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FOREWORD

Biographies of Indian Christian leaders who have contributed to the building of the Church in India are few and far between. The reason is partly that not many of our distinguished forebears left behind adequate, reliable records. A biographer has to do considerable research to gather material from scattered sources, such as missionary magazines and reports, not easily accessible. The reason is also in part due to the unfortunate belief that the role of the Indian Christian colleague in the task of Christian evangelism was subsidiary and negligible in comparison with the pioneer labours of the foreign missionary worker.

This account of the life and work of Canon Dhannavada Anantam is therefore doubly welcome. For it is based on a manuscript of "Recollections" which the Canon himself was persuaded to write almost towards the close of his life; though he did not live to complete the account. But his distinguished son, Dr. D. S. Ramachandra Rao, who had been for many years his father's constant companion, has been able to put together in this delightful volume, along with the autobiographical record, his own reminiscences of his father's life, both when he was in active service, and during the long and blessed period of his retirement. Any one who reads this life of Canon Anantam can judge for himself how significant the contribution of the Indian colleague was in all aspects of the Christian enterprise, from the very early days of Indian Church history.

To very few of us is vouchsafed the blessing of a long and useful life. Canon Anantam lived to the ripe old age of just one year short of a whole century. And that life was crowded with significant events that made history, not only in our country but in the whole, wide world. The Canon's own career was replete with varied experiences, remarkable personal friendships, challenging opportunities

for service, and unusual occasions for travel both in India and abroad. All of them went into the making of his ordered life. Called of God from the heart of Hindu orthodoxy, separated unto him as a Minister in His Church, through his long and active connection with the work of the Church, Dhannavada Anantam laboured assiduously as a Christian educationist of the front rank, a herald of the Gospel to his Hindu kinsmen in town and village, a man of letters who helped translate the Bible and interpret its living message in his native Telugu, a man of God who till the end of his long life spent long hours in prayer and worship.

Dr. Ramachandra Rao has vividly sketched not only these many-sided activities of his father through the long stretch of a busy career; he has devoted chapters in this biography to describe the human, lovable person of the man. Anantam was still in his 'teens when he made the fateful decision to be baptized. That meant turning away from the widowed mother whom he loved so dearly, giving up so much of the security and prestige of the ancestral Brahman home. But to Anantam no price was dear enough to pay for the gift of the eternal life in Christ Jesus. The early calamity of a broken home with the sudden death of his wife, leaving behind two little boys to his care, did not shatter his faith. The home is happily rebuilt and we are permitted to see Anantam in the intimate role of a considerate husband and an affectionate father—and, nearer the end, of Anantam as grandfather and great grandfather !

Perhaps the most remarkable fact in Anantam's long career is the tremendous power for good that he was able to exercise on successive generations of student youth that passed through his care in Masulipatam and Bezwada. This was at a time in history when New India was emerging. Noble College remains at Machileepatnam as Noble High School; the College Department has been moved to Guntur and affiliated to the Andhra Christian College. The old C.M.S. High School at Bezwada has been taken over by the

Municipality. Instead in Bezwada there is today the Anantam Hospital. New occasions teach new duties, and it is significant that, now he is no longer among us, Canon Dhannavada Anantam has left behind as his legacy clear indications how the message of the Gospel may be made challenging and relevant in New India.

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P. D. DEVANANDAN.

PREFACE

It was by no means easy to decide to write the biography of Dhannavada Anantam, either while he was alive or soon after he passed on. During his lifetime, more than a couple of decades ago, several of his friends suggested to him, and a few, who knew him intimately, pleaded with him that he should have on record the important events of his life so that it might inspire generations that come after him. He would smile and say, "I have done so little that is worth recording. But since you are so insistent, I shall think over what you have said". The more he thought over it, the more difficult he found to start writing his autobiography. He was more conscious of his failings than of his virtues. He felt that he might have been just the means (*nimitha*) by which God's goodness passed to others; for which he could not take any credit to himself. He shrank from the lime-light; he was content to remain unknown. As years passed, and as he grew old he lost himself in God—God was everything; he was nothing. In that frame of mind he could hardly be expected to set about to seek, find and record what was really good in himself. It would have run counter to his mature spiritual growth.

But Anantam had the gift of looking at things from the other man's point of view. While he held on to his views, he hardly ever smacked of obstinacy. As he grew older, he realised that the views of others, particularly of those who loved and cherished him, deserved due consideration. He would go out of his way to please others or to make them happy. In matters that did not involve a principle, he was ever ready to come to a compromise with others.

The members of his family, particularly his sons, requested him in later years, to let them have a glimpse of his ancestral home, and of the priceless treasures of mind and spirit that it enshrined; of the men and women who lived in it, and of their ways and beliefs; of the motives too that impelled him to leave it, burn his boats behind him, and become a follower of Jesus Christ,—of his early days, his

married life, and of his vocation at the start. Since nearly all of his own people were dead by then or were too feeble to recollect the past, he was the only surviving person who could give information of his ancestral home. Fortunately the importunity of his sons overcame his reluctance to record some of the important events of his life.

And in 1928 A.D. his "Recollections" of the men and women who influenced his life was written. In the Preface to the "Recollections" he writes—"For a number of years past many of my friends have insistently asked me to leave behind me my autobiography, and I have been putting them off, year after year, from a feeling that my life has had very little romance in it that merited chronicling, much less an autobiography. This feeling has been heightened by a sense that there is a danger of over-colouring or exaggerating events when the personal element comes in. But latterly my sons have over and over again begged me, at least to note down such things as would inform them of my early life, and of my family history, as they have no means otherwise of having the information, which they would love to possess, and possibly value. This appeal I can no longer resist, especially, as it may be I am nearing the close of my allotted span of life; and I propose not to write an autobiography, but to give some recollections of my relatives and friends who have helped to shape my life—common-place and humdrum as it has been. It will inevitably happen that my personal history will come in largely; and I should not regret having undertaken this task, if anything I write should be helpful in any measure to my children primarily, and to others, if these "Recollections" should ever be printed in some form or other. Above all, I trust I shall be kept from self-glorification, but give all the praise and glory to Him who has led me all the way in His mercy and loving-kindness".

"I am aware that the plan I have adopted in this sketch has its drawbacks. There is the inevitable overlapping and repetition of events in different connections, and under

different heads; but I trust that, this defect does not seriously diminish the usefulness of these ‘Recollections’.”

Though he wrote the “Recollections”, he did not seem anxious to have it published in the form of a book. It was written in such a way as to serve the purpose of a Family Reference Book of interest to the family, and intimate friends, but not of public interest, while he was alive. It needed revising and editing. To find a person to do it was not easy. His friends were either too young, or too old to do it. The manuscript lay in his desk for well over a decade, when he permitted his sons to peruse it. They were impressed by it: they felt grateful that he had yielded to their expostulations, and produced a manuscript of vital interest to them. They waited for an opportunity to obtain his consent for its publication under his direction.

Meanwhile the advent of the Second World War, the repercussions of which were noticeable in India, had made the prospect of its publication become more remote than ever, owing to paper scarcity. Even after the War the prices ruled so high that a publication of that sort would have been prohibitive for the Indian intelligentsia to pay for a book. So long as he was alive, there was a chance for the book to be published. During the last year of his life the prospect of its publication became brighter. Some friends in Andhra Desa, and in Madras, were contemplating the celebration of his centenary on the 4th June 1949, when according to Indian calculations he would have entered on the hundredth year. The publication of his “Recollections” might have been one of the items of the celebration. Anantam himself, who had been sceptical about his longevity, once remarked, “Since I have dragged on so long, very likely I shall enter my one hundredth year!” But those fond hopes and plans could not be realised, as he passed on unexpectedly on the 23rd April 1949. It was a disappointment to his family and friends, since the end came so unexpectedly. It took a year or two to get over the shock of his death. The

responsibilities already undertaken had had to be fulfilled, before a new responsibility could be shouldered.

Anantam's unexpected passing on almost on the verge of his entering the hundredth year was a signal for the expression of sympathy to the family by friends all over the country. Hundreds of letters poured in expressing appreciation of his character and personality. Not a few hoped that a permanent record of his life would be made before long. This quasi-public request clinched the issue in favour of attempting to write Anantam's biography. When it was decided upon, the writer having been a member of Madras Legislative Assembly with political duties to attend to several days in the week, could not get time to go ahead with the task till the end of the year 1951.

Then to start, and go ahead writing the biography was a difficult task. The only available book that could furnish reliable information about Anantam's early days was the "Recollections". So he had to draw freely from it for the sake of authenticity. There was hardly anybody alive who was acquainted with those days to compare notes with. The task was made comparatively easy for the biographer up to the year 1928 by his referring to the "Recollections". But Anantam lived over a couple of decades since he wrote it. Though the biographer was very closely associated with him during that period, there was no record, not even notes about his ninth and tenth decades. His two sons had to depend on their memory to visualise, and depict in black and white the scenes and events that happened during those eventful twenty odd years. Some worth-while events might have slipped away beyond recall. But two heads were better than one to recall the past: it meant days, weeks and months of hard thinking and working to recall and arrange past events in their sequence. Perhaps it was the best and most interesting period of Anantam's life. It may be that he did not do much during this period—but he did do as much as a man of his age was expected to do, and more. It was in fact the long evening of Anantam's day! The conflict

and struggle of the day was over: the competitive element in the affairs of life was eliminated except in following the footsteps of Jesus Christ, his Master. He believed that in the competitive world, it is Christ-like to step aside rather than elbow one's way to the front. He could now sit back in his chair, and disinterestedly look at the world and its ways, and on the part that he had played in it, enriched by the experience of the past! During this period he grew to be big, wise and great in his approach to men and events—his spirit clung to what was real and lasting in life, discarding what was ephemeral and trivial. As years passed he evolved into a finer and yet finer type of a human being: it needed care and wisdom to evaluate his evolving spiritual tempo. Old age had lost its terrors for him: nor was it a period of gradual general deterioration. No doubt at times the flesh betrayed signs and symptoms of the weight of increasing years: but in a flash the spirit would assert itself and light up his face with trust and dependence on divine omnipotence. In describing it one can hardly do justice to the spiritual transformation that was taking place in him, as his body grew frail with advancing years. The spirit, indeed, motivated the body, and turned it into its obedient vehicle! In fact, with the radiance of spiritual glow in his face, his charming manners, and soft loving voice he was more attractive and popular then, than ever before.

• The biographer is thankful that a good part of what was worth while during that period was subconsciously preserved and recalled (into service) while writing this book. His sons could bear testimony to the deep impression that he had made on the Hindu public, even as a middle aged man working hard with the sweat of his brow. During the early years of this century while the sons toured in Andhra Desa on business, some of the common people, and of the intelligentsia too, used to accost either of them asking, “Sir, are you not the son of Anantam Garu? We are pleased to meet you. He is a true Christian: he is so unique!” It was a challenge to the sons to be worthy of their father! That uniqueness of his,

which was noticeable in his fifties and sixties, became stabilised and developed a couple of decades hence. It was the lineaments of his character formed in the mould of Christ's precepts and example, that was his priceless possession. It was that that made him attractive and lovable. It was to bring out that characteristic of his that this book is written. If the biographer had not succeeded in placing that aspect of Anantam vividly before the reader it was mostly due to his meagre acquaintance with the writer's craft.

I am indebted to my brother for going through the manuscript more than once and suggesting many omissions and additions. I am grateful to Mr. S. G. Bach of the British Council in Madras who was good enough to read the manuscript, and suggest verbal alterations, in spite of his indifferent health. He encouraged the writer with his good cheer and blessings.

When the manuscript was typed, it assumed the dimension of some six hundred odd foolscap pages: it became too large for modern ideas of publishing. On his own accord, therefore, the writer did his best to cut it down to four hundred odd pages. But some members of the publishing fraternity thought that it was still long, tending to be dilatory.

Dr. P. D. Devanandan, who is responsible for the publication of this book under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A., is no respecter of persons. With soft speech and charming manners he wielded the red pencil with consummate art, heedless of the sighs and tears of the writer, just to be able to save some space and paper; ostensibly to make the book cheap enough to be patronised by the average reader. Like the surgeon he used the cutting knife most mercilessly, hoping to be thanked at the end of the operation! I am deeply grateful to him for his solicitude.

I crave the indulgence of the reader for this obvious limitation which this biography manifests.

ANANTA BHAVAN,
BASAVANGUDI,
BANGALORE-4.

D. S. RAMACHANDRA RAO.

17th March 1956.

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DHANNAVADY ANANTAM
in his sixties while on his first visit
to England

CHAPTER I

A BRAHMAN YOUTH DECIDES FOR CHRIST

We can only go back three generations. Family tradition has it that the grandfather, though a Brahman, entered the service of the Nawab of Carnatic and rose to the command of a battalion, which he led against the British in the Carnatic Wars. When he forsook his military career, he decided to settle down to the peaceful pursuits of village life, in the neighbourhood of Nellore, not far from Madras. During the first decade of the 19th century, a son was born to him and he was named Venkata Rao. He was the father of Anantam.

“ All I recollect of my father ”, says Anantam, “ is that he was a Madhva Brahman, Dhannavada Venkata Rao Pantulu by name; and that he was a tall and well-built person, of a rather darkish complexion. He was in Government service and was much respected. In the influential position he held, he might have been rich, but for his improvidence. I remember my mother telling me that he came as a young man from Nellore District to Pusulooru, in search of a second wife, after his first wife’s death, and married her (my mother). My father, ever after, lived and worked in different taluks of Guntur District ”.

It was the night of June 4th, 1850 when the baby boy arrived in the home of the Dhannavada family. He was named Venkata Ananta Padmanabha Rao, quite a mouthful to announce: but for the convenience of everybody concerned, it was subsequently abbreviated to “ Anantam ”. A sickly child, he caused his mother much anxiety and trouble, but with her tender care he grew to be sturdy and strong. When he was five years old, something out of the way happened.

The father was performing his *puja*, soon after daybreak, and the mother was busy in the kitchen. She heard a cry which floated over the high garden wall. She recognized

her son's voice, and leaving boiling rice on the oven, rushed into the street, in the direction of the sound. What met her eyes stunned her! Her womanly instinct made her eyes sweep the cart, that stood before her, from end to end; and she took in at a glance, that the bullocks were unyoked and secured to the pole. Her son was making frantic efforts to extricate his head from between the spokes of the wheel and crying piteously. The father was told of what had happened; he stopped his *pūja*, and forthwith sent for the village carpenter, who sawed away one of the spokes in the wheel, while the mother held the head and gently extricated it! As he carried away his son exultantly on his shoulder, the father remarked, "The boy has had enough of play; let him now get some acquaintance with books!"

This happened in the village of Yalamaddala. There was no school in that remote village to keep him out of mischief. But a school was improvised and inaugurated in their own home, and a Madhva Brahman, Antanna Pantulu, was installed as the teacher. Under his control, a *pīal* school came into existence, and Anantam was its first pupil. About his first teacher Anantam says, "He was a clever teacher, but he was cruel to the poor children committed to his charge. Within the space of one year, I was taught all that the teacher knew, and he averred that he could teach me nothing more".

Anantam learnt as much as he could under these seemingly unpromising conditions. He says, "I remember how, on one occasion, my father was lying on his back and had me sit on his body, and made me read to him from a palmyrah leaf manuscript of *Bhagavatam*. Oh! the great satisfaction he expressed at his little son's performance. The foundation thus laid at that early age proved helpful, and I believe that, after all, the old method of teaching should not be despised".

The foundation thus laid was of great use to Anantam. Not only during middle age, but also right up to ripe old age, almost to the last day or two of his life, Anantam could

recite verses and poems which he had learnt during his boyhood. Anantam's capacity for memorising was remarkable throughout his long life.

When Anantam was seven years old, his father fell ill. He obtained sick leave from the authorities and took his wife and two sons to Pusulooru where his wife's brothers lived. The illness was to prove fatal, despite the best attention the family could provide. Fearing the worst, the father had Anantam's *upanayanam* performed, for, only then, would the son know the sacred *mantras* to be said at the father's funeral obsequies. The *upanayana* ceremony was quickly performed to enable the dying man to take part in it. Anantam wrote about this in his *Recollections*, "Anticipating that his illness might prove fatal, he performed my *upanayana* ceremony so that I might be ready to perform his funeral obsequies. His death plunged my poor mother in utter despair and sorrow; but I was too young to realise the greatness of my loss, and I remember how I played with other children even during the days of mourning. I had to light the funeral pyre myself, and go through all the painful ceremonial".

THE ANCESTRAL HOME

The burden of the family now fell upon the shoulders of the young widowed mother of Anantam. She was the youngest member of a family of five brothers and three sisters. She came of a well-to-do family, and her father was a respected landholder. After his death, the eldest brother, Konayya Pantulu, looked after the affairs of the family. He was much respected in the village, and treated as a Zamindar.

Anantam graphically describes his mother's influence in his uncle's home. "My dear mother was treated by my uncles and aunts with affection and regard; and her counsel was law to them in all family matters. She was a born lady, and though she was not taught to read or write, she knew by heart many poems and songs in Sanskrit and Telugu, in addition to a large fund of *Puranic* lore. When I was taught the *sandhya*,

on the occasion of my *upanayanam* before my father's death, she learnt it by heart by hearing it recited, three times a day during the sixteen days of the ceremony; and she would correct me when I made any slips in the course of the recital. Her great intellectual powers and common sense were such that she could have administered the affairs of a district, had she not been a woman, or had she lived in times when women could hold office ”.

Till he was about ten or eleven years old, Anantam was under the tutelage of Antanna Pantulu, who was first entertained by his father to keep him out of mischief. He was brought over from Pusulooru and asked to conduct a school in the uncle's house.

About this schoolmaster Anantam naïvely writes, “ He was a terror to the poor urchins who had the ill-luck to be his pupils. He would at times go round administering discipline with his cane, indiscriminately to one and all of them. But he was good at imparting his very limited stock of knowledge to those who were entrusted to his care. I was under this and another teacher for several years along with two of my cousins, learning but little more than what I knew at six or seven ”.

There was another terror, too, in the uncle's rural home; she was a woman, Rami by name. She was a Sudra by birth, and her duty was to sweep the large house, and keep it clean. She had an eye on the children, who were a handful to be sure. Woe to the boy or girl who was inclined to be naughty or troublesome! She would chase the culprit round the house with a birch in hand, and deal with him in an exemplary way, and bring the recalcitrant to his knees. She was treated as a member of the family, and she took liberties with the children, not without the connivance of the elders, up to a point!

When he was about eleven, Anantam was sent to Guntur along with two of his cousins to continue his studies, since that town had grown in importance. Janakiramanna Pantulu, another uncle of his, was then an official in the District

Magistrate's office there; and he looked after the three boys, and had them admitted into the local Mission School, where they commenced to learn English.

Evidently Anantam and his cousin, Seenayya, did not relish the urban ways of Guntur; they longed for the freedom of rural Pusulooru. In the course of a month or so they felt homesick, and without informing any members of the family stealthily made their way to Pusulooru. "We ran as if for our lives, to escape being overtaken by our people", says Anantam, recalling that incident, "and while doing so, we encountered three stalwart *Erikala* men with big lathies, who ordered us to stop there and then. They were highway robbers, and we stood trembling with fear that they would beat us and rob us of our jewels, and perhaps kill us. But when we told them who we were, they let us go, warning us that there was a rapid stream, in full torrential flood ahead of us".

"We soon found ourselves in front of a vast expanse of water, and stood crying, not knowing what to do. In our extremity, the gracious God, who watched over us, came to our rescue. A Brahman came there carrying a bundle of cholam straw for his cattle; he ferried us across the flood on his shoulders, one by one, and took us to his own home, and lodged us there for the night. The next day he escorted us home to Pusulooru, where we had a 'warm' reception—I from my mother, and Seenayya from his father—for our dangerous escapade".

Two persons, besides the mother, influenced Anantam and his cousin in this early period. "I must not omit to note one or two other facts that influenced me to think of being and doing good", owns Anantam. "I had a cousin, the only son of my mother's eldest sister, Manuri Venkata Krishnamma by name, who was loved by every member of our large family circle, and won the pet name of 'the golden one' (*Bangāru*). He was so good, so loving, so pure, and so helpful to every one, that he was pointed out as the ideal for every boy in the family. He had not the opportunity of learning English, and

so he had to be content with a subordinate post in Government service till he retired. He was intensely religious, upright and pure in his private life.

“His orthodoxy as a Brahman was so rigid, that he would carry on his shoulder the small box of his household gods wherever he travelled, and, for fear of contamination, he would never travel by rail; but would walk any distance. This he did even at the age of eighty. His affection for Seenayya and myself did not diminish even after our conversion to Christianity; and he would invariably call on us if he passed through the place where we happened to live at the time. It was indeed a rare treat to me to spend an hour or so in his radiant and joyous company!”

“Another person whom I admired, and whose selfless life was an influence for good, was one Addepalli Sastrulu, a *Vaisya* gentleman. He was great at reading and expounding the *puranas*, and he purposely remained a bachelor, to be able to live on his small income derived from lands, and serve others. He was a welcome visitor in our family, and my recollection of him in my early boyhood rouses to this day feelings of respect and admiration.

“He always placed himself at the service of others, and travelled long distances at his own expense, to transact business for others. He was in fact looked upon as a member of our family. I believe that, though he was not a Christian by profession, he surely had the spirit of Christ, by which he was actuated in all his dealings. This cannot be said of many professing Christians. What was said by St. Peter to Cornelius in Acts. X: 34-35, may be easily said of this good man. ‘I clearly see that God makes no distinction between one man and another, but that in every nation those who fear Him and live good lives are acceptable to Him.’”

From Guntur, the uncle, Janakiramanna Pantulu, was transferred to Machileepatnam, popularly known as Bandar. Anantam and his mother went to live in the uncle's home. In Machileepatnam, along with his two cousins, Anantam was sent to the Hindu High School, of which the

Headmaster was Vempati Subramaniam, a Brahman of culture and capacity. One morning, he happened to be teaching arithmetic to his pupils. As Anantam stood by, he put a question in mental arithmetic. The whole class failed to answer the question correctly; but Anantam, who had been bubbling over with comprehension, burst out with the correct answer, the moment the teacher turned his eyes towards him. "You are a sharp little fellow!" exclaimed the teacher, pleased with his performance. Besides, he rewarded his new pupil with four slate pencils, which the latter was proud of.

Anantam's partiality for mental arithmetic continued throughout his life. In solving the everyday mathematical problems, while his sons felt the need of paper and pencil, he would despise such unnecessary aids, and work out the problem mentally, and would be ready with the answer in half the time they took.

The Headmaster got to be fond of the "sharp little fellow", and did what he could to draw out his talents. For some reason, the Headmaster left the school shortly afterwards, but he was taken on by Robert Noble, who was running a Christian Mission School. Since Subramaniam was a popular teacher several pupils left the Hindu School and joined the Noble School. Anantam, his favourite pupil, and his two cousins followed suit.

ROBERT NOBLE—MISSIONARY PIONEER

Machileepatnam, situated at the mouth of the river Krishna, was a town of considerable importance during the early years of the second half of the last century. It was one of the earliest settlements of the British in India. It grew into a town of great commercial importance because of its ancient industry. Cotton prints, a variety known as *Kalankari*, were a speciality of Machileepatnam, and its neighbourhood; and the *kalankari* bed-sheets, bed-spreads, and door curtains were not only appreciated all over the country, but were also in demand in the markets of the world. Machileepatnam attracted not only the British trader, who came for profit,

but also the Christian Missionary, who came rather with the intention of sharing his own culture and religion with the people of the land.

Robert Noble had come to India in the early forties of the last century as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, and had started a school at Machileepatnam with the object of giving a liberal education to the youth of the country of his adoption. He came from a well-to-do family in England, and was educated at Harrow and Cambridge. He was a remarkable man, and no one who came into contact with him could help being impressed by his magnetic personality. He very soon became popular, and boys flocked to his school. The parents little realised at the outset what the result of the impact of Noble's life, thought and teaching would be on the young and impressionable minds of their boys. Noble remained single all his life for the sake of his school, and for the converts whom God gave him as the fruit of his prayerful and loving labour. He called the school his wife, and the converts, his children.

"I first met him early in 1863", writes Anantam referring to Noble, "and the first impression was one of awe and reverence. He was almost always dressed in satin-coloured silk, and this, to my mind, seemed that he was always surrounded by a halo of peculiar sanctity. But by his loving dealings with his boys, that feeling of fear soon vanished, giving place to filial affection and intimacy. He knew how to win the love and confidence of even small boys; and his discernment of character was remarkable. Both cousin Seenayya and I soon took to him, and he encouraged us to visit him at home. Boys flocked to his house at noon between the morning and afternoon session of the school. He hardly ever touched on the subject of religion, but would help us in our lessons and, by means of questions, he would instruct us on various topics of general knowledge. He would take several boys with him in his spacious bullock coach to school in the afternoon, and I had the proud privilege of a ride frequently on his knee".

“ On one occasion, my hands and thigh were covered with itch at the sight of which he was shocked. He took me into his bath-room, and washed the sores with warm water and soap; then softly applied sulphur ointment with his own fingers, as gently as a mother would. This endeared him to me all the more ”.

“ Mr. Noble’s morning addresses were most impressive both to the young, and to the more advanced pupils. The hymns, taught to all the school, were also helpful in strengthening the impression made on our minds during the Scripture hour; and the magnetic personality of Noble made the serious and thoughtful boys feel that there was something in him that was lacking in their homes, and in their own lives. When he discovered serious thoughts in any of his pupils, he encouraged private conversations, and Bible reading with prayer.

“ It was also his habit to go to the morning school long before the time, and walk about in the compound with his children (as he called them) instructing them in their day’s lessons or in some useful subject. In the evening, he used to remain on the play-ground for some time, watching the boys play; and then he would go either for a walk or a ride before going home ”.

“ Often he would select one or two boys to accompany him in his walks. I remember how one evening he took me for a walk, and how, as it was getting dark, he did not wish to let me go home alone. He accompanied me till I was quite near my home, and walked back in pouring rain, which suddenly burst upon him.

“ Even after we had left the Noble School our visits were not interrupted. In one of those visits, while I was attending the Hindu High School, he happened to be resting on his couch in the hall. When he saw me, he called me to his side and made me sit on the couch close to him, and stroking my back affectionately, he remarked, ‘ I wonder, my boy Anantam, if I would live to see you as a child of God, serving Him! ’ These words were lodged in my heart, and they were fulfilled in my subsequent life .”

Anantam and Seenayya had learned from Noble to read the New Testament in English, and understand the truth as exemplified in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. They had also learnt to pray to God for the revelation of the truth, and for the strength to accept it and live up to it, whatever the consequences might be !

Mason, who was then a teacher in the Noble School, also helped to deepen their spiritual life. Anantam describes the situation in his own graphic way: " I met Mason for the first time in the Noble School compound, as he was going into his room; he stood in the veranda, and, as I passed by and saluted him he smiled so benignly, that it touched my heart. He invited me to his room, and his affectionate talk and characteristic, loving countenance drew me to him. He invited me and Seenayya to visit him out of school hours; we availed ourselves of his invitation. We were then pupils of the Hindu High School, but as we had some acquaintance with the New Testament, and had some love for the truth as taught by Jesus Christ, Mason used this opportunity to read the Bible with us regularly, impressing upon our hearts the wonderful love of God to us sinners ".

DECISION TO BE BAPTIZED

" It was not the superiority of Christian doctrine as a system of religion that won our hearts, but the love of Christ in his self-sacrifice that drew us to Him; and the Holy Spirit working on the religious aptitude which we had from early boyhood prepared our hearts to receive the love of Christ into our lives. Mason impressed on us the necessity of heart-change and of new birth; and when the Holy Spirit of God wrought the change in us, he showed the duty of consecrating our lives to Him, and of the obligation we had to show our allegiance to Him by open confession of our faith in Him, through baptism ".

But the inner voice spoke with differing accents at different times; and the conflict continued and grew in intensity till

the decision was made and the irrevocable step taken. The emotional conflict which raged within for weeks and months could be better comprehended by glimpses of the working of Anantam's own mind which he describes as follows:—

“ We both read the Bible and prayed in secret under the tree in the school compound, which was our favourite resort for prayer and meditation. And our faith grew till we were convinced that it was our duty to confess publicly our faith in the Lord Jesus by baptism.

“It was my fond hope for the sake of my beloved mother to wait till I had attained manhood and then become Christ's disciple. But as our knowledge and experience of the love of Christ increased, the conviction of our present duty to follow Christ openly became irresistible. And when we arrived at the stage at which we could not consistently perform Hindu religious rites, we both talked the matter over, and made up our minds to be baptised. We sought the advice of Mason, who arranged with Sharp to receive us. The latter had private talks with us to test our faith, and the strength of our determination to follow Christ; and, on being satisfied, that we really loved Jesus and had given our hearts to him, he fixed the day for our reception”.

“ We informed our uncle by letter of our determination to be Christians, and waited at Sharp's house to meet and talk over the matter with him. Our revered uncle came over to see us, and with tears streaming in his eyes begged us not to forsake him and join the Christians. When he found that we would not change our minds, he filed a complaint before the District Magistrate (Thornhill) that we were both minors, and that we should be restored to him as he was our guardian. Seenayya was a few months short of eighteen, and I was just a week short of sixteen! The Magistrate ruled that Seenayya was old enough to choose for himself. But as I looked very young, he put me a number of searching questions to elicit publicly why I wished to forsake the religion of our fathers, and why I should decide to leave my relations, and seek admission into the Christian fold”.

“ The Magistrate’s office was filled with officials and people from the town, who had heard of this sensational occurrence, and came in to cause a commotion, and carry us away by force, if possible. The Magistrate’s spacious office room that morning was a veritable ‘ cloud of witnesses ’, to hear our profession of faith in Christ. I hardly expected that I would be subjected to such severe questioning, nor do I remember what replies I gave to his questions. Every answer from me—I was asked to speak in Telugu so that the people might know—was followed by a tremendous outbreak of hisses, and disapprobation and anger from the crowd, and I could see my poor uncle’s face so downcast at my answers. This baptism of fire happened towards the close of May 1886, over sixty-two years ago! ”

“ After this fiery trial was over, the Magistrate ruled that I had proved to my uncle before the assembled crowd, that I knew what I was doing, and that the question of age did not come in; and so he gave me liberty either to go with Sharp, or with my uncle, just as I desired. I said I would go with Sharp, as I could not live as a Christian in my Hindu home and its environment ”.

“ As Sharp was leading us to the carriage, a number of people from the crowd tried to drag us out, when the Magistrate himself came to our rescue, and saw us safe in the carriage that was nearby. There were peons (orderlies) and police constables to protect us from violence, and we were taken directly over to Sharp’s home, where Mrs. Sharp, Messrs. Mason and Sharkey and several Indian Christian brethren received us and encouraged us with words of loving sympathy and prayer ”.

“ God alone knew what inward struggle took place in our hearts, and I felt more than once that I would break down; but the Lord, by His Spirit, comforted and strengthened me and Seenayya from the terrible trial that was to follow. I can never forget the tender love and affection shown to us by Sharp all the four or five weeks, during which we had to pass through the fiery furnace of mental agony and suffering.

My beloved mother, and Seenayya's father and mother were informed of this family catastrophe, and they came post-haste from Pusulooru on the third day. Sharp would take us out for a walk before day-break, and by prayer and advice, fortified us for each day's interviews with our people. Noble did not allow these interviews in the case of his converts to exceed a very limited time; but Sharp allowed our people to be with us as many days as they liked, for any number of hours each day".

"This went on for more than three weeks, and it seems to me wonderful how we stood all the loving expostulations of my dear mother, uncles, aunts and other relatives, young and old, day after day, from early morning till late in the evening, except for a short break at midday. My poor mother would weep all the time. She once asked me to remember all she had undergone to bring me up to that state, and bewailed how I had blasted all her hopes of future happiness for herself, myself, my brother and my little wife (to whom I had been betrothed two years before). In one of her paroxysms of grief she violently knocked her face against the wall where she was sitting, and broke one or two of her teeth, and her face bled profusely. When our people found that we stood adamant, against all their attempts on our reason and emotions, they left us for a season and returned home".

"I have often wondered since whether my Master, so full of tender sympathy to human sorrow, required that I should cause all this mental torture and blasted hopes to my dear ones by forsaking them and seeking shelter in another community, which they, in their ignorance, consider as out-caste and untouchable. But we took this terrible step under the full conviction, that it was our bounden duty to make open profession of our allegiance to our blessed Redeemer, whatever the consequences might be to ourselves or to our loved ones. The Lord has more than made good to me His promise to those who leave father, mother, wife and others for His sake. But my dear mother spent all her remaining days in

continued sorrow till she passed on, broken-hearted, on 17th November 1879. She could not have been more than fifty years when she died. She was kind to my wife, Minnie, and brought small presents for her now and then. Both the father and mother of Seenayya pined away under this overwhelming sorrow. My poor brother lived a number of years as a sufferer from an incurable disease and died. My poor Hindu wife still lives a life of practical widowhood, having been persuaded by her relatives to refuse to join me ”.

“ Before I close these recollections of my beloved mother, I must note one painful incident. When I lost my second infant child, she happened to come on a visit to us. My wife and I were weeping, when she turned to me and remarked that I should realise now, how great her sorrow must be to lose her grown-up son, on whom she had built all her hopes of happiness, if I sorrowed so much for the loss of an infant of a few weeks! ”

BAPTIZED UNTO CHRIST

Later Anantam describes what made him join the Christian fold and what aspects of Christian idealism stirred his heart to action, which made him an outcaste to his own people.

“ My early home training made my heart receptive, and when the love of God in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ was presented to me at the receptive age of fourteen, I gave myself to the influence of God’s Spirit, and received Christ into my life. In what I knew and saw of my father’s religion, there was nothing like the love of Christ, and I readily received the Christian truth. The parable of the Prodigal Son was the chief portion of the Scripture that overpowered my heart, and one morning, when I was praying alone in my walks on Bandar fields, the love of God to sinful man as portrayed in the parable, shone into my soul, and I, in my heart, turned from self and selfish pursuits to God, and sought and found acceptance in His love. God and myself, Christ and myself—and no doctrinal issue—was everything to me. Oh ! the joy and peace that I found when I rose from my knees, after

consecrating myself to Christ ! It seemed to me that there were bells chiming; it may have been that that was vouchsafed to assure me, that my faith and act of consecration were right; or perhaps a resounding of joy in heaven over one sinner penitent; or it may be the effect of my own internal joy. Anyhow from that moment, there was no turning back from Christ; instruction from the Bible by Mason, under the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit, strengthened my determination to follow Christ at all costs and live a Christian life”.

“Some Christian preachers and teachers hold that God is angry with sinners, and that Christ came between to pacify Him by His sacrifice. I was led to view Christ’s mediation in a different way. God loved this sinful and rebellious world so much, that He gave His son for its salvation, and, that He by His sacrifice demonstrated to the world God’s unbounded love, and His work now is to seek to reconcile sinful man to God, and not God to man! This view of God’s love has satisfied my every faculty, and for all these years I rested my hope on it. Nothing, not even my sinfulness, can separate me from His love”.

“On the 28th May 1886, I was baptised along with Seenayya by the Rev. J. E. Sharkey. It was a memorable occasion! I felt quite changed in my life and outlook. I thought that the Christian fold must be a holy and blessed community! As we were returning from the baptismal font, Guntur Narasimhulu (a convert most loved by Noble) came up and said to us—“Brothers, this is only the first rung of the ladder. Remember, he that endureth unto the end shall be saved!” This exhortation stuck in my heart, and at times it made me tremble, when I learnt by sad experience, in later life, how deceitful my heart was. But the saddest thing was—this brother, in later life, fell into evil company, took to drink, married an Eurasian, and fell away from the faith, got into trouble and died a drunkard’s death. What a warning!”

“Later, our people tried to persuade us to go back to our home, and obtained the permission of our Head *guru* (the

swami of the Madhva Brahmins) to receive us at any time during one year, and sent overtures from time to time. They would not perform the *gata sraddha ceremony* (funeral ceremony to be performed for the living when they lose their caste by forsaking their father's religion) so as to keep the door open for our reclamation. Especially, as our people hated the idea of performing this ceremony for the dead, while we were yet alive, and longed to see us and continued to show their affection for us; for it would not be proper to act thus towards us, after the hateful rite had been performed".

That ceremony was never performed by their people, the spirit of human charity and sense of decency rising triumphant over the letter of priestly rigour and of orthodoxy's vindictiveness. Good sense forbade that act of extreme humiliation.

After the baptism, Sharp took them to his own home, and his wife welcomed them as her own. They were to stay there till they got used to changed conditions, when permanent arrangements could be made for them.

For a Brahmin lad brought up in an orthodox home this was a strange experience. It meant a great deal of effort to get used to the new way of life. One of the severest tests that young Anantam went through in those early days at the Sharp home, he recalled many years later, was getting used to the 'untouchable' servants, who cooked the food and served at table.

