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THEY WERE MEN
SENT FROM GOD

To Mrs & Mrs J. Wharton

in grateful appreciation of
the rare old-time hospitality
extended me in my happy
little visit.

E. B. Browley

21-3-39



WILLIAM BOWDEN IN 1858

THEY WERE MEN SENT FROM GOD

A Centenary Record (1836-1936) of Gospel Work
in India amongst Telugus in the Godavari Delta
and neighbouring parts

E. B. BROMLEY

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Foreword

The one thousand mile train journey from Madras to Calcutta skirting the Bay of Bengal is full of interest, revealing as it does the real Hindu India. In contrast to the West Coast, signs of Mohammedans, Portuguese and Parsees are rare. Palm trees, ghauts, temples, tanks, rice-fields, sacred rivers and thatched roof villages are the predominant features of the landscape. Beside these things of immemorial antiquity the modern gifts of India's best friend, are not incongruous and need no apology; railways, canals, roads, bridges and dams, holding in check the forces of famine and flood.

Leaving Madras by the night mail one is usually awakened before dawn by the noisy passage of the train over the many spans of the Kistna Bridge, nearly three hundred miles northward. One hundred miles farther north-east is the great River Godavari. Roughly between these two rivers and in the neighbourhood of their deltas is the area known to Christians all over the world as the Godavari Mission Field. If Africa has its "Beloved Strip" sanctified by noble service, India has this "Beloved Corner," consecrated by the sacrificial service of veterans who have gone down to their graves full of years, and of not a few who, in the glory of their strength, were honoured by sharing in Christian's experience; "Hail, good woman! I bring thee tidings that the Master calleth for thee, and expecteth that thou shouldest stand in His presence, in clothes of immortality."

This corner is the scene of the fascinating story told

in the following pages, a story which is one of the innumerable sequels to the Acts of the Apostles, a story still in the making. During the course of many years, the writer of this Foreword was privileged in the course of official duties, to travel up and down this field an eyewitness of evangelical activities, in schools, village preaching, orphanage, convention, hospital and leper asylum. A variety of methods with one object, the building of a living Church upon an eternal foundation.

The association of that celebrated engineer, Sir Arthur Cotton, with the spiritual and material development of the Delta is of special interest to those at home and abroad, who are called to the double task of serving the best Master in matters called sacred and secular. The connection of the saintly Anthony Norris Groves with the genesis of the Godavari work, so graphically explained in these pages, adds considerably to their charm and value. The moving story of Messrs. Bowden and Beer is now told in appropriate detail for the first time by one who has followed in their train and who by reason of his long service and his historical researches is so well equipped for the work.

It will be realized that this book is but a chapter in the thrilling story of the founding of the Church of God in the north-eastern part of the Madras Presidency. Not only are Messrs. Beer and Bowden linked with their predecessors, Henry Martyn, Carey, Marshman and Ward in the neighbouring province of Bengal, and with Schwartz and Heber in the south, but with many a Devon Christian who gave his humble gifts and prayed his effectual fervent prayer. The true view of the pioneer, so clearly illuminated in these pages, is not of a lonely man essaying a forlorn hope, but rather of a selected subordinate enlisted in a victorious army.

Obedient to his officer's orders he clears the gloomy jungle, digs down to the solid rock, lays sure foundations and builds early and late. Not alone, but with the assistance and for the benefit of seen and unseen fellow-workers. They may bear the name and sign of Luther or of some other leader, or they may be confined within the limits of the official church of the land, but supremely they bear the marks of the Lord Jesus and to Him alone they answer.

And the result? This; Christ is preached; men are born from above; the loss of all things is risked; the outcaste is gathered in and lifted up from beastliness to manhood; the unbearably proud Brahmin becomes a humble little child; womanhood and motherhood are lifted from the sty to adorn the Lord's Table; boys and girls are guarded from a horrible pit and the premature sorrows of hell are displaced by the gladness of Heaven. So the stately fabric of the Church of the First-born is built, the handiwork of the living God, destined to stand for ever.

A. C. ROSE.

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CHAPTER I

Introductory

Stretching 500 miles along the low, monotonous North-West Coast of the Bay of Bengal, and extending up to 250 miles or so inland, lies ANDHRADESA, the land of the melodiously speaking Telugus, numbering over 26 millions, and hence the greatest branch numerically of the Dravidian races occupying peninsular India. This extensive area, approaching 100,000 square miles, is traversed by two of India's greatest rivers, the Godavari and the Kistna—streams which, during long months of increasing heat that steadily dries up the country and converts it into a fiery furnace threatening to blast all animal and vegetable life, dwindle to mere ribbons of welcome green water languishing amid wide beds of sand; but which, when once the great South-West Monsoon rains have broken and poured their life-reviving deluges upon the utterly parched earth, gather up the vast accumulated detritus and filth of the dry season, and in huge chocolate-coloured floods of irresistible volume and power, sweep it off to the sea, but not before this fertilising water, by man's laboured and costly devices, has been made to deposit its sediment upon thousands and thousands of acres of rich, irrigated land. Here, in the region bordering the lower courses of these two rivers, we are in the heart of Andhradesa, where the density of population repeats the almost incredible density of riverine Bengal and China. And here is the arena where have been enacted those exploits of men and women of God, European and Indian, to be recorded in this centenary history.

Topographical: Approached from the sea, the old time way of introduction, this fertile and densely populated central area of Andhradesa presents those monotonous features

typical of the whole western littoral of the Bay of Bengal—the white line of surf ceaselessly pounding on a low shelving shore, backed by dreary sand-dunes, with groves of palms beyond waving their graceful plumes in the sea breeze, inviting by their shade a welcome refuge from the powerful sun. Here are found numerous fishers' hamlets, the dun primitiveness of whose closely huddled huts is only exceeded by their male denizens, whose black forms, escaping sheer nudity by the narrowest margin, issue forth and take to the water in craft so weird, a new arrival to the country might be excused rubbing his eyes and wondering if some strange chance had not transported him to a far flung island of the south seas; and should a momentary fear seize him, it would perforce be tinged with admiration as he noted their agility and complete mastery of control over such unstable craft and crude implement.

Passing inland, the sandy wastes and marshes fringing the coast quickly give place to smiling cultivation, interspersed with groves of cocoanuts and mangoes. Now large villages and their dependent hamlets succeed one another in endless and bewildering succession, bearing conclusive evidence to the amazing fertility and potential wealth of these delta lands, which extend on and on full forty miles ere, in their turn, giving place to gently rising tracts of lesser fertility, too elevated to be served by the canals of the great irrigation works, and dependent upon uncertain rainfall and localised tank irrigation. In this strip from 30 to 40 miles in width the population is no longer dense, and becomes sparse as it approaches the Eastern Ghauts and cultivated portions lessen and patches of jungle increase. Finally one strikes the valuable but deadly feverish forests of the mountain tracts, reputed by the plains people to be haunts of numberless devils far more to be feared than their formidable beasts of prey. It is through a tangle of forested mountains the Godavari River breaks its way in a magnificent gorge that is one of India's famous sights. In the forest region are scattered the picturesque little villages of the ab-

original Kois and other jungle tribes—a primitive and simple folk of an honesty and truthfulness in marked contrast to the sophisticated plains people, who all too readily prey upon their simplicity when they barter their scanty produce wrung at so hard a cost from a rocky soil amid pestiferous forests roamed by wild beasts.

Such in brief is the country known as 'the Godavari' to those who have taken an interest in the mission work related in these pages.

Its People, and their Religion: Of its people, numbering in this localised area over two millions, and speaking the Telugu language in its purest form, the backbone is comprised of a sturdy yeomanry and its hard-working, subservient peasantry, the latter mainly outcastes bound to the caste landowners in a mild servitude. The Telugus generally are a people with many pleasing traits, the more refined classes exhibiting a fine native courtesy allied to handsome figures and countenances, the females possessed of a remarkably high average of good looks.

Happy had they never come under the debasing influences of the arrogant and avaricious Brahmin priest caste, which, ever found living on the fat of the land, naturally swarms in the wealthy delta region. Upon the fear-inspired indigenous animistic worship and rites of the pre-Aryan invasion they have imposed a gross idolatry in cynical disregard of the comparatively purer simple worship and customs of their Vedic scriptures they profess to revere, but which they find less serviceable than the later Puranic writings in the rivetting upon a credulous and easily-led people the fetters of the caste system, and in exploiting for their own gains the gross superstitions and debasing ceremonies of a Hinduism widely divorced from its philosophy, but yet its not unnatural offspring. Unspoilt by such a religion of hoary antiquity, the Telugu people would be of unusual charm, and even now are a most likeable folk, comparing very favourably with the other Hindu races of India. The

saddest Satanic effect of having minds darkened by superstition and gross idolatry is the loss of an active conscience; and being dead to a true sense of sin, they have no perception of the Being and Character of God, and are oblivious to the awful reality of imminent eternal judgment. Their souls are painfully slow to respond to the revelation of Truth conveyed in the teaching of the Gospel—a task the successful prosecution of which calls for the persistent presentation of the peerless God-Man, Jesus Christ our Saviour, fortified with the vital Christian witness of the life-change wrought in regenerated Indians by the Atoning Blood and the sanctifying Spirit. Even as regards the unsophisticated jungle peoples, so hard are their conditions of life in its ceaseless struggle for a mere existence, and so casual their habitual outlook on the vital matter of life and death, that their ignorance and density are appalling, and spiritual impressions supremely difficult to effect.

Indeed, nowhere can there be found in this region a people *prepared* for the Lord, and heartbreaking has been the task of pioneer missionaries in winning their first converts, as the annals of this and others of the older missionary bodies in the Telugu country all go to show.

Historical and Political: Under the rule of its Mohamadan conquerors this part of India formed part of what was known as the Northern Circars, one of which had its capital at the ancient town of Rajahmundry, a fortress finely situated on the eastern bank of the noble Godavari River a few miles above its bifurcation, and where its width, lessened to a little under two miles, is now spanned by one of the longest railway bridges in the world. Another Circar had its capital at Ellore, of ancient fame for the excellence of its carpets. Following upon the brilliant campaign of Col. Forde in 1758-1759, culminating in the capture of the **important** fortress of Masulipatam (then the virtual capital of Andhradesa) and the expulsion of the French from the Deccan, the Northern Circars were ceded to the British by

the Nizam in 1769. It took long to evolve orderly government and settled conditions in a province that for centuries had been the prey of rapacious petty rajahs and their unscrupulous ministers and predatory bands of undisciplined Rohillas. But in time British genius for rule and justice took effect, though for long this unruly area had to be held by the military occupation of the important centres of Masulipatam, Ellore, Samalkot and Vizagapatam, and it was not until 1878 the last military garrison was withdrawn.

Flanking the Godavari on the other side from Masulipatam is its rival port of Cocanada, which during the period under review has enjoyed a steady rise in importance and trade as the older port declined. In the heart of the Godavari is the wealthy trading town of Palakol, embowered in its fruit gardens, for long years a Dutch trading centre, with Narsapur as its port, and boasting one of the greatest markets in all Andhradesa. Masulipatam, from 1611, and Madapollam (Narsapur), from about 1672, were flourishing trading stations of the East India Company, where commerce was carried on in great rivalry with the French in the former, and with the Dutch in the latter, station—the zest with which lucrative trade was pursued often leading to exhibitions of greed and unscrupulousness that brought ill-repute to the Christian religion professed by the European. At first upon acquisition of these rich territories, they were placed under the administration of the Chiefs and Councils of the Factories, but so ill-fitted for the task did they prove, that in 1794 they were superseded by a trained revenue and judicial administration by means of Collectors and Judges, developing into the splendidly efficient and just administration of the times of which we write. Where the devout, God-fearing official was found, such as H. Stokes, of Guntur, and George Noble Taylor, of Rajahmundry, the influence for good they exercised was immense, and admirably paved the way for missionary effort.

CHAPTER II

Christian Contacts prior to Missionary Occupation

It is a remarkable circumstance that as early as 1651, fifty-five years before the landing in Tranquebar of Plutschau and Ziegenbalg, the first Protestant missionaries to India, the Dutch East India Company was moved to send the then startling instructions to its chaplain in Palakol that he was to regard the teaching of Christianity to the surrounding natives a part of his duty—the first recognition recorded of such a responsibility on the part of a Protestant power in India! That a very perfunctory performance was given to this probably unwelcome duty, and that very slight, if any, results accrued, is more than likely. But it was the honourable germ of more effective recognition and performance to be given in the future, and as such deserves putting on record. For this history it possesses an interest of its own, as concerning the heart of the Godavari, and the very place where its mother church was founded!

If the throbbing heart of the district had not been without its early contact with evangelical witness, neither were its flanking points void of contacts leading to earnest desire and prayer. It was in July, 1806, that Dr. Claudius Buchanan, following the great trunk road from Calcutta to Madras, and coming fresh from the horrors and obscenities of Juggernaut, where for over fifty miles his route had been marked by bleaching bones and grinning skulls of pilgrims, and where before his sickened gaze the Hindu Molech's deluded victims had deliberately immolated themselves under his ponderous wheels to be crushed to pulp, had passed from Vizagapatam to Samalkot and on to Rajahmundry,

and from thence, after a sail on the Godavari, to Ellore and on south to Madras and the Malabar Coast—a journey devoted by the worthy doctor to close observation of heathen conditions afterwards given to the public in his well-known “Christian Researches,” that rapidly passed through edition after edition, and did much to awaken an enlightened conscience to a greatly deepened sense of the need of a land given over to such dreadful superstition.

