is very simple:

The Poona real estate does not belong to the American Ramabai Association. Originally the property was conveyed to Edward Everett Hale and others; subsequently it was conveyed by Edward Everett Hale and others to the Ramabai Association. It has never been deeded to the American Ramabai Association. In order to sell the property, it would be necessary to call a meeting, after due and legal advertisement, of the Ramabai Association (which though quiescent, is not legally dead) to determine whether or not the property should be deeded to the American Ramabai Association. As you are well aware, several of the members of the former corporation are not members of the latter; and whether or not the Ramabai Association would at such a meeting vote to deed the property to the

American Ramabai Association, I cannot tell. You will understand, therefore, from this that the sale of the property, at present at least, is an absolute impossibility; neither we nor you could give a deed which would satisfy the purchaser.

We also cabled you that the school must not be removed. You will remember that the Sharada Sadan was originally incorporated for the purpose of educating high-caste Hindu women; some modification, though very slight, of the act of incorporation of the Ramabai Association was made in the act of incorporation of the Ramabai Association. This modification, however, was for the purpose of enabling us to carry on Mukti. It did not apply, and was not intended to apply, to the basis and methods of the Sharada Sadan. Now the Sharada Sadan as you well know is not a Christian school. It is, in fact, a non-religious school. We entered into implied covenants both with the people of India, and with the people of America, that no effort whatsoever should be made in the Sharada Sadan to convert its pupils to Christianity; on the contrary, we expressly made provision for supplying the pupils with the means of performing the rites of worship peculiar to their Hindu religion. The school still stands upon this basis. Should it be removed to Kedgaon, in close proximity to Mukti, a distinctly Christian school, the probability—and some of the Board believe the certainty—is that the Sharada Sadan would become practically a Christian school, and that influence inevitably would be exerted to convert its pupils to Christianity.

We have for the past two or three years been not a little perplexed by the fact that so many of the females of the Sharada Sadan have become Christians; and you will recall that five years ago, complaints of a very definite nature were made to the Board that Christian worship had been introduced into the school. At that time the whole matter was thoroughly discussed in the Board, with the result that we laid down certain rules, which we instructed you rigidly to enforce. Exactly what they were I cannot recall, but I have a very vivid remembrance that the principle of these rules was to make it impossible for anyone to charge the Sharada Sadan with attempts to convert its pupils to Christianity. For the year past some of us have had misgivings as to whether these rules were being faithfully and carefully carried out. We have tried to believe that the reports which have come to us from time to time, that too much Christianity was apparent in the conduct of the school, were unfounded. We have now, however, reached a point where we consider it to be necessary in order that we may keep faith with the American public when asking them for funds to support Sharada Sadan, to have definite and explicit answers to the questions which are recited upon the enclosed sheets. Let me beg you to answer these questions with absolute frankness, and with precision, as upon your answers depends the decision of the Board. Before another appeal is made to the public, we wish to be in a position to state authoritatively that there is no foundation whatever for the reports reaching us through various sources that the spirit and influences of the Sharada Sadan make it now practically a Christian school.

The Board has also considered the question whether it is not wise to place Mano at the head of the Sharada Sadan, making her directly responsible to the Board for its administration, leaving to you the sole charge of Mukti. There are several reasons why this arrangement appears to the Board to be both feasible and judicious. Mano has now had two years experience at the Sharada Sadan, and, from your letters we infer that she has proved herself a capable and faithful administrator. She is in sympathy with the principle and purpose of the school, unless she has very much changed since we took our journey together on the Ivernia in 1900. Moreover, we feel that this arrangement will not only relieve you of the strain of frequent journeys from Kedgaon to Poona, but will also leave you free to conduct Mukti in accordance with the methods suggested by your ardent Evangelical Faith. My impression is that you would be happier in charge of a distinctly Christian school than if in charge of such a school and also one administered on a non-religious basis. Better results, I think, will be obtained by such a division of responsibility for the administration of the two schools.

There comes a time in the life of all of us when wisdom suggests that we devolve part of our duties and powers upon others; and, however reluctant we may be to forego our duties, or to part with our powers, a conscientious regard for the welfare of the common work frequently makes it imperative. Perhaps the time to relinquish certain of your duties and powers has come in your life.

There are other reasons which influence us in deciding that the Sharada Sadan cannot be removed to Kedgaon: the difficulty of inducing a class of women we are most anxious to reach to seclude themselves in a little village like Kedgaon; the difficulty of obtaining teachers permanently to reside at so great a distance from the city; the objection which high-caste women may have to so close a contact with another class of society, and perhaps morally beneath them, as would be inevitable were the Sharada Sadan side by side with the Mukti. These and other considerations which I will not recite have had their weight with us.

I now wish to make, in behalf of the Board, two recommendations: First, that you make application to the municipal authorities of Poona for protection from the annoyance of your neighbours. We cannot but believe that in a city like Poona, in which England is a powerful influence, such protection would be given you. At all events we wish this application to the municipal authorities to be made in our behalf. Secondly, we wish you to make an appeal to your neighbor for a like protection. It may well be that he or his agent is unaware of the annoyance to which his guests and employees are subjecting you. Of course, we recognise that the appeal may be fruitless, but we distinctly wish it made. Will you then be so good as to make the above application and write us in full the result of each?

Be assured that the Board is anxious to carry out, to the best of its ability, the purposes for which the Sharada Sadan was originally founded. We write in no spirit of fault-finding or criticism; we simply wish as Trustees standing in a fiduciary relation to the property and to the school on the one side, and to the American public on the other, to be assured by indubitable facts that the school is, and is to be, what we in America have heretofore represented to our constituency and the public that it is.

With best wishes, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

E. WINCHESTER DONALD,

President, American Ramabai Association.

Questions sent by

DR. E. WINCHESTER DONALD

*President of the American Ramabai Association*

to be answered by

PANDITA RAMABAI

1. How many women of high caste are pupils of the Sharada Sadan at the present time?
2. How many such women were members of the school five years ago?
3. How many of the present inmates are Christians, and did they become so after entering the school?
4. Are any efforts or influences, by any person connected with the school officially or otherwise, exerted upon the pupils to convert them to Christianity?
5. Are any influences or efforts by any person, officially connected with the school or otherwise, exerted to induce the pupils to attend religious worship?

6. Is provision carefully and willingly made for supplying the Hindu pupils with whatever is necessary for the due performance of the rites of their religion?
7. Is there Christian worship in the Sharada Sadan? and if so, by whom conducted and where are the services held, how often and who attend?
8. Give the names and residences of the pupils in the Sharada Sadan; and the circumstances under which they came to the school; that is, were they sent voluntarily by their relatives or guardians, or solicited by the officers or were they transferred from the Mukti?
9. Give the number and names of the teachers and helpers at Sharada Sadan, their special duties and salaries.

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176 *Letter from MISS MARY SAMUEL, Poona, to SISTER GERALDINE, CSMV, Wantage*

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Convent Street, Poona,  
September 12th, 1902

My dear Sister Geraldine,

I put off writing day after day, in hopes of receiving definite news about Mano who could not leave Kedgaon till she was told to sail with Miss Abrams for Australia last week at a day's notice. There have been so many changes since the sudden removal of the school from Poona in June, and such conflicting rumours that it is very difficult to understand the different moves but I am glad the girl is away although you cannot imagine how I miss her. Her position was not an enviable one and I do hope the change will restore her to health, which was far from satisfactory. She was unable to answer your last letter and she asked me to send you her address :

c/o. Mrs. E. W. Nicholls,  
President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union,  
Dutton Road, Medindie, Adelaide, South Australia.

Would you mind please giving it to Miss Noble who may desire to write also? I wonder if there is any possibility of her going to London! You will be surprised to hear that I also am thinking of leaving for China about the middle of next month if the doctor decides that I am strong enough to undertake such a voyage seeing that I am an exceptionally bad sailor.

I have been keeping indifferent health for the last six months and drugs seem to have no effect. My address will be:

c/o. M. Perry, Esqr.,  
Messrs. E.D. Sassoon & Co.,  
Shanghai, China.

I am so sorry I shall not see Sister Benigna Mary for I am longing to receive every little news of you. Are you feeling better and stronger now?

I hope you will not stop writing to me.

With fond love,  
Your very affectionate pupil,

MARY

**1906**

The following is extracted from a speech made by Mrs. Bruere (wife of the Rev. W. W. Bruere, a much revered Pastor who served the Mukti Mission in its early years) before the American Ramabai Association in 1906.

This must be read with understanding. It savours of “the long bow”. Some of it if not all is misleading.

“Visitors come from all parts of India and from other countries to visit Ramabai’s work, and when they see the extent of the work carried on, the multitude of women and the splendid organization, the great executive ability of that wonderful woman, who has her hand upon every part of the work, they are greatly amazed and they say that the half has not been told them. The buildings of Mukti are very fine. The school rooms were furnished with American desks, black-boards and maps which gave them a fine appearance. There was a thoroughly equipped kindergarten, a competent staff of teachers and first class order. And I remember how the girls used to file out of the compound, showing that they were under excellent training. The dormitories were large, pleasant quarters. The girls had excellent beds provided for them; they had good food, well prepared, well served, as I had occasion to know, for sometimes I took a meal with them.

“Then in the drawing room and in the library the girls seemed to feel perfectly at home; they would come and sit in groups of two or three, and study their lessons, and no matter how busy Ramabai was, she always seemed to be ready to hear her girls when they would come to her. It was a pleasure to me to sit in Ramabai’s room and talk with her, and see these girls when they would come in with their requests and caresses; everything was so homelike about the place.

“And there are so many departments of the work. There is the old Sharada Sadan High School in which there are 165 girls, under the charge of Manoramabai. Some of these girls are acting as pupil teachers in connection with their studies, and are also taking up kindergarten work. Then there is the Mukti School, comprising the primary and the grammar grades. All these girls are permitted to go as far in their studies as they have the ability, and the grades are all taught according to the Government standard.

“Ramabai found that she was obliged to separate about 200 of these girls and women from the rest and place them in a separate compound with a lady worker at the head and they have their own little hospital. These separated girls were suspected of having the beginning of Phthisis. Then there is the general hospital in which the sick are cared for. During the famine, there were 250 cases of famine sufferers in this hospital at one time and here nurses are trained from among the girls.

“Then there is the large Bible class in which students are trained to go out as missionaries, as teachers in schools, as matrons, and as Bible-women.

“One day a gentleman visitor came when they were having their day of prayer, for they have the first Tuesday in every month set apart for prayer. The visitor noticed that a great many of these women had Bibles and he spoke to the leader about it. The leader said, ‘All of you who have the Bibles just raise your hands’, and up went scores of hands. The visitor was from Syracuse, New York and this made a very deep impression upon him; he thought it was a great object lesson that he might take home to America.

“There is the blind class, under the charge of Manoramabai. There is one thing that these blind girls can do, and that is, grind grain.

**Contents**



“Then there is the large boy’s school and orphanage. Some years ago, when we were in Poona, Ramabai urged us very strongly to take up this work and raise up husbands for her girls, as she said. But we already had two large orphanages of our own, besides our other work, and we thought we could not take anything more upon us. So she went to work and opened the orphanage for boys herself, for Ramabai does not stop at anything. This will prove to be a wise thing I know. (It did not.—Sr. Geraldine).

“Besides, there are the industries, and one of them is a bakery where they make English bread and cake. The girls are also taught laundry work and they even know how to do up gentlemen’s collars. Besides this, they are taught cooking, sewing, and the use of the sewing machine, also weaving; and there is a printing establishment. About twenty of the older women, who are not able to study, work out in the fields. The work is changed about every three months, so that the girls have an opportunity to learn all the different classes of work. For instance, every three months the cooking class will go to the sewing department, and then on to the laundry department, and so on; and the girls in these other departments will, in their turn go to the cooking class. And, as I have said, the girls in the sewing department, when they are able to sew well by hand, are taught the use of the machine. The latest report tells us that fifty of Ramabai’s women go out daily to teach the people. I do not think that, here in the United States or in China or Africa or Japan, we can point to any woman who had any such force of workers under her.

“Ramabai has from the first taught her girls to be broadminded, benevolent, and to think of someone outside of themselves. For instance, in the famine of 1896-1898 we took in over 300 orphans, and her girls were among the first to raise the money for my orphans. How do you think they raised that money? Ramabai was in the habit of giving the girls sweets and good things for their holidays, and these they gave up and asked Ramabai to give the money that she had spent on them to my orphans. And then in the time of the Boxer troubles in China, they raised a sum of money and gave it to the sufferers there; and I believe they are now helping some poor children in Armenia.

“Ramabai is not satisfied with the work she has already in hand, but she has opened four Widows Homes in other parts of India, placing at the head of each competent, trusted women who have been trained in her Home and school. She feels that in this way she can reach and assist women whom she might not otherwise be able to help. Dr. Duff [\[The Rev. Dr. Alexander Duff, D.D., I. L. D., was a pioneer missionary and an educationist of Bengal for over thirty years from 1829 onwards. He died in 1878.\]](#) in his day said that to attempt female education in India was an impossibility and that one might as well try to scale a wall hundreds of yards high, or to pick a peak from the Himalayas and cast it into the ocean. Dr. Fairbanks, another great Scotchman, recently at a Missionary Conference in India, spoke most emphatically of the work being done for women by women and emphasized the great importance of it”.