STUDENT DAYS IN NOBLE COLLEGE

After some time Anantam and Seenayya went over to live at the hostel intended for the converts to Christianity. Though it was under the supervision of the head of the Noble School, the converts managed the internal affairs by turns, and saw to it that the daily menu was kept up to home standards. It became in due course the chummery for those, who bore similar trials with fortitude, and shared similar hopes that sustained them day by day.

Amidst the agonies and heart-aches which separation from home and family had brought in its train, young

Anantam had not neglected his studies. In fact they became his all-absorbing concern, for he realised that he had to depend on himself now; he had cut himself away from his people, and made it impossible to be received back into their affluent home.

He had already acquired studious habits: his home environment encouraged him to be straightforward and true. Industry and perseverance were in his blood. To think, to dream, and to grapple with difficulties on the mental plane were a part of his make-up. He was fond of books. He early got into the habit of concentrating on the book in hand. He thought that his memory was weak and tried to make up for it by reading what was worth while, over and over again. He did not relish committing anything to memory. He would rather read, mark and digest the lessons that he was given to do. He never believed in cramming for examinations; in fact he could not do it, even if he wanted to. Never did he burn the midnight oil; he would go to bed at night by 9 o'clock. But he would wake up by 5 in the morning, and spend the first hour in prayer. He would start his studies at dawn and finish them when the sun set, without straining his eyes by reading under the dim kerosene lamps of those days.

He never cultivated a taste for sports and games, but he made up for it by long walks in the evening. The sandy fields at Bandar, skirting the Noble School, provided a long expanse for quiet and secluded walks. After school work was over, he would slip out on to the fields with a book in hand, and walk on the soft sand for a mile or two, reading while he walked.

When he felt that his legs could not carry him any further, he would squat and read, as long as the light would let him use his eyes without strain. Then he would throw himself on his knees for a brief while in prayer, and make his way home, while it was still possible to trudge along the foot-path amidst the rapidly gathering shadows of the night. Occasionally he lingered longer than his wont, yielding to

the soft embrace of the sea-breeze, and, as he sped his way homeward hurriedly, he would stumble over a bush or get startled by the howl of a jackal.

Not infrequently would he indulge in the luxury of sky-gazing, and wonder whether his kinsfolk, whom he had loved and lost, were leading worthy lives in the regions that lay beyond the twinkling and intriguing stars. When he got home it would be time to wash and join the group in prayer. An early dinner gave him respite for a gentle walk either on the long veranda of the hostel, or on the soft green lawn on moonlight nights. Then he would have a chat with his comrades, and drop into his bed, while the others trimmed their lamps preparing for an onslaught on their lessons till the midnight hour !

He was brilliant both at school and college. When he studied for the Matriculation examination, the *Pandit* invariably looked to him to take the lead in the Telugu class. He would read passages from the textbooks and paraphrase them, and even make sallies into grammar and diction. A story is told of how once the lecturer in mathematics, Surayya Garu, got stuck working out a problem in the class-room. Anantam came to the rescue and finished the problem on the black-board, much to the delight of his teacher and the appreciation of his classmates. His reputation as a budding mathematician had spread outside the college and the town itself; and many people hoped that some day Anantam would become an eminent professor in mathematics in one of the Madras colleges.

He was twelve years old when he started learning English, and it must be said to his credit that, within six years, he got through the Matriculation examination, having been placed in the first class in the year 1868. Two years later, in 1870, he sat for the First in Arts examination and came out with flying colours, having secured a place within the first five of those who obtained a brilliant first class. He won the MacDonald Gold Medal, awarded to the best student of the year in the Northern Circars! He was pleased with the success,

and his heart swelled with gratitude to the giver of all good gifts. But he never suffered from a swollen head. Success made him humble.

Many avenues of usefulness presented themselves to him at the threshold of life. His uncle who had influence with the high Government officials at Machilēpatnam, suggested that he should apply to the Magistrate for a job when a vacancy occurred. But to the uncle's disappointment Anantam was not eager to avail himself of the opportunity.

His guardian, Sharp, was anxious that he should study Medicine at the Medical College at Madras, and advised him to apply for a scholarship and assured him that he would back him up with a strong recommendation. But Anantam delayed not relishing the prospect of living in Madras, a crowded city. His application arrived in Madras a couple of days too late. He heaved a sigh of relief when his application was rejected; his English friend was disappointed.

Instead he started life as a schoolmaster on a salary of twenty-five rupees a month! "I started to work in the Noble College when Tanner was the Principal, and I was given some of the higher Forms to teach English and Mathematics. Tanner did not believe in Indians getting a decent salary", says Anantam in his *Recollections*. "I was given a small salary, but, as my wants were few, I did not mind it. I had offers of good posts in the Court and Collector's office through the influence of my Hindu relatives and friends; but as I pledged my services to my Saviour I was strengthened to overcome the temptations. When I was in the Matriculation class I happened to read the biography of Henry Martyn, and this influenced me to desire to devote my life to Christian work, which I had the privilege of realising in the years that followed."

"When Sharp returned from furlough in 1873 he gave me a better post, and I worked happily for 17 years in the College, during which period I rose to be the first Assistant Master. All the Principals treated me with the greatest consideration and affection, and I loved my work in the College dearly!"

CHAPTER II

MINNIE SHARKEY ANANTAM

Anantam was sensible and sensitive even as a lad; he drank deep at the springs of human affection. He was not a recluse by temperament. He sought solitude and made the most of it for study, thought and meditation; but he loved human society. He wanted a home to live in with somebody to share his life, making it worth while. His thoughts first turned towards his Hindu wife, to whom he was betrothed while they were both quite young.

The fact that his cousin, Kaveramma, joined her Christian husband, Seenayya, gave him hope that his wife, too, would join him if approached in the right way. But he was terribly disappointed when the first overture met with a rebuff; her people prevailed upon her not to join him.

“ I was married, or rather betrothed ”, informs Anantam in his *Recollections*, “ to a somewhat distant cousin of mine, when I was fourteen and she was seven or eight. Two years after this I became a Christian, and this made me in the eyes of her parents as good as dead. Her parents fostered this idea in her tender mind, and our having not known each other so strengthened this attitude that, when she came to marriageable age, she had no desire to join me ”.

“ When I had finished my college education and began to earn my living, as was expected, I desired to make a home for myself, and made every possible effort to get my wife to live with me. But I was baffled in the several visits I paid to her; all my solicitations and offers of a happy home were repulsed by her, and her parents. In the end, seeing no near or distant chance of a change in her attitude towards me, I was forced to seek the help of the law as the last resource. In the Court, where the District Judge advised the girl to join me, as was the duty of a Hindu wife, she stoutly refused to

join me, as I was an out-caste to her. And the marriage was legally dissolved in October 1873 ”.

“ Before seeking another to make me a home, I sent overtures again to her parents that I would marry a Christian girl, if they did not send me their girl, and that, this would practically doom her to life-long widowhood. I received a negative reply again! The law of the land set me free to marry whom I liked ”.

“ Some might say that I should have remained unmarried, to keep the door open for my Hindu wife to join me at some future time, accepting it as a part of my cross in following Christ. However this may be, I believed that I was doing the right thing in marrying the girl, who in our united life proved to me, meant by God, to share the joys and sorrows of my wedded life; and I had no doubt of God’s approval and His benediction on our union. I leave the rest in my merciful Father’s loving hands. And this happened to be a Vaishnava Brahman girl, the adopted daughter of the Sharkeys. It came about in this way. The Sharkeys were working at Bandar in the forties of the 19th century. The husband was the son of the Judge of the local Small Cause Court. He was educated at Bishop Corrie’s School in Madras. He got married, and settled down to work among the Depressed classes. He and his wife opened a Boys’ Boarding School and Girls’ Boarding School and did good work there ”.

“ They adopted a Vaishnava Brahman child as their own daughter—they had no children of their own—and called her Minnie Sharkey. She afterwards became my wife. Father Sharkey ailed for several weeks, and died on board the ship as he was being taken to Madras for treatment on 26th May 1869. After his death his wife bravely kept on the Boarding School work. Friends used to call on her; they dropped informally into her Sunday evening parties after the evening Church service .”

“ I can only say that my intimate acquaintance with Mrs. Sharkey began when Seenayya and Kaveramma lived in her house temporarily, when Kaveramma returned from

Madras after an operation. I also stayed with them for a time; and it was then that I got to know Minnie. Mother Sharkey loved me very much, and began to treat me as her own son. It was about this time that my affection for Minnie, and her's for me, grew strong unconsciously. We spent much time together in the evenings, in her mother's presence."

"We were engaged after my Hindu wife had repeatedly refused to join me, and I was legally freed by the Court to marry a Christian wife. We had dear mother's consent and she gave her blessing on our union of hearts."

Anantam and his fiancé were very happy during the couple of years of love and courtship; and it led to their marriage in 1874, which was solemnised by the Rev. J. Sharp. The bride was quite young, barely sixteen, and the groom twenty-four.

True to Indian sentiment the bridal couple stayed with the bride's mother for a short while, and moved into a home of their own, presented to them by Mother Sharkey. Finding it impossible to live without her daughter, she moved into a bungalow which was in the adjoining compound, and finally succeeded in persuading them to live with her.

It was a happy marriage from every point of view. They were both educated, and full of zeal to serve their God and country in their respective spheres. And Anantam was supremely happy in a home of his own, with a sweet partner, who was both loving and lovable. They were both devoted to each other. They, too, like his parents, had five children, three of whom died in infancy, while two sons, Ramachandra Rao and Ananda Rao survived and grew to manhood.

"My wife, Minnie, was all I could desire as a wife and companion during the short period of eight years we were spared to each other," says Anantam recalling those early years of his married life. "Her upbringing was such that she was equipped with all that was required of her to make me a happy home. I shall not dilate upon her intense love to me; she almost adored me and clung to me showing how an Indian girl can make an ideal wife."

Just a few years ago, an Andhra gentleman casually ventured when Ramachandra Rao called on him at Vijayawada, "Sir, hardly a day passes without my thinking of your family". Then noticing incredulity in the visitor's face, he continued, "Probably you are not aware of an incident in my life. Your mother used to call on friends next door to us in Bandar. She was very friendly with them. One day she came to know that they wished one of their girls to marry me; but they could not afford the marriage expenses. Do you know what she did? She went home, talked the matter over with your father, and sent word to her friends that they could negotiate the wedding, and that she would meet all the necessary expenses. She was as good as her word. To this day, I and my wife think of her and of her family, as we light the lamps at dusk, for she was the mother who lit the lamp of our home! A rare woman she was!"

Anantam was supremely happy as a husband; he could wish for nothing more. But his happiness was short lived. It happened not long after the fifth child was born. Of the three sons only one had survived, and a daughter died in infancy. The fifth was a boy, born September 20th, 1882.

Her husband has described the situation in his charming simple way: "After this confinement she suffered from utter exhaustion and became so bloodless that the English doctor, who attended on her in the last stage, suggested that the only chance, and that a very doubtful one, was transfusion of blood. I offered to give my blood, but the doctor refused to operate on me, as the result might be disappointing, and I might lose my life also leaving the poor children doubly orphaned. In her complete exhaustion she suffered from the agony of death, and her spirit entered into the presence of her Saviour with the words, 'O Saviour! Will you not release me from this suffering and take me to Thyself?'"

"Not knowing that her end was so near I was speaking to O. S. R. Krishnamma in the veranda; she asked for me. When I rushed in, she gave me a parting look, and closed her eyes in peace! I have no doubt she opened them in glory,

and Christ came and took her away. This occurred on the 15th December 1882 ”.

“ She was only four-and-twenty when she passed on: she made her home really happy and helped to make the homes of others happy, too ”.

“ She helped her mother Sharkey in her girl’s school, and gave Scripture lessons in the Caste Girls’ School, and kept a Sunday School in our home for the poor children living in the neighbourhood. She was the means of leading two or three Hindu girls to Christ; and they were baptised. She was greatly loved by many Hindu women; and on the day she passed on many came to pay their last tribute of sorrow at her untimely death ”.

Her earthly remains were laid in the cemetery of St. Mary’s Church at Machileepatnam, a quiet and restful place, away from the crowded streets, bustle and noise of the town. She is resting amidst her own children, three of whom preceded her, and her foster mother and father, and R. T. Noble.

Lie, mother, in your grave, amidst your own offspring and amidst those saints whose spiritual offspring you are. All that was of the earth in you has gone to the earth. The eternal in you has joined the eternal in the universe. The good that you did unostentatiously, while you sojourned on earth, is still green in the memory of those who knew you.

THE WIDOWER’S BURDEN DAY BY DAY

To Anantam the loss of his wife was a bolt from the blue. She had been the inspirer of his life since they were married. She had clung to him with a love and devotion that passing clouds, hovering on their domestic horizon, could never disturb. During the first few days of his bereavement one day, in the early morning hours, he was fully awake and his thoughts turned towards the one whom he had loved and lost. Evidently he was lying on the edge of the bed-stead, which stood high, as was the fashion in those days. His habit was to lie in bed on the left side with knees drawn. He turned over to the right for a change of posture, little realising the con-

sequence of his movement. He started rolling down the edge of the bed, and would have been down on the hard floor, when he felt two strong arms underneath him arresting his fall, and bodily lifting him up and rolling him over to the middle of the bed.

“ This miraculous intervention could have come only from God ,” he thought, as he folded his hands in grateful acknowledgement. The sense of reality of that deliverance remained with him during the rest of his life ; and in it he saw the hand of God !

“ When their mother was taken away from me,” he writes, “ Amelia, the wife of Chevendra Venkatachalam, who was a pupil of Noble and a convert to Christianity, took the children and me to Guntur for a change during the Christmas vacation. When I returned to Bandar with the children, I had to be at my work during the best part of the day ; the children were mostly cared for by the servants who, I must own, were affectionate and did their best for them. They both frequently fell ill and I had to nurse and look after them in the best way I could. The infant specially needed more attention and care than I could bestow, and the servants were but a poor substitute for the mother. However, my merciful Father helped me, and the children grew under His gracious keeping. In the month of April following (1885) I fell ill with a severe attack of dysentery, and had to keep in bed several days. One afternoon my little son came to my bedside, and, in a thoughtful tone asked me, if I was also going to Jesus like his mother, whom he had seen lying in bed before her departure.”

“ I asked him why he had put me that question. He burst out crying, poor little mite, and said, ‘ Papa if you also go to Jesus, who will give me and brother our food and bring us up ? ’ To comfort him I said that Jesus knew that they wanted me, and so he was not going to take me away now. That did not seem to quite satisfy him, and he went into the next room, and knelt by the couch there, and spoke in his childlike speech, ‘ Jesus, do not take away papa also, as we

have no one to care for us, but make him well soon!’ And he ran away to play!”

“This I overheard from my bed, and when he came the next time to me, I asked him to whom he had been speaking. For a moment or two he would not tell me, but on my pressing him, he said that he had been asking Jesus to make me well. This cheered me like the visit of an angel from God’s presence, and acted like the touch of Jesus; and I was well the next day”.

“In May I went to Amalapuram to the Subbarayudus, where we spent a few weeks, receiving much comfort; and my depressed spirits revived. Both husband and wife tried to persuade me to find a mother for the poor children, as they sorely needed the care and attention of a step-mother, at least. I knew that the tender mercies of a step-mother are cruel generally, and I dreaded the idea. They suggested the name of Subbarayudu’s wife’s sister who, I was assured, loved Christ, and would love me and the children for His sake.

“I made overtures to my Hindu wife, but she declined to join me; and, again she lost her opportunity!”

CHAPTER III

HAPPILY MARRIED AGAIN

“Peel, an Englishman, who was then Principal of the Noble College, suggested,” says Anantam, “that I should pay a visit to the home of Subbarayudu’s wife, to see for myself whether my future partner was there. I prayed most earnestly for God’s counsel and guidance, and went to Vegaikulam (Tirunelveli District) to meet the family. On my arrival at the railway station at Koilpatty I was met by the Rev. V. Vedanayagam, whose face beamed with unfeigned sympathy in my sorrow and loss; and the grip of his hand-shake gave me an assurance of his feelings”.

“I stayed in his house a few days, and had opportunities to meet her, though not in the fashion of the European love-making and courting; I hoped that one day she would become mine”.

“After I returned home I wrote to the father asking for his daughter’s hand, and requesting him to tell her about the difficulties of her position if she married me, and leaving her free, under God’s guidance, to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to becoming the mother of my motherless children. She told me afterwards that she had asked her parents, who were both favourable to my alliance, to give her three or four days to think over the matter, before she made up her mind. She spent much time in earnest prayer to God, that He should let this union come about only if she should be enabled to be a real mother to the motherless children, and if she should be given the grace needed to discharge the duties of her difficult position as their own mother would”.

“She felt that God wanted her to shoulder the burden, and in spite of the fact that she would be marrying a widower with children—which would deter a young girl in her nineteenth year while I was 33 years old—she gave her consent. And I was informed of it in due course”.

They were married on the 9th of January 1884, and Bhagyam (Sowbhagyam as rendered in Andhra Desa) came over to live in the old home at Machileepatnam with the destinies of her husband and the two boys in her hand.

THE GARDEN HOME IN MACHILEEPATNAM

When she came to Machileepatnam she was determined to master the language of her home, and her husband secured the help of a Brahman Pandit, an old friend and teacher of his. She applied herself steadily to the learning of this new language, and made remarkable progress in it during the first year. The Pandit taught her the Brahmana way of pronouncing words, both in speaking and reading. She learnt to speak Telugu fluently, and in a few years she could speak it like an Andhra. Later on her friends in Madras did not suspect that she was not an Andhra by birth.

Another hurdle she had to get over was the question of the domestic helpers in her husband's home. In Andhra Desa those who accepted Christ through Baptism were induced, if not compelled, by the trend of circumstances to break away from the restrictions of caste, soon after they joined the Christian Church.

It was a new experience to Sowbhagyam, when she came to be surrounded by low caste servants in her husband's home, though some of them were Christians.

She prayed for guidance, and made up her mind. When her husband, in deference to her scruples, suggested that the old staff of servants be sent away and caste servants installed in their place, she gave him a categorical 'nay'.

Recalling those early years of their married life, Anantam wrote in grateful recognition of her love and attention to the children, "We were married on the 9th January 1884, and came to Bandar. I introduced her to her mother's duties forthwith, and the children took to her at once, and she did the same as if they were her own. The second boy was in his second year, and for a long time believed she was his own mother. She took charge of the child completely, hardly leav-

ing anything for the servant to do for the first few months; she fed and clothed him, bathed him and went out with him, so that she soon won his affection, and started on the right discharge of her motherly duties by him. The elder one, though four years old, soon forgot his own mother, and loved this mother as his own! My prayer began to be answered, and I had the joy and comfort of my home restored to me ”.

It was not surprising that Soubhagyam was loved, not only within the four walls of her home, but was treated with consideration and respect by friends outside; and her social contacts increased year by year. It was an apt instance of the saying that obtains in Andhra Desa, “Where the heart expands, the home extends!”

She was touched by her husband’s solicitude for her, and by the care with which he would attend to details to make her happy and contented, while she lived some eight hundred miles away from her old home. Both of them loved Christ in their own way, and God was real to them; and their early married life seemed to be a continuation of their period of courtship, which could not be long under the conditions that obtained in this country.

Some of the senior students of the college would visit her husband during the week-end, and she would talk to them, and give pecuniary help to those who needed it. She soon got used to the Andhra way of life, and made a place for herself in her Andhra home. She was kind and cordial to her visitors; and they came in again and again, so long as she lived at Bandar.

The bungalow stood in a garden of four acres overlooking a large orchard of palmyra, cocoanut, mango, orange, cashewnut and casuarina. Her husband was a born gardener, but Soubhagyam inherited the taste for gardening from her father, who had a wonderful garden at Vegaikulam. Between them both, the garden at Frenchpet in Bandar was the envy of the town!

Of course Machileepatnam’s glory was on the wane when Soubhagyam set her foot on its soil. The awful cyclone of

1864 struck a devastating blow on its prosperity, and it was deemed that the regiments of the British soldiers and of the Indian sepoy, too, should be transferred to a safer place than a coastal town. The town could never be the same after the occurrence of those two events, which were the landmarks in its history.

Yet it was the poor man's paradise. Prices ruled low, food was plentiful and labour astonishingly cheap. Rice of the finest quality could be had at 16 seers a rupee; even at that there were old dames who shook their heads gravely, and sighed for the good old days, when merchants brought rice to their door and measured out twenty seers for one rupee.

Housewives wondered what was coming next, when some complained that there was a trend for prices of the necessities of life to rise, though by a decimal fraction; the price level of milk oscillated between twelve to sixteen seers a rupee, depending on the quantity of water added to it; eggs were considered to be dear when one anna could buy only ten instead of twelve. One pie could procure half a dozen varieties of condiments to flavour curries with, and a careful housewife would go round half a dozen stalls before she made up her mind where she could really get her money's worth.

The wage of an ordinary gardener was five rupees a month; a domestic servant was satisfied with a rupee or two above the wage of the gardener, and the *daffadar* of the Collector or Judge was content with a remuneration of ten rupees a month.

Though Machilecpatnam was not flowing with milk and honey, it augured a life of simplicity and plenty. A little money went a long way to secure the requirements and comforts of life!

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ROBERT NOBLE

After Soubhagyam was installed as the mistress of the Garden Home, Anantam set about his duties with courage and hope. He did his best to maintain the reputation of

the College, and helped to carry on the purpose for which Noble had laboured and died.

Since he was mostly self-taught, he could understand the difficulties of his students, and endeavoured to meet them as best he could. He was asked to teach some of the senior classes in the College. Both the staff and the students recognised in him a great teacher.

He was popular with the students. He was a conscientious teacher, and did not waste time; he made the lessons clear to the dullest student in the class. He put them in the way of solving their own difficulties, and induced them to think and act for themselves. Yet he made them feel he was one of them. He visited them in their homes when they were ill and rendered help; he made the hospital staff take interest in those who were living in hostels or hotels. He also met out of his own pocket the expenses of special diet, when he came to know their need.

As a rule, he helped very poor students to pay a part of their fees to the College, and saw that they made good use of their time. The relationship between him and his students was that of the elder to the younger brothers.

A talk with him made them think, and think furiously, too. Caste, idolatry, women's position in the home, the Christian conception of atonement and of self-sacrifice, and several similar intriguing problems were freely discussed. He impressed on them that though some of the customs and beliefs that obtained in the country had originally been prompted by good intentions, time and tide in their march had left behind excrescences. These had changed beyond recognition many customs and beliefs, and defeated the very purpose they had been intended to further. He could thus sow the seed of divine discontent into impressionable minds.

A student named Venkayya joined the College to study English. Anantam took an interest in him since he hailed from his own village Pusulooru, and was a descendent of the family *purohit*. He was poor and not clever; but he made up for it by diligence and perseverance. He would sit up

studying till the early hours of the morning, when he dropped to sleep through exhaustion. He had seven friends in the town and each of them in turn fed him in their home one day in the week. Anantam helped to pay a part of this tuition fees and gave him some pocket-money, and borrowed books for him from the library on his own responsibility. When the time arrived for him to forward his application for admission to the Matriculation examination Anantam tried to dissuade him from appearing.

But the lad was not so easily to be put off. He got on the soft side of Sowbhagyam, and made her see that his chances of success were even. She said that she would have him take his chance, and asked her husband to advance him the examination fee, with the assurance that she would repay him. "You will lose your good money", returned the husband.

She smiled and turned to the lad, who pulling himself together, said, "Madam, whatever my *Guru* may think of my capacity, I promise that I will do my best to prove worthy of your trust in me". And she took the lad at his word, which proved to be an inspiration to him!

In due course he sat for the examination and thought he had done well, and would succeed. But Anantam was still inclined to be sceptical. The great day for the announcement of the results of the Matriculation examination arrived. Venkayya was in great excitement that day. He could neither eat nor get a wink of sleep. He sat on the door steps of the telegraph office since dusk, expecting a message from Madras. Sowbhagyam felt a little anxious about him as the night drew on. But hoping against hope, she fell into a fitful slumber.

At about 4 a.m. she thought she heard a voice crying, "Amma Garu! Sowbhagyamma Garu!"

"Who is that?" asked Anantam.

"It is I, Sir, Venkayya. Please tell Amma Garu that I have got through the examination."

They both came out to congratulate him, and wished him success in life. That was a Red Letter day in Venkayya's life. He never forgot that incident of his student days.

With a recommendation from Anantam, Venkayya secured a place under the Government and, in due course, he rose to be the Accountant of a District Collector's Office. After retirement with a pension at the age of 57, he had vitality enough to undertake a responsible job under a Municipality, just to enable him to keep his son going at the Medical College in Madras. When that responsibility was over, he threw up the job, and lived in retirement in Guntur being looked after by his two sons, a lawyer and a doctor. He lived to a good old age and passed on in his early eighties.

To the end he would not lose an opportunity of telling friends inclined to listen to him, the old story of how Anantam and Soubhagyam took interest in him, when he first went to Machileepatnam as a lad, and gave him timely help at a critical moment in his life.

CHAPTER IV

PREPARATION FOR HOLY ORDERS

Anantam taught at the Noble College for seventeen years, and enjoyed every bit of his work. He could have continued there, and might have risen to be the Principal of the College. But a new call came, which disturbed the even tenour of the contented and placid life at Bandar. While he lectured at the College, he found time to edit the *Hitavadi*, an Anglo-Telugu monthly, for the Christians in Andhra Desa. It became very popular, and Anantam's name became known among the Christians all over the Northern Circars. His name had come to be associated with the civic life and all progressive activities of Machileepatnam.

Those were the days of British dominance in the Church as well as in the State. The British missionary believed in 'the white man's burden' in India, and was provokingly conscious of his Indian helpers' limitations. As an heir to centuries of Christian civilisation and culture, he was inclined to take for granted that the Indian Church leaders were still immature and could not be trusted to shoulder great responsibilities. Men like Robert Noble were, of course, in advance of their day but such missionaries were few and far between. The rank and file, however sincere they might have been in their approach to the problems of the Indian Church, could not recognise the moral and spiritual possibilities in the Christian Indian.

The problem that troubled Anantam's friends more than himself was, what he would do if he continued to lecture at the College, with his individuality, capacity and character. Could he hope to become the head of the College and guide its destinies to meet the country's ever growing needs? It needed more faith than common sense to prophesy the future in terms of Indian leadership!

The Church Missionary Society, however, felt that his services could be better utilized for God and country if he

were in Holy Orders. It was not a surprise when the offer to be released from the College to join the Divinity School at Madras was made to him. Everybody, who knew him thought that he was eminently fitted for this calling.

Anantam himself had a vague idea that he would return to the College after his theological studies at Madras. After much prayer and searching of hearts, he and his wife made up their mind to try Madras for a year.

FROM THE GARDEN HOME TO MADRAS

When they arrived in Madras, Anantam had only the status of a student studying theology. The stipend of a student was offered to him, which was hardly enough to make ends meet. The then Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, who happened to be one of those interested in giving a push forward to Anantam, and knew how comfortably he lived at Bandar, and how his wife had been brought up in her father's home at Vegaikulam, had contrived to give him a special allowance. The stipend and the allowance together did not come anywhere near what he was getting at the Noble College. A nominal house rent was included. To live on that in the city of Madras presented an intriguing problem. It was indeed a challenge to him; he accepted it with humility and courage!

Fortunately a small house with an upstairs room fell vacant in Peter's Road, Royapettah, and they were able to get it through the good offices of a friend. A tinge of sadness crept over the face of Soubhagyam as she went through the rooms, one by one.

Anantam noticed it and remarked, "This house must be a disappointment to you as it is to me. Can we manage with this little house?"

She faced up to the challenge, and returned, "Manage? Certainly we must—and we shall!"

City life was an experience to them. They realised that the amenities of the city are a compensation for its handicaps. New caste servants—the Harijans were a taboo even

in Christian homes in those days—needed training and looking after. Paranjothiamma, the widow of Inala Bushanam, one of the first students of the Noble School, and later, one of the first batch of converts to Christianity, proved to be a friend in need to Soubhagyam, living within walking distance of Peter's Road. She, and her son and daughters, visited them frequently, and helped the Anantam family as much as they could.

The two younger sisters of Soubhagyam happened to be studying at a Girls' School in Madras, and they would visit their sister on a Sunday, and cheer her up. Later on they would come over and spend week-ends whenever they could manage it. Soubhagyam looked forward to her sisters' visits, and she and her husband threw their home open to them.

It was a novel experience for Anantam to go to the School of Theology at Madras as a student, after being a teacher at the Noble College for 17 years. But the relationship between the teacher and the taught was most cordial and informal. Henry Goldsmith, a Cambridge man was a great scholar and a great Christian, too. He was most considerate to his students. He was more an elder brother to them, than a preceptor. They being few, and in a way select, he was able to give individual attention, and meet each one's needs.

Anantam studied Greek and Hebrew under his guidance, and made rapid progress during the course of the year. The other subjects he would study by himself, and take them up with the teacher when difficulties arose.

As an experienced teacher Anantam knew how to make use of the books in the library; the mornings were given to study in his room upstairs. He hardly ever burned the midnight oil. Saturday mornings were usually spent in the botanic gardens close by, studying under the shade of large branching green trees. He often read as he walked under the trees, as was his wont, in his early student days at Bandar.

Having been a teacher he knew how to get at the gist of a book or a problem. Of course his *Guru* was by him ever ready to help with his suggestions. He gave a good account

of himself in the examinations and his success pleased his *Guru*.

Madras had its own distractions. The distances were great, and the means of transportation was not helpful. In those days there were no tram cars, buses or electric trains; rickshaws were unknown. Horse-drawn Victorias or coaches were rather expensive for people of moderate means. But Anantam and his wife had purchased a bullock-drawn vehicle, which was a great convenience to them in Madras. In it they contrived to attend meetings, church services and weddings and social parties without hesitation.

Anantam had the gift of making friends, and he would have made many friends in Madras had he had the time for it. But some of his wife's relatives living in the neighbourhood of Madras got to know him and were impressed by his cordiality and good will. Some of his old students called on him, when they were on a visit to Madras, and kept afresh the old ties of friendship.

The man that he admired most in Madras was the Rev. M. Goldsmith, the elder brother of the theologian. Tall, thin and benign-looking, he carried about him an air of saintliness and of other-worldliness. He lived the life of a *tyagi*, and gave little room for the flesh to assert itself, craving for sensuous enjoyment. He lived the simplest life possible for an educated Englishman in India, and tried to exemplify the love of Christ in his life. The contact with him was an inspiration to Anantam. Goldsmith loved and respected Anantam, and they were good friends till the former passed on in 1940.

Bishop Gell was a man after Christ's heart and Anantam was greatly influenced by his noble bearing and humility. Anantam considered it a privilege to have been ordained by that spiritual-minded Bishop, and never lost an opportunity of meeting him in later years. The Bishop had a soft corner for Anantam, on whose honesty and good judgment, he depended while he was his Chaplain.

N. Subramaniam, a Tamil Brahman convert to Christianity (at one time the Advocate-General of Madras), was very

friendly to the Anantams. So also was his brother-in-law, Krishna Rao, a Brahman convert from Nellore.

But it was not at all like the good old days of Bandar. The amenities of Madras made life worth while in some respects. But the handicaps, particularly those which impinge on the tranquility of the home, could not be brushed aside. "This is not an edifying neighbourhood either for us or for the children. I shall not be sorry to leave it, when we have to go back to Bandar", Anantam remarked to his wife when they talked about the future.

RETURN TO BANDAR

It was time for them to return to Bandar. and the Anantams left Madras without regrets.

In those days it took a little over twenty days to do the journey to Machilcepatnam by road on bullock-carts, and about a fortnight by the Buckingham canal route in country craft. Besides there was an ever present fear of highway robbery *en route*. On the other hand, the sea route took just a day; and it soon became popular with travellers between the coastal towns. But the steamship service was not regular. The accommodation in the first and second class saloons was limited, and a good many passengers had to be content with deck accommodation. There was no privacy for deck passengers; and the sanitary arrangements were far from satisfactory. Again the women passengers had a grievance against the crew. They felt that the young sailors tried to take liberties with them. Added to those there was a special hardship which those who embarked at Bandar port experienced. The sea being shallow, the steamships anchored at a distance of 12 miles from the port. The passengers were obliged to travel by small country crafts known as "*Pinnis*" exposed to the sun, wind and rain.

While the Anantams were ready to embark on the following morning, the evening papers announced that the ship would anchor at Madras harbour three days later. It was a disappointment to them to be put off in that way.

“Don’t you see, brother, that we have been wishing that something would happen to delay the arrival of the ship? We are glad you can stay a few days longer with us”, pleaded their generous hosts.

And they were very happy together till they embarked, and the children had a rollicking time with them; they had no children of their own.

Prabhala Ramachandrayya and his wife, their hosts, took leave of them on the boat, and promised to visit them in their home at Machileepatnam.

The following day the steamship anchored ten miles from the port, as there was no suitable harbour at Machileepatnam and a country craft, reserved for the Rev. D. Anantam and family, was ready to welcome them into a sheltered corner. Soubhagyam was a bad sailor, and was sick throughout the voyage. The tide and wind being in their favour, the *pinnis* bore them away and deposited them safely at the docks at Bandar port, and a warm welcome was given them by the Subbarayudus and old friends.

Anantam was asked to return to Bandar and await orders from the authorities in London. Friends at Bandar thought that he would be asked to join the Noble College again to lecture, besides being called upon to help in the Sunday services at St. Mary’s Church. While he lived in Madras, there was a lurking desire in his heart to return to his old job, and live in his old home again. Nursing that hope, he gladly returned to Bandar soon after his ordination. Soubhagyam also cherished the hope that she would make her home more homely than ever, and her garden more beautiful, judged by the standards of her friends in Madras.

The Secretary of the Mission in Madras, a friend of Anantam, could not give him any idea of where his future sphere of work would lie. He was one of those who thought that Anantam had worked long enough in a subordinate position, and a chance should be given him to express his real self in an independent sphere of activity. He made him understand in a non-committal way that the College had

been going on for a couple of decades with definite objectives in view, and it might not be difficult to find a young man to fit into its daily routine. But there were other spheres awaiting to be explored when suitable men were found. And Anantam was tipped for such a venture.

When the matter was discussed between the Anantams and the Subbarayudus, the latter advised the former not to ask for their bungalow to be vacated till future plans were definitely known. Meanwhile, they should share their home and affection. Brushing aside all Soubhagyam's objections, Subbarayudu generously reassured his sister-in-law saying, "You will not inconvenience us in any way. Don't you see that the house built of stone and mortar becomes larger when the heart of the inmates grows warmer?"

The sisters and their husbands along with the children lived happily together, fondly hoping that the future plans would not disturb the present arrangements.

CHAPTER V

PIONEERING IN RURAL EVANGELISM

In due course, the authorities in London accepted the suggestions of the men on the spot in Madras, and declared that no better choice could have been made than that of Anantam to do the pioneer work of carrying Christ's message to the high caste Hindus in rural areas of Andhra Desa.

Anantam received the decision of the authorities with a twinge of disappointment, as his services were no longer required in the Noble College which he loved as his "Alma-mater". But he could not resist the call of the village folk—he was one of them—and he could discern the hand of God in directing him to take his message of love to the millions of caste Hindus living in the rural areas. In fact the European and the American missionaries had been working in the villages for over five decades, and it had borne fruit, too, in the establishment of Christian churches in some rural areas. But their aim was mainly directed to that section of the people known as the "backward classes" in modern parlance.

The so-called upper classes and the intelligentsia had been left severely alone, for lack of men of the required calibre. To carry the message of Christ to the Brahmans and other caste people was not an easy task. One of their own might do it much better than outsiders. In cities like Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, and in large towns like Machilipatnam and Guntur, there were schools and colleges under the control of missionary bodies, where Christ's message of love and hope was daily given to the rising generation of the intelligentsia.

But the vast bulk of the people in India lived, not in towns, but in villages, miles away from the impact of Christian idealism. How to reach them in the right way was the

question. It was widely said that Anantam was the right man for it. And the request came from the authorities in such appealing and urgent terms that he had not the heart to refuse it.

No doubt he had his own misgivings about the success of this venture. But after prayerful consideration, he accepted the offer, and made up his mind to give it a good trial. Besides, the call of the country was in his blood, and he could not discard the opportunity that came to him unsought. He was 40 then, and there was not much time to lose in idle speculation.

It was decided that he was not to embark on the adventure alone; there might be some danger when a single person, however gifted, went round the villages, taking a message which the village folk did not quite appreciate as yet. More, it would be wise, to approach village polity from several angles of vision. So he would have a band of workers associated with him—he would lead them and give them helpful directives. They would go in a group, tour round villages for two or three weeks, every month—carry their own provisions, kit and tents, and halt under the hospitable shade of a banian tree and pitch their tents. They would then seek the headman of the village, and appraise him of the object of their visit.