Contemporaneously with Dr. Buchanan’s passage occurred the first missionary occupation of the Andhra Coast, when, by the recommendation of the immortal Carey, Messrs. Cran and Des Granges of the London Missionary Society took up their residence in Vizagapatam in 1805. Thirty years were to pass before it became their successors’ joy to see an indigenous church of Telugus founded. Yet they paved the way for the more effective service of all missionaries to the Telugus by applying themselves to the noble but arduous task of preparing Scriptures in the vernacular. These devoted pioneers soon passed to their rich reward, but their successors carried the task through to fruition in the issue in 1818 of a first edition of 2,000 copies of the entire New Testament, followed by a second edition in 1820. Copies soon became so scarce as to be procurable only with the greatest difficulty; but who can estimate what may have been the fruit from these first editions scattered throughout Andhradesa?

Six years after Dr. Buchanan’s contact came that of the Newells at Coringa in August, 1812. This godly young couple, companions from America of the heroic Judsons, had been refused admittance to the Company’s territories, and after a sojourn of six weeks with the Serampore missionaries, had been compelled to separate from their companions (who secured a passage to Burma, there to found one of the most fruitful missions of the century), and had had to take ship to Mauritius to await there whatever door God might open to them. After five weeks of tossing on the Bay of Bengal contending with adverse winds, the ship

sprung a leak, forcing the captain to run to the nearest convenient port, which he found in Coringa, some miles up the northern mouth of the Godavari. A young wife not yet out of her teens, and about to become a mother, the hardships and poor fare of those weeks exposed to the strong S. W. Monsoon had brought Mrs. Newell very low with violent dysentery, and she had to be carried ashore for treatment, being hospitably received by the only English family in the town. Partially restored during the eleven days' enforced detention of the ship, they resumed their tragic voyage. Confined a fortnight later, it was but to see her five days' babe die from a cold caught during a severe storm, after which she herself fell into a rapid consumption, and landing in Mauritius four weeks after the confinement, she was gone in a few days (Nov. 30, 1812). But what prayer must undoubtedly have gone up to God for the benighted Telugus during that unexpected detention in their midst!

Once more six years pass, and on March 18th, 1818, it is Judson himself who, contrary to all plans and expectations, is compelled to spend some weeks amongst the Telugus. Now the contact is at Masulipatam, to the south of the Godavari. It was on Christmas Day, wellnigh three months before, Judson had sailed from Rangoon to visit a distant part of the Arakan coast, but unfavourable winds had frustrated their plans, and without once setting foot ashore he had been all this time tossed about in a small trading vessel. Water gave out; food supplies were exhausted; and these had to be begged from passing vessels. For weeks Judson had subsisted on mouldy broken rice badly cooked, with the inevitable result of reduction to the last stages of emaciation and feebleness from dysentery; consumed by an agonising thirst, none of the natives aboard thought to attend to the solitary white man. No words can describe the horrors of those weeks, upon which he ever looked back with a shudder. Learning they had at long last touched land, he summoned his last remaining

strength to scrawl a few lines in a note sent ashore imploring succour, which happily reached European hands. Immediately a boat set out to the ship anchored in the shallows two or three miles off the mud flats. The utterly exhausted Judson eagerly watched its slow approach and noted the red coat of a military officer and the white tunic of a civilian: as they drew near their ruddy English faces seemed to the almost dying man the very faces of angels! But they, as a glimpse was caught through the porthole of those cadaverous features furrowed with the extremity of suffering and misery, were astonished to find life still lingering in such a casket of mere skin and bone. With tender care they got him ashore and nursed back to a measure of strength permitting him after some weeks to journey overland to Madras and thence back home by the first ship sailing to Rangoon, where he arrived as one received from the dead. Can we not imagine the saintly man of prayer utilising the weary hours of recuperation in supplicating God for the surrounding heathen, little thinking meanwhile that it was to be the very story of his own incredible sufferings—these, and others subsequently incurred—He would use to move the first missionaries to the Godavari to respond to His call!

Sixteen years now pass, bringing us very near to the advent of the pioneer Godavari missionaries, and we have our last contact, the most significant of them all. This time it is not a European, but a disciple of Christ from the cultured Brahmin caste converted through a European hat! For so goes the singular story of the conversion of **Purushottam Chowdhuri**, the first indigenous high caste convert of the East Coast, as set down by Mr. Anthony Norris Groves in his Journal, straight from the lips of the founder of the American Baptist Mission to the Telugus: "Mr. Day, who has been staying at Chicacole, was telling me last evening of an interesting conversion. A man residing between that place and Ganjam had received a tract from some one wearing a hat, who came into his village. He carried the tract home, and put it into a chest. Four

or five years after, he saw in the village Mr. Russel, who was engaged in the Goomsoor war; and the circumstance of his wearing a hat brought to his remembrance the tract he had received. He went home, took it out of his chest, perused it, and was so deeply interested in it, that he wrote to Mr. Russel enquiring about Christianity. Mr. R. replied, that he would see him on the subject of his enquiry; but he went away without doing so. The man was then directed to go to Chicacole, where a lady (Mrs. Helen Knott) gave him some instruction; and from thence he proceeded to Ganjam, where he was baptised; and he is now faithfully preaching the truth. At Chicacole he was shown into a Roman Catholic chapel; but when he saw the images and the paraphernalia of Romish Christianity, he rejected them, as being of the things he had left behind in quitting heathenism." Because just then *not a single missionary* was to be found amongst the Telugus of the East Coast, Purushottam had to go to far Cuttack, to be baptised by the Orissa Baptist Mission. Their first convert, Erun, had been a Telugu of the weaver caste, a worshipper of Siva, who, hearing the Gospel in the streets of Berhampore from the strenuous Bampton, came to them on Christmas Day, 1827, broke caste, and put on Christ in baptism. Purushottam they baptised on October 6th, 1833.

A lonely and footsore figure it was that made the contact of 1834. Purushottam had accompanied Major Brett by sea to Madras, in whose streets, especially Broadway and Mount Road, he had endured much buffeting from his enraged fellow-countrymen when he preached Christ to them. Then he had started out on his remarkable Gospel trek of 1,300 miles, that took him through Bangalore, Bellary, Anantapur, Madanapalle, Nellore and Guntur before reaching Masulipatam, and in every centre he had borne his solitary witness for Christ. Here he was kindly received by Judge Watson, who gave him Rs. 20 to help him on his way. Passing on to Ellore, he there branched off to visit the great idolatrous centre of Bhadrachalam on the upper

Godavari, and thence made voyage down the river to Rajahmundry, and back home to Vizagapatam via Samalkot. It was the first voice of a Telugu to Telugus—musical, scholarly, convincing in argument; for the tracts that soon issued from his pen remain to-day invaluable weapons in the Christian armoury in its warfare with caste and Hinduism; and in the highly gifted Purushottam Chowdhuri was found a great poet whose rich legacy of Christian song to the Telugu church has never been matched, as evidenced by the abundance of his beautiful hymns scattered throughout our vernacular hymn-book.

Thus we see *Palakol*, the heart of the Godavari, and the first place in India whose claims to evangelisation should be recognised, encircled in a truly remarkable manner by contacts from devoted servants of Christ inevitably provocative of earnest intercession with God that Gospel light be shed upon the Godavari. Is it any wonder He soon had His chosen servants installed in this very centre, there to found the mother church of the Godavari?

CHAPTER III

Preparation of the Chosen Instruments

The scene is a little Bethel in a village in North Devon, and the time about the year 1832. God has been working in power, and souls have been saved. One of them is an illiterate man of very humble circumstances. Strong opposition in his home does not deter him from attending; neither do halting speech and uncouth expression his engaging in prayer, though there are some there who feel so raw a performance were well left to those better able. A man of God to whom he confides his infirmity, urges him to persevere. Encouraged by this to disregard his would-be critics, he again essays to utter the burden of his soul in prayer. A stranger present is powerfully wrought upon by the Spirit as he listens to that prayer, and surrenders to Christ. He is a young and remarkably intelligent shoemaker from Barnstaple, who has found temporary work with a local farmer. His name is **George Beer**; and four years later he sets forth to found the mission in the Godavari.

It is in April of that same year of grace that an aristocratic young solicitor, whose face beams with the goodness of a pure soul, comes to Barnstaple on a visit to a relative, who is also a child of his in the Faith. Highly accomplished, and with a passion for literature, Robert Chapman had met the Lord through responding to an invitation, as he was passing by in evening dress, to step in to a service, extended him by a warm-hearted deacon outside the door of Bedford Chapel, John Street, London. There, under the ministry of that rare man of God, Harrington Evans, not only was he converted, but led to follow his Saviour in uttermost dedication. Literary pursuits were abandoned; and then his professional career given up, that he might

become a minister of the Gospel wholly dependent upon God. His exceptional godliness and gift speedily make room for him, and the needy Strict Baptist Congregation at Ebenezer Chapel, Barnstaple, invite him to be their minister. Immediately the seal of God is set upon that seventy years' long ministry of a truly holy man, and the firstfruit is found in a tall young stone-mason of powerful build and open face, **William Bowden** by name, who is to become co-founder with George Beer of the work in the Godavari.

Beer and Bowden, attached both to Ebenezer Chapel, grew rapidly in grace and in the knowledge of Christ under Mr. Chapman's ministry. Their convictions were strongly held, and their zeal found expression in wholehearted participation in open-air Gospel witness, in which they acquired a high measure of ready, fluent address, with the power to compel the attention of their hearers. Missionary annals were read with avidity, and especially were they interested in the accounts of the labours and sufferings of Judson (which upon Bowden particularly made the deepest impression), until the conviction was wrought in their inmost consciousness that the Lord of the Harvest was calling them too to labour in the great field of the East Indies. Meanwhile God gave them devout helpmeets, likeminded, both **Elizabeth** by name; the one somewhat timid by nature but steadfast in purpose; the other practical and strongminded, with a great sense of humour, allied with a strain of mysticism. All four enjoyed the fine physique for which Devonshire is famous.

A visit to Barnstaple in 1835 of Mr. A. N. Groves, just returned from India set on gathering workers for that needy land, resolved their exercise of heart. They were now certain of the call, and but waited on God to remove all obstacles, and so set His seal upon their enterprise. The most formidable of these was that Bowden yet had two years of indentured time to serve; an interview with his master led him to grant a willing release. At Ebenezer it was taken up with great heartiness, so fully had our

friends won the confidence of their fellow-believers. A young sister of the honoured Wreford family gave up her treasured gold watch to swell the fund, and many others gave sacrificially. Mr. Clulow, a well-to-do civilian recently retired from Madras and now settled in Devonshire, took the keenest interest in the matter. He had once served as Judge in Masulipatam, and shared with Mr. Groves and many others a special solicitation for the almost totally neglected Telugu field. Contingent upon their making it their field of labour, he provided their passage and offered a yearly contribution of £50. Thus the way was fully opened for them to accompany Mr. Groves back to India. The sickness, nigh unto death, of their beloved pastor, Mr. Chapman, in the autumn of 1835 enforced upon the anxious and praying congregation yet more deeply the solemn implications of eternity. The surrounding countryside, where many from the humble walks of life had been turned to the Lord through Barnstaple's Gospel witness in which our two brethren had taken prominent part, was equally warm in speeding forth the young couples drawn from their own class. With heads unturned by the prevailing enthusiasm, simple, and unpretentious to a degree, they set forth early in 1836, each of the age of about twenty-three, and in the godly order of Scripture "two and two," on this great adventure for God.

To our inexperienced adventurers it was an inestimable boon to go out as members of the missionary party gathered through the unflagging energy of Mr. Groves during his few months of furlough. He had recently married again—the writer of his 'Memoir,' a daughter of General Baynes, of Sidmouth. Besides our four, North Devon also contributed Brice, a young school-teacher going out to join Mr. Start in Patna. Four were from the Continent—two brethren from Würtemberg, and two sisters from French Switzerland: Mlle. Marie Monnard was a teacher of sweet disposition, whose service was soon closed by ill-health; Mlle. Julie Dubois (later, Mrs. Gundert) a farmer's daughter of rigid

Calvinistic stock, who proved herself a devoted and most capable worker; Kalberer, who had been a journeyman tailor, was also going out to Mr. Start, and proved a very worthy brother, eventually becoming an honoured member of the Baptist Missionary Society; and lastly, the most noted of all, Hermann Gundert, later the great Doctor, a famed linguist, who became a leading member of the Basle Mission, enriching Malayalam literature by his monumental Dictionary of that language. It is instructive to note that Dr. Gundert and his bosom friend, Dr. Mögling, one of the founders of the Basle Mission in India, had been students together in the famous Tübingen University at the zenith of its renown under the brilliant Strauss, and their conversion whilst yet attending his classes had been God's answer to Strauss' faith-shattering lectures!

Additional to the missionary party were certain members of the families of Mr. and Mrs. Groves: a cousin, Miss Emma Groves, who became the wife of Lehner, one of the founders, with Greiner and Hebach, of the Basle Mission; her brother John and his wife, she a believer praying much for her husband's conversion, but he a jovial fox-hunting man whose debts Mr. Groves had paid, and was now taking out to help in odd ways as he might be able; and the gay, champagne-loving, young George Baynes, going out to join the Army, and finding his new brother-in-law useful in discharging debts, though he later on found the Lord and became an earnest worker with Mr. Groves.

Bristol was made the gathering-point of the party, and thither our Barnstaple friends proceeded for the Farewell Tea Meeting held in Gideon Chapel on Friday, February 26th., under the presidency of Messrs. George Müller and Henry Craik. For the closing prayer a stranger in a large travelling cloak arose from the back corner. His supplication in moving terms of child-like confidence in God marked him a most attractive personality. As the congregation arose, Groves hastened to greet him affectionately—it was Captain Percy Hall, R.N., who had declined pro-

motion to flag rank for the sake of a greater Master's service. The next day the party, and a roomful of others, including Capt. Hall, breakfasted at Mr. Müller's; and on the Lord's day spent a solemn time around the Lord's Table at Bethesda.