We will end with an extract from a letter from Manoramabai of April 22nd, 1907: “It is encouraging to watch the progress which the girls are making, and to see that some of them are gradually becoming well fitted to take positions of responsibility. One thing that I think you will be interested in is a class of pupil-teachers whom we are training for school work. They enjoy the lessons in the principles and practice of teaching very much; and it is an education to me, and to those who work with me, to prepare lessons for these teachers, and to help them to put what they have learned into practice.

“Mother sends you a great deal of love. We are both so grateful to you, dear Ajeebai, for all you have been, and still are, to us, and thank God for giving us such a good and true friend. We pray that He will reward you abundantly. Please continue to pray for mother; she is not at all strong and her work is very heavy.

“Please pray too for our little babies, the youngest in this large family. They are very delicate and need special care. Then we would ask your prayers for our Matrons, teachers, and workers, and please pray very much for me, dear Ajeebai, that I may walk worthy of the Lord, and that I may be humble and simple to be ‘filled, according to my capacity, with all the fullness of God’.

Please give my love to the Reverend Mother; my mother sends her love to her too. Please accept a great deal yourself from,

Your very loving,  
MANO”.

AND now we will follow Manoramabai and Miss Abrams on their travels. Manoramabai's next letter was from Melbourne, dated November 10th, a month after her arrival. She and Miss Abrams had been very busy, organizing meetings and addressing them. They were then having a few quiet weeks in which they were bringing out a new edition of Ramabai's *High Caste Hindu Women*, with an addition of her thirteen years' work in India. They remained abroad fully a year, and spoke in many of the chief cities of Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania.

The autumn of 1902 the Rev. Father General, S.S.J.E. [S.S.J.E.—Society of St. John the Evangelist; all the S.S.J.E. Fathers used to come to India in Poona from their headquarters known as Cowley (in England). Hence they were often called Cowley Fathers.] paid us a visit, before going out to India, which gave me the opportunity of asking him to visit Ramabai, and get into touch with her again. This he kindly did. He went there on two occasions, and the first time, spent a whole week in the Mukti Mission. He received a very hearty welcome from Ramabai, and she invited him to give addresses to her family. He generally gave them two instructions daily, Miss Macdonald acting as interpreter, chiefly on the Acts of the Apostles, or the work of the Holy Spirit, in baptism and confirmation, and told them how Ramabai herself had been confirmed. Mano, who greatly regretted being absent on this occasion, received many letters from her girls, telling her of Father Page's visit, and of his teaching, about which they, one and all, were enthusiastic.

And, further, Ramabai was in sore perplexities with her American Committee. She entered into her difficulties with Father Page. She had been summoned to America to answer various questions to which it would have been difficult for her to have given satisfactory answers. She was moreover not strong enough for the exertion of a long voyage. I am sure that Father Page's visit was most opportune. It calmed, strengthened and uplifted her and I do not doubt that his tactful wisdom and understanding of her difficulties and the trying circumstances did more to set things on a better and happier footing all round than a visit to her good friend in America would have done at this juncture. He probably saw things all colour *de rose*, but the result was good and the overstrained Pandita was benefited by his generosity and sympathy. She was learning obedience by the things which she suffered and before long wrote and printed a really beautiful TESTIMONY in which she acknowledged her own sinfulness and the overbounding goodness of God to her in spite of all her transactions. With Mary she sings Magnificat. [“Magnificat” means the *Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Luke 1: 46.55), the song of Mary rejoicing and praising the Goodness of God. This Hymn is a Song of Triumph for the revelation of God to the world as Conqueror, Deliverer and Judge. The Bible says : The Angel went to Virgin Mary and said to her “Greetings most favoured one ! The Lord is with you. He has been gracious to you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall give him the name Jesus”. Mary was full of joy and adoration called forth by the thought of the personal honour bestowed upon her.]

Father page was also a very great comfort to Ramabai, who was in grievous trouble at that time, with her sister-in-law very ill, and she also was much inconvenienced by Brahmin officials, who invaded the institution and forced their way into every room under pretence of searching out plague cases. Both Father Page and I urged her to place her schools under Government inspection as we thought that this would greatly allay the troubles and annoyance she was suffering from. He further very kindly advocated her cause privately with members of the Government, and before long, things were on a very much happier footing. When he returned to England, he spoke most enthusiastically of Ramabai's work, both in sermons and at meetings.

SISTER GERALDINE  
*Community of St. Mary the Virgin,  
Wantage*

Mukti, Kedgano (Poona),

March 20th, 1903

Address:

St. Philip's Mission,  
CAPETOWN, South Africa.

My dear Sister Geraldine,

I hope you have safely received my last reassuring letter about the Pandita (the Bai we call her here) and Mukti about six weeks ago. I have nothing to withdraw from what I said. I have a firm belief in the nobility and goodness of the Pandita, and the single-heartedness and devotion to her work for the amelioration of the condition of the women of India.

I am sure the ill-will and false stories of the Brahmins have found their way to England. The informers were people from within the Sharada Sadan and not Brahmins.

I saw Janabai, the Sutar master's daughter whom you wished me to see. The good of the Sharada Sadan was evidently uppermost in her mind, so I found no occasion to ask about dark shadows. If I had, they would have been about the works I expect, and not the persons who conducted it.

I have been here four full days and spoken to all the different groups of girls and women as the Pandita bade me, and addressed the workers every evening. The Bai has given me her religious experiences; her intellect was partially enlightened during the six months she was at Wantage; but Eastern thought, so different from Western, made it impossible for her to drink in all she was taught. She believes in Christianity as a better religion and so embraced it. England made no adequate response to the burning desire of her heart to deliver the women of India from the curse of caste and Brahmin-slavery [This is a mistake England made an initial generous response, and would doubtless have aided Ramabai further with equal generosity, had an appeal been made. But Ramabai's English friends felt that while she was so unsettled in the faith, the time had not come for them to put forward her cause—SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.J.]. She turned to America, and it everywhere responded and has continued to respond with personal aid and money. She accepted help from all quarters, but allied herself in religious matters to none, but cluded that Christianity, like Hinduism, had its diversities of beliefs and sects.

She never *denied* the Divinity of our Lord or the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity; but had no *clear* and defined knowledge of either, and all was in suspense. *Now*, she believes in both with more clearance of faith, and she and her children worship and love and believe in the Son of Mary Who is also, they believe, the Son of God [See the early corresponded (in Vol I) when Pandita was at Cheltenham. These letters she must have forgotten.—SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.].

She did not at her baptism realise what it was it was to give herself up wholly to the Lord; there was more of the head than the heart. Since then she has given herself to the Lord as any Religious might do, and those who brought about that more conscious consecration of her life, called it 'Conversion'; so she did too.

She is still docile as a child, and though all her supporters or most of them are Protestants and she has imbibed their unsacramental teaching, she has still an open mind. But it is difficult when a person has so fully believed in and given herself up to the Saviour, and has received the Holy Ghost

and surrenders herself to Him, to see where the need of other Sacraments comes in. Finding the disunions and quarrels of Christians, she said: "I will take Jesus Christ for my Guru and study the words He has spoken and the deeds He did for myself, in the inspired records of His life".

It would take too long to attempt to record my conversations with her, and to state the docility with she thinks over or reads what I recommended to her.

She has just come in (4-30 p.m.) and I tell her that I am writing to you, and ask her if she would like to enclose a line to you. She sits down at once to write a letter which I enclose.

If you write, don't say too much about the defects of her religion. I have said quite enough for the present. I am thinking of sending her, when I return to England, the beautifully illustrated two volumes of Tissot—the New Testament. It would be a wonderful delight to her and to her teachers—you probably know the cheap edition—I think it is £ 2-2-0.

If the Mother would like to make this gift through you, and you will let me know, I will forego that pleasure, and send her something else instead.

Of course, there is a very great deal more than I might say, but the time is up. God bless you.

Yours most sincerely in Christ,  
R.L. PAGE

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178 *Letter from* PANDITA RAMABAI, *Kedgaon, to* SISTER GERALDINE, *C.S.M.V.,*  
*Wantage*

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Mukti Mission, Keganon, India,  
June 1903

Dearest Old Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for your nice kind letter. The two volumes of the beautifully illustrated "Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ" have come safely. It is a wonderful book. I like it very much and think it very helpful. I thank you most gratefully for sending such a nice presents to me. I shall use it constantly in teaching the girls.

Mano had just returned from Australia. Our Association are of opinion that I should go over to America—soon—I do not know how soon—but I shall not move until I get clear light from God about it. If I start soon, I shall hope to see you at Wantage, and we shall have a nice time together.

With very dear love and many thanks in your continued kindness,

I am,  
Yours very affectionately,  
RAMABAI

Bishop's Lodge, Bloemfontein, O.R.C.,  
May 26th, 1903

My dear Sister Geraldine,

Possibly I never wrote the first letter referred to in my second, for the post seldom fails, and intentions are not always carried into effect.

I have now a letter from Manoramabai, from New Zealand, dated February 7th in which she says: "I was so interested to hear from mother about your visit to Mukti and to hear that you were able to spend so long there. Your addresses to the girls were a means of real blessing to them. I have received letters from many of the girls during the last month and each one speaks of your visit, and the help received in the meetings. You will, I think, be glad to know that I was Confirmed privately last Tuesday by the Bishop of Christ Church. I have not yet written to mother about my Confirmation, but I hope to tell her when a suitable opportunity occurs.

We are to be in New Zealand till the end of May, and then hope to sail for California".

This is very good news. Please read and forward my letter to Manorama; I do not know her address. I hope I shall meet her in England. I am indeed glad to hear that there is some probability of your going out to India. It is all very wonderful [of] Ramabai, but what she has already allowed me to say and do may place her in considerable difficulty, but the difficulty will be increased a hundredfold if she and her daughter really accept the doctrine and discipline of the Anglican Catholic Church. For at present she is committed to be undenominational, and the Ramabai Association in America which sends her £5,000 a year, would never tolerate anything else, and consider that she had broken faith with them if she really accepted the Anglican Church. However, I believe, she will do what she believes to be right in spite of all dangers and difficulties. Nevertheless, please be very careful not in any way to force on [her] by word or letter. I hope to be able to keep in touch with her. The Mother will, I am sure, let you come over to Oxford to see me after my return.

God bless you.

Yours very sincerely in Christ,  
R.L. PAGE

L. & S. W. Railway, Southampton,  
St. James, 1903

My dear Sister Geraldine,

Thank you for your letter which I received on my arrival here this morning. I had already written to you, so this letter will be posted at the same time. I hope that Ramabai will not have to go to America, for I fear there will be trouble if she does. Nor do I think she is ripe at present to make any change in her religious position, and to press her to do so would be, I expect, disastrous. I hope that

you will not yourself advise her what to do, for you cannot know all that I do about her circumstances. I am writing to her by Friday's mail, unless I hear from you that she is on her way to England.

I shall be quite able to see you if you come to Oxford anytime next week or the week after, though I shall be in retreat, for I have been so much in retreat, that it will not be a strict retreat for me. Soon after the retreat, I shall be away from Oxford. Please regard Ramabai's letter as private.

God Bless you,

Yours very sincerely in Christ,

R. L. PAGE

Please remember me most kindly to the Rev. Mother. I shall be glad when there is an opportunity to see her again.

When Mano's American friends heard of her being in Australia, they urged her returning *via* America to India, but this did not come off, and both her American and English friends were disappointed in not seeing her. She received a wire from her mother to return immediately, and she and Miss Abrams embarked for Bombay, and they back at Mukti by the end of the year.

Ramabai for long had had a desire to start a Home for boys, and she had hoped when Mr. and Mrs. Norton came to Mukti that they would make this fresh development, but their time was chiefly given to the development of Evangelistic work [The Mukti Circular Letters for 1899 onwards mostly tell about the about the evangelistic work. It was consecrated by much persecution and nearly the death of one of the workers, after which singular blessings rested on it.] and when they left Mukti, they themselves started a Home for boys. Many reasons seem to have led Ramabai to desire this. It was not easy for her to find husbands for her many widows, and she felt the question to be a very grave one. She also felt that there was much work needed to be done on the place that could only be done by men and boys.

Thousands of boys and young men wander about India without friends and without a home. If such boys, Ramabai thought, could be gathered into a Home and trained as useful workmen, they would be in a few years self-supporting fit to marry, and able to maintain wives and families. Moreover, there would be the joy of seeing her children settled round about their mother institution, and their children attending the Mukti schools, and being trained from their earliest days in virtuous and godly living.

On her large property of 120 acres there would be no difficulty in building a Home, at a wide distance from the Mukti buildings.