TOURING THE VILLAGES

To start with he had only one Brahman convert, G. P. Venkatachalam, as his companion, the headquarters being at Bandar. Later, two Naidu converts, M. Narayana Rao, and J. Subbayya, joined in. As to the work that they actually did while they toured round the villages, I cannot do better than quote from Anantam's *Recollections*.

“With musical instruments and singing of Christian lyrics we drew large audiences in towns and villages, and delivered the Gospel message in a manner, that caste people realised the message we brought to them was not intended mainly to demolish caste or other social institutions; but to present to

them how greatly God loved them, and to ask them to change their minds and to turn to God, and lead better lives and to prepare themselves for the heavenly life. I continued in this work for five years, 1889-1893.

“That short period of evangelistic work was a time of great refreshment to my own spiritual life as it daily brought me face to face with reality; truths I preached and my knowledge of Hindu system deepened, and my sympathy with my people increased. In some villages, people were deeply impressed with our preachings.....and had the work been followed up by locating suitable guides in sympathetic centres, the work would have borne fruit; but the movement went on for a short while, and the work dropped. Great interest began to be shown by caste people in our message, and their minds were disabused of queer notions they had of the nature of Christian religion. Great friendliness was shown to us, and we were invited to hold our meetings in their streets; when we offered prayers to God at the conclusion of our meeting, the people showed great reverence, and in a few places people began to learn our lyrics. In more than one place, people began to discuss among themselves what social difficulties would crop up in the event of accepting the Christian religion”.

“While in some places, we met with much friendliness, signs of hostility were not wanting—chiefly based on caste prejudice. In Peddapadu near Ellore, our *kalasi*—a sudra—drew our water from the village well, which the people resented; and some leading men came complaining. When I explained that our *Kalasi* was not an untouchable, people went away seemingly satisfied; but when our man went to the well in the afternoon, he found, to his horror, a big snake killed and thrown into the well. We had to drink and cook our food with foul ink-blue muddy water from a tank nearby, in which the buffaloes, and even pigs were wallowing.

“To show that we were not brow-beaten by their unfriendly treatment, we remained there a day or two longer under those

trying conditions. We had several meetings in their village and in the surrounding villages. A fortnight later Canon Alexander wrote to tell me that there was a virulent epidemic of cholera in their neighbouring villages, and large numbers died; comment is needless. The reason for this hostility was that the *kalasi*, though a Sudra, was serving Christians, who, in their estimation, were untouchables! Fortunately such acts were very rare”.

The rarity of such instances was due, in great measure, to the presence of Anantam in the group, next to Providence. His old students at the Noble College were spread all over the district, in towns as well as in villages. They respected and loved him. They still recalled the memories of his teachings and of his personal relationship with them. So whenever he went to a village or a town, he invariably found an old student who accosted him with a friendly smile and introduced him to his friends. Thus a friendly atmosphere was created for the reception of the message, which he and his group had to deliver.

The village folk would give a patient hearing and show an inclination to believe in the truth that Anantam, with his culture and family connection could lay before them. Some of them would invite them to their homes and offer them fruit and buttermilk.

Occasionally some of the villagers would invite them to come back to their village and repeat the message, promising to think it over the while.

At times heated discussions would ensue between Anantam and some learned Pandits about the way of life according to Christ, and its applicability to Indian conditions. Some of the more thoughtful among them would at times admit that they had no objection to receive the truth, as was presented to them, if it did not shatter the village polity, which was based on caste and on division of labour.

“Tell us about moral and spiritual life. We need instruction about them. Only do not ask us to give up our homes, forsake our kith and kin, and join the group of outcastes as

you have done", confided others, who appreciated the truth that Christ stood for.

HEADQUARTERS IN BEZWADA

The headquarters had to be shifted within a year to Bezwada owing to its central location, and its railway facilities. It was thought that the English missionary, the Rev. J. Stone, who had joined this itinerant band, would be able to keep an eye on the missionary work, that was being carried on in the non-deltaic areas of the district. So they toured round the villages for twenty days in the month, and returned home for the remaining days. Stone was a kind hearted man with enthusiasm for work. He got on remarkably well with Anantam and his other colleagues; and they camped together, and carried on as a happy band. But Stone's wife fell very ill, and she had to be taken to England for consultation and treatment. He returned to Bezwada in six months hoping that his wife would join him soon. But when the improvement in his wife's health was not satisfactory the doctors advised against her returning to India. So in the course of the year, Stone returned to England with a heavy heart for he loved the work that he was engaged in. He was a man of judgment, and his advice was sought for in the councils of the missionary organisations.

A wit in those days remarked, "Our missionary Committee simply worships Stones and Stocks". Stock was also a remarkable man in England whose advice was always sought after in local and foreign affairs. Stone could speak fairly good Telugu, and he was just getting to learn how to approach the high caste Hindus under the direction of Anantam and his group. It was unfortunate that he had to go away. Still his interest in the work in India continued, and he communicated it to the well-to-do members of his Parish at Hildenborough in Kent. And, of course, he did deputation work in England on behalf of India for several years.

His successor, Peachy, an Englishman, who joined the itinerant band, was a jolly good fellow, but he had not the

make-up that would appeal to the high caste Hindu. The work went on very well for some time, and Anantam made many friends all over the large district. His old friends gave him a welcome wherever he went, and gave his message a respectful hearing. They returned his call when they happened to pass through Bezwada. The old prejudice against the Gospel message, that it was fit only for the depressed classes and the outcastes, gradually disappeared; and the high caste Hindus had begun to feel it was worth while to give it their calm and earnest consideration.

Gadiyarapu Venkatachalam could keep the rustic audiences spellbound for hours narrating *Puranic* stories, and comparing and contrasting them with incidents in Christ's life, death and resurrection. But his influence among the educated classes and learned men was limited. The others were, no doubt, good in their own way; but they lacked initiative and leadership.

And the itinerant band came to depend mainly on Anantam. He came to gauge the situation as days passed; and, in all humility, he did his best to make the venture a success. He thought that it would be unfortunate if men of the requisite calibre were not recruited it would become a one-man-show. He laboured for five years making his contribution and holding up the torch of Christ's idealism and of its practice in rural areas.

But it was not easy work to do month by month, and year by year. The members of the band had to leave their families for twenty days in the month, and camp out in all weathers and under trying conditions. They were constantly on the move from one rural centre to another, taking their tents and belongings with them twice or thrice a week. They had to be on the alert physically, mentally and spiritually to be true to themselves, and for the sake of their work.

Anantam had a pony to ride when he went out into the villages, but he did not quite relish the idea of riding, when his colleagues had to walk. He used his pony sparingly.

He was a good walker, and kept pace with the younger men without effort.

Anantam was over five and forty when he began to feel the effects of roughing it. His spirit was willing, but his flesh betrayed signs of yielding under strain of constant movement. But he did not complain; he waited and hoped for guidance. It would be a wrench, whenever the time came, to give up the work he loved in spite of its handicaps.

And unexpectedly he was called upon to take charge of the Mission High School at Bezwada. He was disappointed that he could not hold on for a year or two longer. But the members of the family were glad that they could have him at home. He had never asked for a change in his sphere of activities. But when it came to him unsought, he accepted it as a call from God.

The itinerant work continued for a short time under the leadership of Peachey. But there were one or two deaths in the band. One member became too old to work; and another had heavy family responsibilities, which made him look out for a stationary job and Holy Orders; and others of requisite calibre were not forthcoming to fill the gaps. So the itinerant band had to be wound up.

But the seed sown had not perished. The generation, which greeted Anantam and his group in rural areas, had long remembered him and his message!

CHAPTER VI

THE GURU AND THE SISHYAS

The Mission High School at Bezwada had had a chequered career. It took time to strike roots, grow and flourish. Bezwada itself was a small town on the northern bank of the river Krishna. Tradition has it that it was once the capital of Vijayanagar when it extended to twelve miles in the direction of the sea. Archeological discoveries, and the findings in the depths of the river-bed and of the canals give some credence to this tradition.

Its population was eight thousand when the Anantams went to live there in 1889. It was just beginning to throb at the prospect of becoming an important railway junction. The Nizam's Railway had already connected it with Hyderabad and Wadi, whence the Madras Railway carried passengers to Madras. From the other side of the river Krishna, the Southern Mahrata Railway, a famine railway, connected Bezwada with Guntur, and Guntakal *via* Cumbum over the Eastern Ghats.

When the line was first opened, people had to cross the river Krishna in open crafts, even when it was in freshes. The discomfort during the rainy season can be imagined. After landing, too, a stretch of sandy soil had to be negotiated before one got a glimpse of the railway station.

But the Station Master was human; he had a soft corner in his heart for the woes of those who had to weather the current, the rain and wind to catch the train. So he would make it a point of honour not to let the train depart at the scheduled time.

It was a hot journey up the Ghats and the train simply crawled over steep inclines, while hot winds in summer blew dust into the eyes and ears of the passengers. There were no lavatory arrangements in the train for the III class passengers, and they had to wait for hours to arrive at stations

where they could have such conveniences. Except at junctions, drinking water was not available, and that too, was brackish and coffee coloured. Every effort was made to arrive at Cumbum by night fall, and, behold, the train halted there for the whole night ! The passengers got off, went into the village for food, and disposed themselves for the night in their compartments, or on the floor of the railway station.

The next morning the train started on its weary journey again, whistling and shrieking to scare away wild animals, and clear the path over the bridges that spanned across the yawning streamlets and precipitous gorges, and negotiated dangerous bends and slippery inclines. It was a new line opened with uneven consolidations; it needed time to make it safe for passengers to travel by that route.

When Anantam and family arrived at Bezwada at the end of the year 1889, the town was in the hands of engineer Spring, and of his staff of scores of skilled Punjabi workmen, besides the local unskilled labourers, whose number reached four figures. They formed a significant section of the inhabitants of the town.

It took them over three years to complete the construction of a bridge across the Krishna; and then, it looked like an endless steel cage in which the trains crawled, hissing and whistling in defiance of the foaming, dashing and slashing waters below, breaking over the man-made pillars that impeded their mad rush to the sea. It was a magnificent piece of engineering skill; and its architect was duly rewarded with a knighthood by the Empress of India.

That railway bridge made Bezwada; its creation encouraged the engineering fraternity to embark on a similar venture over the Godavari at a later date.

Anantam was a silent spectator of the transformation that was rapidly taking place in Bezwada and its environs. When it was rumoured that he might have to go to live in Bezwada, he did not quite relish the idea, since he thought it was a village-town with few amenities of life as compared

with Bandar, which had an air of gentility and culture of its own.

Unlike Bandar it was situated forty feet above the sea-level, and was thereby protected from the ravages of floods when the river was in freshes. The landscape was not flat, but ranges of hills and hillocks encircled the town. The Krishna formed its southwestern boundary, and two hills faced each other on either bank of the river, as benign sentinels turning huge columns of water in the direction of the Bay of Bengal. Between the hills the anicut was built, decades ago, to dam the water and direct it into canals to serve the purposes of irrigation and navigation.

With its river, canals and hills Bezwada looked an enchanting little town of beauty, with the lure of an eastern Venice. Anantam had an eye for the colourful and the beautiful in nature. It reminded him of the rugged beauty of Palanadu, where he spent a part of his boyhood.

When he was called to take charge of it, the school at Bezwada was at the cross roads. Thomas Young Darling, an Englishman, had the honour of starting it. After him, Mallady Venkataratnam and Kalapatapu Srinivasam, both *alumni* of the school, had the charge of the school as Headmasters for a while; but they left it and joined Government service. The school had been struggling for existence for some time, when one Samuel Navamani Raj, a graduate from the Madras Christian College, took charge of the school as the Headmaster. He graduated in Science and hailed from the South. In a couple of years, he became very popular, and his popularity helped to swell the number of students in the school.

As days passed, Samuel N. Raj realised that he had become a marked man, and that he would be wise to sever his connection with the school. He resigned his post and joined the Law College at Madras. A successor to him was found in J. Gnanaprakasam, a Christian from the Tamil Nadu. He was a man of very limited vision, and was more a disciplinarian than a teacher. It looked as though the

school would go to pieces unless things were set right forthwith.

RETURN TO HIGHER EDUCATION

It was not, therefore, under happy auspices that Anantam was called to take charge of the school at Bezwada. He was aware that his path was not strewn with roses. There was a rumour abroad that some interested parties were about to start a Hindu School since the standards in the Christian Mission School had fallen. But he had good friends in the town, among whom he could count a few of his old students at the Noble College, besides a couple of families of his own relatives. They assured him of their sympathy and support.

There was general satisfaction in the town when it came to be known that Anantam was to be at the head of the school. Still it would be uphill work, and Anantam knew it. Though he was not keen on undertaking the responsibilities of the head of the institution, he was not the person to run away when duty called him. In fact the craving for teaching was in his blood, and he was thrilled with the thought that he would soon be teaching a group of students, once again !

The remembrance of the good old days of the Noble College cheered him up. Not only was he an older man now, but also wiser and more experienced. A year's stay at Madras had broadened his perspective, and given him deeper insight into men and things. His leadership of the itinerant band for half-a-decade had enriched his experience of the rural folk.

As a full grown man he had come into contact with rural conditions, and could understand the motives that lay behind the hopes and aspirations, and the religious strivings of the great mass of the people who were illiterate and inarticulate. He came to see the despair of the men and women who had become entrapped in the meshes of superstition, of mere religious ritual and bigotry; and he also had glimpses of the unsophisticated temper of the village folk, whose simple life and child-like faith had brought them near to the Kingdom of God. In fact, he had a better understanding of the

rustic soul than he had while he breathed that atmosphere as a lad ! He became more sympathetic to their aspirations in this life, and for the life beyond.

While he was a teacher at Machilcepatnam, his friends came to suspect that Anantam had a temper. At times it reached the height of righteous anger against wickedness in high places: but again it would smack of mere irritability and impatience.

But the year's stay at Madras had had some beneficial effect on him; it made Anantam soften his standards of judgment. He realised gradually that he was treading on the tender toes of those whom he wished to benefit, and that his over enthusiasm had become his failing. He confessed to himself that there was justification for the hint given by Soubhagyam, that he had of late, become irritable. As the day of ordination drew near, his desire to overcome his failing took a serious turn. His vision of the patient, gentle, meek and forgiving Christ became clearer day by day, and he felt convinced that, as Christ's disciple, he was bound to show that consideration to others that was shown to him.

The promise, that the issues of life are open to him who overcomes himself, haunted him during his waking hours. And he made it a matter of prayer, believing on the assurance that he is more than a conqueror through Him who loved him. He realised, too, that he had no right to preach to others to overcome their besetting sins, if he could not overcome his own failing.

Thank God that, in a surprisingly short time, he got strength to overcome his temper, and he became mild as a lamb. His friends at Bandar noticed it when he returned from Madras, and his experiences among the village folk gave him many opportunities to prove himself. The change in his temper was permanent; to the end of his days he was the gentlest, sweetest and tenderest man one could have come across. With this grace added to his moral and spiritual equipment, he came forward to guide the destiny of the school at Bezwada.

THE LURE OF THE PEDAGOGIC CALL

Anantam took to teaching as a duck to water. He was thrilled at the prospect of playing the *guru* to youthful *chelas*. He appreciated the change to urban conditions, from the crowds of unlettered and indifferent rustics of all ages, to small groups of eager, intelligent young men. Their plastic minds provided an opportunity to sow the good seed hoping to reap an abundant harvest in their lifetime. Tidiness in dress, punctuality in keeping engagements, and acquaintance with dynamic currents that influenced the movements of the world, were not in vogue in the rural areas; and Anantam and his group had to abandon these considerations to adapt themselves to their new setting. But now these lapsed social qualities became, once again, the vital issues in the daily routine of the school at Bezwada.

He cherished the hope that his motherland would someday become free, and set to work with that end in view. He believed that righteousness exalts a nation, and that freedom would not be a blessing should it be divested of moral ideals and spiritual values, by the rising generation. For the Christ-spirit would rouse their moral indignation against what was evil in the country: and there should never be any compromise with evil.

With his experience of rural India he realised how millions of rustic folk could easily be led by the intelligentsia, however, insignificant they be numerically, and therefore, how important it was for the country that the latter should be of the right sort to exercise their influence.

The old world ideas had started to recede, but the new fangled ones had just started to put up their heads. The present was in an unstable state, and nobody knew where he stood. There was much in the air to unsettle young and impressionable minds, but little to give shape and form to their vague hopes and aspirations. Anantam had then the chance of his life to turn the hankerings of the rising generation in the right direction.

He still remembered how Christ captivated and enthralled him, while he was yet in his teens, and how the consciousness of God's love had thrown a glow of purifying light, ennobling his motives and guiding his footsteps to whole-hearted service to God and man. Anyway, he was certain that his students would have nothing to lose but everything to gain, spiritually and morally, by accepting Christ as their Lord and Master; and he would place before them the Christ-ideal in its simplicity and beauty. He would leave it to the spirit of God to work in their hearts, and convince them of God's eternal truth.

He was aware of the prejudice that existed against Christianity amongst the intelligentsia, and how they regarded it as a religion worthy only of the outcastes, to wean them away from their evil ways and pernicious customs. But they, the cream of the country, had no need for it; they were above it! For do not their sacred books contain spiritual wisdom that is quite sufficient for their requirements? In fact, their Scriptures are replete with instances of high moral attainment, and of persuasions for moral endeavour.

What have the top-ranking men to gain by becoming Christians, except to lose caste, and be thrown on the dung-heap as untouchables? They would rather be let alone: let them not add another to the atmosphere already surcharged with many problems.

Up in Calcutta the Brahmo Samaj as represented by Keshub Chandra Sen was a power in Bengal, and the intelligentsia, even in Andhra Desa, were swayed by it. Christ was no doubt the central figure of Keshub's adoration, but he made it plain that, to fit into the Indian setting, Christ should be disentangled from Christian theology and western religious ritual. He paid his homage to Christ, the oriental, but not the occidental, with occidental trappings as pictured by his followers in the west: Christ should be beheld through Indian spectacles to be admired, adored, and received into Indian homes and hearts. He should be Indianised to be worshipped by India's millions. He should be interpreted in terms of Indian thought and ideals!

Kandukuri Veerasalingam, a Brahman of culture and courage, had been carrying on his tirade against the treatment meted out to women in Hindu polity, and focussing the attention of the people for the removal of the taboo on widow remarriage. He founded a Widow's Home at Rajamahendravaram in Andhra Desa, and gave away some young widows in marriage to eligible suitors. The conservative section of the people, aided by the priestcraft, were loud in their declamation against these unseemly innovations into their time-honoured social structure, and holding up their hands in holy horror, invited the wrath of heaven to consume that intrepid social reformer and his followers.

He was a powerful writer in Telugu prose, and his novels, pamphlets, articles and letters in the press took up the challenge, and fearlessly advocated the cause of women; he demanded their equal rights with men in Indian polity. He was one of the most abused men in Andhra Desa, and was practically excommunicated by the conservative touch-me-nots! He held aloft the torch of truth and justice to the end of his days, and left his motherland deeply indebted to him. And Rajamahendravaram was not far from Bezwada.

Another Social Reformer, R. Venkatarathnam Naidu, started his crusade against idolatry and caste discrimination, at Machileepatnam. He was a professor in the Noble College, and was a power for good in matters social, moral and spiritual. He was very popular with the students, and the young men of his day used to rave over his speeches which were emotional, eloquent and thought-provoking. He stressed the theistic aspect of Hindu thought and idealism, and pleaded with his audiences, young and old, to discard idolatry, since the idols were originally meant for the ignorant, but not for the wise and the initiated. He stirred the emotions of his hearers and made them think. The Missionaries at the Noble College found in him a helpful ally in fighting the superstitions, injurious customs, injustices and idolatry that had crept into Hindu religious practice.

Thus the Christian leaven had been at work in several spheres, the spade work being done by the impact of western culture on Indian life and thought.

Anantam had had to take a plunge into this highly electrified atmosphere of eclectic thought. And he set about it with his faculties alert; and his acquaintance with Hindu and Christian modes of thought and expression came to his aid. He knew the difficulties which the young men under his charge had to contend with, and understood the unsettled state of their mind. The ideals indeed stood apart, mocking at the actuals of daily custom and routine. When he himself was quite young, he saw the clash between what was, and what ought to be!

He realised that uphill work lay before him, and that it was up to him not to lose the opportunity given by God. He placed before the quickwitted students, in an acceptable form, the truth that was in Christ Jesus. He did not encourage the wrangling spirit that was in them, for mere controversy would not carry them far. But honest doubt was recognised and dealt with.

He would place Jesus Christ before them, the historical figure in his sublimity, beauty and glory. He was sure that they would see Jesus: when they saw him, his gentleness and mildness would draw them to him, his purity would sanctify them, his love unto death would captivate them, his association with them would make them adore him, and their spiritual contact with him would transform them into his likeness.

And Anantam strove to impress on all the faculties of his students so that they might bestow the devotion of their whole being in seeking after the truth, until they found it. But he placed Christ, the Nazarene, as the central figure to whom their love and adoration might cling amidst the vicissitudes of life, and from whom they could draw inspiration to live his way of life—to be in the world, yet not to be of it!

He hoped that some of them would not be unfaithful to the Heavenly Vision as they beheld it in Christ Jesus,

and strive to serve their generation and country by the standards set by him in the "Sermon on the Mount", twenty centuries ago. That was the climax of his ambition!

THE GURU AT HOME

Anantam loved to play the role of a *Guru*. But the western leaven had begun to work also in the sphere of education. It was with great foresight that Macaulay advocated the introduction of English education and of British culture into India. Thereupon the Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were founded, and the Eastern student sat at the feet of the Western Savants and drank deep at the fount of Western thought and idealism. The experiment proved a success; and, ere long, it went beyond the most sanguine expectations of its originators!

As yet the Indians were equipped to run only the minor jobs, while the British kept to themselves the key positions in the country. But the western urge, and the spirit of British democracy pervaded all the spheres of administration, and the angle of vision of the Indian had begun to change.

The British Government had not yet made up its mind with regard to mass education in India. Hardly one per cent. of the teeming millions had passed through the portals of the Universities, and this microscopic minority had already begun to claim its right to have a larger and yet larger share in the administration of the country. The British politician saw in mass education a danger to his overlordship of India. He realised that mass education was incompatible with autocratic rule, and was not enthused over it.

But the current of public opinion was getting stronger and stronger as years passed, and the British Government was compelled to make some concession to it.

The Christian Missionary Institutions on the other hand, flourished by the devotion of the workers to the cause, and by the unstinted support given by the mission authorities in India and Britain, in money and men! Their primary

activity in the educational field was elementary education, endeavouring to make the average Christian literate. At the top were the colleges, affiliated to different Universities, where the Indian intelligentsia were instructed and trained in Arts and Sciences to qualify for a degree, and join the ranks of the decently employed under the Government or private agencies. Though the colleges were but a few, their reputation stood high, and their influence was considerable.

In between, was the secondary education up to Matriculation standard, aimed at fitting the youth either to enter college or to pursue a trade or occupation that would help to get a living. The scions of the professional classes and of the government employees, and the young men, whose ambition never soared above that of holding subordinate positions in the several callings, flocked into the High Schools, hoping that, through their portals, they would arrive at the goal of making ends meet. When wisely handled, inspired and directed they promised to become the Vanguard of India to be! It was Anantam's privilege and opportunity to leave his impress on that promising material.

He knew that the young people committed to his charge were apt to be critical, and, in their desire to uphold what was good in their own faith, might be inclined to be unjust to what was best and highest in the teachings of other faiths. As years passed, he came to realise that example was better than precept, and that his own life, as a disciple of Christ, should be a shining example, and a witness to the truth that was in his master. He himself should be above board, and give no room for others to pick holes in his character. The *Sishyas* might read the gospels for themselves, but they would rather see Christ exemplified in the life of their own *Guru*. It was a challenge to him, which he could not but accept, relying on the strength of Him, whose footsteps had left marks up the steep hill of perfection. He would therefore let them see for themselves what Christ had done for him.

Anantam believed in faithfulness in small things; that character should express itself in the daily routine. Religion

that does not help to make right contacts with other men and women was hardly worth professing. Simple things done in faith in eternal realities, often assume cosmic significance! This was exemplified by instances in his life.

During the early days in Bezwada the family felt the need for a milch cow. One of the teachers at the school, promised to secure a reliable animal at a reasonable price. His uncle, a Government official, was approached for help. In about a week a cow was produced, followed by a sprightly dancing calf led by the ryot who owned it. "She looks a *Kama Dhenu*", remarked Anantam.

"That she is, sir," returned Raghavachary, the officer.

"She is thoroughly reliable. She is of my herd. Her mother looks just like her, pure white; mild and harmless; a child may approach her", returned the ryot.

"She looks a fine cow," put in Soubhagyam as she sauntered into the veranda and surveyed the cow.

"Yes, we shall have the cow if he will let us have her at a reasonable price," said Anantam turning to Raghavachary.

"What do you want for the cow?" Raghavachary asked the ryot.

The ryot thought for a while and returned hesitantly, "Thirty-three rupees, Sir, I might have said thirty-five, but since he is a friend of yours, I shall reduce the price by two rupees".

"The price is high. Won't you come down to thirty?" asked Raghavachary.

"As you are in authority, I shall accept what you give me", returned the ryot with a twinge of disappointment in his voice.

But Anantam never drove a hard bargain with a poor man. He took Raghavachary aside and said, "Please do not higgie with him. Three rupees are more to him than to me".

The ryot was beside himself with joy when he realised that he would get the price that he asked for his cow.

This incident would have been forgotten but for one, who watched the transaction from the beginning to the end.

He was a Brahman lad who sat in the veranda, giving lessons to Anantam's son. But he happened to be one of *those who had ambitions! His mother's extreme poverty had not deterred him from embarking on an ambitious career. He went round, and made seven of the well-to-do people promise him one day's food a week, while he studied at the High School. Soorayya had an honest face and clear eyes. He was clever and willing; with his pleasant manners it did not take long for people to like him. Luckily he found his way to Anantam, who employed him as a tutor to one of his sons.*

"He has a heart of gold," he remarked to Raghavachary as he hastened back to school.

"A rare man," assented Raghavachary.

Soorayya had since bestowed greater care and attention than before in instructing his charge; and he came a little earlier and left a little later than the stipulated time. When the month drew nigh to completion, Anantam asked him what pay he expected.

"I dare not demand anything from a gentleman like you, Sir;" he ventured, "the way in which you purchased the cow indicated your generous nature. I shall accept whatever you give me". He was treated as a member of the family.

Soorayya sowed the seed, and to his surprise, Anantam found many friends among the students of the school when he took over.

Anantam walked in the footsteps of his *Guru*, Robert Noble, and made friends with the parents of his students. He returned calls whenever possible, and his house was thrown open to students and their parents, to call whenever they chose. When he came to know that a student had fallen ill he would call on him, and, if there was no male member of the family present, he would send a note to the hospital for a bottle of mixture. If a student happened to be negligent, and was not quite up to the mark in his studies, he would send for the parent and warn him of his boy's lapses. He would have one or two students accompany him on his

evening walks after the school was over. He would chat with them, and get to know the conditions of their homes and of their family difficulties, if any. It paved the way for mutual understanding.

The school started every day with prayer. The students and teachers were assembled in the main hall, and Anantam read a few verses from the New Testament; after a short discourse in Telugu, he would wind up the proceedings with prayer.

As far as possible Anantam took the scripture lessons for the fifth and the sixth Forms, either conjointly or separately, while the other Christian teachers of the staff took the other forms and classes during different periods of the day.

In the higher forms of the school Anantam used the English New Testament, since it introduced the students to simple, chaste and gripping English. The life of Jesus Christ, as found in any one gospel, was studied in the class regularly day by day, both appreciatively and critically. His teachings were compared to, and contrasted with, those of others. The students were encouraged to think for themselves and ask questions. Anantam would answer their queries and endeavour to make them see Christ's way of life.

Gradually the scripture class came to be an institution in the school. The students found Anantam's scripture class, with arguments and counter-arguments, both interesting and entertaining. Some of the very precocious among them would discuss the problems with their elders and compeers at home, and come quite prepared to fire off a volley of questions with the cock-sureness of youth. The Headmaster would smile affably and answer the questions, one by one; and turning himself into the questioner, he would shake their confidence in their own premises, and try to prove to them how unsuitable the ancient tradition had become to the new conditions of the motherland. They would see that he loved his country, though his angle of vision differed

from their's. He spoke out what he considered to be the truth, without hurting their feelings.

The lads respected their Headmaster, and gradually got to love him; he reciprocated their confidence and love. Anybody could approach him and speak to him. One day as he sat at his table in the middle of the large hall, a small boy from the Infant School approached him, and leaning on his arm, with great solicitude enquired, "Sir, where have you been these last few days? I missed you as I passed this way. I feared you might have been ill".

The Headmaster put his hand round the little boy, and drawing him close, returned, "I am quite well my boy; only I have been away. I am glad to be here again to meet little boys like you". And the little one, bursting with joy, ran away in the direction of his class.

The cane was an insignia of pedagogic power in those days. The teacher who spared the cane was thought to be soft and unimpressive. But Anantam had a different code of honour. He had inherited a long cane from his predecessor, and it lay on the table all the time he was at work. He scarcely used it, except to rap on the table to warn a student, who argued with his teacher at the top of his voice, disturbing others at work.

He got on with his pupils splendidly without using the cane, but once, and that was, when a moral issue was at stake. After much thought and prayer he used the cane, and gave the youth an exemplary punishment in public. He smarted under it for a while; later realising that the Headmaster did it out of love for him, he repented and turned over a new leaf.

In spite of his kindness and gentleness, rather, on account of them, Anantam was a disciplinarian of the top rank. Though he never made a fetish of discipline, he maintained it from the beginning to the end of the year. The boys simply loved him and obeyed him with boyish enthusiasm. Boys are boys all the world over, and a wide margin should be left for boyish pranks. Happy is the teacher who realised

it early, and moulded his behaviour on the policy of 'give and take' with his pupils.

Kama Sastry, the Telugu *pandit*, tried to inspire love for the study of Telugu literature among the boys committed to his charge. He had spent a decade or two in acquiring proficiency in it under several *gurus*, and finished it off at Kasi by paying attention to Sanskrit grammar and classics, as aids to the mastering of his own language. The culture and learning of the *Pandit* might be priceless, but were not marketable according to the economic standards that prevailed then. The *pandit* was expected to give the best in him for practically nothing. He had been made to believe that high thinking was only possible when permanently linked with plain living bordering on penury. He considered himself very lucky when his salary touched the figure of five and twenty rupees.

Anantam tried to inspire self-confidence among the *pandits* associated with him, but it proved to be an uphill task.

One day the Telugu *pandit*'s class was particularly hilarious and restive; and though the *pandit* pleaded with the pupils to behave themselves and attend to the lesson, there was no response. His remonstrances served only to whet their appetite for boyish mischief. The class became unmanageable and the ringleader became vociferous. An idea struck the *pandit*. In a determined voice he ordered the ringleader to come over to his table. As he approached it, the *pandit* said, "I mean to send you to the Headmaster. He will deal with you himself".

"I shall not go to the Headmaster, Sir," returned the pupil decidedly.

"But you must go; I shall see that you go to him," insisted the *pandit*.

Realising that the *pandit* was bent on carrying out his threat, the pupil repented, and said in a meek, submissive voice, "Sir, you have the right to punish me; why don't you punish me, yourself. instead of sending me to the Headmaster?"

"It is because I want him to deal with you in an exemplary way."

The pupil peremptorily broke down; tears came trickling down his cheeks. He pleaded, "Sir, you may inflict any punishment you like on me; only, do not send me to him."

"And why, my boy?"

"Sir, he is fond of me. How can he be the same to me when he comes to know of today's happenings?"

And he fell at the *pandit's* feet, and apologised for his misbehaviour.

CHAPTER VII

REVISION OF THE BIBLE

Anantam's talents found opportunity for expression in other spheres. The Telugu Bible stood in need of revision. Important as the school management was, it was felt that the revision of the Telugu Bible was long overdue, and should not be postponed any longer. Everybody who knew Anantam thought that he was best fitted to the job. He was master of the art of writing simple Telugu prose. He had some acquaintance with Sanskrit. And when the call came to him, he left his cottage home at Bezwada as readily as he left his Garden Home at Machilapatnam a decade before. Bellary was chosen as the place where the revision work was to be done.

His missionary colleague, Lewis, ripe in years, was a good sort; he was kind, considerate and well spoken. He knew Telugu well, particularly the brogue in use in the Ceded Districts. Anantam found it quite pleasant to work with him. They had, besides, a Brahman *pandit* to consult when necessary.

The work progressed satisfactorily, and his good-natured British colleague knowing his own limitations, let Anantam have his own way with regard to the choice of Telugu idiom, phrase and expression. When a doubt arose which could not easily be settled, reference was made to the Brahman *pandit* whose suggestion clinched the issue one way or other.

Anantam's job had been to steer clear of the classical style of a *pandit* on the one hand, and on the other, a conversational style, for which his English colleague had a partiality. After the preliminaries were over, the trio understood one another's point of view and endeavoured to accommodate one another. His heart was set on adopting simple, chaste Telugu that can be understood by the common people, and yet be appreciated by the intelligentsia—something

like that of the authorised version of the English Bible which has been held up as model English prose to this day. But he believed that his task was to translate, but not to paraphrase; he kept to the original as closely as possible.

Time was moving fast at Bellary, and the Anantams had not found themselves strangers in a strange place. Only the social and cultural atmosphere of the Ceded Districts seemed to be somewhat behind that of the Northern Circars, and religious bigotry was more pronounced. But unfortunately one or two communities were inclined to flare up on the slightest provocation and take revenge. Seeking satisfaction in murder was far more common there than in other parts of Andhra Desa.

During the cold season, the much talked of and long looked for, visit to Humpi was accomplished. It was arranged by a Brahman lawyer friend, and carried out by a Government official. Anantam was fond of travel and never missed a chance of seeing what was worth-while; he took his family along with him to see Humpi.

As the vision of Humpi burst upon their view they were lost in admiration and contemplation—the reality surpassed their expectations. It looked like a great fortress protecting the temples, statues, dwelling places, animals including the Nandi, and forms of human beings; they were all carved out of rocks and stones with wonderful skill and delicacy of touch. Neither centuries of neglect, nor exposure to the inclemency of the changing seasons had affected their freshness or charm. It seemed as though they came into shape and form only the other day. Not only did they bespeak the cunning of the sculptors and designers, but also proclaimed the munificence and the love of beauty which motivated the ancient rulers of Vijayanagar. It seemed as a veritable dream in rock and stone, human thought and skill aiming at permanency amidst the shifting scenes of the day-to-day world. The grandeur and sublimity of the art of ancient and medieval India stood in contrast with the prosaic achievement of the Motherland in captivity!

Anantam's co-worker, Lewis, had an attack of pneumonia, and succumbed to it in spite of the best treatment available at Bellary. Lewis's death came as a blow to the Missionary Society; and Anantam took it as a personal loss, since they both had become good friends while working together. Presently the Rev. R. J. Bacon was appointed to succeed Lewis. He also was a Telugu scholar.

But Bacon lived at Bangalore, and was not inclined to come over to Bellary. And Anantam was asked if he would go to Bangalore to carry on the revision of the New Testament. He was not averse to leaving Bellary. Bangalore was a large city having many amenities even in those days; its delightful climate all the year round could help close application to intellectual pursuits. Only, Anantam hoped that Bacon would be a pleasant man to work with.

When the time actually came for them to leave Bellary, it was not without regrets that they bade good-bye to friends who had been as kind and cordial to them as if they had known them all their lives.

FROM BELLARY TO BANGALORE

When the Anantams arrived in Bangalore, Jampa Venkatachalam, an old Andhra friend, and his brother-in-law, Charles Manickyam, met them at the Railway Station, drove them to their home, helped them in all the ways they could, and looked after them till they got settled in their new home. They rented a decent bungalow in the Cantonment, within stone-throw of the Zenana Mission Hospital. The lady doctor in charge was friendly to Soubhagyam and the Thambu Chetty family was beginning to be recognised by the Government of Mysore, and he had won his spurs in the lower rungs of the ladder of Mysore administration. He belonged to an old Andhra family that had settled down in Mysore for some generations. He was a Roman Catholic Christian and was much respected.

He took a fancy to Anantam on first meeting him; the latter's simplicity and unconventionality impressed him. A

friendship arose between them, which lasted all the days of Thambu Chetty's life. The latter won the confidence of the Maharajah, who appointed him as Acting Dewan of Mysore. In spite of his heavy work at the Secretariat, Thambu Chetty found time to call on Anantam at times, and welcomed him warmly when he returned the call. His wife, a charming lady with old world manners, took very kindly to Soubhagya, and occasionally sent her carriage and pair to fetch Soubhagya to some women's social functions. Soubhagya's charm and loveable ways were striking as she went about. In a short while the Anantams felt that they were not strangers in Bangalore.