At this very time Mr. Müller was greatly preoccupied with the preparations for opening his world-famous Orphanage, which celebrated its Centenary on the 21st April, 1936. This same month of April, 1836, saw in the homeland the opening of this institution that has been an undoubted God-ordained monument to the fruitfulness of trust in the living God, and the departure for heathen lands of our humble four whom God had called to found what was probably the first 'faith mission' in the present-day acceptance of that term. It marked a new departure in testimony to God in a peculiarly materialistic age, and one to which the true Church universal has made sympathetic response. In this same year God moved Pastor Gossner in Berlin to initiate missionary enterprise upon 'faith' lines.

CHAPTER IV

The Voyage to Madras, 1836

On March 1st the party set out for the Packet Wharf, most going by carriage, but the two German brethren walking through gusts of rain in which it was impossible to hold up their umbrellas and keep dry; but as they neared the Wharf the sun shone out in happy omen. Mr. and Mrs. Müller, two other sisters of Mr. Groves, and a large company, were there to see them off. Miss Paget of Barnstaple, and some others, had even arranged to accompany them to Milford Haven. The extra work and delay of stowing on board the hundred odd baggages of the party was met with the usual ship's profanity, but at length all was on board, hands were shaken for the last time, and the 'Star' glided away out of the dock into the river to the accompaniment of ringing hymns of cheer.

They entered the mouth of that lovely harbour, Milford Haven, two days after leaving Bristol. There the East Indiaman, the 'Perfect,' was to call in from Greenock and pick them up. But she was delayed two or three weeks on the run by contrary winds, and it was only on the 19th the stately vessel drew into harbour to her moorings. Mr. and Mrs. Groves and the English brethren found lodgings with sympathising believers, the rest in an hotel. Whilst no time was lost in commencing language studies under the tuition of the able Gundert, the opportunity was not neglected to bear Gospel testimony in the town in the open air. Gundert had at first looked askance at his rustic Devonshire companions, as he had earlier done at Kalberer, but he now came to respect them as he noted their simple eloquence and earnestness, carrying conviction to the hearts and consciences of their hearers—in painful contrast with the

laboured and ineffective sermons he and his fellow theological students had been taught to compose in the seminary. He was struck too in observing how thoroughly well-grounded they and their wives were in the Scriptures as they diligently sought to enlighten him upon believers' baptism and other cherished truths. During this waiting time Mr. Groves wrote his famous letter of March 10th. to Mr. Darby, setting forth so lucidly and powerfully the true principles governing the gathering out of believers, and warning him against the evils bound to arise from his insistence on "separation from evil as the ground of unity." Vitality different would have been the after history of the Brethren movement had his wise and faithful words been heeded!

But here is the 'Perfect' arrived at last! All is bustle and commotion getting their baggage aboard. As they had to provide their own commissariat, a brother had kindly gone to Scotland and there bought in necessary livestock and brought them round on the ship—40 rams, 20 pigs, cows, goats, geese, etc.—to the great astonishment and amusement of the novices of the party when they went on board and were shewn the pens. It was promptly dubbed 'Noah's Ark'; yet they were glad to have Noah's God providing and caring for them. Just before leaving Bristol, Mr. Groves had proved His providing care in a remarkable incident—needing £700 to pay their passage to Madras, and funds in hand falling considerably short of this, his burden had been lifted by an entire stranger from India calling and presenting him with £200 "in the Name of the Lord!"

On Thursday, the 24th, the party embarked, and on the Lord's day Mr. Groves held his first service with the Scotch sailors. But it was not until Good Friday, April 1st, the longed-for north wind was granted them, and the 'Perfect' weighed anchor and drew out, leaving behind a snowbound countryside. Rough seas soon sent them all to their berths with seasickness, though by Easter Sunday most

were getting about again in spite of a none too steady ship. Poor Mrs. Beer, however, was prostrated all through the voyage and confined to her cabin, and at times they were anxious for her life; once safely landed in India, never again could she be induced to take a journey by sea! After a few days of tossing, a favourable wind set in and bore them along so merrily, the captain's hopes were raised of making a record run, and when the Doldrums were passed without undue delay, he pushed on with this end in view, forbearing to call at the Cape. In consequence no land was sighted after leaving the Cape Verde Islands until they struck the coast of Ceylon. But twice homeward-bound vessels were passed by which they were able to send letters to their friends.

Having obtained their sea-legs, language studies were resumed with renewed ardour. Though but twenty-two, and taking his first voyage, Gundert was a host in himself. As a child in his first boarding-school he would not be contented save he wrote his home-letter in Latin! During the previous months spent in London and Bristol he had concentrated on Oriental studies. He now became the general tutor. To Mrs. and Miss Groves and the Swiss ladies he gave lessons in Bengali—making French the medium of instruction when he had the latter two alone, to their mutual pleasure. Such good progress did this class make that Gundert took them through the rudiments of Bengali and had the satisfaction of seeing them able to speak it a little by the end of the voyage. Mr. Groves, already somewhat acquainted with Arabic and Persian, preferred to make Hindustani his study, being the language used by Moslems, and in general vogue by the Army and travellers—in this he was joined by Gundert, Kalberer and Brice. Gundert welcomed the opportunity to dip into South Indian languages afforded by giving lessons in Telugu to the Barnstaple party. He records that on one occasion his patience with Beer and Bowden was rather tried when, requiring them to pronounce 'ma-nu-shyu-du', 'man', he was met by blank silence; looking

up, he caught a smile on their faces, and they still declined to repeat it; enquiring the reason, he found they thought he was trying to pull their leg, for surely the monosyllabic 'man' would not require a word of four syllables in Telugu! To Gundert this was not promising. The time came, however, when even he had good reason for pride in these pupils to whom he gave their first vernacular lessons!

It goes without saying that spiritual duties on the 'Perfect' were faithfully observed. Amongst themselves they had daily prayer-meetings and Bible-readings, in which Mr. Groves skilfully drew out the two diffident German brethren. On Sundays there were the public services. The captain was an interesting character, having served with Nelson at Trafalgar, with a fund of anecdote concerning Australia, South America, and other distant parts of the globe with which he was familiar. At first he was most friendly, and granted fullest freedom to hold service on deck for the whole ship's company. But 'the offence of the cross' estranged him, and he withdrew the privilege, whilst some of the passengers showed open hostility. At this very time, however, they were greatly cheered by seeing John Groves come out openly for Christ and take his stand before the scoffers. Denied ministry in public service, Mr. Groves descended to the lower decks and there found the preaching of the Gospel rejected by the upper classes welcomed by the rough sailors and menials. His winning manner, deep humility and obvious loving sincerity opened the hearts of those whose lives were so hard, and whose few relaxations so beset with sinful indulgences. One young sailor, a great blasphemer though the son of godly parents, was pierced to the soul and converted.

Though enjoying the wonders of the deep and the magnificent flight of the noble albatross, the long weeks out of all sight of land grew monotonous. In the equatorial region of the Indian Ocean they went through a sultry spell, and welcomed the fitting up of a bathroom on deck. But Gundert longed for more—a swim in the glassy ocean. For

some time he forbore, being warned against it. However, advised it might be ventured upon, he went overboard one day, and was soon joined by others, gleefully disporting themselves in the cooling waters. Next day he fain would have repeated the pleasure, but a freshening breeze hindered. After breakfast there arose the cry, 'A shark!' A young shark was spotted, and soon they had it baited, caught, hauled on deck, and despatched; and shortly after, another and larger one. Gundert tried his finger upon its teeth and drew blood, at which the captain pointed the grim moral. They gratefully praised God for withholding them from taking to the sea that day!

Towards the end they had to contend with winds less favourable, retarding their fast running and robbing them of their hoped-for record run. On July 4th the mountains of Ceylon were sighted as isles rising out of the sea. On the evening of the 7th the 'Perfect' dropped anchor in Madras roads. Although it had been Mr. Groves' original intention to proceed to Calcutta with the majority of his company, his great desire to obtain authentic tidings of Rhenius and the course his dispute with the Church Missionary Society was taking, and to be joined as speedily as possible by his Bagdad party with his two sons (now staying on the West Coast), together with a need to earn some money for immediate expenses, led him to alter his plans and land in Madras instead, and reside there for a time. On the morning of Friday, July 8th, 1836, after a voyage of exactly fourteen weeks, they bade an affectionate farewell to Kalberer and Brice, and safely landed with all their goods through the redoubtable surf. The 'Perfect' resumed her voyage to Calcutta the next day.

CHAPTER V

Mr. Anthony Norris Groves and India

It was just three years before, in July, 1833, Mr. Groves had first arrived in India. The impact of that Spirit-filled, energetic personality has never been paralleled by any of his followers in its spiritual fruitfulness and in revolutionary consequences in scores of individual lives, and we may here well give a brief sketch of the India of that day upon which he was helped of God to make so conspicuous an impression.

But a bare half century before his coming India was almost utterly bereft of vital Christian witness. Nominal Christianity was either wholly corrupt, or a dead formalism. The great Company ruling India in Britain's name actually subsidised Hinduism, and required its officials to make public offerings, with full military honours, to the idols on occasions of important festivals! The majority of Europeans ignored or defied the sanctions of religion, and were sunk into a state of moral turpitude akin to that of their heathen neighbours, some indeed openly embracing the native religion, and maintaining harems. The sole redeeming feature was the work of the first Protestant missionaries in the south—Ziegenbalg, Schwarz, and others; but even here caste had been allowed to invade the churches, with all its withering effects.

Upon such a scene of utter spiritual desolation God in His mercy at length caused the light of the Gospel to shine. Charles Grant, a highly-placed civilian, was soundly converted and awakened to a deep concern for the cause of Christ; rising later by his abilities and force of character to power and control at Leadenhall Street, he did much to secure, through Charles Simeon of Cambridge, a succession of godly men for the Company's chaplaincies, replacing the



ANTHONY NORRIS GROVES

former indolent worldlings and winebibbers by such devoted men as David Brown, Dr. Claudius Buchanan, Henry Martin, Thomason, Daniel Corrie, etc.—men whom God greatly used in the conversion of souls amongst our civilians and military garrisons. Concurrently with this movement came the advent of the great evangelical missionary societies, headed by the noble Serampore group, by Judson of Burma, Ringeltaube of Travancore, Rhenius of Tinnevely, Dr. Duff of Calcutta, and many another mighty man of God. By these and other less prominent, but not less devoted, servants of Christ the main centres of population were occupied. And all this time the Gospel was winning its way far and wide amongst our British kin, particularly amongst garrison officers—Bangalore became so marked an instance as to be dubbed 'the camp of the saints'! The public conscience became deeply stirred about our official patronage of idolatry, until the resignation of Sir Peregrine Maitland, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, brought things to a head and wrought a great victory. When the Company's Charter was renewed by Parliament in 1833, India was thrown open to unrestricted commerce and missionary effort, which gave a great impetus to the latter, and was followed immediately by the entry of the Basle Mission and the American Baptist and Lutheran Missions. About the same time the Bishop, Dr. Daniel Wilson, challenged the serious inroads of caste in the Tamil churches, and, wrestling against tremendous odds, by his patience and firmness gave a severe check to this insidious evil. Compassionate concern grew for the state of the surrounding heathen, and wherever any true servant of God was found engaged in spreading the knowledge of the Saviour, whatever might be his denominational connection, he could be assured of the generous support of local believing Europeans.

It was into such an India as this the ardent Groves came. Significantly enough, it was a military engineer, Capt. Cotton (later, General Sir Arthur Cotton), who introduced him to India. In the three months he spent in Bom-

bay his hosts were Mr. Young, a civilian; Mr. Menzies, a merchant; and Major Jacob, a brilliant officer. Themselves members of the Establishment, it mattered little to them that Groves had left the Church of England—they only saw in him a man out-and-out for God, his mind richly stored with the treasures of the Word poured out in soul-moving ministry, himself consumed with a passion for souls; and to them this was a sesame that opened every door of loving brotherly hospitality, fellowship and generous support. To such a welcome Mr. Groves' catholic soul responded with the greatest eagerness. His removal from Bagdad had been unpremeditated; but once in India he was quick to perceive the vastness of the opportunity afforded, in contrast with Bagdad, where work had come to a hopeless standstill. As he followed the guiding pillar, more and more openings came for his sweet and faithful ministry of Christ, which proved very fruitful amongst longing souls. In Bengal his tour was revolutionary in effect, and left the European community in a deep ferment and controversy. Wherever he moved he won the devoted attachment of well-to-do and generous supporters, who showered upon him offers of regular and liberal financial aid. Undoubtedly he was the main instrument in attaching to the home assemblies of the Brethren that extraordinarily high percentage of military officers and gentlefolk found in their early membership.

But his possibly unwise, though well-meant, personal intervention in the Rhenius dispute, and the inevitable tendency of his teachings to undermine ecclesiastical pretensions and sectarianism, soon involved him in conflict with the clergy, who viewed with dismay the ground he was so rapidly and thoroughly gaining in opposition to their formalism with all spiritually-minded people, intensely attracted by his personal charm and Christlikeness, and the spiritual character of his ministry. As this opposition grew, it showed itself sufficiently influential to hamper and restrict him grievously.

To missionary effort in general, his attitude was one of most warmhearted sympathy, seeking fullest fellowship therewith, and ever as anxious to learn from others as to criticise what his judgment disapproved, such criticism being always in the meekness of deep humility and brotherly love. At first he was content to support existing enterprise, and hence his espousal of the cause of Rhenius, his efforts to obtain workers for various missionary agencies, and the part he took in the founding of the great Lutheran Mission amongst the Telugus. But he was driven to the conclusion that to support and reinforce existing good effort was insufficient to meet the great problem, and that a more valuable contribution would be the formation of a mission of his own establishing (which he originally proposed for the then almost totally neglected Telugu East Coast area), one which he desired to see staffed with devoted helpers working in intense effort, and in utmost simplicity and self-denial, upon simple Scriptural lines. It was with this project in mind he had summoned his colleagues from Bagdad, and had himself hastened to England and the Continent and gathered his party.