With Ramabai, a thought conceived was soon a fact accomplished. In a short time she had sixty boys under her charge, in temporary buildings. Forty-nine of them were immediately employed in industrial work. Seven were learning to be carpenters, ten to be masons, twenty-nine to be tailors and three to be printers. These boys she intended to take their part in building the permanent Home which they would occupy. In her Report of 1902, Ramabai writes : "I am expecting to see a large Christian colony around Mukti in the near future, and I know that He Who has put this thought in me, will make it possible to be realized."

This school for boys was called the *Sadanand Sadan* [The Sadanand Sadan was closed later on.—SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.] (The Abode of Everlasting Joy).

In 1903, a periodical was started for the purpose of sending news to the friends of the Mukti Mission. The first number of this was so poor a production of workmanship that it was hardly fit for publication but like all the Mukti work, it was persevered with until in two years' time a most creditable magazine was produced.



The following description of the Mukti buildings given by a visitor to the institution will give some idea of the vastness of the work :

“The first view of the settlement is that of a long row of houses, well protected from the hot sun by verandahs of rustic woodwork. These are the dwellings of the workers and also the guest chambers, which are nearly always occupied by visitors from all parts of the world. Any such are gladly welcomed and given the best hospitality which can be desired in an Indian village. Behind the first row of houses are the many compounds, on all sides of which are the dwelling places of the 1,500 widow girls and the 115 native boys. These last are kept in an entirely separate quarter from those of the girls. The compounds are a most pleasing sight; in the first is the Chapel building, which is a fine lofty structure capable of holding the whole community for service at the same time. It was most interesting to see this place filled with the women and girls at the time of evening prayers, sitting on the ground in long rows singing hymns in Gujarati until [the] Pandita arrived to lead them in prayer. In another compound are the various workshops, weaving looms and school houses, all of which are in daily use to keep this large community from idleness. The boys have a garden of their own and large open spaces for playgrounds. A well appointed hospital for the sick and a little “God’s Acre” for the last resting places of the few who die at Mukti complete the list of the institutions of this community”.

### **1904**

We have already stated that Manoramabai and Miss Abrams were back at Mukti in 1903. They received a very warm welcome from both workers and girls. The American Committee had accepted that the Sharada Sadan should be established at Mukti. Ramabai had settled this firmly in her own mind before consent was received and evidently meant to carry her point as she had previously done in most matters whenever there had been a clash between herself and American friends. I note that in papers which she published in 1902, Manoramabai is called the Vice-Principal of the Sharada Sadan and Mukti school. The relations existing between Ramabai and her daughter seemed after the return of the latter to be on a much happier basis, and I think a good deal was done to lighten Manoramabai’s burden by giving her change of work, and treating her with more care and consideration. A letter of February 25th gives an interesting account of Manoramabai’s first night in a Hindu home and the impressions it made on her mind. We give this as it has to do with her mother’s work.

Another letter of May 12th refers to their quarterly paper, *The Mukti Prayer Bell*, and gives the history of the cracked bell, which appears on its cover. . . . ‘Liberty’ and ‘Freedom’ were among the most Divine words that Ramabai found in the Sacred Scriptures. They stirred her heart to its very depth, and it was very fitting that she who felt her commission “to preach liberty to the captives” should choose the cracked but sacred bell of the American people, which had rung in their national library in 1775.

SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.

Mukti Mission, Kedgaon, India,  
February 25th, 1904

My dear Ajeebai,

Thank you very much for all your nice letters. It is a very long time since I last wrote to you and I hardly dare ask you to forgive me now after so long a silence. Let me assure you, however, that my reason for not writing has not been that I have not remembered, for I have so often thought about you and longed to see you again. Pritabai Chittare came to see us a few weeks ago and I was so sorry to hear from her that you had not been well. I do hope that now the winter is past you will get well and strong again. Do you remember those lovely walks we had together when I was at Wantage nearly three and a half years ago?

As I have written to Miss Noble by this mail, and she will probably show you my letter, I will not repeat any of the same things in this letter but will try to tell you of a few other things which have kept us so busy during the past few months.

I know that you will be glad to know that my mother's own aunt and cousin who are Hindu widows have come to stay with us for a year at least. The old lady had brought with her two daughters-in-law who are also widows and her little grand-daughter, a sweet child about nine years old. They had not been to see us for about seven years, but when mother heard of all the sorrow they had recently passed through and found that our written invitations apparently had no effect, she sent me to Gwalior to try to persuade them to come to us and my visit proved successful. But, dear Ajeebai, I don't think I shall ever forget this my first visit to a Hindu home. I had often spent an hour or two perhaps at the home of some Hindu friend but I had never stayed all night in a house where all the people were Hindus. It seemed so dreadful to hear them constantly calling upon their idols and to watch the sad, sad faces of these poor Hindu widows. They seemed to be absolutely without hope, or peace or joy. My mother's aunt lost her husband many years ago, and the great sorrow of recently losing her three grandsons and a son-in-law, seemed to have almost crushed her. Her daughter only two years older than I am used to be such a bright happy child when we played together as children but is now doomed to the miserable life of a Hindu widow and the loss of her husband and her three lovely little boys, has taken all the joy out her face. One realized better during those days than ever before God's great goodness in bringing us to a Christian home and to knowledge of His wondrous plan of Salvation, and the experience of life in a Hindu home made one long more than ever that India's women might be given the same privilege which we have enjoyed.

The plague has been pretty bad in many parts of India this year. One of our masters who was then living on our premises lost his brother of plague. This, however, is the only case we have had here at Kedgaon. We have however had quite enough to keep us busy in various ways. At about two o'clock one morning, my dogs woke me up by barking and knocking very loudly at my door and on going out I found that a grass hut in the Rescue Home grounds was on fire and the flames were rising very high. Of course, I called mother and we set to work at once to do what we could. Our masters and workmen with some of the boys worked very bravely while the girls brought all the water that was needed, and in half an hour the fire was put out, but not until almost the whole hut had been burned down. No lives were lost however.

Just a day or two after this, we had a more serious accident. Through a mistake of one of our carpenters a wall of an unfinished building fell down very suddenly one afternoon and many of the workmen were hurt. Two of them were so seriously injured that they had to be sent to the Poona hospital where one man died several weeks ago. The other one we hear is recovering.

It is nearly time for the post, so I must not prolong this letter. I am so sorry that Phoebe has been so ill. Please give her my love and tell her that I so often think of her.

Thank you very much, dear Ajeebai, for your suggestions about the *Prayer Bell*. I am trying to improve it and will write to you more in detail about it another time.

In the meanwhile, please accept a great deal of love from,

Your loving,  
MANO

## ***1905***

AND now we come to a section of this story which is difficult to handle aright (i) because of its great solemnity, and (ii) because it is unlike and so foreign to anything of one's own experience...

For some years past the Spirit of prayer had been growing and deepening in the hearts of many. One day in the month had been set apart for corporate prayer and was called 'The Prayer Day', which was sometimes combined with fasting and longer sessions of prayers were held at other times.

Ramabai, who was always on the outlook for Divine teaching or messages as she read the Holy Scriptures, on New Year's Day, was struck with a verse in Isaiah LXIV: 4, which she considered to be a promise to her by her loving Heavenly Father as a New Year's present. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God beside Thee who would perform for him that waiteth for Him!".

Manoramabai writing on January 3rd, tells of the happiness which they all had had that Christmas, and just before she closes her letter adds : "We are having a week of prayer just now and we open school next week". Before that week had ended "some of the girls offered themselves for Voluntary Service of the Lord".

Ramabai writes in the April *Prayer Bell* : "A prayer meeting was held, and we waited on God to enquire of Him as to the kind of service He would have us do. The Holy Spirit directed all our course. He told us to pray for everyone living here by name every day. It seemed impossible for us at first, for the time at our disposal was but one hour. But the Spirit said we could do it. He gave the plan. Each one of the members was given a list of twenty names. It was arranged for them all to meet for one hour every morning to intercede for these people. Since then they have met regularly every morning to pray for others, and for themselves.

"A Psalm is read and explained and a prayer offered by the leader. After this, all the members of the Prayer Circle remain on their knees for twenty minutes and pray silently. Perfect silence is maintained while each one in the room is lifting up heart to God, and praying for an outpouring of the Spirit on the members of our household, asking God to convert them and save them to the uttermost. Most blessing has come to us in this gathering in the morning hour. The attendance is voluntary, and the girls feel it very much if for any reason they are kept out of the meeting. They are willing to be punished or forego anything rather than be kept out of the Circle. Our prayer friends are requested to remember these Prayer Circles in Mukti before the Throne of Grace, that the members may become faithful interceders and learn of God".

On April 13th, Manoramabai writes and makes enquiries about lantern slides. She ends by an allusion to their work : "Our work has been very heavy during the last five or six months. We are short of teachers and also of helpers in the office and my arm is still so stiff that writing is still very painful. I sometimes wonder if I shall ever be able to use it properly again".

On the 19th June, a marvellous Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit began at Mukti and continued for more than six weeks. "A large number of girls and women have been deeply convicted of sin and filled with joy of pardon, and many have received the cleansing and fulness of the Spirit for life and service".

I will now give main portions of a typed letter written early in July from Manoramabai, which goes to show how little of excitement there was early in this movement, and how it was entirely a God-given inspiration :

"My very dear Ajeebai, It is always such a pleasure to have a little talk with you. I only wish I were near you and could see you instead of having to write but paper talks are better than nothing. The year seems to be passing so quickly, the hot weather is now over and the rainy seasons has begun. I am so thankful to be able to say that my arm is better this year than it was last rainy season. I do not mean it is straighter; I suppose it will always be somewhat crooked and stiff. Now I must tell you a little about what God has been doing for us, for I know you will join us in praising Him for His goodness. The Lord is beginning a great work in our midst; the Holy Spirit seems to have taken possession of one of our quietest and, humbly speaking, most insignificant girls, and He is using her and making her a great blessing among the rest. There has been a wonderful awakening among many of the girls and boys, and we feel that this is only the beginning.

"On Friday night at the evening meeting, which my mother has daily with a few of the girls, God's power was felt; and many were crying out in real agony on account of their sin, while some were trembling from head to foot, fearing that they might be lost. It was manifestly God Himself working, for there had been no stirring address delivered at the meeting; nor had there been any special effort to bring conviction of sin. Monday night's meeting was a quiet one, and many thanked God audibly for His peace which had entered into their souls. Tuesday was our day of prayer and it was full of blessing. We should be very grateful if you would pray very specially for us at this time. The enemy is of course extra busy, and may be expected to do his utmost to hinder the Lord's work. It is in their daily life, at school, in the industrial department, at meals, etc. that the real testing times will come to the girls and boys.

"Mother sends you a great deal of love, and please accept the same with loving greetings to Phoebe and the Rev. Mother from,

Your loving,  
MANO"

Another letter written nearly three months after the close of the wonderful six weeks of revival is a valuable addition to the record:

"In my last letter, I told you how the Holy Spirit had begun to work in the hearts of the girls in a most marvellous way and how His working led to agony on account of sin, confession and restoration and then intense joy. Perhaps, I did not mention the joy, for I remember that I wrote that letter at the very beginning of this Revival; and for the first few days hardly any joy was seen, but a sense of awe pervaded the atmosphere, and there was deep sorrow for sin. Then came the joy and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire; and what seems to be a special anointing for the Ministry of Intercession. When I wrote to you I had not, so far as I know, received any definite blessing during the awakening, except the joy of watching how God Himself was working in the hearts of the girls and doing in them what we workers had failed to do. Soon afterwards, however, He began to speak to me. It seemed as if He came and stopped me in the midst of these busy days, and of my busy life, and began to shew me myself. It would be impossible to describe all that went on during the next few days. I want you to pray very earnestly, although I know that it is hardly necessary to ask you, for you always pray for me, that God will by His Holy Spirit guide me into all truth and that I may not take any false step. I do want by His Grace to hold the truth as it is in Jesus. So far, I feel that I have been

doing right and that I have acted in accordance with God's will, but if I have been wrong, I do want to be led by God Himself into the true path.

"My mother sends you a great deal of love and best wishes for Christmas. She wishes me to say that she does not forget you; but that the reason she does not write is because she really had not the strength for letter-writing. She is so very busy.

"Please give my love to the Rev. Mother and please accept a great deal of love yourself from,

Your loving  
MANO"

And now let us take a final look at the educational work of the schools.

The year 1904 saw their first Government inspection. In February of this year they were again inspected, and favourable reports both of the Lower and the High School were given by the two Indian Inspectors who conducted the examinations. They said : "The management of the schools is excellent". A full account of this can be read in the April number of the *Prayer Bell* 1905.

The industrial work also is making great progress. From the printing office, a most important branch of the industrial work, a good deal of useful Christian literature is being published. Sixteen boys are employed in this department. There are also a good many apprentices in the carpenter's shop. Others are employed in tailoring, masonry, wood-cutting, and designing, and a large number are employed on the farm.