Bacon lived in a fine bungalow in the Residency Road, three miles away from Anantam's residence. Since Bacon could spare a spacious room for the revision work, Anantam thought it best to accept the offer, and go to his bungalow six days in the week. Bacon was not a bad companion to work with—quite pleasant and endowed with common sense. Only he suffered from an exaggerated notion of his knowledge of the Telugu language.

In the early stages the progress of the work had been slow, with arguments and counter-arguments about phrases, words and idioms; Anantam's good humour often came to the rescue and saved the situation. But it had been a great strain on him. There was no *pandit* available at Bangalore with the requisite cultural qualifications to refer to, when they reached an impasse! But one day luckily, he heard from the old *pandit* at Bellary that he would be shortly coming over to Bangalore and would join him and Bacon to help in the revision. Anantam hailed the letter as providential, and wrote back asking him to come forthwith. There was a perceptible change in Bacon's attitude since the *pandit*'s arrival on the scene, as he realised that Anantam and the *pandit*, between them, knew more Telugu than he did!

The work began to progress satisfactorily, and in spite of an occasional disgruntled expression from Bacon, there was cordiality in the group. They were once again a happy band,

working together without treading on each other's toes. The short summer at Bangalore soon passed and with the bursting of the monsoon the group felt the glow of life in their blood, and experienced the thrill of joy and contentment at what they had accomplished. And they made ambitious plans for the future.

But the year 1898 was not a propitious year for the country; Bangalore, too, had its dark clouds hovering over the horizon with uncanny portents. With the advent of the cold weather, rumours were abroad that in North Indian cities a new disease had made its appearance, ushered in by a rise of temperature, and manifesting its ominous characteristics by swelling in the groin, and invariably ending fatally within a few days of the onset of the fever; there were no remedies for it. In fact, there was hardly time to try any remedy. The wise men of Bangalore thought that God's ways were mysterious and His purposes were not always clear; and even if fate decreed it otherwise, it was a far cry from Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore, Banaras and Bombay. They hoped that the angel of death might lose its way and wear itself out in the leagues that have to be covered from the north to the south. They opined that safety lay in distance, and that the best thing that they could do was to ignore its existence and disbelieve the newspaper reports about its prevalence.

But one morning, as people went about their business, they discovered in several parts of the city ominous rat falls; and it came to their notice that people here and there had very high fever, with swellings in the groins and armpits: it was whispered that not one of them recovered!

The realisation of the truth was most disconcerting to the people and the Government alike. As the winter deepened the plague struck its roots deeper, and spread all over the city like wild fire. The suspected patients were immediately removed to isolation hospitals.

But the authorities did not know what the people thought of their measures. In fact, people thought that the

emergency was a creation of the authorities. They could not understand why the infected people should be deprived of the right of dying in peace in their own homes, instead of being hustled into segregation camps and isolation hospitals to die of a broken heart.

The authorities on the other hand grew panicky. Their dread increased as the plague spread from one locality to another. The British soldiers were called in to help the authorities in enforcing the sanitary laws promulgated by the Government.

The sight of the British soldier in the vicinity of their homes scared the women, who screamed as they retreated into the inner apartments. The children cried in terror. The men wondered what would happen next!

In the hour of despair the women in the inner apartments took charge of the situation, and ventured to put the soldiers off the scent. They hid everything from the eyes of the authorities. The infection by plague was kept a family secret. Dead bodies were disposed of during the early hours of the morning.

But in the city proper, which was under the rule of the Maharajah, matters were adjusted amicably. The Mysore Government never made a fetish of efficiency. The Dewan and the other high officials of the Mysore Government sent for the leaders of the people, explained to them the rationale of the steps taken to fight the plague; persuasion rather than coercion was employed.

The onslaught of the plague was a sorry episode; and mistakes were made on both sides. But it needed time and patience to make the requisite adjustments. Several thousands died that year in Bangalore.

Anantam and his family were kept from harm. Though as yet there was no sign of rat falls in the vicinity of their home, on their way, to and fro, they could see ghastly sights in the streets.

The local servants were not dependable during those days of trial and anguish. The only servant who followed

the family from Bezwada looked as though he could not stand the strain much longer. Soubhagyam kept up her spirits, lest any wavering on her part should damp the ardour of her husband, who was engaged on a task of significance to Andhra Desa. Anantam had been wondering whether it was right to expose the members of the family to the plague infection; the plague continued to spread and showed signs of moving in the direction of their neighbourhood. He had an unfaltering faith in God's power of protection in the midst of the plague. But conditions grew worse day by day. Rat falls in the vicinity of their home made every member of the family nervous.

Bacon, for a while, seemed quite impervious to the qualms of his colleagues, who were less fortunate with regard to the localities they lived in. Secluded in his palatial residence above the din and dust of the crowd, he little realised the anxiety of Anantam about his family. He took it for granted that everything went on in the best possible way.

But, one morning, a rude awakening came to him when a Brahman lad handed a note written in English. "My husband, the *pandit*, died last night. Please send this month's salary for cremation expenses". It was sent in the name of the *pandit's* wife.

Bacon placed five ten-rupee notes into the outstretched hand of the lad, and asked him to assure the poor, helpless widow of his deep sympathy in her bereavement.

Anantam felt the loss of the *pandit* acutely. During the two years they worked together, they respected each other, and got to be fond of each other. They appreciated each other's scholarship. Anantam missed the *pandit* as a friend. Besides, the plague had begun to invade their neighbourhood, too. The passing of the *pandit* had brought home to him the danger that encompassed him and the family.

He appraised Bacon of his intention to leave Bangalore forthwith, and work in Madras where a competent *pandit* could be had, if the revision work was to continue till the New Testament was completed. If that plan of work would

not be agreed to, he had made up his mind to return to his duties as the Head of the High School at Bezwada.

Anantam's ultimatum drove Bacon to a reasonable frame of mind. And both he and Anantam finally came to an amicable settlement and informed their respective committees in India of their decision.

Anantam would go to Madras and continue the revision with the aid of a *pandit*, and Bacon would periodically visit Madras to offer his suggestions, if any, and approve of what had been done with modifications, if necessary. Thus the work was continued in Madras till the New Testament was completed.

And the Anantams left Bangalore not without a pang, since their hopes of living and working in a beautiful city had terminated so tragically. But they were thankful that they had been preserved from the ravages of the plague!

CHAPTER VIII

ADVENTURE IN FAITH

It was the beginning of December 1898, when Anantam, Soubhagyam and Ananda Rao arrived in Madras. The north-east monsoon was in full swing and torrential rain greeted them. The heat had abated and a spell of pleasant days was in store for them.

And Anantam sought for a *pandit* and found one. And they both immediately set to work. For the first week or two the progress was slow; but the *pandit* soon came to understand what was expected of him. As he got to know something of Anantam's scholarship and of his command of Telugu, not to mention his acquaintance with Sanskrit, his critical aloofness disappeared, giving place to respect and warm co-operation in the work. Mutual regard and consideration for each other's point of view made the daily task smooth and pleasant; and it progressed rapidly.

Bacon worked at the revision in his own way, and kept himself informed of what his colleagues had been doing in Madras through the post. He visited Madras periodically, and compared notes with them.

It was just a decade since Anantam had left Madras after being called to Holy Orders. Though he was never in love with Madras, he was glad to come back to it after his experience in Bangalore. Fortunately he was able to get a comfortable bungalow again in Peters Road, Royapettah. He was thrilled to be amidst old friends again and charmed by old associations.

A decade was not a long period in the history of Madras, though it might have seemed unduly long to some of its citizens. It was then called "the benighted city" by the globe trotter.

It was the lawyer, who made his presence felt in Madras. Intellectual subtilities surcharged the atmosphere.

Yet Madras has indeed many natural endowments. It has the longest and finest sea-front in the east. It can expand in the northern or southern direction without let or hindrance. The blue expanse of the Bay of Bengal on the east helped contacts with the outside world, in spite of the niggardliness of harbour facilities. Though it was one of the earliest British settlements in the country, though English was more generally understood, and more correctly spoken there than in any other city in the country, it was the least susceptible to the commercial and adventurous instincts of the British rulers. Madras was then essentially an intellectual city, hardly worth being placed alongside of Calcutta or Bombay either industrially or commercially. To dub it, therefore, a benighted city, was not altogether unjustified.

And yet something had crept into Madras which transformed its method of transport. During the decade that the Anantams had been away, electric tram cars began to run on its streets. In fact the poor and the middle class hailed it as a godsend! It was the first city in the country to have had electric tramways.

Meanwhile, another responsibility, rather heavy, came to Anantam, though not quite unexpected. His son Ramachandra Rao had been studying at the Madras Christian College during the previous 18 months. His health was not robust, and a nervous breakdown was apprehended. His failure in the First in Arts Examination was a disappointment to him and the family, as it debarred him from medical studies at Madras. Anantam was at his wits end to know what to do with him. It was said that Ramachandra Rao evinced a desire to study medicine since boyhood. While he was a child he used to go round the garden and collect leaves and flowers, mix them up and administer the concoction to the servants and playmates as a panacea for their ills. One day, his own mother, saw him thus occupied, lifted him up in her arms, kissed him and declared, "My son shall certainly be a doctor one day!"

Anantam's hopes for his son were revived by the helpful and determined attitude of Soubhagyam, and he ventured, "I shall do what I can for the boy with your help. We shall consider the *pros and cons* when the time comes".

They hoped that they would be able to put by something every month, and save up towards their son's medical education in Britain. But as yet there was no sign of saving up.

The Anantams kept a good table and were known to be hospitable. There was therefore no question of saving something at Bezwada, and much less as they went about on Bible Revision work. Again both husband and wife were charitable, and when a call came from a needy friend, a kinsman or a stranger, they went out with an open hand and warm heart to help. People thought that they were rich, because they gave liberally for a good cause; but very few knew that it meant some self-sacrifice to them.

But there was a small account with the bank, the patrimony left by Minnie. Fortunately it had not been touched hitherto, though the interest had to be drawn and spent, from time to time, to meet the needs of the growing sons. Ramachandra Rao had been at the College in Madras for about a couple of years, and his brother was in the Matriculation class; it was not an easy matter to make ends meet, and keep educating them for years together! Ramachandra Rao's failure in F.A. Examination had complicated matters further. The odds were against his medical studies.

But his doctor was of the opinion, that a prolonged stay in a cold country like England, would help him to regain his vitality; he might then stand the strain of medical studies. He had set his heart on the medical profession as it could help him to earn his livelihood in an independent way. But medicine seemed somehow linked up with his being able to go to England. But that probability seemed remote just then, since his parents were not in a position to help him to carry on medical studies for five years at a University abroad.

As a missionary, Anantam had a salary that would keep a family going with the ordinary amenities of life; and his case was one of plain living and high thinking! The prospects of Ramachandra Rao's studying medicine in India did not seem bright. But Anantam had not the heart to persuade him to give up the idea of medical studies, since, whenever he came to think of it, the vision of Minnie lifting up the child in her arms, and declaring that he shall be a doctor one day, haunted him. The impulse to be loyal to the wishes of his dead wife egged him on to contrive, to bring into focus, every right means that was within his reach.

Catherine Subbarayudu, Soubhagya's sister, happened to visit them at that time. As the time for decision drew near, Soubhagya felt more than ever that it was her duty to see that the hopes of Minnie for her son were realised as early as possible. She started forthwith to discuss the matter with her husband and sister.

A day or two later Anantam accosted Ramachandra Rao and said, "Your mother and I think that, if you decide to go to England, the sooner it is done the better. You might as well go abroad and return home, while I am in harness. The small patrimony left by your own mother will be sufficient to keep you going in England for one year. I am glad that your aunt has promised to shoulder the responsibility for another year. Your mother thinks we ought to manage to tide you over the interim period. If you decide to go to Edinburgh, you should set about it forthwith as the summer term begins in May".

Ramachandra Rao was touched by his father's generous offer. Much as he wished to study medicine in England, he felt uneasy at the thought of the heavy burden he would be imposing on his parents, by accepting their offer. The burden of decision had shifted from the parents to the son. So, he should accept it and make the most of it.

His mother smiled when she came to know that he agreed to go to England forthwith. And she brushed aside, one by one, the difficulties that, he thought, might crop up.

“ We have prayed for God’s guidance; when we follow His lead, I am certain that He will not let us down”, she said, defying doubts and fears. His brother, Ananda Rao, also supported the mother enthusiastically. Then Ramachandra Rao’s going to England began to be talked about, and friends came to know of it. Some people became jealous.

As it was the busy season, a passage was booked for him by an Italian liner going to Genoa, so that he might have a glimpse of Europe, on his way to Britain overland.

The outfit for the voyage was speedily got together to enable Ramachandra Rao to catch the boat at Bombay so as to arrive in England about the middle of April.

When all the four of them were sitting at the table one evening Anantam unable to control his pent up feelings, turned to Ramachandra Rao and said, “ Five years seem a long period to be away from home. I shall be quite content if you go to Cambridge and study something worth while, and return home with a degree in about three years. If you are keen about law, you may keep the terms at one of the Inns of court. You might get a decent start when you return home”. But Soubhagyam reminded her husband of Minnie’s ambition for Ramachandra Rao.

Soubhagyam was very busy on the day prior to Ramachandra Rao’s departure making sweets, pickles and other delicacies for the voyage. When everybody retired for the night she beckoned to Ramachandra Rao to come out into the back verandah, and spend some time with her. They both were glad to have a talk together before his departure. When they were alone she enquired whether his outfit was complete or needed any additions. She told him that she was glad that God had directed his steps westward and she was sure that He would guide his steps, protect him from harm and danger, and bring him home safe, with success and honour. She knew that he would do his best. Five years was a long period to be away from home, but if every thing went well, time would fly. She advised him not to overwork, nor stint himself of necessary comforts.

“ Let me tell you one thing before you leave us”, she said. “Your father will do his best for your education at Edinburgh. But should an occasion arise, when you might not like to write to him about anything, do not hesitate to let me know; all the jewels I have shall be at your disposal. You sons shall henceforth be my ornaments!”

Tears of joy welled in Ramachandra Rao's eyes. Soubhagya, with commendable nerve, controlled her emotion, and said, “ I am sure God will not let us down. ”

The next evening there was a hearty send off at the Central Station, Madras; and Ramachandra Rao proceeded to Bombay to embark for Genoa with his mind made up to make good.

CHAPTER IX

THE SHOULDERING OF VARIED RESPONSIBILITIES

Work and responsibility when shouldered at the call of duty should not unnerve any man, much less one of Anantam's temperament, who could look up to God for strength and guidance. After Ramachandra Rao had started on the journey, the weary hours of waiting for news from him made Anantam somewhat uneasy. But the distractions of city life, and the engrossing revision work kept up his spirits.

When doubts damped his enthusiasm, the faith that God would never let him down, kept him above despondency.

Soubhagyam was a woman of faith and hope. She was apt to look at the bright side of things. She would make up her mind after due deliberation, and carry it through in spite of obstacles. Her enthusiasm and good cheer were contagious; these helped to turn many a corner, when matters did not look promising.

Ramachandra Rao's voyage was uneventful, and he had good company on board the ship.

Anantam's old teacher at Machileepatnam, Sharp met Ramachandra Rao when he arrived in London, and entertained him at a hotel as his guest; and after a few days of sight-seeing, he sent him off to Mason at Sheffield; he was Anantam's old scripture teacher at Bandar. This contact cheered him up and made him feel that he was not a stranger in a strange land!

Then one day Ramachandra Rao was hurried away on the Flying Scotsman to Edinburgh, where young Lewis, the son of their late friend Lewis of Bellary, met him and drove him to his lodgings. He and his friends befriended Ramachandra Rao, and introduced him into the routine of the University life. After the first few weeks of novelty and home sickness, Ramachandra Rao settled down to his

studies. He made some friends on his own, both British and Indian, and by degrees got into the full swing of the University activities.

The long summer holiday gave Ramachandra Rao time to observe and adapt himself to the conditions at Edinburgh. He wanted to make the most of his stay at the Scottish metropolis. When he arrived there his thirst for knowledge increased, and he set about to satisfy it. He would make use of the opportunities which the University offered.

When the spring crept in he gave more time and better attention to his studies.

He sat for the First Professional Examination, and got through the whole lot successfully. He then attended the winter's course of lectures in medicine and the hospital work, besides two subjects for the degree examination in Arts. He made use of the long summer vacation also, and got through the Second Professional, besides two of the remaining subjects in the humanities. Similar procedure was followed during the third winter; and, within three years of his joining the University, he got through the Third Professional Examination in Medicine, and completed all the subjects for the degree in Arts. And he took the degree in Arts in July 1902!

Besides, he started work for the Honours Degree in Philosophy and Economics. Anantam was pleased with his son's record. He had not been keeping well for sometime; and he feared that Ramachandra Rao might have to be recalled, if anything happened to him.

Ramachandra Rao's taking the Arts degree lessened Anantam's anxiety, since he realised that it had provided him with one string to his bow. But the cost of books for the Arts and Medical degrees, class fees and tutorial fees had begun to mount up; and it appeared as though the expenses would exceed the original estimate.

Anantam's faith faltered it but did not give way. A talk with Soubhagya braced up his flagging energies, and steeled his determination. As a woman of faith she told her husband that God would not let them down under any circumstances.

By now the husband and wife had returned to Bezwada. The revision work was finished, so far as the New Testament was concerned.

Anantam handed over the task of revising the Old Testament to his cousin Seenayya and Bacon. But he gave his help whenever they sought it. Anantam was again at the helm of affairs of the High School, and he was glad to return to his old friends who warmly welcomed him and his wife. In the course of a few months the school resumed its normal activities in work and play.

During the second term the Government Inspector of Schools, a Mr. Williams, who hailed from Jaffna (Ceylon), visited the school for inspection. He was satisfied with the efficiency of the school, and recorded a flattering report on the management, the staff and students, and congratulated the Headmaster *cum* Manager on the flourishing state of the school.

In the evening Williams called on the Anantams, and Soubhagya gave him a warm welcome. That was, perhaps, his first visit to an Andhra home; her cordiality and simple charm disarmed him, and made him feel quite at home.

"Your son's education must have cost you a fortune," remarked Williams.

"Yes, the small fortune that I had and more!" returned Anantam.

"I am amazed how you can possibly manage to keep him going there, besides educating your other son at Saidapet, and keeping a delightful home here."

"I consider my wife a wizard at times," owned Anantam.

She smiled and said, "By economising in small things, we save up a good bit, in the course of a month or two."

Williams was lost in thought for a while; presently brightening up, he said, "It must have been a great strain on you both. It is surprising how you have been able to stand it so long. I have a suggestion to offer, if you will not take it amiss. With the responsibilities of your position here, I can understand you have endless calls on your purse."

And turning to Anantam he added, "If you can earn something in your spare time, it may lessen the strain!"

"I have very little spare time," returned Anantam.

"Yes, I know, but I am thinking of your holidays. The Government are about to appoint some chief examiners for the Primary Examination. I shall strongly recommend your name to the Secretary to the Government, if you will accept the offer. The appointment will take you over three years; and, I am sure, you will get a decent amount annually."

Anantam was touched by the kindness which prompted that offer, and accepted it with gratitude. And Williams was as good as his word; and things happened as expected. Ramachandra Rao's annual expenses were met out of that extra income without any strain, and the money came in till he returned home in April 1905, having obtained M.B.Ch.B., degree of the University of Edinburgh. The adventure of faith had been a success, and the return of Ramachandra Rao after an absence of about 6 years was a red-letter day in the annals of the family. Anantam and Soubhagyam were overwhelmed by the sense of God's goodness to them.

Ramachandra Rao's return home had not ended Anantam's responsibilities. Ananda Rao had nearly finished his course of training at the Government College of Agriculture, and it was time to think of sending him abroad for specialisation in modern methods of agriculture. His future prospects depended on his obtaining a degree in agriculture.

But going abroad depended on finance. Anantam had hardly got over the strain of having had to keep Ramachandra Rao going at Edinburgh for 6 years; and, it seemed unwise to undertake a fresh responsibility straight away. But Ramachandra Rao was keen on giving his brother the advantage of social and intellectual contacts at Edinburgh just as he himself had had.

When Ramachandra Rao returned to India the prospect of his getting a suitable job seemed remote. For one thing he was a born rebel; very likely, a strain of his great-grandfather's blood ran in his veins.

Though he was happy as a student of Philosophy, Politics and Medicine and enjoyed the life of freedom which the stay in Britain offered him, still Ramachandra Rao was sick at heart. He felt the humiliation of belonging to a subject race. He realised that as an Indian, he had no worthy place amongst the free nations of the world; he must be content with a back seat in the comity of the nations of the world. It often drove him to the verge of despair. When Ramachandra Rao returned to India in this frame of mind, he did not find it easy to get on. Nearly everybody wanted to be in Government service, and would undergo any humiliation to get into it, and remain in it.

He knew indeed that there was the other side to the picture of British life. He had a glimpse of it which made him hope, against hope, that someday, somehow, justice would be done to India. He had come in contact with men and women of the British race who abhorred, as much as he did, British Imperialism and the exploitation of the weaker races of mankind. But, as yet, they were few. He was certain that in the mad rush for power and wealth, Imperialism would outreach its aims; and the day of its extremity would be the opportunity of the minority.

It was a disappointment to his mother when he made her realise that he had made up his mind not to sit for the Indian Medical Service examination in London. He told her that he did not care for military service with its involvements, should eventualities arise. Even in time of peace the military surgeon is transferred from place to place, which militates against professional efficiency. With the conditions prevailing then in the country, as an Indian, he stood a remote chance of being sent as an officer to a hospital in Madras; and he would have to forego many intellectual and social amenities for the glamour of a fat salary, and military status. He would rather enter life through the narrow gate of private practice, though it meant uphill work and uncertain emoluments. His mother understood him: she gave her consent.

When his friends heard that Ramachandra Rao had decided not to think of the I.M.S., they thought he was a fool. But his father thought differently. Anantam never cared for Government service himself, and would never ask his son to enter Government service against his will. He realised that his son, with his loyalty to his country, had become a misfit in the scheme of things that obtained among a subject people. But he hoped that God would make his son's path clear.

One morning, after glancing at his morning paper, Anantam accosted Ramachandra Rao saying, "I have news for you. Since you do not want a job under the Government, I wonder if you would care to serve in an institution under Indian management".

"It would depend on what the management is like," returned Ramachandra Rao, looking expectantly into his father's face.

"According to this morning's paper, Yates, the Principal of Pachiappa's College, has resigned and gone over to the Government. I believe he taught history and economics at the college. The Chair of History has fallen vacant; you may apply for it," suggested the father.

"The situation seems intriguing. But ten to one, the college authorities would prefer a Britisher to an Indian. I have no God-fathers to help me. But do you happen to have a friend among the Directors?" asked Ramachandra Rao with rising hopes.

"I cannot assure you of that," returned the father and continued in a matter-of-fact tone, "but, I know the Chairman of the Board of Trustees in a way. It happened in this way. We have met as members of the Madras University Text-Book Committee. One rainy evening while waiting for it to clear up, when I told him that I had a son at Edinburgh who took a degree in Arts there, and was hoping to take a degree in Medicine shortly, he looked pleased. He wished to see you when you returned home".

“Do you think he meant what he said”? asked Ramachandra Rao.

“How can I assure you of that?” returned the father hesitantly, and continued, “that was the first time I met him. He was very affable. Call on him: who knows, he may take a fancy for you?”

A week later Ramachandra Rao found himself on the door-step of No. 4, Rangachari Street, George Town, in a crowded, ill-kept and foul-smelling street, in the northern part of Madras. A common looking house jutted into the street. The environment depressed him. A heavy, massive teak-wood door slowly swung back as he knocked thrice; and he was ushered into a small room. An elderly man, in his eighties, was sitting on an easy chair, scanning the columns of the morning paper.

When Ramachandra Rao's arrival was announced the venerable gentleman rose to his feet, and greeted him saying, “I am pleased to see you; your father has written to me about you. Please be seated.”

There was stoic simplicity about the room, and the furniture. He was attired in a dhoti; and his unbuttoned cotton shirt revealed the olive coloured skin of his chest, and the sacred thread that hung across his left shoulder,—the emblem of the twice born. The first impressions of the elderly gentleman were not prepossessing, judged by the standards that Ramachandra Rao had acquired in Britain.

After formal greetings were over, Krishnamachariar wanted to know what his reaction was to British culture, and mode of life: and enquired what leading people in Britain he had come in contact with, and how he liked the study of Economics and Politics. Dewan Bahadur Krishnamachari glanced at Ramachandra Rao's credentials with a smile. The interview lasted an hour; he warmed up, and clinched the issue by saying, “You are the man for us! You know, Yates has suddenly left us, and gone over to the Government. I am sure you can take over his classes”.

Then leaving Ramachandra Rao to brood over his utterances, he drew his chair to the table, and dashed off a letter with a quill-pen; he handed it to him, and asked him to call on Tyagaraya Chettiar with that letter. "If he supports me, there will be no trouble. We shall be able to offer you the chair vacated by Yates".

The next morning Ramachandra Rao called on Tyagaraya Chettiar; his stately mansion, the carriage and pair, and retinue of servants impressed his Western make-up. Advancing towards the visitor in the luxuriously appointed drawing room, he greeted him, "Your father's friend, Hanumantha Rao, has already spoken to me about you. I have been expecting you this forenoon". After reading the letter, he owned confidentially, "I feared the old man might put spokes in the wheel. But he has put it very strongly in your favour. He wants me to speak to you for a few minutes just to realise your worth! Between us both, I think we shall manage it. Meanwhile I shall speak to the other members of the Board."

It was a red-letter day in Ramachandra Rao's life when the intimation of his appointment arrived by registered post. For a few days he walked on the clouds. He rejoiced at the prospect of sending his brother to Edinburgh to complete his studies in Agriculture.

Accordingly, both the brothers sailed in April 1906 by a French boat to Marseilles, went over to Britain by the overland route. Ramachandra Rao introduced his brother to his friends at Edinburgh, and returned to London expeditiously.

He attended the summer lectures at the London School of Economics, and participated in its social amenities.

He spent the afternoons at the Golden Square Throat Hospital. He returned to Madras in July; and forthwith began to lecture at Pachaippa's College.

THE GUSTS OF RULE AND MISRULE

With Ananda Rao away at Edinburgh, and Ramachandra Rao installed in the chair of History at Madras, Anantam

had breathing space to consider his social obligations as the head of a large school at Bezwada. The consciousness that his elder son was by him to share the responsibility of seeing his brother through, helped to ease the strain, which he had been subjected to during the past six years. He was glad that Ramachandra Rao had a comfortable berth in one of the leading colleges of Madras, and had enough to keep himself going, and help his brother abroad.

But Soubhagyam was disappointed that Ramachandra Rao had not started with the status of an officer in the I.M.S. But she gradually realised that a coveted post at one of the seats of learning at Madras, the metropolis of the Province, was not to be despised. In the course of a year or two, when Ramachandra Rao came to be in demand at colleges, schools, clubs and associations to lecture to the intelligentsia of the city, and his name was on the lips of her friends, and in the columns of the press, she not only forgave him, but also went out of her way to own, that it was as well that he had followed the bent of his mind, and had done the right thing.

But she nourished a secret fear in her heart, that his political entanglements might lead to complications with the authorities, and end the career which he had begun so brilliantly. When that fear oppressed her, she would retire to her chamber, kneel, and pray to God to protect her son!

Behold, Lord Curzon sat on the Viceregal throne of India, and allowed his tongue to get the better of his prudence! He was indeed a great administrator, well versed in the lore of his day and country, proud of his blood, and prouder still of his imperialistic heritage, and of the achievements of his race.

In international affairs he took the side of India as against the Colonial prerogatives. Indeed he was a capable man, but he was in the wrong place, and at the wrong time!

In fact there was more discontent in India during the Viceroyalty of Curzon than had ever existed since the days of Indian Sepoy Mutiny! He was clever, but never prudent

enough to understand the other man's point of view. In his mad rush for efficiency, he heeded not the helpless millions, whom his steeds had trampled under their hoofs of steel. He was brilliant, but often erred in attempting to show it.

In trying to hold that there were different standards of rectitude between the east and the west, in haste, he said that all Indians were liars. That was the last straw that broke the back of Indian tolerance and self-restraint. The hot brew served by the fiery eloquence of Aurobindo Ghosh went right to the head of the Bengalees particularly those in Calcutta. India felt that her honour was at stake and she should defend herself at any cost.

And Curzon was a subtle politician. He knew how to divide and rule! Encouraged by the success of his attempts at separation, he promulgated the policy of partitioning Bengal into two, when the Muslims would be rulers in one part, while the Hindus would be masters of the other part. The motive behind it was to weaken the Hindu majority in Bengal, so that they could not offer stubborn resistance to the Viceroy's prerogatives.

The country was then in a state of ferment, and the head of the Government, and the leaders of the people said and did things, which they regretted later on.

The repercussions of the Viceregal policy at Calcutta could be felt even in the small towns of Andhra Desa. The student world was greatly excited over what was happening in the political arena of the country, and with the impulsiveness of their age, they would not take things lying down.

Anantam had a difficult time in trying to keep them to their legitimate duties. As a Christian, and as the head of a Christian Institution, his path of duty was complicated.

The Indian Christians as a class, were suspect; the high-caste converts were doubly so. They were deemed by their own kith and kin traitors to their religion, caste, and culture. No doubt some among the thoughtful Hindus, who had come under the personal charm and magnetism of Robert

Noble and his like, loved and respected the British missionaries in India, who rendered social and educational service to the country; though they dreaded the proselytizing zeal that lay warm at their heart. The Christian Indian, who came under the influence of the British missionary, was said to be so loyal to the British Government that he dared not to call a spade a spade! He had to depend on his own resources, since he had to burn his boats behind him when he became a Christian. Converts from the high caste Hindus, whether they came out singly, or along with their partners in life, had to depend on the sympathy and support of their missionary friends for years.

More, the Britisher is a patriot! His heart is thrilled at the sound that "Britania rules the waves—Britons, never, never shall be slaves". He has implicit faith in himself, and in his countrymen. So the missionary would not tolerate even a semblance of disloyalty to the rule of his compatriots in India. To salute the Union Jack with solemnity, was one of the first lessons which Christian Indian children in missionary compounds were taught.

Nor was the educated Christian's economic position secure. He could no doubt find a footing in higher walks of life as a headmaster, a professor, or an administrative officer in missionary enterprises. Yet, he who would impinge on the accepted political code of the missionary bodies would soon find himself left in the lurch. The Foreign (American or European) missionary in particular had to be cautious in what he said, did or permitted.

And the few Christians who entered the much coveted Government service soon realised what an unenviable position their's was. There were very few Christians as yet who had carved out a niche for themselves in independent walks of life, like law, medicine, commerce and industry, and could hold their own.

When Anantam returned to Bezwada and took over the school, the atmosphere was surcharged with political unrest and heat. The Andhra youth were fashioned out of excitable

material, matching the youth of Bengal! Some parents whispered into Anantam's ears that unless he cautioned them in time, they would leap over the precipice. The students were so excited over affairs in Calcutta, that they *nick-named one another, by the names of Bengali leaders, and whetted their appetite for adventure, by mock fights and rehearsals of public meetings held in Calcutta.*

It was a different story with the Andhras. They had no big city to rally round the culture and ambitions of the people. Their platform was as yet an inconspicuous stage, and the voice of those who dominated it, did not carry far. But it was in Telugu, the regional language, and it reached the masses. Rajamahendravaram on the banks of the Godavari was fast becoming the centre of Andhra renaissance under the leadership of Kandukuri Veerasalingam Pantulu. But social reform had not yet become a craze with the intelligentsia, much less with the masses.

Bezwada was wide awake and alert. It was rapidly growing into a flourishing town, and aspiring to become a city of importance. Most of the inhabitants of the town had come from the towns and villages of the neighbouring districts. They were a motley crowd, and swayed by different loyalties. The labouring classes worked hard and earned good money; they lived frugally and the men folk saved up what was left over a night's drink.

Though the Andhra was cast in phlegmatic mould, after a point, he could be thrilled and excited! There was something of the dare-devil in him, most noticeable in the rising generation, and in the labouring classes. Anantam knew it, and the mixed elements in the school had often given him moments of anxiety. If the youth of the classes could think and plan, and the youth of the masses could carry out their designs, there might arise situations with undreamt of consequences. He realised in time that the lads were playing with fire. He would have a heart to heart talk with them, and warn them.

The meeting with the group was friendly, confidential, cautious and informal. Some of them had already been on visiting terms whenever they wanted the Headmaster's advice, or were in the blues and needed a word of cheer. He placed all his cards on the table, and asked them to decide for themselves what was the best course for the country to adopt under the conditions that obtained then. Would a revolution save the country? He made them see that it would be the height of folly to set fire to the house just to destroy a mouse.

He made them realise that illiteracy had made it impossible for the masses to sympathise with the aspirations of the intelligentsia, however legitimate they be. Again the caste system had tended to keep people in watertight compartments, making it impossible to think as a nation, and pool their assets for a national effort. He respected the patriotic fervour of his young friends, but he would advise them to turn it in the right direction. There was much to be done in the direction of social and moral uplift of the country for the time being.

He put it to them plainly that as a follower of Jesus Christ he would not countenance violence in any form, in the attainment of national freedom. He believed that righteousness exalts a nation, and he was certain, that when they, as a nation, sought righteousness and followed it, God would give them the desire of their heart.

At first the youths thought that the Headmaster was talking through his hat. But as the conversation grew intimate, personal, self-revealing and true, they were overborne by the conviction that he was in the right. It then assumed the form of loyalty to a person, whom they loved and respected. They might not have seen eye to eye with him in all the points he had raised; yet they could not go against the wishes of their elderly *Guru*, whose goodwill they cherished, and whose affection they treasured. The sincerity and honesty of their *Guru* disarmed them; while their lips were sealed, their eyes revealed a contrite and submissive heart within.

CHAPTER X

GOD MINDS HIM WHO MINDS OTHERS

Anantam continued his work at school with his usual zest, and the young bloods had soon settled down to their studies. But the seeds sown in their tender minds remained awaiting an opportunity to germinate.

Lads in their teens joined the school in increasing numbers, and Anantam's time was occupied not only with the students but also with their parents and friends. He had time for everybody; his genial smile, his sympathy for the high and the low, and his readiness to see the other man's point of view, had made him an object of affection and reverence in the town.

I cannot do better than quote from his Recollections about his own feelings at this time. He says: "From 1893 to 1911, I was in charge of the C.M.S. High School at Bezwada with a break of four years on Telugu Bible Revision work. I taught English and Scripture chiefly, and I had the good fortune of winning the regard and affection of many of my pupils both in the Noble College, and the Bezwada High School. It was the direct influence of my own beloved teachers on my own character as a teacher that must account for this happy result. They all loved me, and I loved them. I somehow imbibed their spirit in some small measure, and in my work as a teacher and Headmaster, I sought to love my pupils and colleagues, and, to do some good to them in any way I could. It was my good luck that the majority of the teachers in the High School were my old pupils (in the Noble College mainly), and so I never had any friction; and I always treated them as my fellow-workers, and took them into my confidence in all the arrangements of the school. My old Sastri, Pandit Ramachandra Sastri, was a very orthodox Brahman, and very conservative in his ways; yet his regard for me personally was such that he

did not mind 'touching' me. Once when my little son, Ramachandra, crawled up to him and held him by his legs; he would not allow me to apologise to him for the little child's liberty, but raised him and fondled him with the remark, "Nandana is of course Nandana" (a son is the source of joy!).

"When I took charge of the Bezwada High School, the strength was 68; but it grew year by year to upwards of 750! The responsibility of keeping up its *Christian tone and ideals* became more and more heavy, especially as it was not easy to secure *real* converted Christian teachers, whose aim was the spiritual good of their pupils". Men of capacity and character were scarce. The Hindu and Muslim students and teachers should see Jesus Christ exemplified in the lives of men who professed to be his disciples.

The Headmaster endeavoured to maintain high moral standards in the daily routine. He also knew that moral and spiritual progress would depend on the cheerful acceptance of suffering, when it came while doing one's duty. He meant what he said, and said what he meant. While he was a disciplinarian, he acted on the principle that charity covers a multitude of sins.

By slow degrees, things were shaping themselves in a propitious way. The High School at Bezwada was bidding fair to become one of the best institutions in Andhra Desa, where due regard was paid to the development of the character of its *alumni*, besides providing up-to-date intellectual education. Ample testimony to its achievements and influence, and to what it stood for, was forthcoming at the celebration of the Jubilee of the High School in August 1908. The festivities were spread over three days, and several friends came over, some from long distances, to take part in the celebrations, and offer their congratulations. Those were gala days for the students, and the High School and the grounds wore a festive and colourful appearance.

Of course Soubhagyam stood at the helm of affairs, and acted as the right hand of her husband. The lads, many of

whom she knew by name, would run on errands for her, look after the guests according to her directions, and induce their sisters to stand by her, and help in the way she wanted.