But was Mr. Groves well-advised in suddenly turning aside from his earlier intentions of establishing work on the East Coast, and then in Bengal, and now settling in Madras itself? Our next chapter will provide material for an answer to the question.

CHAPTER VI

Madras in 1836

The Madras of 1836 was very different from the Madras of 1823. Then its deadly decorum had been so deeply shocked by the spectacle of one of its European missionaries daringly discarding the regulation top-hat and taking to a straw hat for his stroll upon the beach to enjoy its health-invigorating afternoon breezes, that nothing less than the dismissal of the offender was accepted in atonement for so flagrant a breach of the proprieties! Now in 1836, convention or no convention, Madras was all spiritual vigour, enjoying its heyday of soulsaving blessing and missionary consecration.

At the historic Davidson Street Independent Chapel in Black Town since 1828 the brother of Mary Moffat had been exerting a powerful influence, showing himself no whit behind his famous sister in love for souls and missionary zeal. Mr. Groves' impact upon Mr. and Mrs. J. Smith during his first visit to Madras in February, 1834, had led to their parting "with their superfluities in a very sweet spirit"; and this devotion to God and His cause in a ministry of fifteen years sent out from this church into the Indian mission field J. Bilderbeck, J. W. Gordon, J. A. Regel, H. Bower, W. Dawson, R. J. Johnston, C. E. Thompson, E. Marsden and others—most of these into Andhradesa itself. (Indeed it was in returning in May, 1843, from seeing two of them installed in their sphere of labour in Vizagapatam, that this fine servant of God was lost at sea, and never a word came through to give particulars of the tragic fate of the vessel!)

To the Tamil Church in Pursewaukam (built through the red-hot enthusiasm of Cornelius Traveller, the victim of

the straw-hat episode mentioned above) crowded congregations were drawn under the fostering care of W. H. Drew as he "went in and out amongst the people and won them by his gentle goodness and glowing piety."

From 1833 another, a most godly and powerful personality, took up his duties in Madras. John Tucker, the friend of Arnold of Rugby and of Keble, and as early as 1817 a Fellow of Corpus Christi, Oxford, was appointed Secretary to the Church Missionary Society Corresponding Committee for South India. He took up his residence in Black Town, and there for fourteen years exercised an influence that has never been surpassed. "His influence over the English in Madras was unique. The cream of the civil and military circles crowded to his ministry, and he was privileged to lead to Christ, and to confirm in the faith, high officers in both services who became from that time staunch friends of the missionary cause." Yet so positive was the prohibition of this modest saint against the writing of any memoir of his life and work, that not even an obituary notice could be given in the Society's publications when he passed to his reward! (His main preoccupation at this time was the settlement of the great dispute with Rhenius, which had now reached a very trying stage, and though Tucker knew Groves had nothing to do with the critical phase it had lately assumed, yet he would have been more than human had he regarded his return to Madras at that juncture as welcome.)

Finally, there had landed in Madras on the preceding 24th October its first Bishop, none other than the saintly Daniel Corrie, who, as Archdeacon of Calcutta, had there in 1834 invited Mr. Groves to be his guest, and of whom he then wrote, "He is a dear, dear old man, a lovely Christian; and his fine and interesting face beams with the love that yet glows in his aged heart." The Bishop was universally revered. Writing in January, 1837, but a month before his death, Mrs. Thomas says: "Bishop Corrie called on us the other day, to my great delight, for I had long

revered his character . . . He is a most noble looking old man with a very fine countenance, and a gentle benevolent manner—a pattern for a bishop in appearance as in everything else”; and Mr. Groves, in recording attendance at his funeral, remarks, “A man with a kinder, sweeter spirit you could not have, and he was untarnished by his elevation. I loved him much.” With such a representative of the church at the Cathedral, preaching Sundays and Fridays when in town, the ordinary European might be expected to be well content; yet so great was the keenness those days for spiritual ministry that great numbers were going miles to Black Town to sit under Mr. Tucker, even though it meant rubbing shoulders with Eurasians and natives—to such an extent, indeed, did fashionable Madras flock to Black Town, it was necessary to be there three-quarters of an hour before service began to secure seats, and complaints justly arose that those for whom the chapel was built, and who had been its regular attendants, were being kept out in consequence!

This same year the Indian Missionary Society (of which we shall read again later on) was founded in Madras, to send out meagrely paid missionaries amongst South India's heathen millions. It was sponsored mainly by dissenting believers, but was intended to claim the support of all godly folk, irrespective of denomination, who laid to heart the need of the surrounding heathen.

The Madras of 1836 left small scope for even an Anthony Norris Groves to attract souls to a new cause, and hence the small headway he made in that city.



The stay of the Beers and Bowdens in Madras extended to six weeks only, and was but an interlude on their journey to their appointed field. Curiously, during this short interval, on July 16 to wit, Dr. Clough was born, whom God made instrumental forty years later in the wonderful ingathering of thousands of Telugu converts.

Mr. Groves, who was an exceptionally skilful dentist, made it his first care upon landing to secure a large house in the fashionable suburbs suitable for the practice of his profession. Here accommodation was found for all his large party, and for English meetings. Very hallowed was the time spent around the Lord's Table their first Sunday on Indian soil! Not a few in Madras knew Mr. Groves personally and esteemed him for his humble godliness and remarkable gift; but, as shown above, they were then exceedingly well provided with powerful spiritual ministry; and by the clericals and the strong supporters of ecclesiastical order that devoted man was received with suspicion and marked coolness. Against our young Devonshire brethren, however, there was not the same prejudice, and their zeal for God and earnest sincerity in ministry won them a ready entrance amongst the humbler classes of believers in Madras; whilst out at St. Thomas' Mount, amongst the soldiers in barracks there, they found a little church after their own heart of nearly forty baptised believers, who showed such warmth and appreciation of our brethren as to contribute the handsome sum of Rs. 300 (£30, in the exchange of those days) towards their expenses, the fragrance of which sweetened their path for many a long day.

Let tribute here be paid to the sterling testimony and valuable services of the believing rank and file in the British Army in India. It was upon having to pass orders for condign punishment upon two Christian privates who had refused to fire their muskets in salute of an idol procession, that the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, Sir Peregrine Maitland, was brought in 1837 to face the implications for himself, as a man of Christian principle. Calling his family to his room, he set before them the poverty to be faced should he resign his post. They nobly united in desiring him to obey his conscience. By this courageous act, accompanied by the resignation of his Judgeship by Mr. Robert Nelson (well-known amongst Brethren) for similar reasons, public opinion was so roused as by 1841 to settle

the matter for all time. All honour to the two nameless believing privates who braved the consequences and gave the noble lead required!

Before passing on to their destination, our friends had the valued privilege of meeting the party from Bagdad. About the 24th Dr. Cronin arrived from Bangalore with Mr. Groves' two sons, fine lads, the elder of whom, Henry, now in his eighteenth year, put in many years' honorary missionary service amongst Telugus, and became their life-long supporter, especially in later years when he had the administration of home funds for missionary purposes. Shortly after Mr. Parnell and his family arrived from the West Coast, making Mr. Groves' party complete. One more member, however, was added before the Barnstaple party left—on August 11th was born the first child of Mr. Groves' second marriage. Meantime Mr. Groves had been busy attending to the arrangements for their journey on to Madapollam.



JOHN VESEY PARNELL
(Second Baron Congleton)

CHAPTER VII

In Masulipatam, 1836, 1837

On Saturday, August 13th, the little party left Madras by sea for Masulipatam, and with characteristic kindness Mr. Parnell offered to accompany them and see them settled in. A happier arrangement could not have been made. Whilst his high birth secured him entrance to every circle of society, yet he was never more congenially employed than in helping those of more humble station, which he did with an entire absence of patronage, or of regard to his own comfort.

John Vesey Parnell was converted during his university days in Edinburgh, and his consecration was complete. Brought up in the lap of luxury, and possessed of an income of £1,200 a year, he never thought of himself, and was wholly indifferent to the privileges of rank. With his back against a wall in a slum alley, he would preach with equanimity amidst all manner of obloquy, until driven from the field by pails of water poured upon him from overhead by determined opponents! When returned to England from the East, for him sufficed a small house at an annual rental of £12, without a carpet, with wooden chairs, a plain deal table (which by concession to the housemaid was afterwards stained, because of the trouble it gave in constant scouring to keep it clean), steel forks and pewter teaspoons, and all else to match"—thus did he show his contempt for the world and its conventions. But the simple meal over, and the table cleared—what glowing Bible-readings would follow with those gathered round it! Such was his establishment when in 1841 his father, Sir Henry Parnell, was elevated to the peerage; and such when he succeeded him the following year as the second Baron Congleton!

Two or three days' sailing brought them safely off Masulipatam (or Bunder)—“Fish Town,” in Telugu parlance—once the principal emporium of English trade on the East Coast, but already a slowly decaying town, though in 1836 still claiming a population of about 60,000. Depressing enough would be their first introduction to the land of the Gentoos, as the Telugus were then called. Dropping anchor in the shallows, some five or six miles off the land, all that appeared were the tops of the palmyra trees, with the flagstaff of the Fort rising above them. As the shore boats drew near to land, they found it a low sandy beach, without a single house visible, and turning into the winding mud-banked river, a dreary mile and a half had to be covered before Masulipatam opened to their view. Landing at the Wharf, they were confronted by the immense Fort, whose brick ramparts were already crumbling to ruin. From the Fort a causeway took them through a wide swamp, which in turn gave place to ankle-deep sand and broad roadways, fringed by the black palmyra and forbidding prickly-pear, leading into the Peta, or native town. The Fort was then garrisoned by the 47th. Native Infantry Regiment, the former battalion of British troops having been withdrawn, and with them the resident chaplain. Temples dominated the otherwise mean buildings of the town, and it was a sadly eloquent witness to the degrading influences of surrounding heathenism upon nominal British Christianity (established since 1611, when the East India Company planted here its first trading station on the Coromandel Coast) that, of the twenty Hindu temples Bunder then contained, two of them were built by a former English civilian in office there! The practice of Protestant Christianity was yet at a low ebb. There had been no resident chaplain for years. Prayers were read, with a sermon, once on Sundays in the Fort church by the Adjutant, and in the Peta Chapel by a civilian. A school that had been carried on in the latter had come to a stand; and in the Fort, with its population of from six to seven thousand, and its thirty or so Europeans, with

East Indians besides, the only education given was by a very aged and nearly superannuated sergeant. Under such conditions a welcome awaited any servants of the Lord who might come to the aid of the few active Christian members of the European community.

Mr. Parnell made it his business to introduce his companions to the resident gentlemen, with very gratifying results—the Judge sent him Rs. 200 (£20) for them; Dr. Morton, of the 47th., offered gratuitous medical services; and others contributed to increase their stock of household furniture. Further, before continuing his journey to Bengal, he stayed on a whole month, as the guest of Col. (then Major) and Mrs. Minchen, and with such effect did he read the Acts of the Apostles with them that, from then onwards, they embraced the precious privilege of Breaking Bread every Lord's day. At the meeting, where a good number met each Sunday, the printed sermon gave place to extempore Gospel preaching by Mr. Parnell. He had not the ready fluency and diversity of topic of A. N. Groves, but such utter sincerity and weightiness of utterance as had made him an excellent locum tenens for Groves when absent in Europe, during which period he had borne very effective witness to Scripture truths in Calicut, Cannanore, Mysore, Chitaldrug, Secunderabad, Cuddapah and Bangalore—always oblivious to questions of comfort and health if only souls might be helped by his ministry.

It is good to read the testimony of this dear man of God (of whom one said, "he is the most utterly truthful man I ever met") concerning our friends. Looking back forty years later, upon receiving tidings of Mr. Bowden's departure to be with the Lord, he wrote: "I had the privilege of taking them from Madras to Masulipatam—two dear young men, most simple, unpretentious, only desiring to serve the blessed Lord their Saviour, and this has been granted them." He survived the last of the four by a few months, falling asleep in Jesus on October 23rd, 1883. To

the end Lord Congleton continued their faithful supporter by prayer and gifts.

It had from the first been the settled purpose of the Beers and Bowdens to locate themselves amongst the natives, far from the temptations of European society which might divert them from their work, and to this end Narsapur was made their ultimate objective. But as a large civil and military station, Masulipatam afforded superior facilities for language study, to which they gave themselves rigorously for some eight months before passing on. They were not, however, indifferent to the needs of the local Europeans—Mr. and Mrs. Hughes opening their house to the Gospel, they gave lectures there twice a week. Even after settling in the Godavari periodical visits were paid until the advent of Messrs. Fox and Noble in August, 1841. As a result of this patient seed-sowing a lifelong friend and supporter was gained in Capt. Buckle, and fruit was reaped in after days in the Midford family (from which Mrs. John Beer came). Yet this service was but incidental, and when, shortly after Mr. Parnell's departure, Bunder received its first episcopal visit from the saintly Corrie, accompanied by Archdeacon Harper, during which forty young persons were presented for confirmation, Masulipatam evinced its marked preference for 'churchianity' by begging for a resident chaplain.