The girls' industries have also made great advance. Special notice should be made of the weaving department, where the girls have learnt to weave the best kind of Indian sarees. A good many girls have so thoroughly learnt the art of needlework that they are able to be used as teachers in the needlework departments. The girls specially excel in their drawn-thread work. The lady at the head of this work is a Dane. . . .

There are a series of Circular Letters, somewhere about 1909 and onwards which describe the Evangelistic work, which are full of interest as they shew how steadily Christianity gained ground among the villages and also among the pilgrims who came for great festivals to noted sacred towns. The opposition at first was great and one of the European workers was nearly killed by the malice of the idolatrous priests.

#### TRANSLATION OF HOLY BIBLE

The beginning of the Pandita's greatest and most beautiful work of all, that of translating the whole Bible into simple Marathi, such as can be read and understood by the peasant folk of that caste [was made].

I think when Ramabai undertook this supreme work, her education began in truth. She had been prepared by great adversity. She had over-exerted her strength in the strenuous rescue work at the Famine Camps and in building up the Mukti Settlement and now she was ready for a quieter form of activity, one in which her gifts as a student would find a worthy outlet.

It is now over ten years since she began this work. May health and strength be given her to accomplish her task. I think if she does that she will be the first woman who has made a complete translation of the Holy Scriptures.

SISTER GERALDINE

March 21st, 1971.

Community of St, Mary the Virgin, Wantage

*Some Thoughts on Ramabai's Life and Work  
with extracts from her letters and writings*

My own strong feeling about Ramabai's wonderful and noble life is that if the imperfections are withheld, a story of a wonder-worker will be given to the public the value of which will be comparatively small. But if on the contrary, the life is truly read a great but imperfect character will be lumined, one who had high ideals and has made great mistakes, and fallen at times from high ideals, yet has steadily kept before her vision great aims and has, through acknowledging her errors and shortcomings, pushed forward with renewed desire to amend and repair the wrong done.

Such a picture of the Pandita will, I doubt not, do more for the cause of Christianity than any life which would give her a palace among the *Rishis* of India.

I believe, the C.S.M.V. has in its possession material for the lives of the Pandita and Manoramabai which no one else has. If really ably compiled these two lives ought to be attractive contributions to missionary literature. . . .

There are two printed papers written late in life in which the Pandita gave some fresh information about her early life and conversion. In one of those she sings with Mary Magnificat for all God's goodness to her.

It is said that on account of the patriarchal life of the Indian people, they have a much intenser love of kindred than anything known among Western nations. The allusions made by Ramabai to her parents, her reverence and devotion to their memory go to confirm this. No study of Ramabai's life could be complete without a notice of the heroic and truth-loving and devout Hindu whose suffering life prepared the way for her and Manoramabai's lives of strenuous activity for the cause of Indian women.

The bass notes and the discords of Anant Shastri's inspired life add richness to the harmony of theirs. Ramabai likes to think of her father as one of the Cornelius' of this world. I rather think of him as among the group of St. John the Baptist's disciples who helped to prepare the way for the Kingdom of Heaven. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from Heaven"; and it was surely a Divine call which led Anant Shastri to be a Confessor to the truth he knew, pointing out to his people that education was the light of the women of India, that centuries ago, according to their sacred writings, it was commanded; and that only false theories, taking root in consequence of evil practices and resulting in the deep seating of wrong principles of the social life of the Indian people, had denied it to them. . . . Here is the heart-rending touch in the history she gives of their family religion :

"We went to several sacred temples to worship different gods, and to bathe in sacred rivers and tanks, to free ourselves from sin and curse, which brought poverty on us. We prostrated ourselves before stone and metal images of the gods, and prayed to them day and night, the burden of our prayer being that the gods would be pleased to give us wealth, learning and renown. My dear brother, a stalwart young fellow of twenty-one, spoilt his health and wasted his finely built body by fasting months and months. But nothing came of all this futile effort to please the gods."

An insight into the Hindu home may contrast very favourably with the description so often given by Ramabai and others of the miasma of evil which chokes out all nobility of thought from the homes of ordinary Hindus. Anant Shastri's strength was declining when Ramabai's education began, and moreover he had many other duties; upon her mother therefore devolved her instruction in Sanskrit.



“The resident students, the visiting pilgrims, and the aged father and mother-in-law, now members of the family, as well as the children of the household entailed many cares upon the educated Hindu mother, and the only time that could be found for the little daughter’s lessons was in the morning twilight, before the toilsome day had dawned. Ramabai recalls with emotion that early instruction, while held in her dear mother’s arms. The little maiden, heavy with sleep, was tenderly from her bed upon the earth, and awakened with many endearments and sweet mother-words; and then while the birds about them in the forest chirped their morning songs, lessons were repeated. No other books than the mother’s lips were used. It may be [that] Anant Shastri had [had] some intuition as to Ramabai’s future, for his dying words to her made a deep impression on her young mind. “Remember my child”, he said, “you are my youngest child, my most beloved child. I have given you into the hand of one God; you are His, and to Him alone you must belong, and serve Him all your life”. “He could speak no more”, continues Ramabai, “My father’s prayers for me were, no doubt, heard by the Almighty, the All-merciful Heavenly Father, whom the old Hindu did not know. The God of all flesh did not find it impossible to bring me, a great sinner and unworthy child of His out of Heathen darkness into the saving light of His love and salvation, I can now say to the departed spirit of the beloved parent, ‘Yes dear father, I will serve the only true God to the last’. But I could not say so when my father spoke to me for the last time. I listened to him, but was too ignorant, too bewildered to understand him, or to make an intelligent answer. We were after this dismissed from father’s presence; he wanted an hour for meditation and preparation before death.”

The awful famine years of 1877 and 1878 in which Ramabai lost her parents form part of the training by which she was being prepared to mingle her tears of sympathy, in truly practical manner, with her suffering sisters, and by noble, strenuous, self-sacrificing work for their relief. In the famine years of 1896 and 1897 and 1899 and 1900 she was enabled to rescue many hundreds of starving women and children.

The two following years after the death of her parents, we find Ramabai a wanderer upon the face of the earth, without home, without relations (after the death of her sister) save an only brother; she travelled with him from the South to North-West India, and then on to Calcutta.

During these homeless and apparently aimless years, her work of preparation was going forward. She was then old enough to be impressed by things which she saw, and the caste bondage of her sisters and their hopeless degradation burned like iron into her soul. Whenever she could she gathered audiences around her, and poured out to them the indignation of her heart. Her brother was her escort and her guardian, but when his exhausted body succumbed and death relieved him from his weariness, for a time she faced the world alone. Then she married her brother’s friend, and for nineteen short months she was cheered by a husband’s love and support. Death again left her a lone woman, and this time one of the hated and despised class—a widow—with a fatherless little one. They two were to experience two great facts—the hatred and malice of the Evil one, whose strength had so long held the Fort of devilish cruelty in India’s fair land, and the love of the Stronger than the strong man, whose special care are the widows and the orphans. Alone and friendless she realized what she had never experienced before—an overshadowing and loving Providence which was preparing her for some great work.

Her thoughts went out to Western nations, who had for centuries known the blessings of liberty, whose secret she sought to know. So to England she came, and England was used by God as the instrument to set her at liberty and to bring her into the paths of peace.

Looking back after nearly a quarter of a century on Ramabai’s coming to the Mother House of the Community, it is impossible not to see that the inspiration which she received for her life’s work was gained there. She herself in more than one of her letters alludes to what she received from her stay in a Religious House. It was her first experience of living in a Christian atmosphere. Within the first few months of her coming, the daily life of the Community presented object lessons to her mind which took deep hold of her being. At that time we had a gifted young Sister in consumption. The spring of that year was exceptionally beautiful, and daily she was taken out in the garden in a

wheeled chair; often the little groups of Indians could be seen watching her and her companions with deep interest. Those who do not know the neglect, and even terrible cruelty to the sick in a heathen country, can have little idea what a contrast the loving, patient care bestowed on the sick by Christians would exhibit to [the] heathen. That was object lesson number one.

Early in June the Bishop of Oxford came to receive the Profession of four Sisters. The sick Sister was, by her special desire, one of those to make her Profession. This Ramabai was permitted to see. Their Consecration for life service made a deep impression on her. Within ten days of this Profession the sick Sister suddenly passed to her rest. The beautiful care which is bestowed upon the dead in a Religious House is impressive to most, but what must it have been to those who had never known the hope inspired by a Christian's death, and had experienced only the terrors of pagan rites. A day or two later when the Community gathered to lay her body in the quiet graveyard of the Community, that little group of Indians watched the solemn procession and Service from the other side of the cemetery hedge. There can be no doubt that that impressive service, with its strain of solemn hope and joy, had lessons for them which they had never before known.

Perhaps the great sorrow which befell Ramabai in the death of her friend [\[This friend is obviously Anandibai Bhagat who had accompanied Ramabai and her child Mano from India to England.\]](#) was one of the most salutary portions of her training. With it came a great softening of heart, which prepared her more readily to receive spiritual impressions. There is no doubt that our happiest memories of Ramabai centre round the autumn of that year. She prepared whole-heartedly for baptism, confirmation and her first communion. And though she had many difficulties yet she asked for explanations, in a humble and childlike spirit. The order, method, and discipline of a Religious House appealed greatly to her, and this she has striven to emulate in the works she founded. She was still more struck by the care we bestowed on the outcast and fallen. It was a revelation to her that cultivated women could bring into their house and bestow upon these poor degraded women the love and care of mothers and sisters. She was struck by the hospitality we accorded to guests, and all these things when she started her work at Mukti she sought to reproduce. America without doubt expanded and enlarged her ideas, but Mukti may be said to be the outcome of what she saw in the first Western home that offered a welcome. In this house, she lived as an honoured and beloved daughter, and had great opportunities of learning from within. In America she visited many splendid institutions which she saw from without. She came to her friends at Wantage with overwrought brain and body, and by them was tenderly nursed back to health and power.

At Cheltenham too she had immense educational advantages. The Ladies' College, then under the Headship of Miss Dorothea Beale, the great and successful pioneer in the advanced education of women, afforded Ramabai the best opportunities not only of study, but of learning educational methods. She remained there for two years, and Miss Beale not only placed at her disposal the very best private tuition which could have been obtained anywhere, but was herself prodigal with time and thought on Ramabai's behalf. I think we may read in the events which occurred and which ended in her leaving England on a visit to America that the path of study, however gifted she was as a student, was not in the order of Providence for her. She wrote in one of her letters to Miss Beale words to this effect : "Though death robbed me of my husband, I will espouse learning which shall be an immortal husband to me".

For the present, it was evidently the Divine Will that her character should be shaped on the rougher anvil of active life. The power and happiness of study she possessed in a remarkable degree, and when her physical strength was impaired, she gladly again used those gifts which for a time she had been called to lay on one side.

The voluminous correspondence which took place between Ramabai and various correspondents in England and India will have shewn that Ramabai was peculiarly sensitive to anything which she deemed an infringement of her liberty.

It is impossible to look into the records of Ramabai's life and work without noticing the oft-recurring words, 'liberty' and 'freedom'.

On the one hand, the inspiration of her life and work owes everything to the right conception of the thought of liberty. On the other hand, the errors which made her wander into the bye-paths of self-choosing, and thus fail in her grasp of the highest truth may be accredited to her failure in entering with understanding into the knowledge of "the perfect law of liberty".

The more one studies Ramabai's life, the more wonderful one perceives it to be. That a woman whose independent mind has brought her into such prominence with the whole civilized world, and drawn to herself workers from almost every Western nation, should have arisen out of a people, the women, especially the widows, of which are among the most down-trodden of human beings; that one so noble in her thoughts and wide in her views should claim as her sisters in race and nearly a one-fourth of a century in creed, those whose lives are narrowed by petty surroundings and bounded by the horizon of family life with its squabbles and bitterness, its unchaste innuendos at home, and no less ignoble daily gossip at the well, its fleeting pleasures consisting of jewelry, of curries, of sweetmeats and obscene festivals; things wholly of the world which deaden or extinguish the sparks of elevating, pure and noble desire; that she, who was brought up to observe so strictly her caste rules, that to earn her living by a handicraft to keep the wolf from the door in the straits of famine would have been to lose all that was most sacred to a Hindu—viz. caste—should exact from her high-caste widows some hours of industrial work daily, is indeed a revolutionizing of social life.

The first conscious inspiration which she received was given her when she was about nine years of age. In one portion of her father's house lived a poor family. The family consisted of man of thirty years of age, his girl-wife of sixteen, and his old mother. The mother-in-law was all that is implied by that name in India—a heartless old hag, always beating, abusing and cruelly treating her daughter-in-law. One day when the girl was spinning, a monkey stole her cotton. For this carelessness the girl was abused by the mother-in-law, who nagged the husband on to beat her. Ramabai adds : "I was an eye-witness to all this. Her piercing cries went right to my heart; and I seem to hear them now after nearly thirty years. My childish heart was filled with indignation, I was powerless to help, but I have never forgotten that poor girl's cries for help; and I suppose it was the first call I received to enter upon the sacred duty of helping my sisters according to the little strength I had. But I never realized the extent of grief and suffering, and the need of my sisters just as long as I remained in darkness, and had no love of God in me".