In commemoration of the event it was thought a Jubilee Hostel should be built for the convenience of the students who came from the villages, and the Headmaster appealed to the public for funds. His old students and friends responded to the appeal enthusiastically, and in a week or two, a decent amount was collected. Some more was necessary. The money collected was put in the bank for the construction of a hostel. But Providence willed it otherwise. The hostel was never built; but, the money was later used for a Scholarship in the Andhra Christian College at Guntur, for an *alumnus* of the Bezwada School.

Anantam celebrated the Jubilee, and the celebration made him. It enhanced his reputation and popularity. His pupils and friends would call at all hours of the day, and at times, till a late hour at night. By intimacy with him, they got to appreciate his sterling qualities. Besides, they got to know Soubhagyam: she was no ordinary woman!

About this time some of Anantam's friends started to say that he had nearly lost his instinct of self-preservation. "He never thinks of himself, or of his family; the education of his sons in England must have cost him a fortune. Yet, he owes nobody even a rupee", said one of the staff, and continued, "You have no idea how many students he helps financially to this day. It is all his wife's doing. She is wonderful".

"I do not think they have a banking account worth mentioning;" put in another member of the staff, and continued, "the Headmaster is getting on in years. He may retire any day".

"I have a remedy to suggest. You know I have some land on the outskirts of Buckinghampeta. I shall offer him a couple of acres of agricultural land to build on", put in Ponnayya, the landlord *cum* school-master!

“It is a capital idea; but, he is certain to refuse your offer”, returned a friend, who thought he knew the Headmaster better than the others.

Ponnayya was not taken aback when the Headmaster, in his evening walk, very graciously, yet firmly, refused his offer of a couple of acres at market price to build on at a future date. “My days cannot be many; why burden myself with responsibilities?” was the answer.

Not minding the Headmaster’s refusal, Ponnayya called at his house, and asked to see Soubhagyam. When she came out with some reluctance, “I have come to see you, madam,” he explained, “since I have to seek your co-operation in an affair that concerns your family.”

“My proposition is this,” continued Ponnayya “I have some agricultural land on the outskirts of Buckinghampetta. I want you to invest some money in an acre or two, and you may count on it as a stand-by on a rainy day. Our Headmaster has wisdom, but it is not of the worldly kind; and nothing I say impresses him. He is getting on in years. The land will be a prop to you in your old age, and a patrimony to your sons.”

She was puzzled. She knew that her husband lived more by faith than by sight. God hitherto had not let them down.

“God knows our needs, and He will provide for us in the days to come as He had done in the past,” she said heaving a sigh of relief, and continued, “You, no doubt, mean it kindly; but it would not be fair to deprive you of your property.”

Ponnayya sat for a brief while, speechless, lost in amazement. He realised that he was mistaken in appealing to her selfish instincts. He must appeal to the altruism which was evident in her outlook. “Madam, I respect the motives for refusing my offer. If you will only build a cottage there, you will induce others to build houses by your side. I might then get a better price for my land than I can get now. So just to help me, you should consider my offer favourably”.

“I shall talk the matter over with your Headmaster, and he will let you know our decision,” she returned.

When her husband returned home after dusk, she told him of what had transpired in the early afternoon. "So Ponnayya thought that a woman was more vulnerable to his missiles than a man!", he exclaimed. "What do you think of it?" he asked his wife after a brief pause.

"I have not made up my mind as yet one way or the other. If you do not wish to possess some landed property, I, too, shall vote against it. But we are not the only party to be benefited by this transaction. Ponnayya Garu expects that if we build a small bungalow in his land, our venture would certainly induce others to settle down in our neighbourhood, turning fields into house sites".

He was silent for a while, and then burst out as though he were thinking aloud, "In short he is proposing to feather his own nest, and make us a pawn in the game!".

"You are not fair to him", she retorted. And she continued, "Listen, he is your friend. You have often told me that he is the most conscientious teacher in the school. And the paltry salary you give him is not enough even to clothe the children."

"Can we not suggest the name of some one else to take our place?" asked the husband.

"I suggested that in a way. But he would not have it. He thinks that the success of his plan would depend on our playing a part in it."

"So it is a conspiracy to inveigle us into money-making projects, though of well meaning friends!" he exclaimed with a sigh.

"Don't make things worse than they are. What objection can you have to possess an acre or two of landed property?" she demanded.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart also be," he quoted the Scripture as a laconic answer.

"But, listen; when we had the Garden Home at Bandar, do you honestly think that we were much engrossed with it? Landed property in Bezwada need not become an obsession any more than the house property did at Bandar. Not that

I am anxious to grab at the kind offer. I want to know why you have set your face against it?" she demanded.

"Should we not leave the future in God's hands trusting that He would provide for us?" he returned.

"I have thought of that myself. But God often works through human intervention. Unasked, unsought, in spite of our protests, two acres of agricultural land are thrust upon us at a reasonable price. Why should we not construe it as an act of providence? To honour your word you gave away the Garden Home: God, perhaps, is giving it back to you in this way".

Neither of them spoke for a while; then breaking the silence which was more eloquent than speech, he broke in, "Then you want the land!"

"Not that I want it. But I dare not refuse it." "Besides we are asked to help a friend."

And the matter was referred to the son in Madras, who voted in favour of accepting Ponnayya's offer.

Finally there was some hitch about the price, Ponnayya suggesting the lowest figure possible, and the Headmaster offering the maximum. But mutual friends intervened, and helped to clinch the issue evenly between the two parties. All was well that ended well. He that watereth others watereth himself!

The event that engrossed the attention of the Anantam family during that period was the return home of Ananda Rao from Edinburgh. He did well at the University, visited some farms in different parts of Scotland, got through the examinations with flying colours, obtained the B.Sc. degree in Agriculture, acquired a transparent Scotch brogue and returned home, not without hope of doing his bit for the country.

But there was a tension in the air; the relationship between the British and the Indian intelligentsia was strained. Owing to the assassination of Sir Curzon Wylie in London by an unbalanced Indian youth, every Indian student in Britain was suspect. So when Ananda Rao approached the

India Office in London armed with some recommendations from influential British friends, he was told that there was no vacancy in the service, but that he might go to India, and try his luck there.

But curiously enough, a few months later, a British student at Edinburgh, a class-mate of Ananda Rao, was appointed by the India Office to a post in the Agricultural Department; and he joined up at Madras. Ananda Rao was no doubt disappointed, but was not down-hearted. He returned home in August 1909, and was warmly welcomed by his parents, brother, other relatives and friends. His return home from abroad, with scientific qualifications, was an event to the members of the family. Their hearts were stirred by the consciousness of God's goodness to the youth during his sojourn abroad. After the first flush of excitement had subsided, Ananda Rao betrayed signs of restlessness at his having nothing to do.

Dr. Henry Whitehead, Bishop of Madras, was kindly disposed towards Anantam; one of his lieutenants happened to know the Head of the Agricultural Department in Madras. And the Bishop's recommendation was effective. "Mr. Castle Stuart-Stuart appointed him to the post of Assistant Director of Agriculture, just then created," says Anantam. "Thus my wife had the satisfaction of seeing both her sons started in life honourably, and began to plan for their future, free from financial strain, and in course of time to see them both settled in homes of their own. Ananda Rao was posted to Rajamahendravaram (not far from Bezwada) and this brought him to Bezwada on his tours. To have him come to her home as an official was the source of an unfeigned pride and satisfaction to her heart!"

While Ananda Rao was away from home Ramachandra Rao made it a point to visit the parents at Bezwada, at least once a month, to spend a week-end with them. It greatly pleased Soubhagyam to have her son frequently at home.

The husband has given a glimpse of the vital part the wife had played in their home during their married life.

“ She would have dearly loved to have a girl of her own, but this was not to be. Though this was a sore disappointment to her, as well as to me, she accepted it as His appointment, and set herself out to bring up our boys for God ”.

“ I may be pardoned if I refer to her habit of fasting with earnest prayer when she had any burden on her heart ” continues the appreciative husband, “ One notable instance was that when her boys were at Edinburgh—altogether a period of over nine years consecutively between them, she would occasionally set apart Sundays for them, and spend the whole day in fasting and prayer so that they might be preserved in safety from all the evil influences that prevail in the University life of the West. She praised God when they returned home to her, as free from the vices she had feared that they might learn, as when they left her, and when they took their degrees within a reasonable time ”.

But this happiness was destined to be short.



ANANTAM in his forties engaged in Rural Evangelism
and later as the Headmaster of
the Mission High School

CHAPTER XI

THE HOME CALL OF SOUBHAGYAM

Soubhagyam was remarkable in many ways. She was, in fact, a self-made woman. Her schooling as a girl opened up to her youthful fancy vistas of learning that culminated in wisdom. It was a sore point with her that her father's rural preoccupations had deprived her of opportunities for higher education at school and college. She had to be content with the "3 R's," that she learnt in the rural surroundings of those days, stifling her ambition. She envied girls of her age, whose parents had settled down in large cities like Madras. But she would not accept lying down the decree of mediocrity which fate had endeavoured to stamp on her forehead. She had ambitions.

She was sent to a Mission Girls School at Sakshiapuram, where the standard hardly came up to the Lower Secondary Grade. Marriage had widened her sphere of learning and activity. Machileepatnam had an intellectual atmosphere of its own. When she arrived there she had to run the home, while she was still in her teens, and bring up, two step-children, one of whom was an infant. And that was a responsibility in itself; she shouldered it with determination and courage. Along with that, she set herself to mastering Telugu, which is most unlike Tamil, her mother-tongue. She worked with avidity under a *Pandit* and acquired the pronunciation, accent and even the tone of the Andhras, so much so, that she passed for one of them.

She set her heart on learning English. At school she was taught to read the English Bible. In fact she taught her boys the English alphabet, and enthused them by tipping two annas for every eight letters they deciphered. At Bezwada she had lessons in English from an Anglo-Indian lady, and made progress rapidly. In due course she could read the newspapers in English, understand English books

with the aid of a dictionary, and talk to English friends in their language.

The two growing boys were a handful! Besides, her duties, as the wife of the Headmaster of a flourishing High School whose teachers, students and their parents called at any time from dawn to dusk, left her very little time to call her own. But she made the most of her opportunities. She had a taste for music. At school she learnt the English notation, and could play English hymns on the harmonium.

She got to be fond of Andhra music, and sought an opportunity to be introduced to it. She had learnt to sing Christian hymns and lyrics from Amelia's daughters, who had a Brahman *Vidwan* staying with them permanently. They both adopted Soubhagyam as an aunt, and treated her as if she were their mother's sister. Sangeetha Rao, the musician, took to Soubhagyam kindly, and, when he came to know of her desire to learn Andhra music, pledged to do his best for her.

She was a cosmopolitan by temperament, and had the gift of being everything to everybody, without ostentation. She was natural under embarrassing circumstances. Anantam appreciatively says of her:

"One noon, a Baptist missionary friend, Rev. H. N. Thomson of Bapatla, brought a Boer Minister, released after the Boer War, to see us, as he expressed a desire to visit a typical Indian Christian family. I was at school, but when the school broke up for the midday recess, I came home and found my wife chatting with these unexpected, but welcome visitors. She immediately had the table laid, and entertained them at a sumptuous tea. When the visitors rose to leave at about 3 o'clock, she went in and brought out a pair of new door curtains printed at Bandar, and handed them to the Boer Minister, asking him to take them to his good wife, as a gift from an Indian lady friend".

"This incident ever remains fresh in my mind, and when I met Thomson after my wife's death he spoke of this, and reminded me of another visit he paid with a German merchant,

to have afternoon tea with us, and, of a remark the merchant made to him after they left our home. It seems he was so struck with her refined manners, lady-like deportment and right royal hospitality that, if he found an Indian lady like her, who would be willing to marry a European, he would gladly marry her".

Bronchitis used to trouble her in winter during the last few years of her life; but, a minor operation in the nose by Ramachandra Rao had kept the trouble in check. She had a happy temperament, and she strove to make others happy. She believed in personal cleanliness; at times carried her ideas to extremes. She gargled her throat and rinsed her mouth immediately she returned home after a walk or a call on friends. She scrupulously washed her fingers whenever she touched coins.

The year 1910 was an eventful year for the family. It was decided that Anantam should go as a delegate that summer to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. The Secretary, Sell, was keen on Anantam going there; and his sons encouraged him to accept the invitation.

"Somehow I was not sure that I should go, particularly as I had a bad throat for several years", owns Anantam in referring to this matter in his *Recollections*. "When I expressed my fears to Canon Sell, he sent me to Col. Robertson for medical examination; and he strongly recommended my going, assuring me that I would leave the cough in England, and that the voyage would benefit my health greatly. My mind was still unsettled, though Canon Sell strongly urged me to go. Ramachandra Rao took me to a medical friend of his, one Dr. Philipz; after the most careful, minute examination of my lungs, he said that he would not recommend my going, as the right lung indicated that I had narrowly escaped pneumonia, and that, at my age, the risk was not worth taking. This settled the matter for us, and my dear wife acquiesced in the decision. Had I gone I could not have returned home before December at the earliest, while it pleased God to take her away in September. It would

have been a great sorrow to me, and pain to her during her last hours that I should be absent from her at such a time. God be praised for His loving guidance! ”

Anantam and Soubhagyam went up to Coonoor in the Nilgiris, and stayed with Miss Stubbs, who was a friend of theirs. Ananda Rao took leave, and spent a few days with his parents at Coonoor. It was a great joy to Soubhagyam to have had him with her. She had the grace to be grateful for *small mercies*, if the latter could ever be evaluated in terms of cosmic significance! As she owed to her husband, her cup of joy was then full. Both her sons could now stand on their own feet as honourable citizens, helping others to live worth-while lives. She had done her duty by them. Might she not be ready now to depart, should the call come?

For sometime, Ramachandra Rao had been living at Pallavaram, a suburb of Madras; and on his return home from England, he thought it best to live in the city. The Subbarayudus had to go to Bandar on private business; Ramachandra Rao broke up the home at Pallavaram, and moved into a hotel at Madras. And, meanwhile, Anantam had to come up to Madras on some business with Secretary Sell; Soubhagyam accompanied him. Sell was friendly to Anantam, and placed a bungalow at his disposal; Soubhagyam ran the home there. Ramachandra Rao was pleased to have them in Madras; and he dropped in, every afternoon, after the college work was over.

By the time he dropped in the next day, Soubhagyam had made up her mind. “ We both have decided that you should not continue to live at the hotel; you should have a home of your own ”, she informed her son.

In less than a week a two storeyed bungalow was fixed up in one of the main streets of Purasawalkam; and the old furniture was put into it, while new furniture and carpets were negotiated. The bungalow was well furnished, and the horse and carriage stabled safely. It had all the appearances of a comfortable home. It was owned by the fathe

of a student of Ramachandra Rao at the college, who promised to do everything that was needed to make it look clean and habitable. Soubhagyam thought that the locality was rather crowded, and not quite residential. But on reconsideration, she waived her objection, as it was a good place for professional work. It was time for Anantam to return to Bezwada. Soubhagyam was ready to accompany him home. But Ramachandra Rao suggested that she might stay on till the end of the week, as Dasara holidays were about to commence; and that he would himself take her over, and spend a week at home. Anantam approved of the idea, for she could, meanwhile, train up the cook to cater to Ramachandra Rao's taste. She readily acquiesced in the suggestion to stay on, hoping to put the home in working order before she left.

On Saturday evening she called on her sister, Mary Gnanasiromany (Nallammal), living at Guindy and bade her good-bye. Soubhagyam had a soft corner for this sister.

"You will look after him, when I am away, wont you?" asked Soubhagyam in a caressing voice, pointing at Ramachandra Rao as the sisters embraced each other.

On Sunday morning they attended the morning service at the Zion Church, where she met her mother's only sister unexpectedly, and pressed her to visit them the next day. On Sunday evening they went out for a short drive followed by a walk, and returned home early for dinner. As they sat at the table Soubhagyam looked quite happy and contented. The home looked perfect with women's final touches. Both sat for a brief while absorbed in thoughts of their own.

Ramachandra Rao was happy at the thought that he had had her staying with him for a week. She had been the inspirer of his ambition. She had made it possible for him and his brother to be sent abroad, and given the chance of starting life comfortably.

"You have been a great help to me in setting up this home. It has meant so much work for you"; broke in

Ramachandra Rao directing his eyes gratefully at Soubhagyam.

"Is it not ever so much nicer to live in a home of your own than in a hotel?" she asked.

"When I think of it, I admit you are right. Only I felt I could not give the time a home needs. It is noble of father to let you stay here with me when you are indispensable in the home and the school", ventured Ramachandra Rao gratefully.

"You know he will do anything for you," returned the mother, and continued, "He is getting on in years, and I should like to be with him as much as I can. Bezwada is healthy, but hot. A cooler place will add to his days. I want to have a house in Madras, somewhere in Kilpauk, as soon as you can fix up one".

"What about the finance? We are just finding our feet again after Ananda Rao's return home", Ramachandra Rao asked.

She smiled at him for lack of faith, and added, "Our land in Bezwada is rising in value. We may sell it, and invest the money in a house here."

"It is a business proposition. We shall discuss the matter with father and brother when we go home. I shall arrange for my work, and leave a day earlier. Any objection?" he asked.

"None at all; the sooner we go the better," she returned, happy at the thought of going home.

After dinner they had their family prayers. It was her turn to lead. She did it with apt comprehensiveness. She prayed earnestly, pouring out her heart to the Divine ears, as she had never done before.

After prayer she threw herself into a chair and heaving a sigh said, "There is no music in the home now; it is a pity! But when you are comfortably settled, you should go back to your old love, music. I wish I could sing better than I do". And she softly hummed a few airs, and looked contented.

After a little chat, she retired into her room. Ramachandra Rao went into his study for a brief while and turned in.

On the morning of the 26th September 1910 Ramachandra Rao woke up early, little knowing what was in store for him that day. Not finding his mother about, he went into her room and found her stretched on her bed. By questioning her he elicited the information, which made him suspect, that she had an attack of cholera at about 5 A.M., and that unwilling to disturb him, she helped herself to a dose of the carminative mixture at hand.

Not to lose time he sent for his friend, Dr. Philipz, who has had considerable experience in treating cholera cases in Madras. He diagnosed it as cholera, though he could not think how she, of all persons, could have got the infection. He started to treat her forthwith, and assured her, and Ramachandra Rao, that she would recover. Ramachandra Rao was alone in the home to look after her. After consulting Dr. Philipz, he sent telegrams to his father and brother to come to Madras immediately.

Just at that juncture her aunt arrived. Ramachandra Rao led her into his study, and told her that her niece was laid up with an attack of cholera! But she insisted on staying on, and nursing her niece in spite of the risks.

Soubhagyam was able to recognize her aunt, and looked grateful. Everything that needed to be done was done throughout the day. In the morning Soubhagyam was well enough to appreciate the news that her husband was arriving that forenoon. Ananda Rao arrived in the evening, and she greeted him with a smile. She looked composed as the night came on. Dr. Philipz sent a trained nurse who took over. She had a restful night. With the dawn, the hope that she had turned the corner revived. As the rays of the morning sun flitted into the verandah, and brightened up the sick room, her eyes looked expectant, and her face showed the signs of victory. The nurse was satisfied with the progress the patient had made during the night. Dr. Philipz thought that

the worst was over. But he whispered into Ramachandra Rao's ears, "The disease has burnt itself out, but the shock remains". For a while everything looked hopeful.

When Dr. Philipz came back late in the forenoon, he found that the pulse was getting rapid and feeble. Every precaution was taken to avert the shock; but the signs of heart-failure were evident.

One or two of her favourite hymns were sung, and Anantam offered a prayer. Ramachandra Rao spoke into her ears that she should have no anxiety about their father. She felt happy at that assurance, and smiled contentedly; she knew that her hour of departure was drawing near.

"Ananda Rao and I myself were at her bedside on the 27th September, and this pleased her greatly," wrote Anantam describing her approaching end, and continued, "she was very low, and could hardly speak, but expressed her pleasure that we were with her. The next morning she seemed to revive a little and spoke to him. I was with her all the time, and watched while her precious spirit passed away into her Redeemer's presence. Her life was an object lesson in faithful, loving ministry, and her end was peace and joy. For a few minutes before the end came, her face was lit with a smile; when I asked her what she was smiling for, she looked at me with a broader smile, and closed her eyes to open them no more in this world of sin and sorrow".

CHAPTER XII

WHISPERS FROM THE STATE AND THE CHURCH

The flourishing town of Bezwada had a Municipal Council which looked after the civil amenities of the people. Anantam was one of the councillors. During the short time he had been a councillor, he came to be known as a man of capacity and character. Some of the councillors were elected by the people, and a few were nominated by the Government. The Government decided to have a non-official Chairman, and asked the Collector of Krishna to suggest a suitable person for the Bezwada Municipal Council.

The Collector sent for the leading men of the town, and asked them to tell him who was the best man for that office. They voted for Anantam. So the Collector asked Anantam, to call on him as he had some official business to talk over.

It was with some hesitancy that Anantam called on the Collector the next morning, but the latter was most cordial to him, and told him why he had sent for him. The Collector looked rather disappointed when he found that his visitor was not enthusiastic over the prospect of becoming the Chairman of the Municipal Council. Anantam made it plain to him, that he had not the time to discharge the duties, that would devolve on him, as the head of the municipality.

In those days the duties of the Chairman were not only to lay down the policy for the Council, but also to assume responsibility for the administration of the town. It would take all a man's time and energy in itself if the duties were to be discharged conscientiously and the administration maintained efficiently.

Realising Anantam's difficulty, the Collector suggested that he should ask the Government for a competent Secretary to do the daily routine.

"A clever Secretary might be a handful for me; he might need to be constantly watched;" returned Anantam,

“Should he be a dunce, I should have to do it over again. The responsibility would be mine, not his!”

The Collector appreciated the high sense of duty, that prompted Anantam to refuse the task, which he tried to impose on him. But he requested Anantam to name a person who could fill that position with a due sense of responsibility. The Collector recommended Anantam's nominee to the Government, and had him nominated as the Chairman of the Municipal Council.

Anantam's reputation stood higher than ever in the town, and in the council after he declined office. The Chairman would do nothing without consulting him, and the councillors would defer to his judgment, when important policies came up for consideration. Influence, power and prestige came to him unsought!

One day Canon Alexander, a senior colleague, called on Anantam and informed him, in confidence, that Bishop Whitehead intended to make Anantam Assistant Bishop for Andhra Desa; and that European missionaries were quite pleased with the choice, as they considered him to be the best candidate for the office, and that they would loyally support him. It was a surprise sprung on him. He felt rather uncomfortable when the news came to him on the authority of Alexander: with all the sincerity he was capable of, he told his friend that he was not suited to the job.

But Alexander brushed aside his scruples, and assured him of his sympathy and support, and indicated that it was more than probable, that he would be called upon to relinquish his school duties shortly. While Anantam was grateful for the consideration shown him by his European comrades, he was not quite happy over the prospect of having to change his avocation in life. His wife and sons thought he was needlessly underrating himself, and that it would be a pity to let the Andhras lose the chance of having a Bishop of their own. But somehow he felt, that he would be a misfit in the ecclesiastical frame. But as a compromise

with his family and friends, he agreed to look at the matter in a detached way; should it come to him unsought, he would consider it a call from above, and not run away from it.

But any way the invitation did not materialise. V. S. Azariah was called to the office, and consecrated Bishop of Dornakal in due course.

To Anantam, to ask, seek and knock for a position of responsibility was bad enough in matters secular, but it was un-Christ-like, nay, unthinkable, in matters spiritual! He instinctively felt that his duty did not lie in that direction. Referring to this matter a couple of decades afterwards Anantam records this:

“As far as I was concerned, I knew I was not the man for this great responsibility, and I had no quarrel with the Bishop’s choice. When the question was mooted, Canon Alexander and several missionary friends rather resented it; but as things turned out, in my opinion, the present choice was as good as any.” “I have tried to support Bishop Azariah loyally in any way he required my help and co-operation; but it has not been much that I could do for him of late years”.

“Bishop Azariah has proved himself to be a good organiser and administrator; but some fear that the work was weighted too much with organisation for spiritual life to grow in the church”.

God never makes a mistake though man often does. Anantam’s spiritual endowment would have been an asset to the Andhra Church had he been called to the Bishopric. But it would have meant a lot of travelling and organising, to see that high ethical standards were maintained among the churches. Spiritually, Anantam was too much of an individualist to drive a steam roller to maintain discipline. And he would have been a square peg in a round hole.

Besides, his wife had passed on within a year of the consecration: he would have found it difficult to carry on without her co-operation and inspiration. It was as well

that God saved His servant from a predicament. God had led him through the valley of loss and sorrow, so that his chastened spirit might heed the sighs and tears of the humblest of his fellow creatures. And Anantam grew big to sympathise with the under-dog!

CHAPTER XIII

THE LURE OF LETTERS

The manner of Soubhagya's passing on was a shock to every member of the family, and to Anantam in particular. It took him a decade to shake off its effects. It was thought that he might not survive her long. His sister-in-law, Catherine Subbarayudu, and her husband left Bandar for good, and came over to Bezwada. And the former took over the housekeeping. Ananda Rao was stationed at Samarlakota which is within six hours of Bezwada, and he dropped in whenever he could. Ramachandra Rao was still in Madras, and visited Anantam when possible. He realised for himself, and auntie Subbarayudu confirmed his suspicion, that Anantam was missing his wife sorely. He looked aged and feeble in the course of the weeks that had passed since her death. The daily routine at the school was a helpful distraction. He would rather continue to work in the field in which he had hitherto laboured. To suggest that he should give up his work was unwise. What would he do with his time, except to brood over his loss till grief would have eaten into his soul? Besides, he should not be asked to leave Bezwada and go to live in Madras with Ramachandra Rao, since the breaking of the old home might break his heart.

So Ramachandra Rao decided to sever his connection with the college, and go to live at Bezwada. And he did it at the end of 1910, though he had an agreement with the college authorities to serve till April 1912. Some of the trustees were his friends, and when the circumstances were made known to them, they sympathised with him, and made it easy for him to sever his connection with the college.

It was not easy for him to make up his mind to leave Madras, where he had been shown great consideration and kindness. But he thought that it was the wisest thing to do under the circumstances. And his presence at home

partly mitigated Anantam's agony. He started medical practice and tried to make something of it. His professional experience in Madras was of help to him at Bezwada.

Divine consolation and time were factors in mitigating the anguish that clutched at Anantam's heart. He would have found the work absorbing enough had he continued his connection with the school for some years longer, but for the selfish interests that were brought to bear on the administration of the school.

Referring to the circumstances which led to his severing connection with the school, Anantam says, "In 1910 it pleased God to take away my dear wife to himself, and at the end of the following year. I felt that I had not the strength, energy and enthusiasm which my dear wife had inspired in me during the previous years. And seeing that P—was desirous of taking it into his charge, I gave it up. The circumstances under which I did this were painful, and I was advised by almost all the missionary brothers, and Bishop Whitehead to hold on, but I was too depressed to continue to bear the burden. At the time, it seemed to me as a scheme, or almost a plot, of P—to realise his ambition to have all the educational institutions under his sole control. But later on, I was thankful for the relief it gave me, and I took it as a part of my Heavenly Father's plan for this period of my life; and I had the satisfaction of receiving the support of all the conference. Ennis remarked at the Missionary conference meeting that my conduct in this matter was Christ-like! The C.M.S. Corresponding Committee finally accepted my resignation, and appointed me to be their Literary Missionary from 1912."

About this time Bishop Whitehead offered him the Honorary Canonry of St. George's Cathedral, Madras, in recognition of his literary work—chiefly on the revisions of the Telugu Common Prayer Book, and the Bible.

Anantam had been suffering from chronic cough for some time; it was a strain either to speak or teach for any length of time. His feeble health, and mental depression

had made the cough distressing. So the members of the family thought that he should not go on teaching, lest it should lead to something serious. It may be mentioned that sometime before the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the school at Bezwada, Anantam was called upon to take over the management of the C.M.S. High School at Elooru in addition to his permanent duties. He did it remarkably well; the fact that two high schools should be under the control of an Indian Missionary roused the jealousy of P—. It so happened that Secretary Sell, who was above racial prejudice, was in England on furlough. Taking these factors into consideration Ramachandra Rao, as a doctor, advised Anantam to resign.

After the trouble blew over, Anantam felt greatly relieved, and came to see the finger of God on the screen of his long life. The new sphere of work into which he was called suited his tastes admirably. He could think and write, with his varied and ripe experience, to meet the needs of the country, particularly of the growing Christian Church: schools might be managed fairly well by others, but there was something else which he alone could do, making his contribution to a much wider circle, and leaving behind more permanent results.

Anantam had ever a flare for literature, but, the duties as the Head of a large high school had left him little time to cultivate his gifts. But now an opportunity presented itself, though rather late in the day. There was less physical strain involved in it, and mentally, it was absorbing and stimulating, too! He could forget his sorrow in the work, though he did not relish the circumstances which stamped him into literary activity. Still it was his first love, and the old dormant flame leapt up in the environment that Providence had so unexpectedly provided. He set to work with a comprehensive plan before him. He made a beginning; but it was soon realised that a holiday would help to recoup his mental energies and restore his health. Secretary Sell, who had returned to India by then, backed up his applica-

tion for leave, and insisted that Anantam could not do better than pay a visit to England. Anantam, too, realised that some travelling abroad was necessary to him, before he settled down to literary work.

Ramachandra Rao had just started medical practice at Bezwada, and, Anantam thought it would be a pity for him to leave it and accompany him in his European tour. On the other hand, Ananda Rao had some leave to his credit as a Government Officer; he might avail himself of it and accompany his father. So they both set out with their faces to the West, early in May 1912. Ramachandra Rao went to Bombay to see them off. They spent a night at a hotel, and the next forenoon they embarked on a steamship belonging to the Rubatino Italiano Company.

The visit to Britain, and the contact with his old and new friends there, and the travels on the Continent had done Anantam good and he felt quite fit to carry on the literary work that came his way. And he sat at his desk for several hours a day. And in due course he was able to provide the books, pamphlets, periodicals and journals which the Andhra Christians needed.

“I had a taste for literary work,” he owns, “the first work was a translation of the little tract written by Mr. Morris, I.C.S., and Mr. Arden gave me a prize book for this work. While I was still a student, I translated, “The Sinners’ Friend”—which was published later on by the R.T.S.; several articles on religious topics were published in the “Sākshi”, a Magazine conducted by the Narasapur Missionaries with whom I had then very fraternal relations, specially, John Beer. The “Noble College Magazine” was a venture of my own to answer the attack of an Anglo-Telugu monthly on Christianity, inspired by the Secular Press of England. Mr. Sharp wrote most of the articles, but owing to ill-health resulting from overwork, we gave up the journal after a couple of years. I revived the “Hitavadi” of Mr. Sharkey in 1873, and conducted it for 40 years or more, with a break of a few years when engaged

in the Bible Revision work; and subsequently, owing to the pressure of school work I handed it over to Bishop Azariah, who changed it into a diocesan organ to meet the needs of the mission agents.

“I conducted a small monthly four-page sheet, “Satya Doota” (Messenger of Truth) for the R.T.S., for about 20 years, and passed it on to my brother Subbarayudu, and after his death to the Rev. G. Kantayya. The other chief works in Telugu are: “New Companion to Bible”, “Arden’s Devotions”, “Walker’s Commentary on Phillipians”—J. R. Miller’s “Come ye Apart”—a book of Daily Meditations based on the life of our Lord: and Fosdick’s “The Manhood of the Master”. The book “Come ye Apart” was very popular among the Andhra Christian people. I published the first edition at my own cost, and the thousand copies sold out rapidly, and I gave the book to the C.L.S., who have published the second edition.”

The Messenger of Truth, “Satya Doota”, was a significant attempt to broadcast truth. Religious subjects were dealt with briefly to explain the Christian idealism to the non-Christians on the front page, both in Telugu and English. The remaining pages were given to subjects of general interest in Telugu. A page was given to the most important news of the month in short paragraphs, with editorial comments, which gripped the attention of boys and girls, and of men and women. Generally it had an illustration or two. It was priced one pie! It reached a circulation of 10,000 copies which was the largest circulation for any periodical in those days.

“I translated for Canon Sell several works of Miss Havergal, but they were difficult to sell. In those days Christians had not developed a taste for reading; and few were able to purchase books.

“During the period in which I was on literary work I carried one revised edition of the Telugu Bible through the press, and prepared another revised version on the lines laid down by the Bible Society Committee for the future edition.

These sheets with my suggested emendations are in the hands of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Madras. Mr. Marler (L.M.S.) was my collaborator in this work."

"As my sight and my physical and mental energy began to decline, I felt I should resign my connection, with the C.M.S., as an active worker, and I was glad to be placed on the retired list of workers in 1924. And the C.M.S. have generously granted me a pension in recognition of my long services in their educational, evangelistic and literary work. May the gracious and merciful saviour forgive all the sins and failings in my life and in the work committed to my hands from time to time".

At the outset Anantam was disinclined to accept the offered pension. He thought he could manage without it. Being a man of simple habits, he thought he could live on his slender private means. But several of his Christian friends in mission service pleaded with him to accept the pension, since there was a possibility of his case being quoted by the mission authorities as an excuse for brushing aside the claims for pension made by their employees, less fortunately placed than he. He understood the situation, for as yet the mission had not made any definite plans to give pension to their workers, some of whom felt that their prospects in old age were bleak.

Therefore, erring on the safe side, Anantam accepted the pension gratefully, and made the best use of it according to his lights. Most of it went in charities. No good cause, nor a good man or woman, when brought to his notice, would go without his sympathy and financial help, though it be a mite. His great pleasure in life was to give to others, especially to those in need!

The translations of English books were of a high order of excellence; they went right into the homes of the rural areas to help them. There was neither verbosity nor pedantry in his style. It was so simple and gripping, that illiterate men and women could understand, when it was read out to them.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GLORY OF THE SETTING SUN

Anantam was seventy-five when he relinquished the responsibility of office. He felt as gay as a school-boy when he threw away the fetters of office, and breathed the air of freedom that had been vouchsafed to him. He felt grateful to the giver of all good gifts for the precious gift of leisure. He looked as though he had inherited a large fortune—he said he did not know what to do with it. Time meant to him much more than money: it was life's opportunity to do good.

He had somehow felt, and even said, that he would not live long to enjoy his well earned holiday. But his doubts had proved to be groundless; and he had had a long care-free holiday! It came to him in small instalments; by degrees, he was inveigled into the heritage of a centenarian. Had Providence presented it to him as a whole, it would have frightened him!

He worked, ceaselessly year in and year out, to the limit of his capacity, and, when the *well earned* holiday came, he felt at a loose-end for the time being. But soon he discovered that half a century's struggle and strife were more than compensated, by the state of freedom, into which his spirit had entered.

It was indeed an intriguing situation, and he entered upon it with hope and courage! In retirement, he soon found, that there was enough for him to do. He continued to live at Bezwada, and his old friends maintained their former cordial relations with him.

It should be mentioned here that Ramachandra Rao went to England early in 1915, at the commencement of the world war, hoping to render some professional service to the people there, as medical men were called away to the front.

They had now a bungalow of their own at Bezwada. It was built in July 1914, before Ramachandra Rao went abroad, on the site that was purchased by Soubhagyam a few years before her death.

Anantam would have got a good price for the Garden Home at Bandar, had he had the worldly wisdom; but, as a matter of fact, he let it go for a song. It happened in this wise.

One day at Machileepatnam Anantam sent for a mason, and asked him to let him have an estimate of the cost of good repairs to the Garden Home so that it be made into a pucca residence. The mason thought that it would work out to two thousand rupees. Anantam was perturbed; and he asked him to get a buyer for the property, as it stood.

A few months later a gentleman from Machileepatnam accosted him on his morning walk, and enquired if he had decided to sell his Garden Home at Bandar. Anantam returned,

“ Yes, for a reasonable offer ”.

“ And the offer to be ? ” demanded the enquirer.

Anantam to get rid of the man, returned, “ It should not be below Rs. 3,500,” and moved on.

“ Will you consider an offer of three thousand rupees ? ”

“ No, not a rupee less.”

“ I shall come to see you later on.”

The next day Dinavaihi Hanumantha Rao called to inform Anantam that one, Ayyanki Subbarayudu, had decided to purchase the Garden Home, and had asked him to fix up the price and negotiate the sale. “ It seems you have told him that the price is Rupees three thousand and five hundred,” ventured Hanumantha Rao, and added, “ He thought you might ask ten thousand rupees for the property; had you stood firm, he would have paid it. In fact when he met you yesterday, he had in his pocket five thousand rupees in currency notes, to deposit with you, and the balance to be paid on the completion of the transaction ”.

Anantam said, “ Our meeting yesterday was most unexpected, and I never thought he was seriously thinking

about my property. I should have consulted friends like you as to what the property would fetch in the market. Still I cannot go back on my word”.