The request was granted, but little to their real comfort, as clerical direction only grievously fettered them. Harper refused to approve for a new school they had liberally endowed any books other than those in use in the national schools in England, which proved quite useless for the instruction of natives. And when later God sent them those fervent, godly men, Fox and Noble, duly licensed clergymen, the chaplain actually inhibited Noble because, forsooth, he continued the holding of Bible-readings in private bungalows and engaged in extempore prayer—prayer of which young Lieut. St. John, recalled thereby from the life of sin into which he had been led, wrote to his glad father: "The Major of my corps has a social meeting of those religiously

inclined every Friday evening. Messrs. Fox and Noble expound from the Bible, and this is followed by the most beautiful extemporary prayer I ever heard, which flows from the hearts of these good men as water from the purest spring." Such was the paralysing effect of official clericalism without grace from on high. Such conditions would bode ill to our humble dissenting brethren, and well might they move on.

CHAPTER VIII

Settlement in Narsapur, 1837

Narsapur, then commonly known as Madapollam, from the name taken by the East India Company's factory located in its northern suburb, is forty miles north of Masulipatam, and lies some six miles up the western branch of the Godavari River, on a high sandy ridge, elevating it well above the periodical inundations of the river. From earliest historical times it was a port of some repute. Before it lay a deep basin capable of holding all the ships of His Majesty, William the Fourth's navy, could they have cleared the bar at the river's mouth. So long as the burthen of mercantile shipping remained small, the bar was not a serious obstacle; and even down to times within living memory a forest of masts was in view as one looked across this anchorage. But the further growth of the bar, united with the substitution of steam for sail, with its effect of concentrating even the coastal trade upon ports with favourable facilities, has caused the complete decay of this port of former considerable importance. Two hundred and fifty, and more, years ago Narsapur was also a great ship-building centre, where better built ships, of stout Godavari teak floated down from the great forests flanking the river, were to be had than at any other port on the Coromandal coast. Subsidiary to this thriving industry was its famous ironsmithery, carried on by 300 skilful smiths. Prosperous indeed was Narsapur in those halcyon days, with its considerable shipping, its busy smitheries, its clanging shipyards, its commercial warehouses, its weaving petas and bleaching yards. The zenith of prosperity was reached by the establishment about 1670 of the Company's factory in the suburb of Madhavayapalem, anglicized into Madapollam. Here were brought and purchased

for export handwoven cloths of such exquisite texture as to achieve world-wide celebrity, such type of cloth being known to this day as 'Madapollams,' from the factory that collected and exported it to Europe. All through the delta that grows the cotton extended this highly prosperous weaving industry. In addition, Narsapur enjoyed a considerable export of grain and general commodities, its trade being carried on with all parts served by the Bay of Bengal, but principally with the Burmese ports of Moulmein and Rangoon. But at length the introduction of machine-manufactured textiles in Europe seriously undermined this lucrative trade, and when in 1827 the Company closed its factory, a fatal blow was dealt, and the famous weaving industry of the Godavari delta rapidly declined. Coincident with this came the growth of the bar at its mouth, rendering the river inaccessible to any but vessels of superficial draught, and its shipping trade was steadily diverted to Cocanada, which finally established its commanding position as the principal port of the Northern Circars when the canals of the irrigation system brought it into communication with all parts of the delta, as well as with the upper waters of the Godavari. (Cocanada, with its inconvenient and steadily silting roads, has now in turn to give place to Vizagapatam, since the opening there in 1933 of a magnificent land-locked harbour, with every modern facility.)

The Madapollam factory abolished, Narsapur's European residents had withdrawn. Its shipping trade had dwindled, and its numerous godowns were mostly lying empty. Its ironsmithery was crippled; its weaving industry paralysed; its ship-building and repairing languishing. Added to all these depressing conditions came the Great Famine of 1833, the greatest ever known to afflict the Northern Circars. To quote the official Manual: "The crushing misery which gradually came upon the people and slowly destroyed them was appalling. As it increased from day to day thousands emigrated to Madras and other more fortunate districts. A stream of pilgrims flowed day and night to-

wards the south; Madras being the seat of Government, thousands repaired there with the remnants of their household possessions and with the children and dependents who had not died upon the road. In many cases the famishing parents sold their little perishing daughters to men who carried them off to Hyderabad. The great northern road soon became one long graveyard. It was often most difficult to distinguish between the dying and the dead. It was directed no one should be relieved at the public expense without undergoing the ordeal of working for this relief . . . tenderly nurtured women and high-born men were seen working at this manual labour under the direction of native overseers, while some decided to starve rather than submit to such degradation. The pressure of hunger made men lose all regard for others and thoughts for the rights of property. It became impossible to transport grain without the protection of armed escort. The usual routine of village life was most melancholy. During the day men could be seen prowling about the streets picking up anything edible, even from the most defiled sources; and at night women would go to the village well and watch the water drop slowly into their brazen vessels, every drop being carefully prized and cherished." This terrible famine did not extend beyond a year, and the two following seasons were favourable. But in 1836 set in a series of years in which the rains failed, renewing the deep general distress. In the ten years from 1830 to 1840 the population declined no less than 23%!

It was in April, 1837, two months before the accession of Queen Victoria, that our friends arrived in Narsapur. Unlike Masulipatam, there was no European home to open its doors to them with the customary Indian hospitality of those times. But finely situated on the bank of the river, close to 'Holland Wharf,' where formerly the Dutch handled their Palakol factory's maritime merchandise, was the long vacated 'Dutch House,' that had lodged their local official and his retinue. All the doors and windows had been taken

out and sold upon its relinquishment thirty years before, and it was little more than a shell, but happily with the roof on. Moreover the premises had been solidly built with Dutch thoroughness, and its apartments were spacious, so that it afforded an airy and tolerable camping place. So here they settled in. At hand lay gruesome evidences of the Great Famine, seen in the skeletons of some of its victims lying unburied along the compound wall where the poor souls had taken shelter, fallen and died. The people they encountered in the streets bore the sad emaciated figures of famine times.

Shortly after came the Hindu festival called the Pushkaram, held every twelve years on the banks of the Godavari, in its turn with the eleven other sacred streams of India. Pilgrims flock from all parts of the land to bathe in its waters, considered peculiarly sacred at these times, with virtue to wash away every sin of those who bathe therein! Crowds gather on the river bank morning, noon and night, and convert the most favoured resorts into huge standing camps for the twelve days during which the festival lasts. Such a resort is Narsapur, and the new-comers had now their first experience of such festival throngs. Their speaking powers were still limited, but the spoken word was reinforced by extensive tract distribution. Soon they were horrified in witnessing the dreadful ravages of cholera, which came raging in the wake of the festival, levying a terrible toll of the under-nourished survivors of the famine. The grimness of their introduction to the Godavari was unrelieved!

Under these most depressing circumstances the Beers and Bowdens occupied Narsapur and the Godavari for Christ. It was ominous of a period of prolonged and severest trial and hardship upon which, in God's all-wise providence, they now entered!

CHAPTER IX

Early Struggles and Trials, 1837, 38

The missionary cause sponsored by the Brethren was now doing none too well. The ardent Dr. Cronin had retired from the mission field—he who, reared under the rough discipline of Rome in Ireland, had not been deterred from following his convictions even though an episcopal fist had promptly knocked him down on the spot upon being found reading a Protestant version of the Scriptures; and whose stedfastness of purpose had been such that, having given his word to join Groves in Bagdad, not even the death of a young wife, leaving him an infant to be carried in his arms by mule across the desert from Aleppo, had turned him back! Even the utterly devoted and self-denying Parnell, who had hazarded so much and endured so much for the cause, had been seized with a “hopelessness which he thought the want of miraculous power in the Church cast around labour amongst the heathen,” and embarked for England on June 17th, 1837—he had previously printed a small pamphlet to support the view that the apostolic and miraculous powers of the ancient Church would seem almost a *sine qua non* for successful missionary work. The laborious Gundert was getting restive, anticipating his soon-coming severance from the disheartened Groves; and when the break came in 1839, he carried away as his wife the exceedingly capable and devoted Julie Dubois. The reaction at home was most serious. The Bagdad mission had been abandoned in complete failure, as man estimates success and failure. In Madras Groves was getting nowhere. His foremost lieutenants were giving up in despair. Not surprisingly it gave rise to views unfavourable to missions to the heathen. But notwithstanding all, Groves remained

true to the call he had received. It was left to the humble Godavari workers to prove the others wrong, and the noble Groves right! A singularly high honour was appointed them of God. Not wise men after the flesh, not mighty, not noble, in them God had "chosen the things which the world regards as foolish, in order to put its wise men to shame"; and those whom "the world regards as destitute of influence, in order to put its powerful things to shame."

First, however, He would test them to the utmost 'to prove their faith sterling—being more precious than that of gold, which perishes, and yet is proved by fire—that it might be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the reappearing of Jesus Christ.' For they too were to feel the effects of the strong reaction that had set in at home. Their would-be regular supporter had come to accept the strange view now gaining wide currency amongst Brethren that it was *not* the responsibility of the Church now to promote missions to the heathen, that being the task assigned to another dispensation! The logical conclusion of this conscientious brother was that he must withdraw his offer of a yearly donation. Our friends were nine months in India before receiving any letters from England, and the first they received was this intimation! £50 a year was not a great sum, even in those times; but to these humble folk it meant much. In the event they never received the donation; but in his letter withdrawing the offer, this good-hearted brother sent a generous sum to cover their return passage, should they abandon the enterprise, or alternatively, to use as they thought well. The sum was most welcome for present necessities. But what of the future of these brave workers who, having put their hand to the plough, felt they dare not look back? Without church, committee, society or individual pledged to their support, El-Shaddai wanted them to make Him alone their trust and confidence, and to find in Him a shield and their exceeding great reward. Great was the honour to be pioneers in founding a mission on 'faith' lines in those times, so isolated from their fellow-

countrymen. An allwise Father made the test complete—He permitted eighteen months to pass at this time without a single letter from home!

What this must have meant in their lonely circumstances! In Madras at that time the Mail came but once a month, and Mrs. Thomas, in her "Letters from Madras," writing on Feb. 9th, 1837, thus describes it: "In England with your daily post, you little know the eagerness with which we poor Indians look out for our monthly despatch, nor the delight with which we receive it. For some days before the mail is expected all Madras is in a fever, speculating, calculating, hoping, almost praying, that it may arrive a few days, or even a few hours, before the usual time; and when it is known to be 'in,' the news travels like wild-fire in all directions; peons are despatched from every compound to wait at the post office and bring the letters the instant they are given out, in order to gain an hour upon the general postman; all other interests and occupations are forgotten; and many people will receive no visits, if there should chance to be any unfortunate beings so letterless as to be able to pay them." But eighteen long weary months, and no home letter, no renewal of supplies, no tangible tokens of sympathy and prayerful interest? It was appalling!

Then their dietary entailed privation, probably the more so to appetites of Devonshire heartiness. They had to live entirely on the country—on rice, fish, fowls and Indian vegetables, without bread, meat or potatoes, which may be a real privation in the long run, when health falls below par, and excessively trying climatic conditions make the appetite 'peckish.' But here too God gave them needed grace—as they told Judge and Mrs. Thomas upon their first visit to Narsapur in January, 1838, "The Lord has brought down our appetites to what He gives us to feed them on." They gratefully accepted through the kindness of these friends the real boon of some fresh mutton killed for the Judge, together with some bread, cakes, and a little wine

in case of illness. A civilian, Mr. Jelicoe, made them a similar gift on another occasion. And again, from an unknown friend, they were cheered to receive a gift of Rs. 30—it was just the sum each family was living upon per month! That their God was Jehovah Rophi, "I am the God that healeth thee," Mr. Bowden was proving—before leaving England he was a constant sufferer from dyspepsia, but in India he was enjoying excellent health and good digestive powers.

The formidable task of perfecting themselves in the knowledge and use of the vernacular was tackled with grit and determination, combined with the admirable good sense to practise all they acquired by going out into the bazaar with tracts and engaging the natives in conversation. Curiosity made the natives eager at first to converse, and brought them in great numbers about their quarters. Gathering a little school of a few boys, they found thereby further valuable facilities for practising the Telugu tongue, and they soon all became markedly efficient in its use. Mr. Thomas' testimony, given when they had been but seventeen months amongst the Telugus, was that they spoke it decidedly better than the ordinary run of missionaries. Mrs. Thomas pays special tribute to the great zeal of Mrs. Beer, who, though too prostrated on the voyage out to participate in the diligent study held on board, now went ahead and rendered an excellent account of herself by the thorough competency, colloquial and literary, of her attainment. Mr. Bowden's own observations, written in 1855, are interesting and valuable: "We began to converse with the people with tolerable intelligence in about a year after our arrival in the country, and by the end of the second year we had acquired such facility as to be able to speak upon religious subjects with tolerable freedom. There is some difficulty in acquiring a correct pronunciation and idiomatic expression; but by close attention and persevering endeavours the difficulty can be overcome. In learning the colloquial use of a foreign language, it is obviously best

to follow in the track God has pointed out, and which is seen in the manner children learn their own or another language. A child only learns what it requires, and as it is called for, and almost always by the ear, and it is not until after a sufficient knowledge for all ordinary purposes is obtained that its mind is set at work to learn to express more complicated ideas. My own observation leads me to conclude that one great hindrance to a speedy acquisition of a colloquial use of a language is the endeavour to acquire too much at once, and to obtain that which is required by reading, and thus to burden the memory with much that is not immediately required to the exclusion of much that would be of immediate use. Reading in a new language should not be neglected; but if the student's object be to learn to speak it soon, he should use every effort to have it spoken and reiterated in his hearing as much as possible; and if this practice be persevered in, a man, with God's assistance and blessing upon his efforts, can hardly fail to acquire readiness in the language." Weighty words new learners may well lay to heart after eighty years! Whom God has truly called, He also equips. Not only in the case of the four founders of the mission, but also with their successors, generally speaking the lack of superior education and college training has proved no bar to the acquisition of sound vernacular attainments, and the general position won by Godavari missionaries in the Vernacular Examinations has been very satisfactory.