The call grew stronger as years went by, until the time came when she, an emancipated member of the outcaste and degraded widows, having the joy of light, liberty and salvation herself, burned to impart the same to her race and her country.

But though she was guided first to England, and England was eager and ready to do all in her power for this daughter of India, she found the atmosphere of England and the Anglican Church not sufficiently rarefied for her aspirations of freedom. She perceived in a nation reserved and conservative lack of that sense of liberty which was growing and expanding daily in her soul. Both the nation and the national Church were too narrow, tight, and compact for her needs.

Though doubtless this may have had some effect on her, yet I am inclined to think that impatience to get to work was at the bottom of her restlessness. It is true only her Brahmin friends did their utmost to undermine her new faith, but the swarms of Non-Conformists who buzzed around her like mosquitoes were determined to seek to break off her friendship with the Community of St. Mary the Virgin.

I quote here from Canon Furse's *Beauty of Holiness*, which seems adequately to express Ramabai's feelings with regard to this.

We want to be more Evangelical, more Catholic, not such sticklers after uniformity, not so precise in our proprieties. We will have our prayers in the rigid form of the Collect. . . . We want more liberty.

O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us but in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged. (2 Corinth. VI : 11-13).

Not finding all she desired among our insulated people, she went farther afield and among the free-born Americans, some of whom could recall the telling of the story, from a grandsire's lips, of their national independence gained. She found in more ways than one an answering mind, which made her soon perceive that it was from among them she should the stores of education and culture, as well as the material riches which she needed to train her mind, and strengthen her heart, and furnish her future institutions.

Such characters as President Lincoln, whose life she read, and then made a digest of in a letter to her child, and even more that of Harriet Tubman, the Negress and runaway slave called the Moses of her people, because she released and led 300 of them across America into Canada, and there provided them with homes and work, found a response in her own soul. She too would be the Moses of her Hindu sisters, and lead them out of darkness and the slavery of the evil one into the light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ. And the Americans, with their open-handed generosity and Catholic sympathy, and withal a greater power of demonstration than is possessed by English people, were ready to enter into her plans and forward them. Funds and plant, books and pictures, workers, assistants, and teachers were for and secured.

But Ramabai's appeal was not only made to her American sisters, it was an appeal whose echo rang out into all lands.

"An institution of the kind indicated, where the pupils must be supported, and the foreign teachers liberally paid for their services, cannot be founded and afterwards kept in a flourishing condition without money. Therefore I invite all good women and men to give me their help liberally, in whatever way they may be able, for a period of about ten years; it is my solemn belief that it is the most sacred duty of those who dwell in this highly favoured land to bestow freely talents of whatever kind they may possess to help this educational movement. I venture to make this appeal because I believe that those who regard the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus to the heathen so important as to spend in its accomplishment millions of money and hundreds of valuable lives, will deem it of the first importance to prepare the way for the spread of the Gospel by throwing open the locked doors of the Indian Zenana, which cannot be done safely without giving suitable education to the women, whereby they will be able to bear the dazzling light of the outer world and the perilous blasts of social persecution.

"Mothers and fathers, compare the condition of your own sweet darlings at your happy firesides with that of millions of little girls of corresponding age in India who have already been sacrificed on the unholy altar of an inhuman social custom, and then ask yourselves whether you can stop short of doing something to rescue the little widows from the hands of their tormenters. Millions of heart-rending cries are daily rising from within the stony walls of Indian Zenana; thousands of child widows are annually dying without a ray of hope to cheer their hearts, and other thousands are daily being crushed under a fearful weight of sin and shame, with no one to prevent their ruin by providing for them a better way.

"Will you not, all of you who read this book, think of these, my countrywomen, and rise by a common impulse to free them from life-long slavery and infernal misery? I beg you, friends and benefactors, educators and philanthropists, all who have any interest in or compassion for your fellow-creatures, let the cry of India's daughters, feeble though it be, reach your ears and stir your hearts. In the name of humanity, in the name of your sacred responsibilities as workers in the cause of

humanity, and, above all, in the most holy name of God, **I** summon you, true men and women of Christian lands, to bestow your help quickly, regardless of nation, caste or creed”.

To shew how deeply the thought of liberty had entered into her soul and how contact with America had strengthened it, and developed it, we have but to look to the emblem she chose for the cover of the Mukti periodical. It is a large cracked bell with a passage from Isaiah 61 : “The Lord hath anointed Me to preach Good tidings unto the meek sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound”.

And another text from Isaiah 62 is on the cover : “I have set watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth”.

At first sight the cracked bell arouses the sense of humour in a casual observer, but when the story of this venerable bell is told, it strikes a very different chord in the soul. It tells of deep things, of bitter wrong, of a great call, of intense and burning hopes for the future of her people. But it tells more than this. May England be prepared and do much, yes, exceedingly much to make up for past great opportunities let go—before the day of reckoning comes. It is perhaps nearer than any one of us may think.

Ramabai’s cry for years has been: “O Lord! How long shall this oppression of the Hindu widow go on?” May England double and redouble her efforts. May she whole-heartedly help in giving freedom to the captive sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Then the day of reckoning will not come upon her as a day of judgment.

And may Ramabai come to know that perfect law of liberty which alone is true liberty, which only those can possess in its fulness who accept the Church, and live in union with the Divine Master, controlled by the Good Shepherd in the gracious power of His Sacramental Life.

From the time she left the shores of England, we may look upon Ramabai in a very peculiar way as God’s pupil and it will be of interest to trace the methods by which He trained her.

Before however proceeding farther, it may be well to endeavour to give some answer to two questions : (i) why did Ramabai fail to accept Catholic Christianity? (ii) Were not her friends premature in having her baptized?

The former of these will involve a somewhat lengthy answer. First and foremost of the causes, **I** think, may be discovered in the Oriental mind. With all the apparent simplicity and directness of Ramabai’s character, she had also a complexity of mind, which is the mark of the Indian and a result of the pantheism of their creed. Sir Monier Williams describes the receptivity and all-comprehensiveness of Hinduism in following words :

“It has something to offer which is suited to all minds, its very strength lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human characters and human tendencies. It has its highly spiritual and abstract sides, suited to the metaphysical philosopher; its practical and concrete sides, suited to the man of affairs and the man of the world; its aesthetic and ceremonial side, suited to the man of poetic feeling and imagination; its quiescent and contemplative side, suited to the man of peace and lover of seclusion. Nay, it holds out the right hand of brotherhood to nature-worshippers, demon-worshippers, animal-worshippers, tree-worshippers, fetish-worshippers. It does not scruple to permit the most grotesque forms of idolatry and the most degrading varieties of superstition, and it is to this latter fact that yet another remarkable peculiarity is mainly due—namely, that in no other system of the world is the chasm more vast which separates the religion of the higher, cultured and thoughtful classes from that of the lower, uncultured and unthinking masses”.



Have we not here the key to Ramabai's failure to accept Catholic Christianity, and an explanation of her religious fluctuations if you will, but I should rather call it religious *progressiveness*? I will try and give a partial answer to the question why she did not receive Catholic Christianity. I will not now deal with the imperfections of the instruments God made use of –this has had its place elsewhere- but will go on to consider the psychological reasons. I know I am tunnelling underground, and without the help of an accredited surveyor.

I must trust to an unearthly Guide to keep me from going far out of my course.

I think there are some half [a] dozen reasons which have to be put into the scale. First and foremost, her mind revolting against the awful tyranny of the caste system with its ramifications of unjust and cruel laws and practices was like a bird escaped from a cage; in one of her letters she alludes to this. Liberty and freedom were beyond all other words in the Bible those which met with the truest response of her heart. She wished to fly with the swallows or soar with the lark, and she would at first have none of the corporate life of the rooks or starlings, who were marshalled under the command of a leader. Christian liberty and Christian hierarchical government with its ramifications and discipline her mind was unable to harmonize. Then too the very title "The Church of England" was something abhorrent to her. And can we not understand how such a title may seem to uninitiated foreigners to savour of the inborn arrogance of our insular nature instead of the sweet humility of the Divine Master? I felt from my very earliest connection with Ramabai that this was a bone that stuck in her throat, and I did all I could to take away hurt and to accentuate the simplicity of the Universal Church, but alas ! When the history of the divisions comes in the fortress seems to be lost. A heathen mind has no such traditions as had the Jews which made it easy for them to assimilate the thought of the Kingdom of God. A convert from Hinduism grasps much more readily the thought of unfettered liberty than of the blessings of liberty within a society of which he or she has become a member.

There is a great want in the Hindu mind; its pantheism makes it illogical and this lack of logical reasoning doubtless hinders the reception of the thought of the Kingdom of Heaven extending and embracing earth. The Hindu religion throughout many centuries has shewn itself easily adaptable to circumstances. It has never met any other religion with strong impact but by quietly colliding with opposing forces. Thus it has gathered from first one, then another, some new ingredient, some fresh tint to the many-coloured garment with which it seeks to clothe the soul. Courteous, gracious, perceptive, resourceful, the Hindu is quick to grasp the surface ideas and to weave them into the fabric of his thoughts and life, but these ideas must not be revolutionary. They therefore lack all the strong virtues which Christianity imparts—justice, strength, courage, truth, loyalty, etc. Thus a society and discipline do not find with them ready acceptance. The reaction of the bow of the caste rule too tightly strung result not only in the snapping of old ties but in the refusal of discipline from another form of society. The experience of Church missionaries is that it is almost impossible to impress Indian people with such a sense of loyalty to the Church that they will refrain from joining in undenominational worship. The temptation of higher salaries which Non-Conformists are invariably able to offer, the friends whom they have belonging to other missions, are strong temptations which in many cases weaken, if they do not draw them away from the Church allegiance. But there is a still greater difficulty, and that which Ramabai touches on in the letter, an extract of which I give here. England to an Indian has an unsavoury sound.

When required [in] Christmas 1885 not to communicate in the Chapel of St. Mary's Home, on account of the unsettlement of her faith, she wrote to Miss Beale as follows :

"I have not joined in the Communion Service for more than three weeks. I do not mind if they will not let me communicate with them. What matters it to me if any say 'You shall not communicate with us'? The Mighty Hand which gives the daily bread needed for our temporal and spiritual life is neither short nor taken back. It is ever bountiful, ever giving needful things. I will not grieve over this matter. The door of the Universal Church of God is not shut against me, and I believe the Universal, the Holy Catholic Church is not confined within the walls of the Anglican Church".



We have to keep clearly before us that the difficulties in the conversion of India are greater than those which faced the early missionaries. With both, the citadel of the Evil one has to be demolished and the evil which pervades the society must fall with it. But where that has to be done by the soldiers of the Cross, who are hateful to a people because they are their conquerors, the difficulties are increased ten-thousand fold and indeed seem insuperable. The bitterness which burns like a fire deep down in the souls of these Indian people and which various circumstances tend to suppress must out at times. Occasionally in Ramabai's burning utterances this feeling is expressed. Here is one:

"Our only wonder is that a defenceless women like Rukmabai dared to raise her voice in the face of the powerful Hindu law, the mighty British Government, the 129,000,000 men the 330,000,000 gods of the Hindus; all these have conspired together to crush her into nothingness. We cannot blame the English Government for not defending a helpless woman; it is only fulfilling its agreement made with the male population of India. How very true are the words of the Saviour, 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon'. Should England serve God by protecting a helpless woman against the powers and principalities of ancient institutions, Mammon would surely be displeased, and British profit and rule in India might be endangered thereby. Let us wish it success no matter if that success be achieved at the sacrifice of the rights and the comfort of over one hundred million women".

With this feeling burning in their souls, the very title *The Church of England* would tend to alarm and repel. Had it been *The Church of Christ in England*, the result with Ramabai might have been different. But the last society such a woman (with her great inspiration to work for the benefit of her people) would ally herself with would be—not Catholic Christianity, but the Christianity which bore the impress of their conquerors.

Then she was beset by a mixed multitude which would give her no rest nor allow her to imbibe Christianity from those who were her God-appointed guides. We had not sought this *rare Indian jewel*; God had brought her to us. Her fame had reached far and wide, and letters from every missionary in India bore to Western shores the story of this wonderful women. She was thus fair game of anyone who would entrap her and few considered it unfair or disloyal to endeavour to undermine the teaching she was receiving. By nature vain, her vanity was stimulated by the letters she received from members of unsectarian bodies, who took pains to furnish her with arguments against the faith once delivered to the saints instead of helping to build her up in it, and alas ! to vilify the Church's practice. Nothing could have been more heartlessly cruel and one can link many of the errors of her life to the un-Christian influence of so-called Christians.