“You need not stress the point you mentioned inadvertently,” returned Hanumantha Rao. “The man can well afford to pay what you want. He knows that the property is worth the money, and that he is not a loser by the transaction”!

Hanumantha Rao acquainted Soubhagyam with the situation. She asked her husband to look at the matter from the point of view of common sense.

But he asked firmly, “which is worth keeping, my word or money?”

The sons, too, supported Soubhagyam.

But Anantam was adamant; and he sold it at the price he mentioned!

Soubhagyam had been dead 4 years when the construction of the bungalow which she dreamed of, was completed. Hanumantha Rao, as an old student of Anantam, readily co-operated with his *Guru*, and helped him in every way he could to carry out his late wife’s desires. He happened then to be the Chairman of the Municipal Council, possessing executive powers. Anantam and Subbarayudu were constantly on the scene of construction by turns, and saw that time and materials were properly used.

When it was completed everybody said that it was a beautiful bungalow. The bungalow was called “Bhagya Vilas” in remembrance of her who inspired its construction. Anantam lived in it for over a quarter-of-a-century!

The Subbarayudus also built a small bungalow next to “Bhagya Vilas”.

Anantam was grateful that though the Garden Home had slipped out of his hand, another house equally good, but financially more secure, had been given him. He proved once again that God had not let him down, when he tried to be loyal to Him. He was moreover happy at the thought that Soubhagyam’s wishes for him with regard to a dwelling

place were realised; he could go on living in it as long as he liked.

Anantam wanted "Bhagya Vilas" to look beautiful and worthy of the name it bore. The garden, therefore, kept him occupied daily for an hour or so after his return from the morning walk.

Anantam had a lovely voice, and he could sing with rapt devotion. He sang as if he believed that it was a preparation for joining the chorus of Heaven. His sister-in-law, too, had a sweet voice, and she often joined him in singing; but her husband was not musical though he enjoyed music. When musical friends happened to stay with the family, there was music every night after dinner. True to his methodical routine Anantam would excuse himself at the stroke of nine, and enjoy the music from his inner apartment.

Saraswathi Bhushanam, Amelia's second daughter, had often spent a day or two at "Bhagya Vilas" when she passed through Bezwada. She was a great musician! Anantam would ask her to sing after the midday meal; he would sit by her enrapt in her music. She had a wonderful voice, and could sing the classical sacred songs and melodies of Thyagaraya with touching sweetness and abandon! He would often say, "There is nothing on earth so enthralling as music; it lifts one's spirit up to the feet of God"!

Anantam was a light sleeper, and though he turned in soon after 9 P.M., it was often long past ten when he fell asleep. He could not get sleep so long as there were any lights on in the home, or any engaged in conversation even in a low voice. The family endeavoured to maintain perfect silence during the quarter-of-an-hour of his siesta at noon, for even the footfalls of those passing by his bedroom often disturbed his sleep. The midday nap, short as it was, refreshed him wonderfully, and sustained him through the hours of work till dusk!

Of an evening, as he went out for a walk, he would intently fix his eyes on the western sky aflame with the glory of the setting sun, symbolic of his own life!

CHAPTER XV

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

Ramachandra Rao returned to India in July 1919, hoping to spend a few months with Anantam, and take him to England during the following spring. He had planned to carry on the political work he was doing during the war in Britain. While he was away from home, Anantam spent the cold season at Bezwada with the Subbarayudus. And the summer and autumn he spent at Coimbatore where Ananda Rao was the Vice-Principal of the College of Agriculture.

They were the early days of experimentation in the Agricultural Department with Indians in the higher ranks of officialdom; and Ananda Rao had had to fight for every step up the ladder of promotion in rank and emoluments. In spite of obstacles, which at times drove him to the verge of despair, Ananda Rao was one of the few Indians in service who had finally arrived at the topmost rung of the ladder.

Anantam was quite pleased with Ananda Rao's achievements; he was glad, too, of the opportunity to spend a few months every year with his son. The college was a stately edifice standing in extensive grounds with well-laid-out roads, gardens and fields. From anywhere in the college grounds one saw the view of the distant hills, melting away into the clouds that hovered over the horizon. The blue of the mountain ranges vied with the blue of the sky overhead, which smiled on them on the starlit nights, and transformed them into a panorama of golden yellow, when the ruler of the day started on his stately ascent, as the dawn broke with its one hundred and one voices. The stillness of the nights, the weird enchantment of the distant mountain ranges disappearing in the mist of the moonlit sky, and the freshness of the mountain air were soothing to the flesh, and uplifting to the spirit of Anantam as he struggled with the problems of his life's sunshine and shadow.

By spending some months with Ananda Rao, Anantam realised in a measure the difficulties his son had to contend with. His own experience in the past, as the head of a large school in Bezwada, helped him, time and again, to advise his son how to meet awkward situations at Coimbatore. Ananda Rao was delighted with Anantam's annual visits to him, breaking the monotony of his lonely life.

Anantam was not a believer in single blessedness; since he had had a very happy married life, he hoped that his sons, too, would marry, and live happy ever afterwards. As Ananda Rao was getting on in years, and had an assured position under the Government, Anantam tried and succeeded in persuading him to look round for a partner in life. Some friends suggested the name of a gentleman in Calcutta who had an eligible daughter. Anantam paid a visit to Calcutta to explore the possibility of a matrimonial alliance with the family whose head was Sri. S. C. Mukerjee, the Superintendent of the Bank of Bengal.

Meanwhile events were fast developing in their home at Bezwada. Anantam's brother-in-law, Subbarayudu, had been looking frail for sometime. He had passed the conventional old age of three score and ten, and added two years to his span of life. Temperamentally he was gay and happy. In his advancing years he became a victim of a debilitating trouble, and it was deemed imprudent to let him undergo an operation. But he was prone to become dependent on others for help in the daily routine. He was active while in service, and left no stone unturned to reach his objective. He had a sense of humour, too, and enjoyed jokes at his own expense!

He became a Christian as one of the early Brahman converts from the Noble School. It was at the Converts' Hostel that Anantam happened to meet him, and make his acquaintance. They lived there together for some time and got to be friendly, sharing the spiritual inspiration which that institution had provided. When they parted later, they kept up their friendship; and they treated each other as brothers.

The lonely life which Subbarayudu had been leading at Amalapuram starting the Mission High School there, had affected his health, and he looked prematurely old and debilitated. So, his friend Arden, advised him to get a partner in life, and introduced him to Vedanayagam's family at Vagaikulam. When he went there he was liked by the family: but some friends thought that he looked too old to be married to Catherine.

But her father thought otherwise. Arden's recommendation was an asset to the visitor. The latter's natural simplicity and spiritual aspirations touched a chord in the father's heart. The daughter, too, seemed drawn to him. The visitor seemed to be a good sort: his longevity need not necessarily depend on his looks.

When they were married a few months later, the father gave the daughter the parting counsel—"Mind that next to God, the health and well-being of your husband depends on you. Be wise, keep him contented, and give no occasion for worry or anxiety". And she followed her father's advice to the letter. When the father visited them the following year, he could hardly recognise his son-in-law; he looked quite a different man, happy, jolly, healthy and young!

One day in his old age, he pleaded that he might be allowed to try some curds as a last resort for his ailment, since the other remedies had failed. His wife yielded! At the midday meal he helped himself to spoonfuls of rich curds for three days successively. His appetite was gone by then, and he felt uncomfortable.

The doctor declared him to be suffering from obstruction of the bowels. His age and physical condition contra-indicated surgical intervention. To the wife's query "can anything be done to make him come round?" the doctor looked into her tear-bedewed eyes, and said gently, "Let him rest in peace! God's will be done".

The patient understood the significance of the doctor's cryptic announcement, and turning his face to him, said softly, "Thank you doctor for all you have done for me.

You are an old friend ; let me take leave of you. Good-bye !” And held out his hand to the doctor to shake. And the doctor quietly slipped out of the room !

When his wife, burst into a cry, he beckoned her to his side, and, with his hand in her’s, pleaded with her to usher him into the divine presence without tears in her eyes.

It was fortunate that Darbha Rama Sastrulu, a Brahman convert to Christianity, and an old student of Subbarayudu at Noble School, arrived from Bandar the previous evening, and looked after him during the hours of acute suffering.

Referring to Subbarayudu’s death, Anantam remarked, “ It was not death: the sting of death was not noticeable anywhere. It was only a passing on, a translation from earth to heaven ”.

In his *Recollections* says Anantam, “ Subbarayudu was extremely affable as a friend, and a warm-hearted and genial companion. Though we were not relatives at first, our having lived together in our school and college days drew us both to each other. He remained to the last a faithful brother, and shared my joys and sorrows to the last as no one else did ”.

Anantam felt the loss keenly, when death took away Subbarayudu. He used to look up to Subbarayudu as an elder brother and missed his mature judgment in matters where two heads were better than one. But his peaceful death was an inspiration to him, and he bore the blow bravely in order to be able to comfort his poor widow, who felt very desolate after her husband had passed on. Her many friends advised her to stay on at Bezwada, and not to break up the home, which she had helped to keep going since her sister Soubhagyam left it.

Subbarayudu, too, had wished that she should continue to live in Andhra Desa, after he had gone. Gnanasundaram, the step-daughter of her eldest sister, and the widow of G. Krishnayya, one of the Brahman converts of Noble, had come over to condole with her in her bereavement. The former expressed a desire to live with her aunt if it could be

arranged. Anantam was pleased to know of her wish. And that arrangement being satisfactory to all concerned, she stayed on, and the home continued to go on as before.

Ramachandra Rao was still in London, working at the hospital, and doing propaganda work for Indian freedom. His uncle's death was indeed a blow to him, as he was fond of him: and the event was quite unexpected. It was only in April 1919 that Ramachandra Rao was offered a passage back to India; and he availed himself of it to go home.

CHAPTER XVI

ENGLAND AND EUROPE REVISITED

The second visit to England took place rather suddenly. Ramachandra Rao and Ananda Rao had been talking about it for weeks, but nobody took it seriously. But within a week decisions were made and passages were booked from Colombo.

What Anantam saw, and did during this tour in England and Europe cannot be better described than in his own words. The tour lasted from May to November, 1926.

“ This time all my family circle, consisting of my doctor son, Ananda Rao with wife and two children, my sister-in-law, Mrs. Subbarayudu and myself formed the party. The matter was arranged rather unexpectedly, and we took our passage on a French boat—S.S. Ambois—a comfortable boat, and we had fairly comfortable berths except Mrs. Subbarayudu; we all enjoyed our voyage. The other members of our party suffered from sea-sickness for a day or two, but I and Sanjeevi (the grandson) were entirely free from it, all through the voyage. And we had a few Indian friends, too.

“ At Djibouti, a French Settlement opposite to Aden (Africa), we were invited to a dinner by a Gujerathi merchant. It was a very hot place: the flies were a veritable plague! We arrived at Marseilles on the 28th May, and we found a comfortable place, ‘ Bordeaux Hotel ’, and stayed there for about five or six days to give rest to myself, and to Sharoj, who was not well at the time. The Manager and Proprietrix were very civil and kind, and were fond of my two grandchildren—who were an attraction in the city for semi-Indian costume.

“ Marseilles is a nice and clean city, and its parks and gardens, its restaurants and shops, were a sight indeed. The sea-board was very attractive, and I long to visit the place again, if I should be given life, health and strength.

“From Marseilles we went to Paris, where we spent four or five days. We arrived in London on the 6th June, and were met at Victoria Station by Miss De'Morgan, Ramachandra Rao's friend; she took us to rooms booked for us at Leicester Square.”

“Later we moved into Mrs. Willis' home at Ladbroke Grove—Ramachandra Rao's landlady during war time,—who gave us board and lodging on very moderate terms; but as she had not rooms for all of us, Ananda Rao and family were received by another friend of Ramachandra Rao, Mrs. Alcindor, the widow of a doctor from West Indies. We were only about half-a-mile distance from each other, and we met every day, and had our walks and sight-seeing together frequently. Mrs. Willis was very attentive to us, and spared no pains to make us comfortable.”

“My stay in London for a few weeks recouped my strength, so that in spite of my failing sight, I was able to go out for long walks in the mornings, and in the evenings, by myself.”

“Mrs. Subbarayudu and I spent about a fortnight with Mrs. Goodman and her family at Garveston (Norfolk), and enjoyed it very much. I had long country walks—sometime with Mrs. Subbarayudu, but often by myself. This benefited me greatly, and I cannot be too thankful for the love, and kind hospitality given us by our hostess. We then returned to London.”

“Afterwards we spent a week at Coventry with Rev. Mr. Panes, whose brotherly kindness can never be forgotten. He took us over to all the interesting places in and around Coventry—especially did we feel interested in the drive to Stratford-on-Avon (Shakespeare's birth-place). We saw also Marie Correllie's and Jane Austen's homes. How primitive they looked! Some houses had doors, etc., just like those in the villages of our country. Mr. Panes had a small but comfortable home of his own there.”

“We then passed on to Rugby (Ashby Magna), to spend a week there with Mr. and Mrs. Tanner at their Rectory. The living is poor, and unless they had private means they

could not be well off. He had an immense house to keep in order, and a big garden and orchard. Mrs. Tanner was very poorly; Mr. Tanner took us to Leicester town, and showed us its beautiful park. Flowers were planted in such an artistic manner that they looked like a beautiful Turkish carpet with different patterns!"

"From Ashby Magna we paid another visit, of nearly two weeks, to the Goodmans; and we enjoyed it equally with the first. I preached for the Rector in his two Churches, Taxford and Garveston, at his Harvest Thanks-giving Services, and he appreciated my help greatly; he has since written to me twice or thrice. This visit to the country, and the life in the country benefited me much."

"I must not forget to mention the pleasant visit we paid to the famous town of Cambridge on our way to London from Garveston (first time). We stayed there three days, and visited all the important colleges—which were not in session then—being vacation time. And we saw the colleges where Ragland, Noble, H. D. Goldsmith, Charles Simeon, Bishop Gell and other saintly men were students. I was amused to see the name "House of Commons" in front of a house, on the other side of the road on which our hotel was situated. On enquiry I found that it was the name of a public house!"

"We visited several times Mr. and Mrs. C. W. A. Clarke who lived in a suburb of London. He was an ex-principal of the Noble College. We met two of their sons also."

"While in London we made several new friends. We had a pleasant afternoon with Mr. and Miss John Oxenham, and met one of his sons at Cambridge—all of them are gifted writers!"

An amusing incident occurred at Cambridge. Anantam and his party were going round a college when one Professor 'X' happened to be on the premises. Noticing Anantam, he accosted him, and asked if he would like to be shown over the library, and other interesting features of the college. Anantam gratefully accepted the offer, and started

walking behind the professor, at his usual slow pace. Of late he had been having pain in the throat when he walked briskly, and particularly when he climbed steps; as a precaution he took it easy, and escaped the pain. But the professor was not aware of this handicap, and, evidently, he was in a hurry. And turning back he noticed Anantam lagging behind; he went up to him, and putting his arm through Anantam's practically carried him along with him as though they were on a skating ring. Anantam clung to the professor who appeared to be in his early sixties, whereas his companion had completed his seventy-sixth year.

When the affable man left, Anantam beamed all over with smiles, and declared, "It is wonderful; I never thought I could stand that whirlwind speed!"

This incident was not forgotten so long as Anantam lived.

"Just before we left London", continues Anantam in his *Recollections*, "we paid a flying visit to Oxford and Windsor. Oxford colleges were also closed for the vacation, and we were unfortunate, as it was a wet day, and could see but little of the place. I liked Cambridge better somehow."

"As the Royalty were not in residence at Windsor, we could see the Palace, and the Royal Chapel—the effigy of Princess Charlotte is a marvellous work of art and baffles description! The first feeling was, could human skill have accomplished such delicate workmanship!"

"I must not forget to note down a few impressions of London people. My grandchildren, Minnie and Sanjeevi, were a great attraction to the people of London. An Italian painter of some note was attracted to them, and proposed through an Indian friend, to paint their likeness. The parents consented, and the children gave several sittings with the result that he produced a beautiful oil painting of the children. He offered to sell it to us, but asked a prohibitive price for it. We declined the offer. He, at last, gave us a few copies of its photo, free."

“On one of these visits to the Painter’s studio, Sharoj lost her gold wrist watch, and the matter was reported to the Scotland Yard. In a fortnight the watch was handed over to us, intact. We were impressed with the incident. The watch was picked up on the bus she travelled by some one, and handed over to the Police. How unlikely it is that this would happen in our country!”

“Sharoj was ill, and had to consult a lady doctor. Ramachandra Rao took her to one, whom he knew in the war days. And she, Dr. Baker, attended to her in her own home, as if she was her own! We heard that this lady passed away on 1st March, 1928 after a long illness.”

“London is a city of nations, and all nationalities live as free citizens, without any disabilities on account of their colour. But colour prejudice is not altogether dead. Alcindor’s children suffer for their colour in various ways, I am told. No distinction is shown in the Universities, and other educational institutions by the real natives of Britain. But those who have been in India, Africa, and other Eastern lands, show this prejudice most, even to this day.”

“As it was autumn, and rain and snow had commenced to fall, we left London by the end of October, and went to France. We, the three Bezwada folks, stayed at a country place; they gave us food and lodging, and were very kind. They fed us sumptuously for very moderate charges. We paid two visits to Versailles, and saw the fortifications, old royal palaces, and museums. The pictures, paintings and statues were beautiful. We were shown the table, inkstand and pen, which were used in signing the treaty after the last ghastly war.”

“It was amusing that the British lay the guilt of the war on the Germans, and the Germans honestly believe that it was British greed that was responsible for the war. No doubt we in India, as most people in Britain, were fed on deliberate falsehoods in the time of the war. I suppose that this is the political morality even of professed Christian nations and Governments.”

From Veroflay they went to Paris, where Ananda Rao and his family joined them; they spent a few days together, doing the sights of gay Paris, once again. The weather was milder than in London, and they walked about, as much as they liked. The taxi was ever at their disposal, and the fares were ridiculously cheap, for the French coin had depreciated to about a tenth of its face value. The children had a good time; they received a fair amount of attention by the passers-by, in the streets.

Anantam liked in a way, the easy going life of Paris, as a contrast to the stir and hurry characteristic of London. But he was sceptical as to the trend of the Bohemian attachments, which tended to weaken family ties in Paris. The parks and gardens, the Arc De Triomphe and the Tuilleries, he thought, were wonderful!

The civility which the French showed to one another, and to strangers, he owned, was remarkable. He rejoiced that there was hardly any colour bar in Paris. Gaily dressed and painted French butterflies could be seen walking, arm in arm, with full blooded African men, immaculately dressed, in the most fashionable quarters of Paris. Their entrance and exit would go unnoticed even in the aristocratic hotels of Paris.

The voluptuous sunshine of France lends itself to outdoor enjoyment. Anantam was struck by the leisurely fashion in which men and women sat out in the open, in front of cafes, and gossiped while sipping wine or coffee. To him the 'home life' with its privacy and sanctity, made the most direct appeal.

He noticed that the French people were as fond of money as any other people, and knew the art of striking clever bargains, in spite of the lavish display of courtesy and polite words. He did not relish the compulsory exaction of 10% on all bills at hotels and cafes—this commercial instinct jarred on the æsthetic make-up of the French people! But he thoroughly enjoyed his visit to France, and spoke reminiscently of his stay in Paris and Marseilles.

From Paris the party went to Rome, though the train journey was tedious. "The Italians, we expected," wrote Anantam, "would be very sympathetic to us; but we were greatly disappointed. Everyone seemed to be out to make money. The railway porters and officials were most rapacious; one official demanded a big fine because Sanjeevi fell asleep on his father's lap with his feet on the seat. As this was refused, he asked Ananda Rao to hand over his passports, and would not return them till the fine was paid!"

"Political animosities were most virulent. Ramachandra Rao asked a fellow passenger what the feeling of the nation was with regard to Mussolini. The passenger, who was a native of Malta, spoke rather disparagingly of him. Presently another man, an Italian, rose from his seat, and gave him a stunning blow with his fist—and there was quite a commotion on the train. The man bled profusely, and lost a couple of teeth. We had very unpleasant experiences in the city of Rome itself. There were churches, chapels, statues of apostles, and of the saints by the hundred, but not much true religion or common honesty. They asked exorbitant prices at the restaurants and hotels; and pick-pockets were much more in evidence, and busy than in other European cities we visited or even in Indian cities. On the tram car that Ananda Rao was travelling one day, he was robbed of his pocket case with £20 notes in it along with other papers.

"But the city was beautiful. The new city is clean and beautiful with its gardens and museums. St. Peter's Church, and the Vatican, were the admiration of the world, and offer an object of study to the visitor."

"We visited the famous ruins of the Roman Forum, St. Paul's prison, the Emperor's palaces, etc., all of which reminded one of the uncertainty of earthly greatness and glory!"

"From Rome we went to Nice, where we stayed three to four days. The park was lovely, and the market, chiefly, the flower market, was most interesting. One afternoon we drove in a motor car to the notorious Cassino at Monte

Carlo. The place was kept clean and tidy; restaurants and shops were most tempting.

"Ananda Rao walked up to the gambling den, and enquired of the porter what was to be seen inside; he replied that there were rooms, gorgeously furnished, and one of them contained expert gamblers, gambling away; and, if he liked, he might go in and join them. The admission fee for seeing the inside of this hell was 10 francs each. We did not care to throw away good money to see this form of sin. We had tea at a restaurant at a very moderate charge, and returned to Nice. The drive was pleasant, the route lay up a hill, commanding very beautiful scenery all round".

"A fellow lodger at the hotel, an Englishman, informed me that more than two thousand people sacrificed their lives by suicide, every year to this demon of gambling. I could scarcely believe this until I saw this fearful fact mentioned in print afterwards. I could well believe it, since I read in the papers the other day that a dividend of 150 per cent. was paid for the previous quarter to the shareholders in this infernal concern. How many hundreds and thousands of fools must have contributed to enable the concern to make such incredibly huge profits! Civilization in Europe run mad!"

"We then left Nice for Marseilles, and embarked on S.S. Angiers on the 11th November, and returned to India on the 1st December 1926. It was a memorable event in our lives full of pleasant experiences amidst friends and strangers, which my family treasured as rich mental and spiritual legacy to count on, in the years to come."

Anantam was enriched by his second visit to England and Europe—his vision was broadened, and his energies received an added stimulus and a fresh directive! During the first period of his retirement, the spirit of the recluse seemed to dominate him, and the influence of the Anglican Church, Low Church as it was, was perceptible in his response to the national call. But his second visit to the Western countries, his meeting with several types of men and women, and

his contact with people of different church loyalties, made him realise, more than ever, the limitations of the church in meeting the vital needs of millions of human beings all the world over!

Anantam grasped the truth, which had been hidden hitherto, that a Christian could sympathise with the aspirations of his country for freedom, without being disloyal to Christ, his Lord and Master. He could now face the problems, created by the Gandhian ferment, with an open mind!

CHAPTER XVII

MIGRATION TO MYSORE PLATEAU

“ Your father must live in a cold climate; he will then live to a good old age! ” suggested Soubhagyam in her latter days. Ramachandra Rao strove to fulfil her desire. Bezwada was hot, surrounded by barren rocks on all sides, which radiated heat, and obstructed the sea breeze. It was no doubt a healthy town to live in, but hot, dry and dusty.

With his advancing years Anantam had begun to feel the heat; and the family had been, for decades past, escaping the summer heat by going to the South Indian hill stations during the months of May and June. Ramachandra Rao realised that Anantam would be better off by a prolonged stay in a mild climate, with the amenities of a city life assured. Bangalore seemed to answer the purpose admirably.

In popular parlance it is known as “ the pensioner’s paradise ”! With its green parks, colourful gardens, wealth of blossoms, variety of fruit, abundance of vegetables and well-laid-out roads and thoroughfares, it can be rivalled by few cities in the country. Intellectual activities could be sustained for hours without fatigue—games and sports are the features of its youthful residents. As the Headquarters of the Government of H. H. the Maharajah of Mysore, it had an atmosphere of its own. Sir Mirza Ismail, the Dewan, had a will of his own; and he was known to have driving power. Under him Mysore maintained the reputation of a “ model Indian State ”, and was on a par with the best administered British provinces. Corruption was discountenanced, and efficiency was maintained in the administration.

The Dewan was bent on beautifying Mysore in the vein of India’s one-time Moghal rulers. Mysore stood as an emblem of what Indian talent, push and determination could

accomplish in spheres of self-government and industrial enterprise.

Bangalore stood on the top of a plateau, not hidden from the eyes of all-India; everybody in the motherland visited it someday or other!

Anantam had previously lived in Bangalore; the impressions left on him were far from being pleasant. But lapse of time had had its soothing effect. It had grown to be a large and populous city, with great improvements and modern amenities.

So Anantam accepted the proposal to try Bangalore for some time, as a part of the scheme of things, that merciful Providence had provided.

During the family's first visit to Bangalore, Anantam was introduced to K. Matthan, the Secretary to the Government of Mysore, by N. Madhava Rau, who was the grandson of Anantam's cousin. Madhava Rau was a member of the Mysore Civil Service, and was gaining reputation as an efficient officer.

Mathan gave Anantam a warm welcome. They were drawn to each other at the first meeting; their mutual love, regard and consideration lasted to the end of their days. When Matthan came to know that they had been thinking of settling down in Bangalore, he encouraged the idea, and promised to find them a house-site in a good locality. He thought that the City would be more congenial to them than the Cantonment. True to his word, Matthan negotiated a site belonging to a Mysore Government official, quite close to his own property; and in a short time it was made over to Anantam's sons at a very reasonable price.

When they came over to Bangalore, they first lived in the Cantonment in a rented house. J. W. Edwin, an Officer of the Cantonment Municipality, helped them in many ways to settle down. Matthan helped them in every way he could. Madhava Rau called whenever he could spare the time.

Ramachandra Rao started his professional practice, and was able to stand on his own feet before the year was out.

It was more than he had expected; and he was thankful that his professional skill was appreciated soon after his arrival in Bangalore. But an unexpected event happened; the bungalow was sold over his head, and the new landlord wanted to take possession of it as soon as the agreement period of one year was completed. The landlord showed him no consideration; and he was obliged to vacate the bungalow in which he had set up his practice.

Meanwhile Edwin undertook to supervise the construction of two bungalows at Basavangudi (Bangalore City) on the site negotiated by Matthan. By the end of April 1928, *i.e.*, seven months since the foundations were laid, both the bungalows were ready for occupation. The house site was divided between the two brothers, Ananda Rao buying the larger portion. Anantam donated ten thousand rupees towards the construction of the two bungalows. The layout of the bungalows, the method of construction, and the simplicity of design marked them out as beautiful villas in Basavangudi. Anantam was pleased that his sons had each a bungalow of his own, and that they stood close to each other, with only a garden wall between them.

Providentially an official in the neighbourhood was under transfer orders to Madras; his bungalow was let to Ramachandra Rao from July 1928. But the official very considerably placed a couple of rooms at his disposal. He shifted forthwith his practice to the new place; but he and the family moved into his bungalow at Basavangudi.

The latter lived there during May and June, and got to know the people. The Matthans were kindness itself. Basavangudi was decidedly cooler than the Cantonment during the hot weather; and their little home, situated on the top of a mound, was breezy, and commanded a magnificent view of the country.

Early in July 1928 they returned to the Cantonment, and Ramachandra Rao continued his professional work at Spencer Road.

But, again, bad luck dogged his footsteps. Within a year the owner was retransferred to Bangalore. He expressed a desire to live in his own home; and Anantam suggested that Ramachandra Rao should raise no objection to vacating the house for the occupancy of the owner.

Accordingly Ramachandra Rao and family took up residence at his own house at Basavangudi. It was uphill work to start practice again. Some patients still clung to him out of sheer loyalty, but the distance between his own house and the scene of his professional activity was over five miles.

This comparative slackening of professional activity was disappointment both to Anantam and his son, but they hoped for better days to come. Anantam's health had by now considerably improved, and Soubhagyamma's wish for him was fulfilled.

But Anantam's eyesight was failing, and reading caused eye-strain. Dr. B. K. Narayana Rao, an old friend of his at Bezwada, happened to be the Superintendent of the Minto Ophthalmic Hospital at Bangalore. One of Anantam's eyes developed a cataract which was ripe for operation. He generously offered to come home, and perform the operation. Anantam had completed his eightieth year; and he felt grateful for the consideration shown by Narayana Rao.

The operation was successful. Gratitude swelled in Anantam's breast when the vision was fully restored.

It was in the early days of his career that Dr. Narayana Rao came to know Anantam at Bezwada. When they met again years afterwards at Bangalore, the old ties drew them together, and they became good friends again. Narayana Rao often went out of his way to be of service to Anantam. Anantam warmly appreciated Dr. Narayana Rao's consideration for him.

When the subject of fee was hinted, Dr. B. K. Narayana Rao blurted out, "If you mention the word fee, I shall not cross your threshold again".

LAST VISIT TO MACHILEEPATNAM (BANDAR)

Though he was born at Pusulooru and laboured at Bezwada for forty years, Machileepatnam was Anantam's first love. It was there that he had spent the most impressionable period of his life. It was there that he first came into contact with that rare, sublimated saint, Robert Noble, and finally became a disciple of the Nazarene. It was there that he got initiated into the priceless lore of English language, till he obtained the B.A. Degree of the University of Madras. It was there that he was married, and his children were born; it was there that he started his career as a schoolmaster, with the virgin passion of his soul, and laboured for 17 years on hand-to-mouth subsistence, stoutly refusing to be inveigled into the broad path, that led to opulence and influence. It was no wonder that he looked to Bandar as the *Khasi* that inspired his hopes and moulded his destiny!

When its name was mentioned Anantam at times fell into a reverie, thinking of the past, that could not be recalled. Occasionally he would lift the pocket handkerchief to his eyes, press it on them, and with a disarming smile on his lips, he would join in the conversation. He often spoke of the olden days at Bandar, of his joys and sorrows, of his successes and failures with the detachment of one, who was conscious of the higher values of life. There never was bitterness or resentment at unkindness shown him during his early days. A song of gratitude was ever on his lips, and the peace, born of contentment, lit up his face.

He often expressed a hope that he might some day be able to spend a few days at Bandar. In fact he visited Bandar, on business, while he was working at Bezwada. Since his retirement, he occasionally spent a week-end with Darbha Rama Sastrulu and family, his old friends. He was at times an honoured guest of Dr. K. Ahobila Rao, the most popular

doctor of his day in the Krishna District. After his death, the hospitable doors of Satyavati Ramachandrayya, the elder daughter of Chevendra Venkatachalam Pantulu, were thrown open to him. Thus, now and again, he had a sniff of Bandar air.

But he would rather live in a home of his own, even for a few months, and enjoy the thrill of Bandar-way-of-life in the new setting. That thought, vaguely expressed, materialised in an unexpected way. The Managing Director of the Andhra Insurance Company invited Ramachandra Rao to Bandar during the Christmas season, to see that the medical work was finished before the official year ended.

Ramachandra Rao and aunt Subbarayudu arrived in Bandar early in December, and got a vacant house cleaned up and furnished, while they stayed with the Rama Sastrulus, partaking of their hospitality and enjoying their fellowship. Rama Sastrulu had become old and feeble by now, not having completely got over the effects of the paralytic stroke that he had a decade before.

He was ever ready to be helpful to others, and he would call on his old friends in his bullock vehicle when the spirit moved him. In spite of his peculiarities, one felt drawn to him; and he often brought the spiritual touch into the conversation. He was Ramachandra Rao's teacher while he was a boy, and he was fond of his old pupil to the end of his days. The members of his family helped their friends in every way they could, and the bungalow was made quite fit for occupation in about a week. On the way from Bangalore, Anantam stayed back in Madras in Ananda Rao's home, and came over to Bandar, when it was made possible for him to settle down in the new home without strain.

The bungalow, that had become his temporary residence at Bandar, was in good repair. It was not long before he recognised it, as the one in which he and Minnie lived for sometime with the Sharkeys, when they first married.

Bandar was a flourishing town when Anantam was a lad attending school. After the devastating cyclone of 1864,

its importance had gradually declined, though it is still the Headquarters of the Krishna District.

Bandar moves, no doubt, but, it moves slowly though steadily, with a lingering look on the past. There are families living in Bandar today, which claim kinship with men, who had either helped or thwarted the ambitions of the East India Company of yore.

The loyalty to the town of their birth is, indeed, touching even amongst the poor and the down-trodden. It has, to this day, preserved the lineaments of ancient culture, which the rude touch of modernity has not effaced.

In his old age Anantam was glad to be ushered into his old surroundings once again, and to get some inspiration from them. Within the four walls of the bungalow, the impressions which the past had left, would often radiate thoughts that fondly lingered on his early married life. As he gently walked into the compound of the Noble College, the stately structure standing in extensive grounds, would recall to his memory his student days, of his early labours as a teacher, and of the inspiration that he drew from Robert Noble, who lived a life of love and self-sacrifice for the young men of Bandar, and died in their midst.

His old pupil and friend, -Rama Sastrulu, was a link with the past; he often called on him and compared notes with him about men and women, and of events of the past. There were a few still living in Bandar, who belonged to his day and generation; some of his old students had become grey haired and feeble; and Anantam's meeting them was a dip into the exhilarating memories of the golden past!

It was more than half-a-century since he left Bandar—the decades that had passed since had wrought changes in his make-up in unison with changes that had been taking place in everything about him, in social and political life. Anantam was not a dreamer; he was a thinker. His spirit revived under the redolent atmosphere of olden memories, and he felt as though a fresh lease of life were given him.

Ramachandra Rao's work was sent home, and he could stay with Anantam while he attended to his business.

Rama Sastrulu's daughters called on him as often as they could, making him recall the memory of the wonderful mother they had had, and of the charming friend, he and his family had had in her.

Satyavatiamma would drop in of an evening, and spend some hours with him and aunt Subbarayudu. Though getting on in years, and living alone as the sole remnant of her family, she still kept her charm, beauty and dignity! She was fond of music and friends, and given to hospitality. The memory of her mother Amelia, was fresh in the memory of her friends even after the lapse of quarter of a century.

Aunt Subbarayudu had been complaining of weak eyesight for some time. During March the sun grew very powerful, and the rays flashed into the eyes direct from the hot glistening sand, and affected her vision. She hurriedly bade good-bye to her friends, and returned to Bangalore: it had a beneficial psychological effect on her.

The old friends continued to call on Anantam, who occasionally returned the calls driving in a car. One day they were invited to tea to the 'Garden Home' by the landlord, who happened to be a friend.

Anantam was delighted to enter his old home after an absence of half-a-century. The landlord very kindly took them round the house. Anantam's powers of reminiscence leaped into activity, and he began to narrate incidents that had happened in each room. He recognised his study where he had laboured, the room in which the children were born, the reception room where friends were ever welcomed, the dining room and the guest room. As he strolled into the garden he recognised some old trees, and was delighted to get close to the *Ponna* tree, under shade of which he studied for his B.A. degree examination.

"You will come again, Sir; don't you be a stranger to your old home," the generous host ventured, as they rose to depart.

But the host, not long after, had joined the great majority; and later, the Garden Home changed hands again! That visit to his old home stirred Anantam to the depths of his being; contentment and peace pervaded his spirit thereafter.

Kaveri, the grand-daughter of his cousin Seenayya, happened to be on a visit to her parents at Bandar. She had some throat trouble that needed to be looked into. She came over to them and stayed on till it was time for them to think of going to Bangalore. An operation was performed and she was greatly benefited. But Anantam, her grand-uncle, was delighted with her company; she was with him while Ramachandra Rao went about on business. Of an evening when he strolled in the compound leaning on her arm, as the sea-breeze blew softly, he would tell her of their ancestral home, which had lacked nothing worth having; where love ruled the hearts of men and women, the young and the old, where generosity was practised to a fault, and where culture and good breeding had knit the members together.

He would tell her of his boyhood; and of how much he and his mother, were indebted to her grand-father's family. He was pleased to avail himself of the opportunity to see Kaveri through her school and college at Bandar and Madras, till she passed out creditably both at the Andhra and Madras Universities, having obtained M.A. (Hons.) and B.T. degrees. He felt more than compensated for his having undertaken the responsibility to educate her. He came to know later on, that she had blossomed into an excellent teacher, adored by her pupils, and loved by her colleagues; he was gratified by the success she had made of her life. Her company had cheered him up. He was glad, too, that Ramachandra Rao had been of some professional service to her.

Again a cousin's son had brought his wife with a cataract in the eye, from Guntur for operation. The husband was a quasi-social reformer; the wife was a conservative. Her social habits did not quite fit into the modern setting. Luckily, an airy cottage happened to fall vacant in the compound; and it was set apart for them. The husband used to

join them at *chota hazari* and tea; but he had the other meals with his wife. The operation was performed successfully; the patient was grateful for having got back her vision.