One incident of the very early days is noteworthy, not for its results at the time, but for what followed in after years, in striking illustration of the words, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days."

They had not been long in Narsapur when they were visited by a company of weavers from Jagannapeta, in the Nagaram Island, keen to hear their teaching, and staying several days at a time to hear it fully—an encouraging circumstance. Apparently nothing came of it. Yet the Seed had not been sown in vain. Eighteen years later, when

Mr. Beer had already passed to his reward, Mr. Bowden meets one of them again in their own village, of whom he writes: "He had, during the conversation, shewn such an acquaintance with the letter of the word, as led me to ask him if he had heard the Gospel either from myself or the late Mr. Beer. He said that he had not seen us for many years, but that eighteen years ago he had visited us, with others, in Narsapur. I then recognised him as one of a party which had, on more than one occasion, come and remained with us several days together. Since that time we had lost sight of the whole party, but one, who has sometimes come to us. My old acquaintance then asked me to explain to him the meaning of the circumstance of Pilate mingling the blood of some with their sacrifices, and of the tower of Siloam falling on the eighteen men. I told him of the destruction of Jerusalem, as fulfilling our Lord's warning, which was but a sample of judgments still to come down on the ungodly world. He further asked me to explain the parable of the sower; however, he anticipated me in explaining it, and showed a remarkable acquaintance with the facts and doctrines of the gospel. All this while he had no book in his hand. All he spoke of was from memory, but as he said, 'he can't believe.'" Did it again seem to be seed sown in vain? Four years pass, and in January, 1860, three of these weavers visit him in Palakol: "Three days ago I had an interesting visit from three men, two of whom were among some visitors who came to us when Bro. Beer and myself first arrived in Narsapur, now 23 years ago. One I have occasionally seen since then, but the other only once until this last visit; the last-mentioned man is by far the more interesting of the two, and the third seemed to be a particular friend of his, as he occupied himself in explaining all I said to this man. His first question was: 'When I saw you last, you mentioned the word 'paschattapam'; now I want to know its meaning.' I explained, 'paschat,' afterwards, and 'tapam,' burning, or the after-anguish, illustrating by the case of the woman weeping at Jesus' feet. After

ome conversation on this subject, 'I read in the Bible, if one ye offend, pluck it out—what does this mean?' I read the ontext and sought to explain. The next question, what s faith? I read Heb. 11:1, and explained by saying, 'If when you left your home you had promised to give your ittle girl some fruit on your return, she would have told her companions of it, and in anticipation have divided it among them many times before you got back—this is faith o believe what God has said or promised in His word.' Our conversation led me to use the illustration of a stubborn son, at first refusing to listen to his father's counsel, but afterwards yielding himself to his father's wishes; when he told his friend the whole story of the prodigal son, and then asked me to explain what it meant by the woman sweeping her house for the lost piece of silver. We subsequently conversed on atonement. As we were then in the schoolroom, I asked Mrs. Cowling to sing a beautiful hymn of her composing on the text, 'Who only hath immortality,' etc., and after she and a blind young woman had sung this hymn and chanted Rev. 1:5-7, we resumed our conversation—really a gladsome one for me, for it showed plainly this man read attentively the Word of God. He is a man of caste and resides across the river twelve miles away." The Spirit manifestly is working, but the husbandman needs *long patience* for the precious fruit of the earth, and even with forty years' service amongst the Telugus Mr. Bowden is not permitted to see the gathering in. All four of the original labourers are now resting from their toil when, after a further quarter of a century has fully passed, in June, 1885 (or 48 years after the original interview), it is the joy of the son of Mr. Bowden to receive and baptise in Narsapur a leading man of that weaving community—dear Pinjala Musalayya, an erstwhile zealous Hindu who built an idol car at his own expense, but henceforth an exceedingly fine and stedfast witness for Christ until his death at extreme old age. In the following November two others are baptised by Mr. Heelis in their own village of Jagannapeta. These three

are later followed by their wives, one of whom, Mallamma, becomes an exceptionally good Bible-woman. The early toil has at last come to blessed fruition, though none of them were spared to see it!

CHAPTER X

The Antarvedi Festival

Shortly after the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, the Narsapur pioneers had the pleasure of receiving their first visit from a fellow-missionary to Telugus. James William Gordon, from Vizagapatam, was the son of John, a yet earlier missionary to Telugus. The father, though he had left England in January, 1807, had not arrived in India until September, 1809, owing to wartime detentions. In March, 1810, he joined the devoted pioneer, Des Granges, who, with the able assistance of a remarkable Brahmin convert, Anandarayer, was putting the final touches to their translation of the four Gospels into Telugu. This was finished on May 16, just eight weeks before Des Granges' lamented death, and printed at Serampore in 1811. It was John Gordon's privilege, in association with his colleague, Pritchett, to carry on the sacred task bequeathed by Cran and Des Granges, which was advanced a stage further by the publication in Madras of the whole Telugu New Testament in 1818. Gordon laboured faithfully for the Telugus ten years more, but did not see a single convert won amongst them. James William, who lost his godly mother in 1814, was brought up amidst the Telugus and acquired their speech as a child, which proved a great advantage when, after his conversion and call under the inspiring ministry of J. Smith in Madras, he entered upon his forty years' service in 1835. To the new workers in Narsapur he would seem almost a veteran with his many years in the country and long-acquired fluency in the vernacular, and earnestly would they glean from him helpful information drawn from the thirty years' experience of the Vizagapatam missionaries.



BATHERS AT THE ANTARVEDI FESTIVAL

Advantage was taken of this welcome reinforcement to make their first assault upon the great local stronghold of Hinduism—the Antarvedi Festival. Six miles from Narsapur, at the place of alleged peculiar sanctity constituted by the commingling with the sea of the waters of the Godavari, the second of India's sacred rivers, stands a large temple of the god Lakshminarasimhaswami, whose marriage festival is celebrated about the end of January. "Once a year," wrote a correspondent to the 'Madras Mail,' Antarvedi's "thousand inhabitants wake up to celebrate a famous festival, and prepare to receive a mighty invasion of forty to fifty times their number—visitors to the sacred temple. For days prior to the festival, crowds flow in by canal, river, and by road. They may be divided into three classes: The devout, the profit-seekers, and the pleasure-seekers. The first includes pilgrims from all quarters, come to pay their vows and to bathe in the sacred waters. Childless women come with offerings and petitions to the god and goddess, whose marriage is celebrated on the first day of the festival. Others of the faithful, with various requests and prayers, assemble here to worship and to obtain the benefit of immersion in the sacred waters. The more devout, and those with special requests, who have in turn visited and bathed at the six other mouths of the Godavari delta, called after six great Rishes, come here to complete their course, and bathe at the seventh, and last, sacred spot. A host of shopkeepers, in temporary stalls, erected by the villagers and rented to them for the six days of the festival at exorbitant rates, drive a thriving trade in the sale of all manner of wares, attractive to the holiday crowd. Hotel-keepers, the managers of the various amusements to be found at all festivals, and a legion of beggars—the maimed, the halt, the blind, the able-bodied and the fraud—these rank amongst the profit-seekers." After describing the idol marriage ceremony, the writer continues: ". . . a tired crowd wended their way to bathe in the mingled waters of the river and the sea. To the ordinary observer this is the great sight

of the festival. From the village to the sea (a distance of between one and two miles) the entire route was a dense surging crowd; whilst on the beach itself the bathers swarmed in tens of thousands a full mile along the foreshore. Hundreds of beggars, in an uninterrupted line on either side, marked the route to the sea, in front of them cloths spread on the ground to catch the doles of rice, cowrie-shells and small coppers thrown to them by the generous crowd. Deformities of every description were to be found amongst them—the most prominent being the lepers, chiefly children, whose parents exhibited the stumps of diseased limbs and invoked the pity of the passers-by. Such an extraordinary number of these cases excited suspicion, proved to be only too well founded, when a Police Constable was observed stripping off numerous rags and bandages, cunningly stained, and tied around a folded healthy limb; and a cleverly devised mask, made of mashed plantain and rouge, covered with damp muslin, spread over the face of a wretched child. He was heard to assert that hardly a single one of these ghastly cases was genuine. Along the front could be observed one or two European missionaries, with numerous native assistants, struggling, usually in vain, to get an audience. On the beach itself, from dawn to noon, an earnest crowd bathed in the shallow waters, throwing in offerings of limes and plantains, which still more earnest folk were fishing out of the water and re-selling to be thrown again in the sea. Though timed for noon, not until nearer sunset did the car-dragging ceremony take place. The god of the temple was placed in the car and dragged through the village streets, attended by enormous crowds. As the car passed along, the onlookers pelted the god with showers of fruit—oranges and plantains. The car was at length brought to a standstill in front of a Mantapam, and there remained till late at night, when with all pomp and ceremony the god was taken back to the temple. The next three days were occupied by sea bathing ceremonies in the morning, and minor processions and ceremonies in the vil-

lage in the afternoon and night. On the last day, in the early morning, the god itself was escorted in procession for a bathing ceremony, and brought back to the Mantapam, where it was kept till late at night, before its removal to the temple, which terminates this interesting festival."

Most probably Gospel witness at this greatest of local festivals has been maintained without a break from this memorable first visit in 1838 onwards. For the solitary record of the attendance then we are again indebted to "Letters from Madras"; writing February 17th, Mrs. Thomas says: "Yesterday the old Braminee post office writer came to pay a visit and chat. He had been to a great heathen feast at some distance—thirty thousand people present. He told us that the Narsapur Missionaries and Mr. G. were there, preaching and giving away books, and that they said, 'What use your feast? arl (all) too much nonsense! What for make noise,—tum-tums,—washing?—arl that, what for do? pray to God, that prarper (proper)!' We asked if the people understood and listened, and if any of them believed the 'padre's' words. He said, 'Understand, very well;—listen, plenty;—believe, no, sar!'"

It is to be admitted this worldly Brahmin's summing up has continued largely true of the intervening 98 years. A chapter could be given to the rough treatment meted out to European and Indian, men and ladies, at this notoriously rowdy festival; and there has been little apparent fruit of the sore buffetings and gross insults borne amongst Antarvedi's turbulent throngs. Yet—was it in 1823 a wealthy member of the fisher caste of Bendamurlanka built the huge temple as a mark of piety?—then let it go down on record also that one of Bendamurlanka's fishing hamlets now sees a baptised young fisher widow faithfully living her lone Christian testimony in its midst! The writer well remembers some thirty years ago an old man who regularly walked in six miles from his village to the Narsapur Sunday meetings—an unforgettable figure, for he was bent so double that he lodged the bundle with his midday meal upon the middle of his back

and bore it along without further concern! This aged Chinchinada convert was pointed out to him as a one-time most devoted worshipper at Lakshminarasimhaswami's Antravedi shrine.

For three-quarters of a century the Gospel was yearly proclaimed there, and yet no local devotees of this celebrated god renounced allegiance. But this also came. Skirting the spacious maidan on which he is annually taken in his ponderous car to pay his respects to his younger sister, Gurralakka, ensconced in her own little temple a mile or more distant, are numerous houses of the Mala community. The Malas to an extraordinary degree have responded during the past half century to the urge for advancement and education. In 1909 came a request for a mission school, with its Christian teacher living amongst them and daily teaching the Bible stories. It was gladly granted, and, as usual, the school did its work effectively. In 1915, as the writer and a colleague came away from a visit to the school, a dear wee laddie followed and asked, "Sir, won't you baptise me?" "And why do you want to be baptised?" "Because I am believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation." The time had now come. Shortly after the first baptism took place. To-day there is a good church in Antarvedi. It will be found gathered in a nice meetinghouse looking out an Gurralakka's temple—the subdued boom of the surf always in one's ears.

CHAPTER XI

The Situation gets more Depressing 1838, 1839

Some of the trials and privations of the Godavari pioneers have already been traced. It added to their trials to find the superficial curiosity of the natives quickly wane to vanishing point. The readiness of the people at first to hear and receive their books and enter into religious conversation, together with our brethren's rapidly growing ability to engage in discussion with them, had naturally raised good hopes. It was now their mortification to discover how evanescent it all had been, and that in fact there was a total lack of any sincere search after Truth. It was very disheartening. As the Beers poured out their hearts to Mrs. Thomas one day they spent with her in her temporary hot-season retreat in Samuldevi in June, 1838—it had been “very dull of late; the people seem to have satisfied their curiosity, and now never came near them; they had not seen a single instance of wish really to know or enquire into the truth—only mere curiosity.” There at least they found a sympathising ear!

Then the early generosity they had experienced was not maintained. The weary months passing without letters from home deepened the depression. Little ones were coming along, adding to their expenses and problems. Still they held stedfastly on their way. Mrs. Thomas, on November 19th, 1838, wrote: “The Narsapur Missionaries go on zealously and sensibly, and I hope do the *beginning* of a little good. Bowden and his wife are here just now, that she may be under the Doctor's care during her confinement.”

In the hot season of 1839 they again had the Thomases near them at Samuldevi, to benefit by the strong sea breezes

in mitigation of the intense heat, and we have this interesting entry under May 14th: "The Missionary Beer came the other day, dined with me, and went to preach in the topes. A Brahmin brought the tracts I had given, and asked Beer to explain them, as he said they were very fine, but nobody could understand them. He requested Beer to establish a school here, and said there would be plenty of boys glad to attend. So we are going to set one up, and Beer is to come now and then from Narsapur to superintend it when we are at Rajahmundry." A few weeks later, however, Mr. Thomas was appointed Circuit Judge, and they had to remove to Chittoor, and his successor was a man of very different character, who had no use for schools and other means for the enlightenment of the people. This was another severe blow to our friends. But what they did not then know can now be told. At that very time a little Brahmin boy, born and brought up in Samuldevi, and with family connections with Narsapur, removed to Vizagapatam, and eight years later was baptised there—the first indigeneous *Northern Circars Brahmin* to confess Christ!