With faith upset and mind harassed and perplexed it was only wonderful that she did not wholly relapse, and for time it seemed as if she had done so. But the instrument which had been so wondrously fashioned for God's future work in India, it was not His purpose should be lost to His Hand. If through the imperfections of Christians Ramabai failed to rise up to accept the fullness of the heritage into which it was the Divine purpose for her to enter, He would Himself become her teacher and her Guide, and train her in the mysteries of the Faith as she was able to receive it. Henceforth we must see her as God's pupil. "I will take Jesus as my *Guru* (teacher)" were her words. "I will study the Bible for myself", and so she did.

There were still other forces which led on to this crisis. There was her natural impatience to get to work, and she was unwilling to give herself the time for quiet preparation and to the deepening of her spiritual life, which is so essential for all, but most especially for babes in the faith who are called to be [the] future leaders of others. These are days of action, and there are few who are willing to prepare like their Lord by thirty years of hidden life; or like His forerunner by a disciplinary sojourn in the wilderness.

Vanity and arrogance which were yet unsubdued by practical Christianity made her chafe at the childlike attitude of heart which alone can receive Divine mysteries and made her eager to become a teacher before she had herself been taught. Liberty was undoubtedly her watchword, which impelled

her forward. Behind all her gifts was a strong commonsense blended with enthusiasm which gradually fused all the brilliant qualities of her character into a consistent whole.

It is an intricate labyrinth, but it may be useful to try and study the ways by which she was led, and how the knowledge of the truth was gradually perceived by her. Discernment by personal experience will best perhaps explain God's method of dealing with her soul.

I think it is unquestionable that she had accepted whole-heartedly the Fatherhood of God before leaving England; her letters from America seem to show this. She is always looking to the Father for help and recognizing His goodness in strengthening her feebleness for the great work to which He had called her. She had read Westcott's Fatherhood of God and assimilated some of its wonderful thought. Had she not also received into her being, though the intellect had not bowed before it, the Divinity of our Lord?

When first she went to America and was desirous of bringing her cause before the public, she was introduced to a remarkable woman, Frances Willard by name, one of the leaders of the Temperance Crusade. Miss Willard was originally trained to educational work, and as the head of one of the large educational institutions in the United States, she was a strong person in that department of work. But her soul was saddened by the spectacles which daily came under her notice of deserted wives and forlorn children, the result of the demon of drink asserting sway over the bodies and souls of men and women. She felt drawn by a special call to relinquish educational work and to join women's crusade in fighting against this rampant evil. When Ramabai told her story, the soul of Frances Willard expanded towards the suffering daughters of India. She interested other members of the Temperance Union in Ramabai and her cause, and they together resolved to bring her and it before the American public.

Ramabai was necessarily much in the society of Frances Willard, and from her learnt about the object of the Temperance Crusade. This appealed greatly to her. She not only heard of their work, but learnt also the true and high reason which inspired them to carry it on. Intemperance is a sin which dishonours the body for the body of a Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit. They not only directly carried on their crusade against intemperance but they sought in all ways to teach the sanctity of the body, because in it dwelt the Holy Spirit of God.

This appealed to Ramabai with great force, because the religion of the Hindus had taught her to despise the body, and now she came more and more to realize how the body dwelt in by the Holy Ghost must be consecrated to God in true and honourable service.

Then too in America, when the great effort she was called upon to make in behalf of her cause made such demand upon her health and strength she learnt increasingly the value of prayer. In the strength of prayer she made her long journeys, in the strength of prayer she addressed her meetings, and her letters speak frequently of the comfort and strength she finds in prayer. But she had not yet peace of soul. As light raised her standard of Christian purity, an increasing consciousness of sin took hold of her whole being. This led her on to feel the present need of Salvation. It was not till 1890 that she clearly grasped the Doctrine of the Atonement, and realized the power of living Saviour. She tells how on her return to India she suffered agonies from haunting fear of sin.

There can be little doubt her child's firm grasp of the Christian Faith and her earnest pure life had not a little to do with Ramabai's onward progress. It was in 1889 that Mano by her simple teaching of the Faith to the young child-widows had drawn four of them in a few months to desire to be baptized.

In 1890 Ramabai came across Dr. Pentecost who was holding (missions) [meetings] in various parts of India, and he helped her to a clearer apprehension of the Doctrine of the Atonement than she had hitherto accepted. She felt that up to that time, her faith had resulted more from the intellect than the heart, and she was gradually learning that "with the heart man believeth unto

Salvation". Later on when many and perplexing difficulties with her girls arose she realized how impossible it was to appeal to their higher faculties while they remained heathen, for all the best in them was stunted and in darkness, and so she saw more and more clearly the wonderful working power of grace through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and she longed more and more that her girls might be regenerate, and for herself desired further outpourings of light, wisdom and love.

About 1895 Ramabai got into touch with the faith-healers. She undoubtedly experienced answers to prayer in the matter of recovery from sickness both with regard to herself and others. These were unduly magnified, and very probably were no greater than similar experiences of many earnest and devout Christians. But Ramabai was carried away by these experiences, and possibly the flattery of friends for a while made her think that she had exceptional powers of healing, and for a time her judgment was warped and darkened. An extract from one of her letters to her child when in England will show how unduly and unwisely she was pressing not faith-healing but Christian Scientism upon her and consequently hindering her education :

"I found a letter waiting for me from mother in answer to one of mine in which I told her my eyes were getting bad, and I was going to the hospital to have them attended to. Mother says that if I take to spectacles again I shall have backslidden, and that she will be terribly grieved. I do not know how to put it into good English, but to translate it literally, she says 'If you backslide I shall be so grieved that I should feel as if my life had been taken'. I do not know what to do about it. I cannot possibly study if I do not see properly, though, of course, I do not like to grieve mother".

Ten years later Ramabai had broken away from the Christian Scientist Movement.

Later on when the Mukti Mission was established and there were very many sick ones in her large family, medical attendance was discouraged by her, and faith-healing was largely advocated. One is glad to think that Ramabai's commonsense triumphed in the long run; perhaps her own increasing ill-health made her realize that prayer is not to bring God's Will to our will, but to cause us to rise to know God's Will and follow it. She certainly must have found that it was subversive to all discipline for individuals to be leaving their appointed work to pray by the beds of the sick at their own discretion. We were glad to learn that in 1906 she had accepted the services of two resident medical women at Mukti, and we hope in so doing she had come to realize that to each was given his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that, in the Christian society and that as there are many members in body, all members cannot have the same office and each should use his God-given gift with diligence, and seek to maintain a true harmony of the whole. Therein is true humility. May we not hope that this lesson learnt will be a stepping stone towards her accepting Church organization and discipline?

She says, "I still have an open mind and whatever I see to be God's will for me I shall do".

The faith-healers undoubtedly enlarged Ramabai's ideas of the power of the Living Christ, who is to-day amongst His people not only to forgive sins but to say also, "Arise take up thy bed and walk".

Thus by a long and painful path she has been brought to the knowledge of the Truth, though not as yet accepting it in its fullness, and is able to help those who are seeking the same. Her simple faith is as real as her deep devotion to her unfortunate sisters, a devotion which is shewn in all her care for them.

The second question, whether we were premature in baptizing Ramabai, has yet to be answered. Having over and over again weighed this question, I have never been able to see any but one answer: That we were right in taking what seemed to be the God-given opportunity for her baptism. Her circumstances were so exceptional that her case can never be judged from an ordinary standpoint. When she came to us, she had asked for our help for five years, to prepare herself by study of various kinds for her life's work, and we thought and hoped that we should be able to continue the

work of her instruction in Christianity during that period. No other portion of that time could we hope for the quiet months she had with us when she was preparing for the Church's initial Sacrament.

We have never ceased to sorrow over her failure to receive the Church's full sacramental teaching, but this does not prevent us [from] acknowledging with deep thankfulness what her life in God's hands has wrought, first as a pioneer and reformer of her people, and also as an Evangelist in bringing to them the glad tiding of Christianity.

We have seen how God prepared His instrument, and the history of Ramabai's work already given will have fully shewn what the result of the preparation has so far been.

It may be well now to break up the light by means of mental prism and glance at her in the various relationships she held towards subjects and friends. But first we will consider her executive work and what she was as a woman of business and as an administrator. The story of the purchase of the field at Kedgaon shows her quickness of apprehension and her far-sightedness as a woman of business. That field was first occupied by rescued famine sufferers in 1897.

Four years later, 2,000 women and girls were safely housed in well-built buildings. To quote the words of a visitor who saw it in 1901 will give some little idea of the strength of character of the woman as well as of her varied gifts which effected such a wondrous development. "Within these extensive grounds are well-ventilated, comfortable dormitories, . . . kitchen and dining rooms occupying a building 145 feet by 30 feet wide; store-houses, bakery, hospital, . . . rooms for industrial work, . . . rooms for the Pandita and her assistants, offices, guest rooms", and a great building used as a school-room on week days and a place of worship on Sundays. The grounds are well laid out with young trees, fruit trees, and gardens producing large supplies of vegetables.

The following quotation shews her executive capacity:

"As for dear Ramabai, she is like the little girl's chicken that 'ran around so she could not count it' - in the cook room shewing the girls how to make *chappaties* (wheat cakes), ministering to the sick with her own gentle hands, arranging classes, keeping accounts, overseeing buildings-in short, every details of the work of Kedgaon is under her supervision. It seems to me that the day is not very far distant when Mukti will become a self-supporting work. At present, however, it needs help, that the buildings may be completed, and the whole work firmly established. Ramabai does not know I am writing this, so I can speak freely. The heathen around look upon her work with wonder, saying: "A goddess dwells in her, and this is why she can do all this wonderful work, for the goddess pours out the money". Miss Hooper and other testify that the work is done carefully, economically, and with much less expense than if a foreign worker superintended it. Kedgaon is called a Christian colony in itself. It may yet be a stronghold of Christianity, as Poona is said to be a stronghold of Brahmanism."

[I think this look into the system of the Sharda Sadan is taken from Mrs. Andrews' accounts of her impressions-SISTER GERALDINE, C.S.M.V.]

We will consider her now as a teacher. We have already said that Ramabai's call was pre-eminently to be an inspirer of her people; but she was also a teacher of no mean power. In the early days of the Sharada Sadan most of her girls were heathen. She would gather them round her and tell them of the wonderful love and care of the Creator in preparing this beautiful world for His children; or she would give them some moral lesson on the beauty and sweetness of pure unselfish lives. Selfishness, she says, is the ruling power in India which has been the cause of the downfall of the nation; and in order to raise their dull and selfish minds to some nobility of thought she seeks to interest them in everything around them. The beautiful garden, the flowers and birds, she tell them, are lessons on the Beauty of God. The warble of the little songsters that come every spring she tell them teaches to praise God. She tries to develop in them kindness to animals, for the Indian people, in spite of their worship of animals, are frightfully cruel to them. So pets are encouraged in the Mukti Mission, and these the children love, and are loved by them in return.

We do not know the exact reason why the Pandita refuses Government grant-in-aid. One of them doubtless is that she has her own special ideas of the needs of these poor ignorant girls, and desires to supply them in the ways she thinks best adapted to their wants. Because the Indians are taught to despise their bodies, Ramabai has physiology taught in her schools. Because their sense of the beauty of God's world had been so stunted, lessons in botany are systematically given. She surrounds them with everything which will help to raise and refine them, and trains them in various industries, in order that they may come to know that honest work is honourable. She endeavours to create an *esprit de corps* among them which is little known in ordinary Indian schools. They are banded into unions of different kinds such a Christian Endeavour Society and a Temperance Union and they are given lessons in managing their own meetings. They have learnt parliamentary rules in a simple form so that they can elect members and officers in an ordinary manner.

She says herself that her work is far from perfect and that visitors to the institution will find many faults which need correcting, but the marvel is that the work is what it is when one considers the difficulties that Ramabai has faced and conquered in building up her work. It seems nothing short of miraculous that she should have reduced the chaos which must have at first existed when she brought 300 girls into the family of the Sharada Sadan, and later on fifteen hundred more-untrained, untaught, many of them possessed with evil spirits-before those 300 had imbibed a spirit of discipline and order, and made of them an organic whole. Only a comparatively small number were at first received into the Sharada Sadan at Poona; the rest were camped at Mukti (at Kedgaon). This work was doubtless undertaken in utter ignorance of what the cost would be, but it shows what the patience and courage of Ramabai is to have reduced that chaotic mass into a disciplined and well ordered household.

There is an extract from Dr. Hume's address delivered at the sixth annual meeting of the American Ramabai Association in 1894 which gives some idea of what her work is:

"To see that simple white-robed devoted women managing an institution like the Sharada Sadan is a lesson for any man or woman in the world as he administers the affairs of organization for nearly 2,000 persons. To manage a native regiment of adult Indians requires two Colonels, often two Lieutenant-Colonels, Captains, Lieutenants, and non-Commissioned Officers and then to think how that simple woman with her God-given gift of administration can almost single-handed conduct that work is a marvel to us who have been able to visit her and see it done."