This nephew of his ever contrived to find opportunities to talk on religious matters. Avoiding controversies, Anantam told him of his spiritual experiences, of how God had been good to him since he came away from his own people, of how the transcendent love of God, as exemplified in the life and death of Jesus Christ, had been a comfort and inspiration to him, and of how the hope of a future life sustained him amidst the vicissitudes of earthly life. His contentment and joy in life, and his transparent hope of the future life did make an impression on Jagannadham, his nephew.

In 1886 Anantam, as a lad, stood alone in the District Court before the Judge, and confessed his faith in Christ, when thousands of spectators, who had gathered round, hissed at his decision not to return to his ancestral home,—his own people were mortified and humiliated thereby. But now, after three score and ten years, in the same Bandar, a scion of the aggrieved family, had come to the 'lost' member, with no bitterness in his heart towards the one who had left them, partook of his hospitality, and made his wife realise that she had come to one of her own!

It was a proud day in Anantam's life! With his generous and affectionate nature, Anantam felt sad whenever he thought of his having had to leave those whom he loved tenderly. Both parties had in those days thought that such a step was inevitable, when a change in religious belief occurred. But now, they were inclined to look at it from a different angle of vision; surely there ought to be some way of circumventing the obstacles which intolerance on both sides had reared!

Times have changed. Just like Anantam, Jagannadham was also inclined to hold that a more tolerant attitude should be assumed on both sides, making it possible to live with the family, whatever religious views an individual may hold,

as it is being done in Lanka (Ceylon). Both hoped, that the day for the realisation of that ideal was not far off!

Anyway they were happy that they had come together, and got to know each other better than before. They parted with utmost cordiality and goodwill; they never met again, though they had corresponded with each other for some years.

Since Anantam arrived in Bandar, he had endeavoured to call on Rama Sastrulu once a week. The latter had been in failing health, for some time. He had had a stroke over a decade ago, but with care, nurture, regulated diet, and complete trust in God, he recovered sufficiently to hobble about in the home, and converse with friends on matters social and political.

On Good Friday eve when Anantam and Ramachandra Rao called on him, he was in agony, exhibiting symptoms of kidney trouble. He was restless and somewhat irritable. In between the spasms of discomfort, he was calm, and lifted his hand up in the direction of the sky, whence he drew his comfort and inspiration. His wife, an ideal woman in every way, preceded him by a decade, but his two daughters and son looked after him with touching devotion. He seemed to know that the end was nearing; he was not in the least perturbed. His family hardly realised it. His own doctor thought that there was no immediate danger, and the District Medical Officer, who was called in consultation, shared the medical attendant's optimism. But Anantam and Ramachandra Rao were of opinion that the end was drawing near. They bade him an affectionate good-bye, promising to call the next day. Before they departed Anantam offered a prayer committing him to the mercies of the Heavenly Father.

The next morning, very early, a messenger called, asking Ramachandra Rao to call on the family forthwith. He learnt from him that Rama Sastrulu passed away peacefully in the early hours of the morning. It was the 15th April 1938 that he passed on. The sadness caused by the passing of Rama Sastrulu deepened the gloom of the crucifixion,

and the poignancy of grief caused by the separation from the beloved one was hard to bear.

Anantam felt keenly the loss of his brother convert, his sole link with the past. But he was thankful that Providence had contrived to make it possible for him to be with his dear friend during his last days. Anantam invited the family to his home; they accepted the invitation.

While Ramachandra Rao looked after their physical comforts during the day, Anantam comforted them, prayed with them, and turned their thoughts to the realities of the other world. He missed his old friend sorely; but he had the satisfaction of having been of some service to his son and two daughters, who had remained single, looking after their father. During the second week of May, about a month after their friend passed on, Ramachandra Rao thought it was time that he should take Anantam back to Bangalore, as the hot winds had begun to blow.

When the time came for Anantam to depart there were tears in the eyes of his friends, for they loved him as one of their own.

The days at Bandar glided on softly, redolent with the memories of the past, spurred on by the duties of the present, and enlivened with the hopes of the future. Neither Anantam nor any one else thought that it might be his last visit to Bandar.

CHAPTER XIX

THE TENTH DECADE

The year 1940 found Anantam in perfect health considering his age. Old age is a state that cannot be cured, though, at times, it may be defied! He realised that though old age has its terrors, it has its joys as well! Life's tangled carpet of shadows and sunshine can carry one through, if one but stretched oneself on it in faith and tranquillity. Anantam accepted what was inevitable in nature, with good grace. As years crept on him, he realised his limitations and kept himself within bounds. His methodical and self-controlled life preserved him from the strains and jars which an irregular and adventurous life would have entailed.

After ninety, one could not be said to be robust, and trifling inconveniences and physical discomforts tend to make one introspective and alert. As one year passes, the prospect of seeing another year through, becomes more uncertain than ever. Time seems to lag, energy flags and interests become limited. The shadows of the fleeting whirl of life are cast on the daily routine; and everything about one suggests the counting of one's days, one by one, since they cannot be many.

To him the future held out no allurements which might become an obsession; nor did the past leave in its trail the marks of failures and regrets; the memories of days spent in the service of God and man were his sheet-anchor! His motto was, "one day at a time".

He accepted each day with a grateful heart, did the work that came to him, with all his strength and earnestness, however trifling it might seem to others. His one ambition was to be faithful in the work that came to him on that particular day.

He would not leave to the morrow what could be done that day. His correspondence, charities, obligations to

others, meditations, studies, prayers, whatever should be done that day, he strove to accomplish, swayed by the thought that there might be no tomorrow for him! "I have lived my life, I am ready for the call," he would often say.

But ninety odd years of incessant activity could not but record its strivings and achievements on his mind and body, besides the strain. He felt his end might come any day, and would have his sons by him when the end came. Ananda Rao and family had settled down in Madras for some time in their own home.

The climatic conditions were tolerable at Madras, and, if the worst should come to pass, the summer could somehow be tided over there with its amenities. Besides Madras is nearer to Bangalore than Bezwada. Again Ananda Rao would look after the father, whenever Ramachandra Rao had to go away on duty; aunt Subbarayudu, too, had begun to feel the effects of age; and, she had some of her own people living in Madras. She would have some help from the members of her sister's family, whenever a woman's aid became necessary.

Anantam had come, by now, to discard outside activities, one by one, and his life became introspective and meditative: and he could easily keep to his daily routine at Madras, provided he had a decent home to live in. Besides, Ananda Rao had a fine home there to accommodate his father whenever occasion arose. Ramachandra Rao had negotiated a site in the residential district of Chetpet, and was contemplating building a home for themselves. The second World War had already started.

The kind old friends at Bezwada did not like the idea of their going away from them permanently. But, when they were apprised of the situation arising out of advancing years, they assented, though with reluctance.

He addressed a congregation at the morning service in Telugu at Saint Paul's Church. He gave them on Sunday the parting message, exhorting, in the vein of St. Paul, the men and women who had grown before his eyes, to live lives worthy

of their Master, and committed them to the mercies of God in his prayer and benediction. Friends and acquaintances called on him during the following two or three days—almost to the hour of his departure. Many of them, particularly the women friends, departed with moist eyes; children were brought in for his blessings. They felt that they were taking leave of one of their own. Parting was no doubt painful to him, but he was comforted by the thought that he had stayed, as long as he possibly could, with his friends, amongst whom he laboured for over fifty years.

With hearts full of gratitude for the good-will of friends, at the end of the hot weather, Anantam and family migrated to Madras in 1940. A small bungalow was secured in Kennets Lane, a central locality for Madras. The bungalow did not look very desirable, but it was taken as a stop-gap arrangement.

Later they succeeded in securing a two-storyed bungalow, 'Nutford', in Harrington Road, Chetpet. It was spacious, and had a garden; Anantam could stretch his limbs without having to go out for walks. Another consideration was that it stood close to the house-site that Ramachandra Rao had negotiated for building a bungalow.

But it was not an easy task to build in 1942. Three years had passed since the second World War had started. It seemed to be of no advantage to postpone house-building. The prices of materials had been steadily mounting, and none could tell when it would stop. Daniel, an old friend of Soubhagyam, who gave her music lessons three decades before, had by now budded into an engineer, and offered to supervise the construction of the bungalow for a consideration. Ramachandra Rao had agreed to provide the materials.

The work progressed satisfactorily and strong, dependable foundations were laid. Anantam was invited by the workmen and the engineer to visit and bless the foundations as they were being laid.

He readily consented, and prayed for God's blessing on the habitation-to-be, and on those who would live in it. It

was a simple, joyous and uplifting ceremony, performed in Anantam's inimitable way, that touched the hearts of all those who were present on the occasion!

The walls were beginning to rise, and the engineer thought that, if everything went according to plan, the ground floor would be completed by the end of May.

But the unexpected happened! On the 12th April 1942, news flashed that an enemy flotilla was sighted in the Indian Ocean, possibly to bombard Madras; the city was warned to be prepared for the worst during the next 24 hours! It was a bolt from the blue; Madras lost its head. An exodus of the people started within a few hours of the warning about the impending enemy action.

The trains were crammed to suffocation; specials were run to accommodate those who would escape to a place of safety; those who had motor cars fled to the neighbouring villages, laden with gold, silver and paper money, and jewellery. Some of the high British officials, including the members of the Government House, lost their nerve and disappeared from Madras. The city was left in the hands of the military; the Civil Authority abdicated for the time being.

The evacuation of Madras continued all through the night; and yet, only a minority could get away, the vast majority had to stay behind. Anantam was calm and quiet during the hours of panic. When asked whether he would like to be driven to some place of safety, he shook his head and said, "I have no desire to leave my home. I and mine are in the Heavenly Father's keeping; nothing can possibly harm us without His permission." And he, his sons and the members of their families, stayed in Madras heedless of the threatened danger.

Ramachandra Rao had two domestic helpers, who graciously chose to stay with the family and take the risk. Anantam showed no sign of anxiety or care. He had some sleep; but, during the waking hours, he sought God's protection for the city. The night passed uneventfully, and with

the dawn hope revived. The morning radio announced the glad tidings that the flotilla was seen to disappear in the Indian Ocean to the south of Ceylon!

The partial evacuation of Madras disorganised trade for some time. Those who fled had time to repent of their folly. They had to contend against overcrowding, fabulous high rents, scarcity of food, insanitary conditions, insecurity to life and property through lack of police *bandobust*, and lack of water.

The construction of the bungalow was delayed for a while by these disturbances. To complicate matters, Daniel went off his head during the scare. He told Ramachandra Rao that the dread of the Japanese attack on Madras had got on his nerves, and he could not stay any longer in Madras to supervise the building operations. Ramachandra Rao sympathised with Daniel, settled his accounts, and set him free.

Ramachandra Rao had now to look after the building operations himself, besides securing the materials required. Anantam pitied his plight, but lightened his burden with an encouraging smile, and a word of prayer. In a fortnight the service of an experienced engineer were secured, thereby relieving Ramachandra Rao of considerable anxiety. The summer was on, and Anantam accompanied Ananda Rao and family to Bangalore, while aunt Subbarayudu went up to Fern Hill, in the Nilgiris. Ramachandra Rao stayed behind in Madras, urging the workmen to go ahead and complete the house before the bursting of the monsoon.

The building operations continued to progress, though slowly, and it was September by the time the ground floor was completed. As the signs of an early monsoon were noticeable, the construction of the first floor was put off to the following year. Anantam and Ramachandra Rao moved into their bungalow at the end of September, reassured with the sense of security, which the ownership had engendered.

The year 1943 was already two months old, and Ramachandra Rao heaved a sigh of relief at the thought of having

a respite. Ananda Rao had been away on some business, and had not returned home. One morning, unexpectedly, Anantam told his son that the wisest thing for him to do was to complete the bungalow straightaway, or, sell the materials he had already purchased, and wait till conditions became easier. He spoke as if he had some intuitive knowledge of the future!

Surprised as Ramachandra Rao was, he made up his mind to follow Anantam's advice. The old engineer friend was away, and Ramachandra Rao had to undertake the responsibility of seeing the work through with the help of a friend, who had built a few small houses. Fortunately an experienced mason joined the workmen, and helped to supervise the work. Iron and cement had become scarce; and it was not easy to obtain permits from the Government to purchase them. At Ramachandra Rao's request, a top ranking engineer inspected the structure, and certified that five tons of cement were necessary to complete the bungalow; but the headworkman thought that not less than ten tons would be needed.

Ramachandra Rao applied for a permit on the strength of the engineer's recommendation. But there was no sign of the permit for weeks in spite of a reminder; in exasperation he applied to the Headquarters at Calcutta for help, explaining how he was let down in Madras. Calcutta promptly despatched a permit. A fortnight later, the post brought him the permit he had asked for, from the authorities in Madras. And Ramachandra Rao purchased in all ten tons of cement. And Anantam thought that the timely help was providential! The mason's estimate was correct; ten tons of cement was just sufficient to complete the building.

CHAPTER XX

HOME LIFE IN MADRAS

Subsequent events had proved Anantam's foresight in having urged Ramachandra Rao to go ahead and complete the bungalow in Madras. The moment peace was declared the prices shot up incredibly high, and have been going on rising to this day; the wages, too, kept pace with the prices.

"I am glad I followed your advice, though the strain was great," remarked Ramachandra Rao, as they were sitting together in the veranda one evening. Anantam beamed a smile and said, "I had been praying for guidance. I felt I was being guided to give you that advice!"

"I have now a shelter over my head—I am quite content. You are here with me, and your brother is by us. What more do I need?" remarked Anantam. "How good has God been to me and mine," and he closed his eyes in grateful adoration. They called their new home "Ananda Vihar", (the abode of Joy)—after the brother. When Anantam and the other members of the family left Bezwada, the cutting away of the old ties at "Bhagya Vilas" was not so trying, since the idea of settling down in Madras was then only dimly visualised. They left Bezwada with the thought that they still had "Bhagya Vilas" and they could return to it any day they felt inclined. But the treatment accorded to them in Madras by old acquaintances and friends was cordial and encouraging.

"If the mouth (speech) is good, the whole town becomes agreeable," was the Andhra proverb that Anantam frequently quoted. This was true of himself! His approach to people was disarming—a bright smile, a winsome voice, and a soft speech! When they came to know that he had emerged into the tenth decade people were drawn to him, nay, were fascinated by him. Even in Madras, casual visitors deemed it a privilege to do anything for him!

Madras had its social and intellectual advantages, what with its colleges, and cosmopolitan social groups. As a result of the aftermath of war, Madras had far better facilities than Bezwada, for obtaining rationed commodities barring rice. The matter was mooted in the family circle, and the pros and cons were discussed; and when asked what he wished to do with the property at Bezwada, Anantam answered decisively, "I have no desire to go back to 'Bhagya Vilas'; since you brothers have homes of your own at Madras and Bangalore, I am willing to sell it, if a reasonable price is forthcoming!"

Within a fortnight a purchaser was found in the person of the Rajah of Challapalli, who negotiated the transaction through his agents; they came all the way from Bezwada to Bangalore. Anantam wished to know if his sons desired a share, in the price, which the property would fetch. But they suggested that he should do what he thought best with the money, since both of them had enough. Thus freed from embarrassment Anantam turned his attention to his first love, *i.e.*, to endow a hospital with funds.

Meanwhile "Bhagya Vilas" was sold: and, the money was put into the bank, awaiting some worthy person to take charge of it and use it. The interest that accrued from it was distributed among some charitable organisations that stood in need of financial help. Anantam prayed, and waited for guidance. He would rather see his proposed charities take shape while he was yet alive; of course in his tenth decade every year seemed to him a decade; and he wished that things happened quicker than they did. Yet he had to wait a couple of years before a decision could be arrived at. His faith that God would direct his steps in the right direction came to fruition in this way.

One day, when Ramachandra Rao happened to visit Bezwada on business, he called at the C.M.S. bungalow, where the Venerable Archdeacon Spear and his wife, old friends of the Anantams, were in residence. They greeted Ramachandra Rao, and over a cup of tea they discussed many problems of mutual interest.

When the question of their activities in the city, and in the district was mooted, Mr. Spear expressed grateful satisfaction of what they had been able to achieve hitherto, but, he owned, that there was one regret. They had been for sometime contemplating establishing a hospital at Bezwada, but lack of funds had stood in the way. What they needed was a founder with a donation; they had the wherewithal to run a hospital! They were waiting for such a happy consummation!

Then Ramachandra Rao told him of what Anantam had in mind—how he had been on the look out for an individual or an organisation to come forward, and make use of his endowment, to start a hospital. A surprise it was to both parties to know each other's needs! He promised to talk it over with Anantam, and let Archdeacon Spear know what he thought of the Christian mission making use of his monetary aid; meanwhile Archdeacon Spear would write to England to find out if he might accept, should a monetary offer be made to him. Anantam was pleased to know that his old missionary friends were desirous of starting a hospital in the vicinity of his old home, and that his endowment would help to make their desire take a tangible form. He made up his mind to hand over, what he had set apart for the hospital, to the mission, should his terms be accepted.

Within a month letters arrived from the authorities in London authorising Archdeacon Spear to accept the offer, and go ahead with the project of the hospital. But there was a difference in view-point. The missionaries wanted the hospital to treat only the Christians; but Anantam wanted the hospital to be useful to everybody, including the Christians—there should be no distinction made on the score of religion, caste, colour or sex. Finally Anantam's point of view was accepted in black and white.

Anantam sent Archdeacon Spear a cheque which he gladly accepted; the layout of the hospital was taken in hand forthwith! The mission had set apart a site of about 4 acres, along

with the buildings standing on it, for the hospital. Archdeacon Spear was then about to retire from the mission service, and return to England for family reasons.

He took the matter in hand immediately, and, with the help of an engineer, made alterations, and renovated old structures so that a decent hospital was ready to function by August 1947. But unexpected torrential rains came down, making locomotion impossible. The preliminaries had to be postponed to the 12th September, when the opening ceremony was performed under the presidentship of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Mutyalu. There was a large gathering of doctors, and of the representatives of the people, Christian and non-Christian, educated and uneducated, men, women, and children. Everything went off well.

Anantam's old friends were gratified at the welcome given to them by the hospital authorities at the opening ceremony on the 12th September, 1947. Anantam had completed his 97th year by then, and did not feel fit to undertake the journey from Bangalore and back. Ramachandra Rao had promised to represent him and the family at the opening function. He should have left on the 10th September. But aunt Subbarayudu took seriously ill suddenly, which made Ramachandra Rao abandon the journey.

Anantam's deepest emotions were stirred when he came to know that his fond hopes for a hospital were at last fulfilled, and its management was in good hands. He felt that it was the event of his life, and his heart was filled with gratitude to the Heavenly Father, who had made the starting of a hospital possible; it might prove to be a blessing to generations, after he had gone. And he was happy that God had heard his prayer. During the eight years it has been in existence, it has come to meet the needs of the people in an efficient way.

It was a god-send that Lt.-Col. Skinner, a retired member of the Indian Medical Service, should have accepted the job of superintending the hospital since its inception. He is a humble, conscientious Christian, unassuming and meek,

CHAPTER XXI

THE PASSING OF SRIMATHI SUBBARAYUDU

Srimathi Subbarayudu had been a widow for well-nigh thirty years.

She was clever and capable, and could read and write Tamil and Telugu; and she conversed with ease and force. She was an entertaining speaker, and made friends easily. Women were drawn to her; and they appreciated her manner and affability. She kept home for Ramachandra Rao, when he was working as a professor at Pachiappa's College. After Soubhagyam's death, she and her husband came over to Bezwada, and lived at " Bhagya Vilas " along with Anantam and Ramachandra Rao. She looked after the three men with care and affection. She was a wonderful housewife, and an excellent chef.

With advancing years her responsibilities increased; but she was made of the stuff that would rather wear out than rust out.

She was considered by her compeers as a travelled person. As her friends said, her feet itched to travel! In her sixty-sixth year she joined the Anantam's family in the tour to England and Europe. She thoroughly enjoyed her visit to England. Her going abroad had liberalised her mind; and she cherished, too, a desire to see her motherland become free.

Her visit to Europe had given her a status on returning to Bezwada. The Government nominated her as a member of the Bezwada Taluk Board to represent women's interests. Then she was elected by her compeers as a member of the Krishna District Board, when Ramachandra Rao was its President. She took interest in the work allotted to her, and championed the rights of her sex, whenever she could.

She was subsequently appointed by the Government as an Honorary Magistrate of Bezwada City, and she attended the Court when women and children were involved.

As she was nearing three score and ten, she sold her bungalow for a good price. With that money in hand she felt quite independent: she played the role of Lady Bountiful! She supported charitable organisations like the Bible Society, National Missionary Society, Young Women's Christian Association; she helped some of her poor relatives, specially young men to prosecute their higher studies, and better their prospects. Her heart went out to the poor and the suffering; she helped them as far as she could, though she was often taken in. She would at times say, "I have done my duty by the needy; surely God will not let me down!"

She was colourfully and tastefully dressed. She was simple in her tastes, and stood the rough and tumble of life without wincing.

Her active habits, in old age, were a strain on her limited strength. Dietetic errors, cumulatively caused a breakdown on the evening of the 14th August 1947. While the country was rejoicing over the celebration of the freedom festivities, she had an attack of acute gastric catarrh which compelled her to lie in bed for a couple of days. She soon recovered, and felt the thrill of freedom, and went about her duties with a spring in her step, as if shackles had fallen off her limbs. She was gay as a girl, singing the praises of Mahatma Gandhi.

She was aging. But malaria had done its work impairing her memory. She forgot what she ate, and what medicines she took: she had another attack of gastritis.

Her grand niece, Dorachiammal, was fetched from the cantonment. A nurse friend arrived on the scene. Dr. Seshachalam, Dr. Anbu Pillai, and two lady doctors arrived and held consultation about her condition. They hoped that she would improve by the morning. But restlessness, pain, nausea with blood-stained expectoration, continued till the early hours of the morning. Anantam came into her sick-room and prayed by her; she was greatly comforted. Ramachandra Rao, noticing some signs of improvement in

the early hours of the morning, prayed by her. Thereupon she looked quite contented.

She was noticed to fold her hands, lift up her eyes, and utter inaudible words in prayer. On the morrow, when Ramachandra Rao came to her bedside, she looked calm and collected, betokening the peace that was in store for her.

When tea was served through a feeding cup she slowly sipped it. Coramine was injected to stimulate the heart.

As Ramachandra Rao held her hand in his, she opened her eyes, looked at him lovingly, and with a sweet smile lingering on her lips, she closed her eyes never to open again.

She passed on at the ripe age of 86, happy and contented, leaving her property to be used for charities which she was interested in. God granted her heart's desire that she should not suffer long, nor be bedridden. She often remarked that she would die suddenly, and her forecast came true!

In spite of her limitations, she loved much, and was loved in return!

CHAPTER XXII

LAST DAYS IN ANANTA BHAVAN

His sister-in-law's unexpected death was a shock to Anantam. He had hoped that she would survive him and look after Ramachandra Rao. But the unexpected turn of events had nearly unnerved him. On the day of the funeral Anantam spoke with great feeling for a quarter of an hour—the burden of his talk being his own, and his sons' indebtedness to her for what she had been to them for forty odd years. He touched on her piety, her devotion to duty, and her sympathy for those in affliction. He and his sons would cherish her memory with affection and gratitude. He thanked friends for having come and honoured her memory. It was a wonderful oration; an impromptu speech!

Anantam missed her, particularly in the evenings, when they both used to sit in the veranda, and discuss the family affairs. He and Ramachandra Rao weathered the storm of bereavement for three months as best they could; time and human sympathy helped to soften the poignancy of grief.

They returned to Madras in November 1947. The day after they arrived in Madras, Tirupalu and his wife Ramanamma joined the family to look after Anantam. The former was brought up by aunt Subbarayudu while he was in his teens. It was she who helped him to get married. But through some unfortunate misunderstanding he had left her service, and returned to Bezwada. He mourned her death, and came back to the family, when he heard that they needed him. It was a relief to have an old domestic helper come back, since he was trustworthy and knew their needs; besides, he would never spare himself in serving the elderly members of the family.

After a short stay with Ananda Rao and Shoroj, they moved into "Ananda Vihar". Tirupalu's personal attention to him helped to cheer up Anantam.

Early in 1948 Pankajamma, his niece, the daughter of Soubhagyam's brother, came to stay in "Ananda Vihar".

Anantam was delighted to have her to look after him, and fill the place vacated by his sister-in-law; she was a godsend to him. She was not only an experienced compounder but also acquainted with the hospital routine. Of an evening she would sit by him in the veranda, as aunt Subbarayudu used to do in her latter days, and converse with him so long as his interest was sustained.

Madras was beginning to warm up by the end of April, and Ramachandra Rao thought it was time to take Anantam back to Bangalore. The summer exodus had been in full blast for days and it was not easy to get accommodation by rail. Still, they managed to get sleeping accommodation.

Being tired they both soon fell asleep. And lo! at midnight Ramachandra Rao thought that he had heard a thud in the compartment, and woke up with a start to pick up any package that might have fallen down. But when he opened his eyes, to his horror, he found Anantam lying flat on the floor, helpless and speechless. He tried to lift him up, but could not manage it by himself. A fellow passenger jumped down, and lent a helping hand. Between them both they lifted him up, and made him comfortable on his berth; it was a relief to find that Anantam was not hurt on the head or spine. But Anantam complained of intense pain in the right hand, from the wrist to the fingers. The right wrist was sprained, and the fingers, too, besides being bruised and bent.

At Katpadi a passenger wanted to enter the compartment. But Ramachandra Rao begged him not to disturb an elderly gentleman who needed to be kept absolutely quiet. He went away to find a berth elsewhere, but failing to do so, he returned and repeated his request with importunity. "I see you are in trouble," he said. "If you will let me in, I will look after the elderly gentlemen till we get off at Bangalore. Please let me be of some service to one, who needs it."

With some reluctance Ramachandra Rao let the persistent knocker in. To his surprise, the new entrant sitting by Anantam asked him, in a caressing voice, where the pain was most severe. When Anantam pointed to the fingers most hurt, he started massaging them with the deftness of an experienced masseur.

His gentle touch did the trick. When the acute pain had begun to ease a trifle, he opened his medicine chest, and producing an anodyne balm, rubbed it softly on the painful fingers. Presently Anantam felt his fingers easier, and he soon fell asleep. Meanwhile Ramachandra Rao sat up, watching the gracious consideration shown by the newly found friend. But his own head had begun to swim; he had had a very busy day with packing up at home. He found it difficult to sit up any longer. The friend, noticing the situation, whispered, "You look worried, and dazed! Leave your father to my care, and sleep for a while; and, you may look after him after I get off."

With gratitude Ramachandra Rao stretched himself, and dozed away for a while. It was about daybreak when Ramachandra Rao and Anantam woke up; they pleaded with the friend that he, too, should relax for a while. Reluctantly did he allow his mind and body relax on the top berth.

The friend got ready to get off when they arrived at Bangalore. Anantam expressed his sense of deep gratitude to him. Ramachandra Rao's heart was too full for words; he requested him to honour them by visiting them in their home, "Ananta Bhavan". He promised to call if he could manage it. He was a commercial traveller, visiting chemists and doctors on behalf of a Pharmaceutical Company; he hailed from Andhra Desa.

Ramachandra Rao, later on, wondered whether he was a real man of flesh and blood, or could it have been an apparition, in human form, sent to help those in need!

Both Pankajamma and Tirupalu were greatly concerned when they came to know of what had happened during the night.

As usual their friend K. Matthan's car was awaiting them at the City Station to take them over to "Ananta Bhavan". Pankajamma took the place of aunt Subbarayudu, and tried to run the home as best she could. Of course she was next in command to Ramachandra Rao in looking after Anantam, in matters medical. After the fatigue of the journey was over, and the shock of the fall passed off, Anantam rallied round; and the mild climate of Bangalore revived him. The right arm came into service but slowly, and the pain passed off, by degrees.

He could never, after that accident, use his right hand to shave himself. And he had to depend on others for that. He was then just completing his ninety-eighth year.

A few weeks later Ananda Rao, his wife, daughter, and her husband and their baby, came over to Bangalore, and stayed in "Shanti Nilayam," their own home. Their presence next door braced up Anantam's spirit; he was delighted to welcome his first great-grandchild, Minnie Snehalata's daughter. She was a year old, and Anantam played with her, and endeared himself to her by imitating the mewing of a kitten. The little thing called him "Meya-Meya-Thatha"! He felt very grateful to God for the privilege of carrying a great-grandchild on his knee. The meeting of the one-year-old and ninety-eight-year-old, and the expression of their love to each other was, indeed, a sight—a reflection of heaven's glow! It was a glorious summer, and Anantam's contentment and joy seemed complete.

The 4th of June was approaching. The celebration of Anantam's birthday had become an annual function in Bangalore for over a decade; the family and friends looked forward to meeting him and offering their congratulations.

As the birthday drew near in the year 1948, an unexpected event happened. Sanjeevi, Ananda Rao's only son, took ill suddenly in the U.S.A. and the message that he was to be operated on the 3rd of June was flashed across to India—it was to be a major operation for a gastric trouble! That message threw the family into consternation. The idea of

the annual celebration of the 4th June had to be given up on account of Sanjeevi's serious illness, besides the consideration of the passing of aunt Subbarayudu, a few months previously. Anantam prayed for his grandson. Ananda Rao and family came over, and shared a frugal meal with Anantam at "Ananta Bhavan". The members of the family spent the day in prayer.

And late in the afternoon, a cable arrived from America informing them that a successful operation had been performed, and that the patient's condition was satisfactory. The sorely tried family heaved a sigh of relief, and Anantam's pent-up feeling burst into a song of praise! Sanjeevi's parents joined in the chorus, and the evening drew the family together for counting their blessings, one by one.

It was a quiet day for Anantam, but it was rich in experience. A week later he rejoiced to read a very cheery letter written by Sanjeevi himself, from his sick-bed.

Ananda Rao and family stayed a few weeks longer at Bangalore, and returned to Madras. Anantam missed them very much, particularly little Priya. The days passed in much the same way, but for Pankajamma bestowing all possible attention on her uncle. Kaveramma got a job and came over to Bangalore.

Anantam welcomed her to his home and heart; and her company brought cheer to all the inmates of 'Ananta Bhavan'.

Anantam tried to be as happy as he could, and spent most of his time in reading, meditation and prayer. His desire to write was checked by the stiffness of his little finger, and by the increasing general debility. But a couple of physical impediments caused him considerable discomfort during the last decade of his life.

Hernia made its appearance while he was at Bezwada in his early sixties. The operative technique was not so perfect in those days as now: the surgeons hesitated to advise him to undergo an operation. But he managed very well for over twenty years with the aid of a well-fitting truss. But in his eighties, the truss became a discomfort rather

than a help. Later, in his nineties, he was obliged to dispense with it altogether. The hernia could not be reduced to normal; and he stood the chance of being strangulated any day. The pain was at times excruciating, and he felt as though he were in the throes of death. But immediate attention, and a recumbent posture brought relief.

He asked Ramachandra Rao whether there was any method of getting rid of that agony. He consulted his friend Dr. T. Seshachalam, who thought that operative interference, at his age, was contra-indicated. Ramachandra Rao consulted another eminent surgeon—Col. Pandalai—in Madras, who observed, "There is nothing wrong with him: he is in perfect health—only his age is against him. Send for me should he ever get strangulated; ten to one he will pull through!"

The other physical trial was the onset of spasms. He would suddenly complain of cramps in the left arm, and that the arm was getting heavy—and finally it became a dead weight. Internal administration of a stimulant, and brisk massage to the arm helped to bring it to normal. These spasms appeared once a fortnight; later they came more frequently. There was pain during the onset of the spasm, but after the shock passed off, he was his old cheerful self again. Occasionally when the pain was severe, he would groan, and wish that God would soon take him away, but later he would express regret for his lack of patience, and submission to the divine will. On the whole he enjoyed his stay in Bangalore, year by year, and felt sorry when the time to depart approached. As they were driving to the railway station, once he remarked to Ramachandra Rao, "What a pity we have to leave this charming city, Bangalore!" They stayed at Bangalore that year longer than they usually did.

They got ready to leave Bangalore by the first week of December 1948. Anantam kept himself busy during the early days of December looking into his books, papers, letters, accounts, etc. Of course Ramachandra Rao took

over the duty of packing up his clothes and bedding. But he would insist on putting into his handbag himself the things he might need on the journey, so that he might pick them up in an emergency. Two days before leaving Bangalore he called Ramachandra Rao to his desk, opened the drawers, showed him where he had deposited one or two bundles of letters carefully secured in paper, and inscribed in a corner, "to be burnt after my death", and several other papers for reference which need not be taken to Madras, and many odds and ends, and handed them over to his care.

It was his wont to remark that he might not come back to a place when he left it. Ramachandra Rao generally smiled over it. But aunt Subbarayudu was somewhat superstitious. She would remonstrate with her brother-in-law by asking him, "Why should you make such remarks when we are about to leave the place? That might happen to any of us!"

With a smile in his lips he would return, "The young may die, but the old must!"

The sister-in-law who would have objected to the handing over of his belongings to Ramachandra Rao had gone. Ramachandra Rao was alone with him; he said nothing, but took it as part of his natural caution. But at the back of his mind there was a question of questions, "Is it worth while to have his father's life lengthened should the pains continue to torment him and that, too, with increasing frequency?" He shrank from the inevitable answer. He said to himself, "God knows what is best!"

Kaveramma's school would go on till Christmas; she had to stay on till then, and Pankajamma, too, to keep her company.

On the day before the departure, Ramachandra Rao was more busy than ever. Most of the packing was done in the forenoon. Anantam looked composed, since his handbag was nearly packed up. It was late in the evening when Ramachandra Rao returned home. He found the drawing room full of ladies, and Anantam sitting in his favourite chair and talking to them by turns.

Once bitten twice shy. Ramachandra Rao saw to it that Anantam did not travel by the mail train again, and take the risk of a crush and accident, as he did on his way to Bangalore six months before. He arranged to travel by the passenger train, and informed the Superintendent of the Railway Station that a gentleman in his 99th year would be travelling by that train and asked for a compartment, not over the wheels. Anantam was up early in the morning, and got ready for the journey. He offered prayer for travelling mercies, and committed those who stayed behind to God's keeping. The members of the family, and those of the domestic helpers, including children, were present, as usual, at the worship.

Final good-bye was said. Anantam sat in his favourite chair for the last time, and looked at the garden through the open window, while luggage was put into the cars. His friend Matthan's car was waiting to take him to the railway station as usual. Srimati Kalyani Ramunni Menon and her daughter stood by the car to bid him good-bye. Comfortably seated in the car he departed from "Ananta Bhavan" never to return to it again in the flesh.

The railway authorities were most kind. They provided a small compartment, which the two had to themselves all the way to Madras. The back gate of the station was kept open, and the car drove close to the train. Anantam had only to step into the compartment and find a seat. Gnana Oli, Chikkappa, Venkatappa, and Sundarappa gave him a hearty send off. The Edwins met him at the Cantonment Station, and bade him good-bye. He was pleased that the journey had turned out to be so comfortable. It was 9 P.M. when they arrived in Madras. Ananda Rao was waiting for him at the Central Station with an invalid's chair by him. With his face lit up with boyish glee, he allowed himself to be carried by two men on the chair, and be deposited by the side of the car. And his son drove him to his home, "Dhanavada" in Nungambakam. He looked quite bright and cheerful, none the worse for the journey.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LAST DAYS IN MADRAS

Hardly had they got settled in "Ananda Vihar" when Christmas came round. Anantam and Ramachandra Rao were invited to luncheon on Christmas day by Ananda Rao and Shoroj. Anantam had given up going to church on Sundays and festive days for some years, as he could not stand the strain of a long service. He stayed at home, and spent the forenoon in prayer and meditation. It was a quiet family gathering, and they four spent the day happily together. There was a party at 'Dhanavada' on the New Year day. They were among the invitees. Anantam looked wonderfully cheerful; he faced the year with courage and determination.

At the party he sat away from the other guests, wondering when he should join them in the garden. Dr. Kasturi Narayanamurthy, his doctor, arrived in time to persuade him to join the party. It was a delightful evening, sunny, but cool and fresh. He did justice to what was served and enjoyed everything that he tasted. He soon became the centre of attraction at the party.

The interest in Anantam was focussed when they came to know his age. Hardly any one of them had hitherto met a man of his age. They simply looked at him, and wondered; that a man of his age should walk about with a steady step, eat normal food, join in the conversation without betraying the least sign of fatigue, laugh heartily, and make others laugh with witty remarks, or apt aphorisms, was beyond their expectation. No doubt he was hard of hearing; but it was made up by Ramachandra Rao acting as the loudspeaker. The climax was reached when he rose to retrace his steps to the drawing room; he looked around, and said, "Good-bye friends—there goes a young man of ninety-eight!" And they cheered him lustily. They thought he was wonderful

for his age: they were certain that he would live to be a centenarian.

January has been, as ever, the nicest month of the year in Madras, and it passed delightfully. Pankajamma also joined them for a part of the time, while Kaveramma visited her parents at Machilepatnam.