Pulipaka Jagannadham grew up a most zealous young Hindu, very punctilious in his observance of the rites enjoined in the Shastras and Hindu tradition, a Vaishnavite, a constant reader of the Bhagavata, and devoted to the worship of Vishnu. He was easily the most superstitious 'castey' Brahmin boy in his school, and it was only his great ambition to perfect himself in English that induced him to waive his strong caste prejudices and enter Mr. Hay's Native English School in 1842. In 1844 Mr. Hay placed him in charge of a class, which he taught with zeal and earnestness. The Bible was one subject of instruction. It arrested him—provoked argument and increasing opposition as it convicted him of sin. Too proud to believe Jesus to be the Saviour of the world, and yet ashamed of the character of his Hindu gods, he turned in his misery to Vedantism, but found no relief. Further struggles ensued until he yielded

and accepted the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This warfare continued three years, when the death of an older brother convinced him of the uncertainty of life. Three months passed, but no peace; he wished to run away, 'but where shall I run, when my tormentor is within me?' On Sunday, April 25th, 1847, he attended the Bible Class early with tears, and after followed Mr. Hay to his room and announced he did not wish to go home. "I feel I am a sinner, and none but Christ can save me." His elder brother came and exhausted every effort to induce him to go home. Crowds poured into the compound, screaming with rage and agitation. They sent two constables to arrest him for theft. When this failed the mob broke into the house, yelling like savages. He was carried off against his will. He was found in a neighbouring temple held fast by two men in the presence of the head of police. Then he was taken to the police office. All that night he was in the police den, his Bible (clutched tightly in his hand all through his rough treatment) his only comfort. The next day he was taken to the Collector's Cutcherry, before Mr. Fane, the magistrate. "Where do you wish to go?" "To Mr. Hay's." "Why do you wish to change your religion?" "Because I wish to find the truth." Immediately decision was given there was such an uproar that a company of sepoy was sent for. Before they arrived the mob dragged Jagannadham away from his Christian friends near whom he was standing. The Clerk of the Court said 10,000 people were waiting on the road to intercept Mr. Hay's party. But all efforts, pleadings, promises failed to move him. The sepoy arrived and arrested the two most troublesome leaders, and escorted Jagannadham safely to Mr. Hay's house, where a sepoy guard was posted for a few days. Next morning his sacred thread was found broken and thrown aside. On Wednesday evening, the 29th, he was baptised by Mr. Hay in the Chapel in the presence of a large congregation and to the general relief everything passed off quietly. Mr. Jagannadham became a pillar of the

church, a faithful pastor for 38 years, the writer of some excellent hymns, and a member (with Mr. Beer's son amongst others) of the Committee of Telugu Bible Translators.

The friendly overtures of Mrs. Thomas to the boys drawn by curiosity to see the white lady and her baby in the little bungalow by the salt creek at Samuldevi that first hot season had not been in vain! May we not regard it as a factor in helping that very 'castey' youth to overcome his scruples and enter the Englishman's school four years later?

In October our friends experienced one of those terrible convulsions of nature that too frequently visit the Coromandel Coast, and at times focus incredible fury upon an area in dreadful devastation. Such was the great cyclone of 1839, that raged all along the coast from Narsapur to Vizagapatam, and extended its ravages as far inland as Rajahmundry. Morris' Manual, "The Godavari District," says: "It was most destructive near the coast. It was accompanied by a tidal wave, which burst upon the shore and caused an inundation at Cocanada and Coringa. The shipping were driven on shore, some of the wrecked vessels being carried, it is said, four miles inland. The loss of life was very great. Very many of the native houses at Samalkot were blown down; all the European houses except two were unroofed; and even in Rajahmundry some of the houses were nearly dismantled by the violence of the storm." (The house there so recently vacated by Mr. Thomas was all unroofed except one room, and all their successor's furniture destroyed.) "The destruction of property was very great. The merchants' storehouses in Coringa and Injaram were ruined; cattle and crops were destroyed; large tracts of land were rendered unfit for cultivation by the overflow of salt water; and the wells were filled with brackish and undrinkable water for some miles inland." This was the crowning stroke. Following on the Great Famine of 1833 had come a general failure of the rains in the years 1836, 1837 and 1838, culminating this last year in distress falling very little short of famine; and now this devastating cyclone! In the

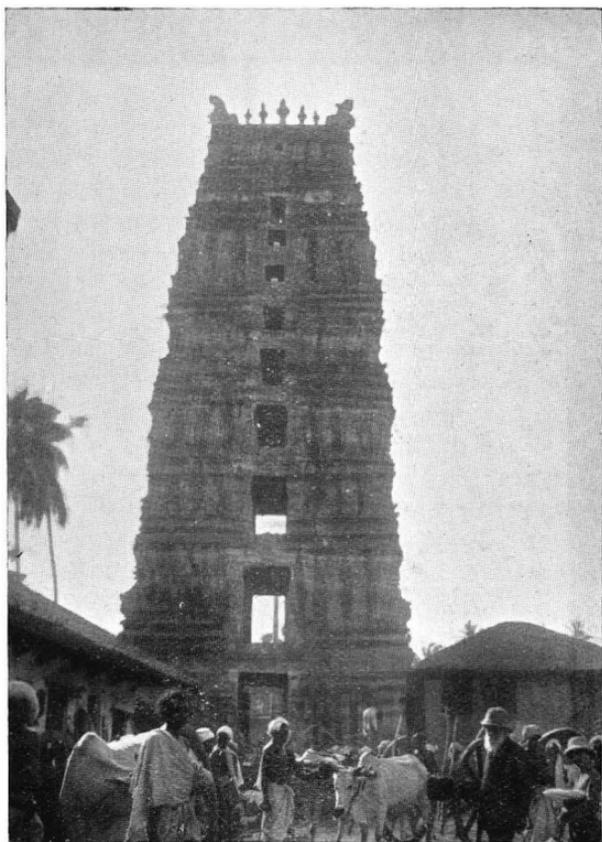
official year 1840-41, the population of the Godavari District fell to 533,836, as against 738,308 in 1821-22—a loss of one-third in twenty years!

Coincident with the prevailing acute economic distress came the breaking point for George Beer—his one transient lapse from the path God had appointed him of entire dependence upon Himself. “I say then, did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid.” But rather that by this crucial experience they might, in recovering themselves, remain fixed ever after, minding the apostolic word, “Be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, abide therein with God.” *They* had been called to a life of *faith*!

Highly intelligent, and of great energy, the pressure of hard fact and bitter experience succeeded with George Beer in dimming the brightness of that simple trust in God that held William Bowden, of great simplicity of character, unyieldingly on his way until he had won through. The Beers already had one little girl of three years, and another child was expected. Yet supplies were dwindling. We have their explicit statement published many years later that they suffered “an absence of all sympathy and help from England.” As too frequently happens, Barnstaple’s early enthusiasm had waned and been succeeded by inexplicable inertia. Mr. Müller had not yet been led to put them on his list to receive his missionary gifts. It is true they were still nominally ‘Baptists’; but so intimately were they connected with Robert Chapman, A. N. Groves, and others with whom he was closely associated, that we cannot suppose this essentially catholic-minded man of God would be materially influenced by this consideration. Unquestionably, God was in it all—both in withholding the hands of Chapman and Müller, and in permitting His dear servants to suffer such sore neglect—for He had His own deeper purposes in course of fulfilment. But it reflects none too well on those who should have accounted it their responsibility and their privilege to minister to their needs, and not

leave them for a bare subsistence to the more generous care of outsiders. Had this strange neglect occurred only during the following years of strife and division, it would have been more comprehensible. Coming as it did in the pristine years of undivided Brethren testimony, it has to be confessed that in this direction at least the testimony was lopsided.

Though there was the indifference of ignorance amongst their people at home, on the spot were dear friends truly concerned at their being so crippled for want of adequate support. It was upon their strong recommendation that Mr. Beer, almost driven to the step, departed from the path of full faith in God by joining the afore-mentioned Indian Missionary Society, "an association similar in principle to the Evangelical Alliance, aiding all true Christians without any regard to their particular creed." Under its auspices, 1840 saw Mr. Beer installed with his family in Masulipatam, resuming service in that needy centre. About the same time the splendidly constant Bowden removed sadly with his family to Palakol, upon which they had bestowed much labour by unfailing weekly visits. It now became his fixed station, and yielded the firstfruits of their labours.



THE PAGODA, PALAKOL
with Mr. Heelis in the foreground

CHAPTER XII

Palakol Occupied and Narsapur Reoccupied, 1839-1842

Palakol, mentioned earlier as the scene of the first Protestant witness to Christian truth, had been ceded by the Dutch in 1804, and the old commercial rivalry had long ceased. The largest town in the delta area of the Godavari, it was also the richest, and, with its great weekly market, the busiest mercantile centre. Dominating its crowded streets, from the heart of which it reared its massive bulk, is the largest pagoda in this part of Andhradesa. Built by one of Palakol's merchant sons in the heyday of its prosperity as a supposed act of piety, it might well have been dedicated to Mammon, the real god of the town. As usual in India, the grossest libertine, the most unmitigated scoundrel, might pass its portals and participate in its rites; but let a Christian, seeking humbly by grace to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in holy living, cross its threshold, and the whole town rises in riotous wrath! Built by one of the two cleverest maistries of that day, a curious tradition relates that upon its completion he was perturbed by discovering a slight inclination to the north. Puzzled how to remedy this, he consulted his fellow famous maistry, who, after careful inspection and calculations, advised the digging of the tank, that now lies to the south, of prescribed distance and dimensions. It was done, and the weight of the ponderous pile of masonry caused imperceptible sinkage on that side, serving automatically to bring the edifice into the true perpendicular!

It was almost under the shadow of this lofty pagoda the Bowdens were later to make their residence. But the first six years they lived in a small house on the southern outskirts of the town. A certain favourable spot in the

busy streets was chosen, and there Mr. Bowden preached regularly twice a week, though without seeing fruit. But the main attraction to him was the Saturday market, which, drawing enormous throngs from the whole surrounding country-side, afforded unrivalled opportunities for propagating the Gospel; and should any hearers be really interested, a pretext to satisfy their folk at home could readily be found for staying overnight in Palakol, though the real reason might be to learn more of the truth in the seclusion of Mr. Bowden's house embowered in the gardens studding the suburbs of the town, or even to attend the Sunday meeting.

Of the former considerable European community there remained now but a few families of Roman Catholic East-Indians, speaking Portuguese as their mother tongue. Cut off from the regular ministrations of their priests, and naturally simple-hearted, to them the Bowdens found ready access and soon won amongst them the converts as yet denied them amongst the natives. Two young girls, Helena and Charlotte D'Bras, they had received into their home on first coming into the district and had taught them English and given them schooling. They had early given their hearts to the Saviour and become effective witnesses for Christ to their relatives, and later became most useful helpers in the school. This school was a very modest venture, boasting of little more than a handful of children, but as time went on it yielded rich fruit to be related in a subsequent chapter.

During the period of peculiar loneliness when bereft of the companionship of the Beers, their poverty and trials continued most severe. Once they even had to subsist for a few days on nothing but the commonest coarse black grain, pounding it themselves, and making what porridges and bread cakes they could with it. But they always found the Lord step in for their deliverance to strengthen their faith. They were continually sustained by that word, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." As they rejoiced to testify in after years, the seasons of greatest trial

they proved to be those of greatest blessing to their souls; and great as was the outward relief they found in the timely supply of their needs, those instances bore no proportion to the spiritual deliverances, and the strength drawn by them from the Word of God itself and the precious promises of God, applied in such power that the burden was quite removed long before the help came. "I am the Lord; I change not," and similar precious words, had great power to sustain and give joy and confidence when outward relief seemed far off, so independent of any external circumstances is the joy that God gives to those that trust Him. Their testimony in such terms shows them marvellously akin to the great George Müller himself!

One item of news early in this period of loneliness brought them special cheer.. On February 26th, 1840, Nellore was occupied by the American Baptist Mission in the person of its pioneer Telugu missionary, Mr. Day, with his family, joined the following month by Mr. and Mrs. Van Husen. This was the third missionary occupation of the Telugu country on the East Coast, and reduced by over 100 miles the 300 miles' gap of unoccupied territory between the Godavari and Madras.

And there was that to hearten them in the tragic event of July 12th, 1840, when the first martyr for the Faith amongst the Andhras was found in no less a personage than a Mohammedan prince. Damning evidence had convicted the Nawab of Kurnool in 1839 of fomenting a dangerous Moslem rising against the British, and he had been consigned a state prisoner to the Fort at Trichinopoly. During his irksome idleness some Persian and Hindustani tracts on Christianity came into his hands and made a powerful impression upon him when he read them. An earnest request he made for an interview with the local missionary was not acceded to, but a Hindustani Testament was supplied him. Reading this, he expressed a wish to be present at the English worship, and the two following Sundays he attended morning service in the church. On the fatal Sun-

day he obtained permission to stay on there for the Tamil service in the afternoon, during which time of waiting some persons entered and engaged him in conversation. A Moham-
medan approached him, bending low and holding up his hands joined, as if in supplication. No sooner was he within reach of the Nawab than he darted forward and stabbed him several times with a small dagger concealed between his hands. The prince was conveyed to his house in dreadful agony, and lingered but a few hours. He sent for the missionary, to whom he expressed his belief in Christianity and anxiously requested baptism (which it was deemed inadvisable to administer). In the midst of his sufferings he exclaimed, pointing heavenwards, "God is God," entirely omitting the ever customary words, "and Mahomet is His prophet." The assassin, a fakir, persisted right to his execution that he had done a meritorious act, as the Nawab intended to become a Christian; and this was the prevalent Mohammedan opinion.