Mrs. Andrews tells us what a true mother Ramabai is to her family. She says her intercourse with and influence over her pupils in home and school are those of a wise companion, a tender mother, and a Christ-loving woman. She is repaid as she watches the selfish suspicious and fretful natures of the girls gradually change. It is often long before these poor girls who have been so cruelly treated can understand that anyone desires to be kind to them. What patience it must mean on the part of Ramabai to bear the foul abuse and cursing which in her work of mercy is so often hurled at her. 'I smile at it', she writes, 'for I am so well used to hearing them curse me and speak dirty words about me'.

One of her former pupils says in speaking of her: "We got a very good education in Ramabai's home; she looked after us more than our mothers could do, my mother was very kind to me . . . . What we learned in Ramabai's school we never forgot; it was a good foundation laid there, and I have the same love towards the Pandita that I have towards my mother."

The following is an extract from Ramabai's Famine Pamphlet which tells of her mother-love for souls :

"Death by starvation is but a small matter compared with the misery they have to be in when they fall into the hands of wicked people. Ever since I have seen the poor girls-some fallen into the hands of wicked men, ruined for life, and turned out by their cruel masters to die a miserable death, some being treated in the hospitals only to be taken back into the pits of sin; some bearing the burden of sin, utterly lost to the sense of shame and humanity-hell has become a horrible reality to me, and



my heart is bleeding for those young daughters of this country. Who with a mother's heart and a sister's love can rest quietly at this time, seeing that thousands of young lives are being destroyed utterly and sacrificed to sin. I cannot forget the old days in which the merciful God was so good to me, and kept me from harm; and it is my belief I have been saved by Him for this time, that I may show my gratitude by action, and save at least a few of the young widows. Some of our girls and I have made up our minds to stand by these suffering sisters of ours. So long as we have a little room and some grain, and a piece of cloth left in our school, we will share these with our new girls and look to God for help. He knows our present need and the danger around us. The plague which devastated Bombay and is still making a great havoc there has come to Poona also, and we do not know what will happen to us in the next hour. Dear friends, help us with your prayers and active sympathy, and the Father of mercies will keep us under shadow of His wings."

As I look back over thirty years and recall the various great and good people with whom the Pandita has come into touch and comment on the influence she has received from them, I should say without a question that the influence of her friends in America brought out the best side of her character. Undoubtedly activity suited her, it kept her brain and body continually at work and while in America and under the influence of great workers, the channel of her thoughts was kept pure and clear.

I judge by her letters : those we (Community of St. Mary the Virgin) received from her while in America were quite free from the arrogance and self-assertion which filled them while she was at Cheltenham. She was helped to see what a really good work was being done for her child and she was appreciative and grateful.

I believe Ramabai had strong affections, but as a friend she was very exacting and wrong-headed and strained friendship almost to breaking point, but in the long run her higher nature asserted itself and though she had by unwise friendship woven a web around herself which she would feign have broken through and could not, there were times when she strongly realized what our friendship had meant for her and her child and she did not shrink from making a public declaration of her feelings.

America supplied Ramabai with funds for her work and gave her the best advantages during her stay in that country-we may say, perhaps that the body of her work was given by America, the soul by her sojourn in the Wantage Community.

In order to show what an inspirer of her people Ramabai has been, we cannot do better than quote the following extracts from the Reports of the American Ramabai Association of 1900.

"In nine years 87,070 dollars have been sent to the treasury. Did ever one man step into a \*foreign country, and a stranger alone single-handed, and by his personality strong in purity, by his eloquence matchless in its simplicity, touch the hearts of the people, and open their purses as this fearless but modest little Oriental woman did ten years ago? *And she will do it again.* Large as are the figures mentioned, and few number of years, the wide-spread influence that Ramabai has exerted cannot be measured by time or space; nor can any money be placed upon the good she has accomplished so quietly, so unobtrusively, that her own people are far from recognizing its extent and power as yet. But we prophesy that the time is coming, and not far distant, when her children, the children of her heart, the children of her country, shall rise up and call her blessed.

"She is slowly but effectively introducing into the public thought of India the ideas of justice and mercy to an unfortunate class of her countrywomen. She is furnishing [a] concrete illustration of how women ought to be treated by any society which deserves to be called civilized. This is her cardinal work. Her ambition is to make, not America and England, but India see the value to civilization of a rationally compassionate treatment of women whom circumstances have rendered helpless.



“These years of actual experience have proved that the scheme is no mere vision, inviting the compassionate to well-meant but fruitless labour, but can be made a living fact. It is proved that enormous abuses, though deeply rooted in centuries of habit can be successfully attacked. A solitary woman, consumed with love and pity, endowed with insight and tact, knowing through and through the temper of the people among whom she must work, unfaltering in purpose, unfailing in resource, excelling in patience, undaunted by whatever adversity of conditions, has been able to inaugurate a reform, and in face of a most bitter and relentless prejudice, has been able to maintain and advance it through nearly ten years. It is a marvel that she and her school have not been annihilated by the violent hands of the hostile multitude about them. But though the conflict has been fierce, she has not suffered defeat. Her school has been established and maintained and its accommodations are already overtaxed. In a movement opposed to fanatical prejudice the most difficult and dangerous part is gaining a foothold. Ramabai has gained a foothold and has kept it. The possibility of ultimate success is assured thereby”.

The foregoing extracts go to prove that Ramabai is not only an inspirer of her countrywomen but also an inspirer of the world at large. The wealth of providence which has fallen like raindrops along the vast watershed of her singular experience has been the means of fertilizing wherever her story is told not only her own people, but the peoples of the world. The following are some of the results which have already followed on her espousal of the cause of the child-widows of India :

1. “An increased sentiment in the Hindu community in favour of re-marriage of Hindu widows in all parts of India in large numbers.
2. The interest in the kindergarten system and female education which is daily increasing in India.
3. The desire which Ramabai’s institutions have created in the hearts of Hindu men for the education of their wives.
4. The Hindu people who live in Kedgaon and the surrounding country are more careful not to ill-treat their little wives and windows lest they should run away and go to Pandita Ramabai.
5. The impetus which Pandita Ramabai’s example has given to the Indian Christian Church. Mrs. Shewantibai Nikambe’s School [This school still exists and is known as the Princess High School for Girls situated at Grant Road, Bombay.] which was started in Bombay for high caste child wives, child widows and unmarried girls. Godubai’s Home [Godubai (alias Anandibai alias Baya) writes in her autobiography Maze Puran (Marathi) that she had determined to start a similar institution and Maharshi Annasaheb alias Dhondo Keshav Karve admits in his autobiography that he too had received inspiration from Pandita Ramabai and thus they both together established their world-renowned institution for women at Hingane, near Poona-now developed as S. N. D. T. Women’s University] for Hindu Widows in Poona and Miss Shorab Chuckerbutty’s orphanage at Allahabad are the direct outcome of Pandita Ramabai’s work. The chief agent in this great development is a *daughter of India*. This is not the work of missionary Society or of European missionaries but an Indian widow, moved by the spirit of God, as His instrument in this mighty work. It shows something of the possibilities of Indian Christians. When hundreds more are actuated by the same spirit which moves Ramabai and are led to similar efforts what may we not expect to see?”

One extract from an American Ramabai Association Report will close these remarks upon Ramabai’s work :

“During the ten years of her work in the Sharada Sadan this one woman reformer, by her silent influence, and by her object lesson to the educated young men, showing them the difference between an educated wife of twenty and an ignorant wife of none or twelve, has done more towards

weakening caste rules, more towards the recognition of the true brotherhood of man, and more for the advancement of women; has prevented more demoralizing child marriages and promoted more remarriages with the despised widows than have the many so-called reformers- than has the Brahmo Samaj during the entire period of its existence. While her brothers theorize, she practices”.

The questions “Is she true? Is she honest?” have so often been raised that before closing these thoughts on her work and character they must be dealt with. Unhesitatingly we can answer that in following her God-given call she has sought to be wholly sincere and single-hearted. At times in her relationship with others her truthfulness has been called into question. As one reads between the lines of the American Ramabai Association Reports one perceives this to be the case. But what great worker is there who has never had his or her veracity at some time in their lives called into question? And when one takes into account two great difficulties which have existed all along with regard to Ramabai and her Committee great allowances have to be made in the judgments formed. The first of these is the radical difficulty which Orientals and Occidentals experience in understanding each other’s mind. The other is hardly less great than the former. Her Committee have had to control a rapidly growing work whose base of action is 14,000 miles distant from its guiding hand. Two months elapse before an answer can be received to a question on either side. In these days of fast-going, circumstances rapidly change, and an answer when it comes may fail entirely to meet the case as it then stands. As one follows through the Reports the delicate relationships between Ramabai and her Committee, one cannot but be astounded at the unfailing generosity, patience, kindness, and tenderness which they have at all times evinced in dealing with their difficult problems. Circumstances prevented the Committee at the time of Ramabai’s great trouble with the Brahmin Advisory Board from understanding the grave difficulties through which she was passing. After months of patient waiting, she wrote a long letter of explanation to an American friend which this latter wisely circulated among the Committee.

The following extract from a letter of Mrs. Andrews shows how highly they thought of her in those early days :

“It is written in such a calm dispassionate manner that it carries conviction to the minds of all who read it, and therefore there seems but one opinion that your policy prior to February 1890 must be resumed.”

Ramabai has naturally been charged with unfaithfulness in regard to the religious policy of the Sharada Sadan. So much has already been said with regard to this in the written history that not much need be added here. She was very strong in her opinion that only as a secular school allowing religious freedom could she hope to draw in any members of the higher caste she desired to benefit. She wished that her pupils might be free to study as they desired the religious book of the East as also the Book of books. She started by not desiring to influence them directly towards Christianity. Such a position to a true believer is almost if not wholly untenable. Ramabai was wholly inexperienced when she set forward, and as Christianity took a greater hold on her whole being she more and more desired to see her girls drink in the blessings which she herself was experiencing. Bit by bit, Christian influence strengthened in her institution, and conversions were more readily made, and within ten years the school had almost entirely changed its character. It had become a Christian institution. Missionaries report its work as a mission work.

The generous Committee proved itself as ever ready to go forward with Ramabai. From one of the Reports we gather the line they took with regard to this change. “Now if this sudden change, if these rapid conversions, are the result of the indirect influence of Ramabai’s unselfish Christian life, then it is indeed God’s own work to which she is called. No one would say ‘God speed’ more gratefully, more reverently than your Executive Committee. But if any indirect influence has crept in though all unconsciously to Ramabai, then the pledge to the people is broken, and we do not regret that the policy of the school should be changed before the expiration of ten years, a policy insisted upon by Ramabai and faithfully adhered to by her constituents.”

In 1898 when Pandita Ramabai's American Committee reconstructed her Association they were gladly willing to set her free from her promise of retaining an unsectarian position. I gather from various trustworthy printed matter that three quarters of her original subscribers were members of Orthodox Churches. Her committee (after the Unitarians had retired in a body) were led by and continued to be led by prominent clergy of the American Episcopal Church, who were associated in their work with Methodists, Baptism, Presbyterians. At no time would it have been difficult from the American point of view for Ramabai to have embraced full Catholic Truth. In fact, at the reconstruction of the American Association, the Committee would have gladly set her free from her promise of retaining an unsectarian stamp on her institution, but she again accepted this yoke of her own free will.

What then are the chief impediments to Ramabai's going forward to accept the fullness of the Church's teaching? The chief causes are two :

- (i) The difficulty in her own mind with its strong pantheistic mould, *viz.*, that all is equally right and good; and
- (ii) The strong pressure put upon her by Non-Conformist friends, especially those of her staff.

I venture to think that her unusual circumstances—those of controlling and employing European and American workers—made it impossible for her at the beginnings of her work to call to her aid (as fellow-workers) the higher type of missionary worker. I think this has hampered her in many ways and it has barred her way to her return to her full membership in the Catholic Church.

Extracts from two letters of Manoramabai's will prove this latter to be the main hindrance.

When Manoramabai returned to India in 1900 and was desirous of being Confirmed and taking her stands as a churchwoman, she found innumerable difficulties, which held her as a spider's web holds a fly.

"We have so many Non-Conformist friends in Poona and Bombay who would create no end of talk about it. Nearly all mother's friends dislike the idea of my being even on friendly terms with the Sisters."

In 1903 she writes : "I am situated among people of many different denominations and among many who are opposed to Church teaching."

Determination and preservance have been among the largest factors in the human side of Ramabai's work; but we note how she constantly ascribes all to the glory of God, and looks upon herself as an instrument in His hands.

We may add to this that she is a capital farmer, and a poet of no mean order. In the kindergarten, which is a part of her educational work, training the older girls to teach the little ones, many of the action songs used in English school have been aptly translated into Marathi by Ramabai. She has also enriched the song of the Christian Church with a number of beautiful hymns [set] to English as well as to Indian tunes.