Everything seemed to be going on nicely, and time glided softly on the wheels of the daily routine. But Anantam was not one who would hasten matters; he would take things as they came. Yet, a longing of the spirit to be freed from the limitations of the flesh was slowly creeping over him. But in a moment he would shake it off, and smile in the glow of robust optimism, stepping into the light of life's realities! He was an optimist by nature.

The spirit was indeed willing, though the flesh betrayed signs of being restive at times. During the last few years and months, the most noticeable characteristic was, a smile that softly lingered on his lips whenever he spoke to or hailed his friends. His face was radiant with contentment and joy!

"I am leading a useless life now: I cannot understand why God has permitted me to stagnate so long!" he would exclaim at times.

But a friend once drew his attention to the fact, that he had been rendering as much service by his talks at home, and by his meditations and prayers, as he did when he was actively employed—perhaps, greater service! That suggestion consoled him, while he wavered on the brink of despair.

And the months and years spent in prayer, praise and meditation need never be considered as burdening the earth; it was rather the sowing of the good seed in season and out of season! He did much more than what could be expected of a man of his age; when his enthusiasm carried him beyond his strength, he would grumble at the weakness of the flesh that thwarted his purpose. Nevertheless, he would see the divine purpose that had clung to the limitations of the flesh.

The tenth decade may be said to be a period of struggle between the flesh and the spirit, in which the latter finally

came out triumphant. Jealousy and ill-will had never entered his soul. Temper, which he had kept under control for over half-a-century, had become non-existent, giving place to a softness, tenderness and sweetness that dominated his being. He would never judge harshly, much less would he speak a hard word to any one he knew—but when the occasion needed truth to be told, he did it with kindness and gentleness. He was ever ready to forgive and forget, and make amends for lapses on his part. He would not bear a grudge against anyone for rudeness or lack of consideration to him. He had the peace which came of forgiving others, and of the consciousness of being forgiven by God.

Nor was the tenth decade a period of senility with him. The characteristics associated with it were hardly noticeable in him. He often owned his forgetfulness. But, his friends were astonished at the many things that he had remembered, rather than take notice of the few things that he had forgotten! Casual visitors to “Ananda Vihar” would express a desire to have his *darsanam* when they were apprised of his age.

He kept his age well, and very few could guess it correctly. He never entertained the hope that he would live long, since his parents and brother died under fifty. He was healthy, no doubt, but never robust. In his late nineties, when he suffered from spasms of pain, and insensibility in the left arm and foot, he was advised by his doctors to have a teaspoonful of brandy in water or milk twice a day. Though he took it, he was not happy. In vain did his doctor argue with him to convince him that, at his age, he need have no fear of forming an alcoholic habit.

When he was ninety-five he stayed in Bangalore right into the winter, against the advice of his doctor. He had an attack of influenza which soon brought on the complication of “double Pneumonia”. Dr. Seshachalam, the chief surgeon, saw him, and fetched Dr. Venkatasubba Rao, the chief physician, for consultation. They both grew anxious, and without mincing matters told Ramachandra Rao, “You

know both the lungs are affected. We shall do our best; but his age is against him. Send for your brother immediately. One can never tell what might happen!"

Everything that could be done for the patient, was being done, day and night. He lay patiently for a week in bed, swallowing the bitter potions administered to him. At the end of a week, anxiety gave place to hope. And a week hence, thank God, he was moving about the house. The recovery was rapid and uneventful. Ananda Rao returned to Madras. Anantam himself felt quite fit to travel by rail to Madras in a month!

Since his recovery from that trouble to the end of his days, he kept remarkably well, except for slight colds occasionally. Everybody who knew him intimately thought that his health and longevity were due to his methodical and saintly life. But he himself attributed them to God's gracious goodness to him.

As he passed the middle nineties, his friends, particularly those who were not of the Christian persuasion, considered him as specially favoured by God; his longevity was deemed to be the result of merit gathered amidst the rough and tumble that divine destiny had strewn along the path of his life. Even strangers would desire to see him, and have the privilege of talking with him. They relegated him to the realm of the '*Punya-purusha*', and considered themselves privileged for their contact with him. Some of them eagerly brought their children to be touched and blessed by him. He hesitated, but noticing the look of disappointment in their face, he would ask for God's blessing on them, and finish it by saying, "May you live as long as I have lived!"

The weight of years did not bear him down; his faculties, the higher ones in particular, remained intact to the end! The spiritual in him, never yielded to the frailties of the flesh in his advancing years. Yet, he longed to join the heavenly throng at the earliest possible opportunity. During his latter days he did not relish the idea of his dear ones praying that his span of life be extended yet.

The future life was an absolute certainty to him; his leisure moments, and particularly his waking hours at night, were given to the contemplation of the Heavenly Kingdom, and of the parts being played by his dear ones, who had gone before him, in that rich and full life above. "They, up in Heaven, must have outstripped me in spiritual grace," he would exclaim at times wistfully. He would greet his old friends apologetically, "I am still here awaiting the call!"

He would talk of his passing on as though it were going from one home to another. One day while talking on this subject to Ramachandra Rao he said, "You do not seem to realise that my days here are fast coming to an end. My call is long overdue. I cannot understand why I am kept on here so long. I sometimes feel quite washed out; I wonder what my life is clinging to. It might be my dear mother's doing. When I was a boy she used to pray for my longevity: on the day of my *upanayanam* she begged of the one hundred and one visitors gathered there, for copper coins coupled with their blessings, so that I may live long. Can it be that their prayers still keep me here? The thread on which my life is hanging, seems to snap any moment; but something intervenes, and I contrive to stay on here".

Then he thought for a while, and looking straight into Ramachandra Rao's eyes, he said, "I believe you are in a great measure responsible for that. Your prayers are coming in the way of my departure. I wish you would pray for my early passing on!"

"Don't you see that this impatience of yours impinges on the eternal purpose of God? You might as well submit yourself to the will of God, and continue to share my life here, till His call comes," returned Ramachandra Rao plaintively.

"Even a Saint like Paul expressed his desire to leave his tabernacle behind, and get admitted into the eternal glory of God. As for my continuing to stay with you, it was the one desire not to leave you alone, that has kept me here so

long—but in any case, I cannot always be with you;” the sooner you send me away, the sooner I cease to be a handicap to you!” pleaded Anantam retrospectively, and waited for an answer.

“Man asks, but God grants according to His Wisdom,” returned Ramachandra Rao, and continued, “I am free to ask God what I desire, and you are free to ask Him what you long for. But it is up to Him to grant what he considers best. Shall we leave it at that?”

“I don’t think I am selfish in longing to go away,” put in Anantam with a knowing smile.

Thus there came about mutual understanding, and each of them was free to pray as his heart and conscience dictated. And God heard both prayers, but exercised His right to choose between them in His own way. And who was Ramachandra Rao to question God’s prerogative, however sore his heart be?

In his tenth decade, Anantam was wise enough to reckon with the fact that his end might come any day. While he was quite prepared for the call, and would welcome it, there was something which pulled at his heart strings! He wished that his family should be with him when the call came!

“Not that I hesitate to go away, but I do not want you to feel that you had not been with me during my last moments after what you have done for me all these years,” he would say explaining his stand to Ramachandra Rao.

“I should myself dread such a contingency arising; but I am sure that God will not let that happen, when He takes me away on duty,” Ramachandra Rao would return.

“I wish I had your robust faith,” Anantam would say, relenting, and continue, “ask our friend Dr. Hensman to come and see me while you are away”.

Dr. H. S. Hensman was a retired Government servant; he was for sometime the Superintendent of the Mental Hospital in Madras. He would listen indulgently, when Anantam complained of Ramachandra Rao’s tendency, of recent months, to return home after 8 P.M. from the political

party meetings, and his occasional going out of town on business. "Let me know when he goes away; I shall be at your service, whenever you want me," his doctor friend would say to cheer him up.

The infirmities of age made him cling to one who understood him. It was just a passing cloud, which never interfered with the joyous sunshine of his life to the end of his days.

The Easter day of 1949, was the last Sunday on earth, for Anantam. He read a great deal on Sundays; books of biography, and those dealing with the practice of religion in daily life, appealed to him most. Ramachandra Rao went to church in the evening, along with his brother and sister-in-law, and returned home after service. Anantam must have been reading something worthwhile when he was by himself. After supper he glanced at the "*Mail*", and as Ramachandra Rao put him to bed, Anantam suggested to him that before he turned in, he might read the chapter on "Jesus and the Rich" in R. J. Barker's book—'It began in Galilee', and also, the chapter entitled, "And so, Uphill", in the 'Scrap—Book of J. O.' by Erica Oxenham.

Ramachandra Rao entered the drawing room, picked up the two books, and turned to the chapters indicated by Anantam.

Barker, in the previous chapter, entitled, "Jesus and the Poor," says, "Jesus was one of the poor, identified with them, concerned for their material and spiritual emancipation; and His message was primarily, '*good news to the poor*'. They are His first concern, and He calls on His first followers to share their lot as he did, Himself. Until we can proclaim again His message as good news to the poor, nothing will stop the oppressed of the earth looking elsewhere for their emancipation". In the chapter we are concerned with, Barker says, "The sympathy of Jesus with the poor becomes more pronounced as we consider His attitude to riches." Then referring to the story of Dives and Lazarus, he says, "All this gives pointed significance to his promise of revolution;"

“Blessed are you poor.....woe to you rich folk! The accumulation of wealth, is itself unjust, as it is done at the expense of those least able to afford it. ‘You cannot serve God and Mammon’—the possession of riches is incompatible with the service of God”.

“Tagore more truly expresses His mind when he says, ‘God is ashamed when the prosperous boasts of His special favour’.” “There is far more money spent on the defence of property than on the defence of the poor. The community life of the Kingdom is impossible without sharing; only in such a society can the individual come to his own fullness of life.” ‘Beware of covetousness, it is responsible for all the injustice and oppression of men.’ “If it is not the business of the followers of Jesus to create a new economic system, then whose business is it?”

“The call was to plunge more deeply into that life of sharing in which the possession of riches is not only an anachronism, but utterly impossible. It is in the act of renunciation that covetousness is defeated.” Then Barker quotes a couplet,

“The best thingsthat any mortal hath,
Are those which every mortal shares”.

It is intriguing to speculate why Anantam had asked Ramachandra Rao to read that chapter at the close of the Easter day. They had often discussed between themselves practical economics. Anantam was not a believer in hoarding money or accumulating property; he was a believer in sharing what he had with others. Though he had not studied economics as a science, his spiritual instinct had taught him the art of life in which human values were not sacrificed to the Mammon of gain and greed. He was most considerate to the poor.

He worked hard in every decade of his long life; but he never set about to earn money. He never asked for an increase in his emoluments. He took what was given him, and threw on God the burden of providing for his needs.

He was by no means a recluse, though he lived a remarkably simple life. When duty stared him in the face,

he accepted great responsibilities, putting the financial burden on God. His faith had carried him through, and often help came from unexpected quarters. Somehow money came to him, and, through him it flowed to others, making him and them blessed. He made it a principle to give a little more than less, to the poor, in business transactions. When the end came, there was very little left in the Bank. He was fortunate enough to see his charities take shape and blossom in the way he wished.

So, Ramachandra Rao with whom he had discussed economic responsibilities in a matter-of-fact way, was inclined to believe that Anantam's asking him to read that chapter might have been to cite him, as a witness, that he had not been unfaithful to the Heavenly vision, *i.e.*, that he was his brother's keeper, from the beginning to the end of his days!

With regard to the other—Scrap Book of J. O.—here is the message which that great novelist, John Oxenham, sent to a friend in 1931—"It was said in the mountains in France concerning a saintly old man who had once lived there, 'Il voyait grand et il voyait beau—He saw large and he saw beautiful'." "Until we all come to think large, and to think beautiful, there can be no lasting peace and prosperity in life. We are all parts of a great whole. Let us try for the whole—big and beautiful thoughts—and not for a part only."

"That was said of an old saint who lived in 1018, but it might have been very well said about J. O. himself in the last few years of his life" says Erica Oxenham about her father, and continues, "When the bustle of life was over for him, he was able to sit back, and rest, and look out on the world, and see things large and see things beautiful".

What was claimed for Oxenham by his daughter could be claimed for Anantam with equal certainty. Anantam met Oxenham in London in 1926, Ramachandra Rao having been a friend of the family from the days he was a student at Edinburgh. Both of them became friends, and Oxenham presented Anantam with copies of some of his novels and

poems. Among the latter, Anantam got into the habit of reading every morning a few poems from Oxenham's—"Wide Horizons"—to the end of his days.

He had the privilege of enjoying the evening of life's day during the ninth and tenth decades. As he beheld the glory of the setting sun in the western horizon of his beloved country, he saw everything big and everything beautiful. More, that vision made him grow big and beautiful during the last two decades of his life. That Easter day must have presented him with a panorama of what was big and beautiful in the multicoloured light of God's love as exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ. And Anantam wished Ramachandra Rao, and the other members of the family, to share with him the rapture of the contemplation of God's love to man!

CHAPTER XXIV

THE END OF THE PILGRIMAGE

The 21st April, 1949 happened to be the last conscious day of Anantam. It was the second day since his temperature had come to normal. On the afternoon of the previous day Pankajamma and Kaveramma arrived from Bangalore. Their presence cheered him. He had a comfortable night, and woke up in the morning at the usual hour, 6-30. His ablutions over, he partook of the *chota hazari* served in his bedroom. Then, as was his wont, he walked into the drawing room to conduct the morning family worship. It was the Thursday after Easter—and he read a portion from St. Luke's Gospel, Chapter XXIV, verses 13 to 31. Meanwhile, Sri. N. R. Krishnamma, the grandson of his old friend Ratnam of Machileepatnam, called. Ramachandra Rao stepped into the veranda to greet him. Krishnamma wished to be in the veranda to avoid disturbing the speaker; he could hear every word spoken by Anantam. The extempore address lasted about ten minutes: and then a prayer was offered. As usual it was a short and sweet prayer, made in a supplicating voice, with earnest and clear accents. He pitched the prayer to the key of gratitude for the wonderful mercies of God, rather than to the supplication for the good things of life for those who were near and dear to him.

After the family prayer was over, Sri. Krishnamma was ushered into the drawing room, and he stayed with Anantam for half-an-hour. They talked of the old days of Bandar, of Krishnamma's grandfather, father and mother. Anantam made several jocular remarks, and Krishnamma roared with laughter. "What a remarkable man he is!" exclaimed Krishnamma as he departed.

There was a rise in Anantam's temperature on the day after Easter; but it came down under treatment. Yet he did not feel quite fit to come to table to have dinner with

Shoroj and Ananda Rao, and their guest Dr. Hilda Lazarus, on Tuesday night, though they were invited to "Ananda Vihar" at his suggestion.

Anantam subsided into his easy-chair, and spent some-time in devotional reading and prayer, as was his wont. For some years he had been using Mary Wilder Tileston's "Great Souls at Prayer". The prayer for that morning seemed providentially appropriate for what was going to happen before the day ended. "And now, Lord, What is my hope? Truly, my hope is ever in Thee. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet I will fear no evil. Lord, Thou knowest whereof we be made; Thou remembrest that we are but dust. Into thy hands I commend myself, for Thou hast redeemed me, Thou God of Truth"—Lancelot Andrews.

A book that he had found for many years very helpful was J. R. Miller's "A Message for the Day"; in fact he had translated one half of the book into Telugu and had it published by the C. L. S. so that it might be found helpful to those who did not know English. That was the last work he undertook and accomplished in his late nineties. An apt verse also came to his help as he turned over the page intended for April 21. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give you an expected end"—Jeremiah XXIX—II.

Ramachandra Rao had to call on a friend who wanted to see him on important business. As he was preparing to go, somebody called with whom he talked for a few minutes; and both of them left together. After the visitor had departed Ramachandra Rao got into the bus; but to his amazement he discovered that he had forgotten to put the purse into his pocket. He got off the bus and returned home. Anantam was pleased to have Ramachandra Rao come back to him so soon, and greeted him with a smile. When Ramachandra Rao told him of his misadventure, he returned, "Never mind; you may do it in the cool of the evening".

Ramachandra Rao threw himself into a rocking chair facing Anantam, and glanced at a political weekly. They talked of many things of mutual interest, while conscious of the goodness of God for having spared them to each other. Ramachandra Rao's coming home had given him the opportunity to spend one hour with his father all by himself, undisturbed by visitors! But that day Anantam abstained from his usual morning walk as he did not feel quite up to it. He sipped a cup of tea, closed his eyes for a few minutes in prayer, and asked Ramachandra Rao to lead him to his bedroom. He relaxed till the bath was ready.

After seeing Anantam comfortably settled in his bed with a table fan going by his side, Ramachandra Rao went to the Government House to attend a party meeting. Fortunately the business was finished earlier than he had expected. At the exit Dr. Gurupadam, a Minister of Madras Government, offered to give him a lift on his way home, which he gratefully accepted. On the way the Minister expressed his desire to meet Anantam, since he had heard a great deal of him.

Leaving him in the drawing room, Ramachandra Rao went in and informed Anantam that Sri. Gurupadam would like to see him.

Anantam welcomed the visitor with a smile and beckoned him to a chair close by. Anantam lay in bed while the visitor spoke to him as best he could. During the last decade of his life Anantam became hard of hearing, which was aggravated by any passing illness. They managed to converse for a brief while and the Minister took leave of him with deferential regard, expressing the hope that he would soon regain his normal health. As Ramachandra Rao came to the car to see him off, Dr. Gurupadam owned, "I am pleased to have met your father. He is a remarkable man! I must come and see him again before he goes away to Bangalore".

When Ramachandra Rao returned Anantam accosted him in a caressing voice saying, "I am glad you have come home soon. I felt very tired and exhausted some time after

you had left. I nearly had you rung up on the phone. But a hot cup of tea revived me”.

“And the cause, Sir?” demanded Ramachandra Rao.

In a soft, penitent voice like that of a young boy, who was made to see his fault, he returned, “Against your advice, I got myself shaved—I felt very uncomfortable with my bristly beard—I had not had a shave since Easter Sunday—when Tirupa was half through, I felt as though I were collapsing. But Pankajamma gave me some mixture, and I revived; Tirupa then finished the operation. A cup of tea was very grateful”.

It came to Ramachandra Rao’s notice later that, shaving was not the only delinquency that was responsible for Anantam’s spell of exhaustion; there were other contributory factors. He had spent a good while in discussing family affairs with Kaveramma and Pankajamma, during the afternoon. When asked, he assured them, that he was all right, only the heat was trying.

Then Ramachandra Rao wished to know if he might call on the friend who had sent for him in the morning. Anantam readily agreed to his going there and reassured him that Kaveri and Pankajam could look after him during his absence. Only he put in his usual request to come back soon. The heat had not yet abated, nor had the sea-breeze sprung up. The day temperature had gone up to 108°—a most unusual event for Madras in April.

Ramachandra Rao himself felt the heat, as he came out and trudged his way to the bus stand. He returned home by eight o’ clock. Meanwhile Anantam had finished his light dinner.

He greeted Ramachandra Rao and remarked, “You have come home; the girls are waiting for you. Have your dinner with them, and come back to me. Thank you, I am now feeling better than I did in the afternoon. There, Tirupa is bringing the paper! It will keep me occupied till you have had your dinner”.

Ramachandra Rao found him still reading the paper when he returned after dinner. Not a trace of fatigue was

noticeable in him. It was 9-30 P.M., and Anantam wished to turn in for the night. Tirupalu and Ramachandra Rao helped him to his bed. As he lay on the bed he looked at the mosquito net which should be lowered. But the room was warm and sultry. The sea-breeze had just begun to stir. So Ramachandra Rao suggested that he might wait till the room cooled down, and then he would lower the net. And Anantam agreed to the suggestion. His pulse was low, but not unexpected on a hot day like that.

And Ramachandra Rao left him and went into the drawing room to glance at the paper. Soon after, Ramachandra Rao heard Anantam calling him; he appeared at the latter's side.

"The mosquitoes are troublesome; the sea-breeze has cooled the room now, and you may let down the net," said Anantam.

Ramachandra Rao complied with his request, and retraced his steps into the drawing room, and started reading the newspaper, culling information for the debate in the Assembly on the morrow. Within half-an-hour Ramachandra Rao heard a call, and he ambled to Anantam's bedside. "You have had a busy day. You look tired. Why have you not turned in yet?" warned Anantam with paternal solicitude.

"I am gathering material for tomorrow's debate. I shall turn in presently," pleaded Ramachandra Rao. He had not been gone ten minutes, when he thought he heard a shrill cry, somewhat different from what he had heard previously. A short minute later he thought he heard it repeated, but less distinctly. It sounded as if it were a farewell message—"Son, I am going away!" It sounded strange. For a second he wondered if he were dreaming. That anything should have happened during that brief while was unthinkable. Anyhow it was time that he put away the paper.

When Ramachandra Rao glided softly into the bedroom with the aid of the flash light, he could see Anantam, stretched

in bed just as he was, when he last left him, but gently fanning himself with the fan. But the question asked, whether he wanted anything, elicited no answer. Ramachandra Rao was about to get into his bed not wishing to disturb the sleeper.

Meanwhile Kaveramma's voice was heard from the adjacent room, "Thatha has called you twice, saying he was going away; please find out what is the matter with him."

"It must have been a nightmare," returned he, "and I would rather not disturb his sleep".

"It didn't seem a nightmare," she insisted.

Ramachandra Rao approached him and asked, "Is there anything you want?" There was no answer.

Ramachandra Rao repeated the question a little louder—but, no answer. He felt Anantam's pulse—it was rapid, feeble and irregular—very different from his normal pulse. Pankajam and Kaveri rushed to the bedside to render any help they could. Tirupalu and his wife were summoned into the room forthwith. The light was switched on, and it was past eleven.

Sri. D. D. Sabnis, living in the top flat, came rushing down, asking why Ramachandra Rao had been talking to his father aloud.

Ramachandra Rao explained the situation in a few brief words, and requested him to ring up his brother, and ask him and his wife to come over immediately, and pick up Dr. Hensman on the way. Meanwhile Sabnis fetched some coramine, a heart stimulant, which Ramachandra Rao injected into Anantam's arm. The pulse improved by the time Ananda Rao, Sharoj and Dr. Hensman arrived—but there was no vocal response to queries. The left leg and arm behaved as though paralysed. Ananda Rao was visibly moved when he saw the condition in which his father lay. He approached him and said aloud, "Father, I have come—I am Ananda Rao".

Anantam was evidently conscious though his speech centre in the brain was involved. He fumbled with his right

hand, and gently holding Ananda Rao's hands pased it up and down, to make sure that it was his younger son's hand. There was a sense of satisfaction visible in the face, when he realised that Ananda Rao was with him. Dr. Hensman was of opinion that Dr. K. Narayanamurthy, attached to the General Hospital, Madras, should be called in to take the responsibility for the patient's treatment, as he had been attending on him recently. Ananda Rao fetched Dr. Narayanamurthy on Dr. Hensman's suggestion. The doctor said that everything that could be done, had already been done, and that they should wait for the morning. Presently the paralysed arm and leg began to move; the doctor sounded a note of optimism and left, promising to call on the morrow.

That condition continued to be much the same throughout the night. In a way consciousness continued till midday; and he responded to the stimuli of food and medicines put into the mouth. Throughout the afternoon and the night, oxygen was given continuously to help breathing, and strengthen the heart. But it helped only to keep life going, without clinching the issue in favour of recovery. All hopes of his pulling through were given up, when the breathing became stertorous.

The members of the family were being gradually prepared to accept the inevitable. Ananda Rao and Shoroj were by the patient most of the day, and came over after dinner to spend the night at "Ananda Vihar ", fearing that the worst might happen any moment. Signs of congestion of the lungs were evident: and the pulse was getting feeble and fast.

The hope, that he might regain consciousness, even for a brief while, had to be abandoned finally. The patient, by then, could swallow neither water nor medicine, when it was put in the mouth. Ramachandra Rao's flagging energies were heading towards a standstill as the shadows of the night enveloped the city, but for the twinkling and pulsating stars that shone above, inspiring hope and trust in the destiny of man. Tirupalu, the patient and loyal attendant, stepped into the breach, and looked after the patient with the thought-

ful care of a trained nurse. He rubbed stimulants into the gums of the patient with cotton-wool, and with a delicate touch of the fingers removed the gathering phlegm and froth from the throat, preventing suffocation thereby, and putting a drop or two of cool, grateful water between the tongue and the lower jaw.

The nurse's job was admirably done throughout the long and weary hours of the night by Tirupalu. Since the patient was unconscious for over sixteen hours, it was presumed that he could not have felt much pain when the trouble became serious. The face did not betray any sign of suffering—on the other hand, it connoted, a peace that was beyond all understanding!

While life flickered on the brink of eternity, awaiting the final call, the everlasting arms seemed to support the feeble body, which the soul had hitherto dwelt in, and motivated. Something unearthly lingered on the face; and Pankajamma standing by him said softly, "How beautiful his face looks—he must have looked like this when he was young!"

The calm composure sprung from reliance on eternal verities, spread over his face; he looked as though he had had a glimpse of the other world! What would the family not have given for a word from him to symbolise his rapture, as the soul partook of the bliss, which his unshakable faith had reassured him! But his clear sonorous voice had failed him just when his family stood most in need of it. Not so long ago, his eyes would glow with joy, when his soul longed for the divine presence, and he felt the thrill and ecstacy of the Heavenly Father's love! But now his eyes were closed, and would not reveal the secrets of the soul within! The facial expression was the only clue to what was happening within.

Ananda Rao and Shoroj, who had been stretching themselves on the adjacent veranda all the night, left early in the morning intending to return shortly. Apparently the patient's condition had not changed for the worse. Nobody thought that the end was so near. The longest road has a

winding, and the longest life comes to an end. Who can tell when the last contraction of the heart occurs and why? What life is, is a mystery—how it begins, how it manifests itself, and how it ebbs out, is a mystery of mysteries! What we cannot understand, we accept; we leave it to faith and hope to weave a multi-coloured panorama of a worth while future!

Within an hour of Ananda Rao's departure, Ramachandra Rao heard the stertorous breathing softening down, and with a ray of hope that it might mean a good sign he approached him and felt the pulse. It was hardly perceptible; and stimulation by the available medical means became ineffective.

Scarcely had the household time to gather round the bed when the breathing stopped, and the heart ceased to beat. Ramachandra Rao committed his father's spirit to God in prayer; and, he rang up his brother to inform him of what had happened.

The passing of Anantam happened on the 23rd April, 1949, at 7-30 A.M.

CHAPTER XXV

REGRETS AND CONSOLATIONS

Anantam was an optimist during his last decade. As the prospect of passing on, any day, became more and more evident, a heavenly joy and contentment illumined his face and lent colour to his attitude to life. Though he has had his days of suffering and sorrow, he felt that his long life had been a privilege and worth while. Yet, at times, a sense of his unworthiness would cloud his radiant face, and, in a voice tinged with disappointment he would exclaim, "How fruitless my life has been!"

He would reminiscently recall the days of his *Guru*, Noble, whose life was blessed with a rich harvest of conversions, even from among the high caste Hindus. The retrospect depressed him, and he wondered why his life had been sterile. He used to think that his influence on his own people gradually came to nothing since he left his old home and estranged his people. They would not consider the message which he tried to deliver to them, for they took him to be a traitor to his home and religion when he became a Christian and joined the ranks of another community—an act of diabolical violation of the laws intended to preserve the integrity of the Hindu family life and caste sanctity.

His mother died in 1879 a heart-broken widow, who forgave her son, but could not forget what he had done! His only brother died some three decades after their mother passed on. He would call on Anantam, but would turn a deaf ear to his message. He could never forget what his brother had done, blasting the hopes of the family. His betrothed wife died, preceding him by fifteen years, pining away her life, deeming it a consolation to be permitted by Providence to keep her hair long, to be clad in colourful sarees and wear *kumkum* mark on her forehead to the end of her days—the insignia of a married woman who had

not been widowed. Thus his nearest ones in blood, departed, one by one, without sharing his faith and hope! It was a terrible disappointment to him, and in a fit of grief he would sit back in his chair and looking up and folding his hands, say, "I leave them in the hands of my merciful Heavenly Father, who, I am sure, will deal with them tenderly!"

Fortunately, there was the other side to the picture, which lent the silver lining to the dark blue of his despair. Tekumalla Rajagopala Rao joined the Matriculation class when Anantam took charge of the C.M.S. High School at Bezwada, as the Headmaster. He had sat several times at the Matriculation examination, but failed to come out successfully. Not that he was not clever nor industrious; but his interest lay elsewhere; he could not confine it to the text-books prescribed for the examination. He was a scholar for all that; he read English books omnivorously; spoke it fluently in his own style. Besides he was a master of the Telugu prose; he was already a budding *pandit*. He wrote novels in Telugu and won a prize in Andhra Desa for the best novel. His style was so masterly that the examiner for the Matriculation that year set portions from his novel to be rendered into English at the University examination! He belonged to the same Brahmana community as Anantam.

Anantam was pleased to have him as a student in the school. A kind of friendship sprung up between the student and the Headmaster. The latter discovered that the student was clever and capable. The Headmaster knew his weak points, and immediately set to rectify them. He passed the examination that year with flying colours. Rajagopala Rao was a live wire in the school, as well as in the class. Most of his leisure was occupied with social and religious activities. He led a tirade against idolatry, and had great arguments with those who patronised the temples which enshrined idol worship. He agitated against the nautch parties, and dedication of girls to the temples. He fearlessly advocated widow remarriage, and social purity. He did not believe in

caste distinction though he was not prepared to break with it.

He was inclined to believe in the great spiritual attainments of his ancestors, and hoped that there was enough wisdom in the Vedas to guide him, and to make his life worth while. He attended Anantam's scripture class regularly and came prepared with the lesson prescribed. He would raise many a moot point in discussion, and took nothing for granted. Anantam was indulgent to him, since he himself went through similar ordeal in years gone by, and knew how to meet his student's difficulties. When he came to know that the Headmaster knew the Hindu Sastras, his critical attitude gradually gave place to appreciation; though they could not see eye to eye in everything, the master and the pupil got on together amicably. Anantam presented him with a copy of "Christianity Explained to a Hindu", a publication of the Christian Literature Society. He studied it carefully, and found time to write a booklet on "Hinduism Explained to a Christian". Anantam respected his pupil's scruples and scholarship, and felt certain that he was dealing with a very hopeful material. He was introduced by Anantam to the Principal of the Noble College at Machileepatnam; and after passing the First in Arts Examination, he joined the Madras Christian College. In due course he obtained the Bachelor of Arts Degree. Meanwhile his wife joined him; and two sons were born to them.

But his spirit of enquiry and honest doubt followed him; his love for Telugu literature continued to the end of his days. A few years later Anantam was deeply moved when he got the news that Rajagopala Rao had become a Christian; more, he had been installed as a Lecturer in Telugu in the Madras Christian College!

There was again Kolluru Subba Rao, a Brahmana youth, who was a student of the Matriculation class when Anantam first took over the school. He was not particularly brilliant nor industrious; but was well behaved and willing. He finished his academic career with the Matriculation class:

he entered service of a neighbouring Zamindar, and lived in well-to-do circumstances. After he retired from active service, he settled down in Bezvada, (now Vijayavada) with his old widowed aunt. One day he took Ramachandra Rao into confidence and said, "It was uncle (he addressed Anantam as uncle) who first taught me, years ago, of the sublimity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ"!

He frequently visited "Bhagya Vilas," stayed on till a late hour in the evening, and went home. He developed a high blood pressure, which Ramachandra Rao tried to reduce by suggesting a drastic cut in his food, which he did not relish. He kept to his usual rations, and one day, while on a visit to "Bhagya Vilas," he had a paralytic stroke. He was taken home, and made a rapid recovery under treatment. When he was in a fit condition to be driven in a car, he insisted on being taken to the Sub-Registrar's Office, and there asked Ramachandra Rao to accept a document by which he transferred his small landed property to the former, so that it might be used for the service of the poor and the helpless without discrimination of caste, creed, or class. He passed on not long after, and his gift is intended to commemorate his generosity by endowing a bed in Anantam's hospital at Vijayavada!

After Anantam passed on Ramachandra Rao asked those who attended on him whether they had ever noticed anything peculiar about him. "His smile was disarming," said one of them, "there was a heavenly radiance about it. One never felt tired of doing anything for him"!

As years advanced Anantam's character mellowed; and he became the centre of attraction to the young and the old. Yet he was conscious of his own failings and often referred to his having done so little in his life. Humility is a blossom of ripened character, and God does not despise a humble and contrite heart. He had always shunned the limelight; but to the end of his days his hands were full of good works. However poor his estimate of himself might have been, those who came into contact with him could not help being

impressed by his purity, love, joy and his readiness to deny himself for helping others.

Again he was one of those who feared that they might not see their country become free in their life-time. Much as he loved his country's freedom, he would never approve of violence being used in its attainment. He believed in international disputes being settled at a Round Table Conference as worthy of civilized people. In the early stages of the non-co-operation movement he could not see eye to eye with Mahatma Gandhi, so long as national effort was restricted to the material plane. But later on as Gandhiji grew bigger, and made Indian freedom a moral issue, and directed it towards a spiritual objective, Anantam followed the chequered career of the national struggle with interest, praying for God's guidance and blessing. On the day of the declaration of India's independence, Anantam was one of the happiest men in the country; he rejoiced that his dream of a bloodless revolution had come true and the two nations had amicably settled their disputes as human beings are expected to do. It was the crowning joy of his life, that the trust he had reposed in the better elements of the British people had come to realisation, and Mahatma Gandhi's appeal on the moral and spiritual planes had the desired response from the British statesmen by granting India's freedom—a unique instance in the history of the world!

Dheenabandhu C. F. Andrews had been a friend of Anantam for over three decades. He paid a visit to Anantam at 'Ananta Bhavan', in Bangalore about a couple of years before India became free. Both old friends met, after many years. Ramachandra Rao met Andrews frequently at Congress meetings during the hectic period of the non-co-operation movement, when the latter made kind enquiries of Anantam. Andrews loved and respected Gandhiji, and held that the latter's great spiritual and moral resources had to be explained, but not to be explained away. After meeting Andrews, Anantam's regard and love for Gandhiji grew

fourfold, and he felt grateful to God, that He had given India in Gandhiji the sort of leader that she badly needed. Gandhiji knew that Andrews was a true friend of India, particularly of the poor and the helpless, and rewarded him with his love and confidence. Anantam treasured the memory of his contacts with Andrews and recalled them with great pleasure. They both were glad to have met again after many years and parted affectionately—they never met again.

The assassination of Gandhiji in 1948 was a shock to Anantam. Anantam was visibly moved when the news of the assassination came to him. For sometime he could not believe his ears. He toyed for a while with the hope that it might be a false rumour. For he thought that no one could have had the hardness of heart to do such a dastardly deed as to make the apostle of non-violence the victim of violence. The truth dawned on him slowly—he was horrified—he felt disconsolate—tears gathered in his eyes as he sat and visualised the greatest tragedy enacted during his life-time. “God’s ways are mysterious—we cannot understand them now—but some day we shall!” he said slowly from the depths of agony.

Anantam believed that Christ’s way of life—the realisation of the fatherhood of God and of the brotherhood of man—is the culmination of India’s age-old spiritual aspiration and moral endeavour. His life, with its limitations, was consecrated to the attainment of that objective.

God has blessed him; and many there are to-day who call him blessed!

STATEMENT OF MY FAITH AND HOPE

“ On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

To the glory of my God and to the encouragement and inspiration of my dear children I desire to note down first and foremost that when I was a lad of about fifteen, I was drawn to Jesus, my loving Saviour, by the presentation of His love to me; He apprehended me and I gladly yielded myself to Him. In spite of many failings and much unfaithfulness in my long life, I have enjoyed the unbroken assurance of my full and eternal salvation, and of my complete acceptance in the sight of God as one of His children. The grounds of this blessed assurance are His blessed promises and His character: such as “ I have loved thee with an *everlasting love* ”; “ With Him there is no *variableness* nor *shadow of turning* ”; “ Jesus, the *same* yesterday, today, yea, for ever ”; “ Not that *we* loved Him, but *He* loved us first and gave His life for us ”; “ Jesus the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me ”; “ *I* have chosen you ”; yes, He chose me to be His for ever, knowing as He did how weak and liable to fail Him I am. “ Jesus is mine and I am His ”; “ I know whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day ”.

For this happy experience I bless His name, and at this ripe age, (I am now nearly 82) I am resting my soul on His love alone, and awaiting His coming to take me to be with Him in the eternal mansions He has prepared for me.

This unflinching faith and invigorating hope I bequeath to my children and grandchildren; may they cling to Jesus more and more, and not allow their worldly callings and occupations to engross their attention too much; may they walk with God and be strengthened with His might !

I confirm this statement on 10th July 1944. I am now 94 years old.

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