The following extracts from her letters and utterances, show how her heart went out continually in acts of prayer, praise and thanks-giving. Her strong faith is shown in the following :

"I have been having a great deal of opposition lately from my Brahmin brethren. For twenty years continually they have written and talked against me and tried to break down and overthrow this work. It is hard to feel this when one is in the midst of great undertaking but the after-effect of it is like that of a powerful tonic to one's moral and spiritual nature. It taste bitter but it is very strengthening. A visitor here remarked that I need a strong powerful man to stand by me and fight my

battles. Yes, I said, the Lord of Hosts is His Name; and He is that fights my battle for me. “Oh !”, said the gentleman, “He is a spirit, you require human help in this work”. I have a different opinion. There are some things that power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.”.

“When the last such trial came, my heart seemed to fail; but the Lord rebuked my unbelief. Just about that time the foreign mail arrived and there was a beautiful post-card containing pictures on it. It came from Boston, from a friend whose name I could not make out simply from the initials. It contained just one sentence as a New Year’s message. It was this :

*More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.* This message helped me out of the trouble”.

We have yet to speak of her reverence and love for the Bible, Ramabai was well versed in the Holy writings of the Hindus. From the first when she came to read the Book of books, she perceived it to be something very different from the sacred books she was familiar with. The latter may be compared to diamonds hidden in heaps of rubbish and dust, the former to light brighter than the sun at noonday, scintillating on its every page and cutting like a sword into the denseness of man’s heart, dividing asunder the very bones and marrow of his inmost being, and throwing light on the thoughts and intents of his heart. She loves to tell her family of our Lord’s conversation with the woman of Samaria, and leads them through it to find in the World of God those perpetual streams of water, welling up to quench the thirst of parched and anguished souls.

Ramabai read her Bible subjectively, and interprets it literally. She is content to find in it the green pastures needed for herself and her flock. She fails to appreciate the noble work of students devoting their lives to Higher Criticism studies, and has taken up her pen in their condemnation as she considers this hurtful to the pure Word of God. She fails to see that as a propaganda of scepticism is being zealously pushed in India by infidel emissaries from Western lands, it is needful to allow antidote to grow and expand alongside of the poisonous literature circulated throughout the length and breadth of her country.

She inspires her people with a like love of the Scriptures, and take pains that they should all possess them. She considers that the translation made of the Bible is too difficult except for the learned, too many Sanskrit words being employed, and so she has made a re-translation of the New Testament, which she is having printed in the Mukti press, and as each book is printed it is circulated in the mission. She is also compiling a Concordance, and employing several of her better educated women as helpers in this work. If her life is spared she also hopes to prepare a Greek and Marathi, and a Hebrew and Marathi lexicon. All these will doubtless serve as valuable foundation works, which in future times can be improved upon or enlarged as students are found to take in hand literary work.

Ramabai’s burning desire that her people should embrace Christianity constrained her to write a paper in which she called upon Christians to consecrate themselves to the Lord for the work of spreading the Gospel, and upon missionaries to train Indian Christians in Bible methods of evangelization. She has also written a learned pamphlet in which she seeks to show Western nations the harm which is being done by the undue magnifying of the sacred books of Eastern philosophical beliefs in that it puffs up the vanity of the followers of these false creeds to make them consider them of equal value with the Word of God and thereby strengthens them in their hold of the kingdom of darkness.

We have alluded to fault and imperfections in Ramabai’s character; not that these make one think less highly of her, or love her less on account of them, but rather because these very imperfections overruled by the loving Heavenly Father to His Glory, have gone to bring out truer and deeper traits than if she had been exempted from the “erring and straying” to which all the sinful children of Adam are prone.

Another reason, and this a most important one, is that when the time comes [for] handing on a true character-picture of so important a personality, the tendency of her heathen countrypeople, after Ramabai's death, will be to account her as a goodness, and of her Christian compatriots to accumulate legendary records which will bring disproportion into the story of her life and mar its true harmony.

How conscious she herself is of these wanderings from the fold of the Good Shepherd, some of her most beautiful utterances prove. Ramabai cannot be judged by ordinary standards. Raised up to be a beacon in a benighted land, she is a public character. As her acts of praise and thanksgiving are public, so too are not unfrequently her acts of penitence.

A few words need yet to be said in answer to the question. Why did not England instead of America help in supporting Ramabai's work? The main portion of the answer to this has already been given. Ramabai asked the help of England and England readily accorded her everything she wanted. I cannot too emphatically assert this. Ramabai went to America on a visit with the intention of returning to England, and thus put into the hands of the Americans the opportunity of espousing her cause. I think I am right in saying that England and her Colonies have hardly been behind America in the gifts they have sent out to Ramabai; and England would have done still more for her, had she had [the] patience to wait and prove the generosity of the English public.

In having attempted to make a fair study of Ramabai's life, the impression remaining on one's mind is one of great contrasts. *Thankfulness* that through her instrumentality the kingdom of darkness is being weakened in India. *Heart Sorrow* that she has failed to rise up to the highest Spiritual gifts, chiefly through the unhappy divisions among Christians. Is it altogether the fault of the Non-Conformists that we are so divided? I think not. It surely seems that we need more elasticity in our methods and systems; more power of entering into the difficulties of those less advanced in the faith than ourselves. While guarding jealously the Church's heritage of the Faith, should we not also be able to enter more into the difficulties of those who, unable to accept the whole body of Christian Truth, are yet sincere in their desire to be led onward by the gradual teaching of the Holy Spirit? And should we not more readily perceive the goodness and beauty of the work and lives of others?

It was painful to hear of one who had known and loved Ramabai in England being dissuaded from visiting her on account of "the strange practices carried on in her mission". Shall we ever hope to win our erring members if we are not willing to meet them as friends and watch over them as children?

Broad-minded generous-hearted reverent Christians of various denominations in America have banded together to attack the stronghold of caste in India and in so doing have set an example to the world of Christian unity, and may we not hope that the day is not far off when their example will be followed in other Christian lands? Such action has surely given richer and fuller meanings to the teachings of the Master and strengthened the hope that the prayers of Christ and His Bride may be answered by a growing unity of heart and mind among His followers.

SISTER GERALDINE

*Community of St. Mary the Virgin, Wantage*

## A Message from Pandita Ramabai to her friends

Dear GUARDIAN, [\[This letter is addressed to the Editor, Bombay Guardian edited by Mr. Alfred Dyer.\]](#)

Kindly allow me to send a few words of greeting and farewell to my friends through your columns. I wish you and all my dear friends in the Lord a joyful New Year. I am very grateful to the Lord and to you all for helping and making me feel very happy in the past year. The Lord be praised and glorified for all His goodness to my children and to me.

On the 24th of the last month, I opened my Marathi Bible in the morning and my eyes fell upon certain passages, marked on the same day in the year 1896. I happened to be at Sohagpur, C. P., on that day. Dear Sister Drynan and myself were preparing to go to the Government Poor House there, and were waiting on the Lord to give us directions before going to do the morning work. The Lord told me that morning that I was to get 300 young widows from the Famine districts, and gave me for my comfort and strength the promise from Isaiah 60 : 10, 11, 16 and 18. I little understood and realised then the importance of these promises.

On the 24th of the last month, when my eyes fell upon these verses, and the date put down against them, the HOLY SPIRIT brought to my remembrance all that the Lord said to me through those words and my joy knew no bounds when I began to recount His mercies one by one. When I gathered all my girls for prayer on the Christmas morning, I found that there were three hundred of them from the Famine districts – all looking well and happy. How I thanked the dear FATHER for fulfilling His promises in giving me the desire of my heart. A Church, all of the newly-converted girl-widows, is established in the ground which was a lonely desert a year ago, but is now alive with human beings, and in which the walls of the new houses are fast springing up. GOD gave me three hundred and twenty girls from the Famine districts before the year was over, and has squared the number of the fifteen Christian girls who attended the Camp meeting in April 1896 at Lanowlee (Lonavla). So a Thanksgiving and a Camp meeting was held at our new settlement near Kedgaon Railway station.

Also, the Lord gave me a name for our new settlement :

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls **SALVATION**, and thy gates **PRAISE** !”

*(Isaiah, 60 : 18)*

Yes, the devastating plague was not heard of within our borders the whole of the last year. The Lord has kept and preserved us under His wings. Blessed be our good **FATHER** for His everlasting mercies ! Now the walls of the new houses being built up, shall be called Salvation according to His command. So our new settlement is called **MUKTI**; and the gates, when they are finished, shall have **PRAISE THE LORD** inscribed on their heads.

My American friends have been asking me for a long time to go over to see them; but **I** could not do so without consulting **GOD**. At the end of November last, the Lord showed me clearly His will about my going abroad. I had prayed to Him to send me the right person to take charge of the work; and He has done so. My dear friend Sunderabai Powar and my assistants will look after the school at Poona, while Sister Abrams (who a few months ago was told by the Lord to go to Kedgaon to help me) has charge of the new church and school at Mukti. Also a good Christian architect has been sent by God to look after the buildings there. I have sure promises of the Father to depend upon for the support of my children, and look forward to the time when our new building will be completed, and we shall have a church building of our own at Mukti.



The desire of my heart as regards having 225 Christian girls is more than fulfilled. I have during the last year realized that the Lord “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”. So I praise and thank Him out of the fullness of my heart. To your prayers and help I owe much of this happiness, my dear good friends; so I thank you very gratefully for what you have done for me. I thank you and pray for you that the dear Lord may bless you according to His rich mercies.

Now farewell, my dear friends. I am to sail for America very soon. So please pray for me that GOD’s will may be fulfilled in me whether I am at home or abroad; and that my children and myself may be kept by Him. “Now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the **Power** that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by **CHRIST JESUS** throughout all ages, without end, Amen.”

Bombay : January 10th, 1898

Yours in His Service,  
RAMABAI

My address in America will be : 36, Rutland Square, Boston Mass., U. S. A.

## Appendix–Ramabai Sings Magnificat

About forty years ago when I was a little girl, my parents visited Benares as pilgrims to get merit, for they thought they would save themselves, and us their children, by bathing in the Ganges, and by worshipping the idols in that place. As orthodox Brahmins, they most religiously avoided coming in contact with Christians and the Mlechchas, *i.e.* the foreigners, but one day in the providence of God, a Christian man came to see my father while we were at Benares. I do not remember whether he was an Indian or a European Christian, nor what he spoke to my father. **But I** remember two words which I heard him say while he was conversing with my father. The words were “Yeshu Khrista” *i.e.* Jesus Christ. He shook hands with my father when taking leave, and said something which I do not remember. But I found myself repeating the two words “Yeshu Khrista” which I heard from him, after he went away. I must have repeated them many times because my sister was much alarmed and drew my mother’s attention to what I was whispering to myself. Mother asked me what it was that **I** had been repeating; but **I** was afraid to answer her question and kept silence. She warned me against repeating the name of the God of the Mlechchas, and told me not to bring His name to my lips again. But I never forgot that Name.

About thirteen years after this, a Baptist missionary [\[The name of this Baptist missionary was Mr. Issac Allen whom Pandita Ramabai later met while she was in England.\]](#) living at Silchar, Assam, sent a little printed card to me by my husband. The card had these words on it : “Incline your heart unto the Lord”. I read them and pondered over them in my heart. I had lived without God and without hope for many years. I felt as if there was a great emptiness within me which needed to be filled, and no one but the God who was full of love and compassion for sinners would be able to fill it. **I felt I** needed His help and for the first time in my life I prayed to the Unknown God to incline our hearts unto Him.

I did not know how to pray, but without my knowing it, the Holy Spirit converted the Words of the Scripture into a prayer in my heart, and God did answer that prayer in His appointed time, when it pleased Him to bring me into the light of the blessed Gospel.

A few weeks after the above incident, I found a little booklet, the Gospel of St. Luke in my room. I do not know who had brought it or left it there, but I began to read it and greatly liked the story told in it. About this time my husband introduced me to the missionary who some weeks before had sent the card for me. The missionary read the first chapter of Genesis and explained it to me. There was a wonderful attraction in the words which he read. My soul responded to the message of God’s Holy Spirit. I resolved then without knowing the reason why, that I would become a Christian. Sixteen years after the time when I first heard the Name of Jesus Christ, I realized that “there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved”.

Some unknown friend, whose name is written in the Book of life, made me acquainted with that Name at Benares and another unknown friend left a small Gospel in my room for me to read, that I might come to know the Son of God, “Who loved me and gave Himself for me”. These dear people who are well known to God and whom I expect to meet soon in the presence of the King, sowed the seed, other watered, and God gave the increase and I was born in His Kingdom. How I thank God with a full heart to-day for sending His messengers in order to make Himself known to me. I realize more and more the wonderful power that is in the Name of Jesus and in the Word of God which converted me. It will be an encouragement to the dear children of God, who have toiled long in this country without seeing any visible fruit of their labours, to know that the Word-Seed, faithfully and prayerfully sown, does surely bear fruit.

I am convinced more and more that the Gospel given to our people freely will be the means of their salvation. I am therefore going to spend your generous gift in giving the Gospel to many thousands of pilgrims, and to many others.

Mukti, Kedgaon,  
April 23rd, 1908.

RAMABAI

## **ERRATA**

*Note* : There may be a few more mistakes in the biblical references; those listed above are only illustrative and appear in the original.

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