Before the first converts from the natives were brought in, the Lord gently drew the Beers back from their side-track, back to their first love, where their hearts had been all the time. After about a year in its service, the Society they had joined came to an end. Knowing that Masulipatam was about to be occupied by the Church Missionary Society, to make it the headquarters of the Telugu Mission they were inaugurating under the godly Noble and Fox (who arrived there on October 28th, 1841), Mr. Beer took it that this was God's way of sending them back to Narsapur. Immediately He undertook for them in a remarkable matter, confirming them in the step of faith they were taking. They had long desired the fine vacant premises which had previously sheltered them. Government now gave them permanent occupation, in return for a small annual quit rent. This, again, was commuted in 1861 upon payment by Mrs. Beer of the trifling sum of Rs. 40 (£4). Thus came they into possession of a spacious compound of nearly three acres finely situated on the bank of the Godavari well above



NARSAPUR BUNGALOW

flood level; a very solidly built bungalow open to the salubrious sea-breezes, and in use to this day; the old guardroom on the main street, easily adapted for the purpose of public meetings and a boys' school; and other buildings that long served to accommodate a caste girls' school; a substantial wall enclosing all, save on the side open to the river. True, it had been despoiled of its fine large doors and windows, and these had to be replaced. But this done, they were provided with splendid accommodation for themselves and succeeding generations, far superior to what they had been occupying under the society. This proof of their Father's care fixed in them the assurance that they did much better putting their trust in Him than in man!

An early task upon their return was the re-establishment of the boys' school, which has been running ever since. Spade work in this direction had been done by secular enterprise before their coming to the country. As early as 1826 three schools had been launched experimentally in Rajahmundry, Cocanada and Narsapur, and had run ten years before being abolished. When the school in Narsapur was closed in 1836 it had an attendance of 50 boys, showing it met a felt need. Of this the Beers took welcome advantage. For many years it was run on very modest lines, until in the sixties their son, John, raised it to a High School with great success.

Before burdening His servants with the care of an infant church, God gave the Bowdens their first real holiday, attended by marked instances of His providing care. It came through Mr. Groves, who was distressed at their paucity of support. Writing to his son, Henry, in 1841, who was about to return from England with his young bride (only spared to him two brief years), he says, "The Bowdens have lost nearly all those who used to contribute to their support, but the Lord still provides; my desire is to pay all their expenses should the Lord prosper me. I have written to ask Bowden to meet you here." Mr. Groves was himself soon after so embarrassed by great losses and financial

difficulties as to be incapacitated from fulfilling his generous impulses, but the desired visit of the Bowdens to him in Chittoor took place in the early months of 1842.

When the arrangements for the visit were completed, funds did not suffice for the journey. Mrs. Bowden questioned whether it could be the mind of God they should set out with money lacking. Her husband replied that the same God Who had supplied their daily wants must be trusted for the journey. They therefore set forth for Masulipatam, and spent the day in passing with the Beers in Narsapur, and ere they left their roof a servant came with a letter from Mrs. Groves, enclosing Rs. 70 for their expenses on the way! But this was not all. When near Chittoor they fell in with a stranger at a travellers' bungalow, an officer recently returned from Burma, with whom they had much converse about missions; and who spoke much of the refreshment his acquaintance with Judson and the other American missionaries there had given him. On leaving he wrote an order for Rs. 200 on his agents and gave it to Mr. Bowden. Indeed, they were so supplied during all their absence from home that they quite abounded!

This journey taking them past *Guntur*, it is of interest to observe that a few weeks later it was occupied by that remarkable warrior, C. F. Heyer, the founder of the American Evangelical Mission to the Telugus, who was welcomed there on July 31st by Mr. Stokes, and received every assistance from that godly Collector. It is indicative of the discursive, catholic activities of Mr. Groves that he had had a hand in directing this Mission to India and the Telugus. He had been active in stirring up a strong interest in the Lutheran churches on behalf of Rhenius, which subscribed large funds with a view of adopting and supporting him and his work in Tinnevely. His untimely decease broke up all these plans, and the sympathies of these Lutheran churches were then enlisted on behalf of the needy Telugu field as a worthy alternative, leading not only to the occupation of Guntur, but of Rajahmundry also.

CHAPTER XIII

Dawn at Last! 1842

“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.” “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, ‘The Lord hath done great things for them.’ The Lord *hath* done great things for us; whereof we are glad . . . They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

In its converts, the Telugu field has proved the most prolific in India; but in yielding its firstfruits, a very hard one. Thirty years of toil were expended upon the Vizagapatam field ere it yielded its first handful of indigenous believers. Only Mr. Day’s inflexible resolution to live and die amongst the Telugus prevented the American Baptists from withdrawing for lack of result; the Mission worked twenty years in the field before the first Ongole convert was baptised, and another eighteen years passed before there came that marvellous ingathering that has made it famous in mission annals, and 2,222 were baptised in one place in one day! As late as 1857, after fifteen years’ occupation, the communicants in the Church and Lutheran Missions were but 49 and 64 respectively.

So with the Godavari. Year succeeded year in diligent toil and faithful seed-sowing without seeing a native converted, until six had run their course. In Palakol Mr. Bowden had found the people so hardened and opposed that on one occasion he kneeled down in the public street and cried,

“O Lord, let Thy Word take hold upon this people.” This lack of conversions greatly exercised their souls. The burden of Mr. Bowden’s prayer at this time was, ‘If it is Thy will I continue in Palakol, let me see some souls come to Jesus; if not, show me another place.’ In anxiety of soul they gave a week to waiting on God with fasting, pleading for some definite token of His blessing. It was granted them there and then. Kolah Atchamma, a one-time concubine of a European gentleman living in those parts, was brought in a remarkable manner to accept the Truth. She adorned her profession by her love to her Lord, of Whom she spoke to everyone. She opened her house in the caste quarters of Palakol to women who came, first as listeners, and then as fellow-worshippers. It was only a few years she was spared to glorify God, but in that time she was most diligent in making Him known to others, and for years after her decease testimony was borne by her caste neighbours to the truths learnt from her lips. At the same time, and during that week of prayer, an illiterate shoemaker of Sid-diligudem, a suburb of Palakol, was awakened and led to come and enquire the way of Life. Coming at that particular time, it was accounted the sought-for token; they were now assured they were in the right place, and that souls would be given them for their hire.

Emberu’s case revealed to them that God was working in ways unknown to them. One, Suttugulla Penumallu (whom we shall hereafter know as Philip), of Katharlanka, near Ambajipeta, was used to turn him to the Lord. Philip was a man of affairs, moving much about the district. Once upon attending Palakol market he heard Mr. Bowden preach and was awakened. He followed him to the house, where Mr. Bowden painstakingly explained the plan of salvation to him. An intelligent man, he grasped it, and before leaving, asked God to save him. He took the Message back to his village. A month later he came again to Mr. Bowden and reported his people were ready to hear the Truth from him; would he visit them? Rejoicing in this opening for the

Gospel, Mr. Bowden accompanied him back and camped there two days, spent in carefully instructing them in the fundamentals. Philip he could not baptise, for besides his own wife he was keeping a woman of the toddy-drawing caste, and this so common matrimonial tangle must needs first be straightened out. Philip escorted Mr. Bowden back to Palakol and spent the night in Siddiligudem, and preached Christ to his fellow-Madigas there. His testimony arrested Emberu, who said, "I have often heard the missionary preach these things, but without grasping his teaching. Now I understand, and I lay my sins at Jesus' cross and yield myself to Him." This resolution led him to them that memorable week.

Emberu came from the lowest section of the outcastes, from an environment that to this day continues one of squalor, hard drinking and evil living. He had little gift, but much grace, and his godly life in its midst for 36 years was a deep comfort to the missionaries. And the closing scene of his life was his best, for he greatly glorified God in his death in May, 1878, from hydrophobia, that ever-present menace of the hot season. After being bitten by a mad dog, he continued in a very happy state of soul, rejoicing in his approaching departure, and witnessing to all around him of the power of Christ to save. When he grew rapidly worse, he feared he might become violent, and insisted they should shut him up in the house and leave him to die all alone. By God's grace his senses were spared to him in his isolation, and he continued to rejoice and triumph in Christ until the end came—a most telling manifestation of God's grace in weak, sinful man!

Emberu's wife, Marie, was also brought in at that time, and before the year was out they had the great joy of having their first public baptism, when Mr. Bowden immersed not only this couple as firstfruits from the heathen, but also four members of the D'Bras family—Matthew, the father, Eleanor, the mother, Leon, the son, and Helena, a girl of thirteen, who was to become Mrs. Heelis, and an

invaluable worker for fifty years. They had to wait another two years before seeing Atchamma finally break with the past, and by public baptism identify herself fully with the despised little flock of God. But 1842 closed, seeing established in Palakol the mother-church of the Godavari.

Where and how did our friends spend Christmas Day, 1842? We know not. But they would have wondered greatly had it been made known to them that that day, far away in a Highland manse looking out on the lovely island of Skye, and in an atmosphere then tense with the agitation preceding the Disruption, was born one who was to be one of the most successful of their successors—James Norman Macrae.

CHAPTER XIV

Proving God in Quiet Plodding 1843-1847

The years that followed were years of quiet plodding, with little outstanding incident. The general hard times still continued, for to the previous ravages of famine and cyclone were added in 1843 those of greatly destructive floods, and it is significant that the Government revenue in that year fell to the lowest figure ever returned from 1820 onwards.

Of the Beers we get but one peep, though we know him to have been engaged in that Gospel itineration so congenial to his earnest, energetic nature. The hot season of 1843 they spent in Masulipatam as the guests of Mr. Noble, and on April 14th their elder son, John William, was born, who, to the great comfort of his widowed mother, was to be his father's successor, and one of the finest missionaries the Godavari has had. Writing to Mr. Stokes in Guntur, Mr. Noble's testimony is gratifying: "I trust that dear Mrs. Beer's visitation has been in some measure a blessing (would I had improved it more!), and Mr. Beer's society is a privilege. 'Iron sharpens iron,' and Christian intercourse gives a fresh edge to Christian minds." Then he goes on to tell of one of those fearful cyclones which on that coast often precede the coming of the S. W. Monsoon, when, although two and a half miles distant from the beach, the sea nevertheless came round the house, and the wind several times burst open the barred and bolted doors.

It was the following November that Mr. Noble, having first given two years to the intensive study of the language, opened his school that was to become so famous in Andhradesa. A curious necessity long served to maintain

the personal connection of the Godavari brethren with Bunder—they had to go there to cash their remittances. In those days they thought little of the forty mile walk to and fro; changing into their pyjamas, they would set out in the late afternoon, and walking all through a moonlight night, arrive for breakfast—a tribute to their powerful physique!

A most interesting event in the autumn of 1844 was the visit to Palakol and Narsapur of a German brother, L. P. M. Valett, who was to become a brother-in-law of the Bowdens. He had landed in Madras a year earlier as the pioneer representative of the North German Missionary Society, and had meantime been residing with Mr. Heyer in Guntur. He was now prospecting for a field of service, and after visiting Ellore and Rajahmundry, selected the latter as the more suitable. Taking up his residence in January, 1845, Rajahmundry became the headquarters of another missionary occupation of Andhradesa. Like our own friends and others, he was fortunate in finding derelict Company property available for accommodation by permission of Government. Another great boon was to find a liberal supporter in Capt. Arthur Cotton, stationed there at this time engaged in investigations into the possibilities of the Godavari river and in drawing up his proposals to Government—which shortly after materialised in the great Anicut and its irrigation system. Installed in his new station, Valett had an exciting experience in the shooting of a tiger that strayed into his compound—an incredible happening in present times.

It was during this period the Bowdens had a remarkable experience following upon a visit they had to pay to Masulipatam for a confinement. Only a fortnight after it was strongly impressed upon Mr. Bowden they should return immediately. At the time small-pox was raging in Palakol and neighbourhood, and all advised them not to go. They, however, felt it their duty not to delay. On returning, so dreadful were the objects that met them on the road, Mr.

Bowden shut up his wife's palanquin, fearing she would be startled at seeing the ravages the disease had made. When they arrived at their house, they found people presenting offerings to two stones on the premises, considering them the gods that would protect them from the disease. Mr. Bowden at once stopped the offerings, though the place was surrounded by hundreds who sought admittance. He went out and spoke to them, but finding his remonstrances had no effect, he broke their stones to pieces before their eyes and buried them. The people were enraged, and said that all his children would die of this disease. Far from this, however, his was the only house not attacked by it, and the disease left the place! This circumstance was never forgotten by the natives of that time, and was of great use to them in demonstrating the vanity of their idols. It happened shortly after this that Mr. Bowden was attacked by fever, and had to go to Rajahmundry for advice. The people thought it was the anger of the goddess following him. But he only experienced fresh instances of the care of his Heavenly Father. When he was very ill Mrs. Bowden was tried by finding their tea had come to an end. She remarked there was only enough for once more, and asked if she should divide it. "Oh, no," he said, "the Lord will provide." Immediately after a gentleman called with a message from the Judge, a kind-hearted gentleman, saying he was sorry to hear of his illness, and offering any assistance he could give; and he mentioned tea and arrowroot as things he wished to send—the two they particularly needed!

Another deliverance came at a time they were so reduced as to be without a light in the house, being unable to buy lamp-oil. They were also without tea. Again the oft-proved word, 'Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things,' sustained them. On the Sunday morning, when Mr. Bowden was going to Narsapur to preach, the postman came at an early hour—a circumstance that never occurred before or after—with a letter containing only the following words, "The enclosed Thirty Rupees have been

put into my hands for you." They never discovered from whence it came!

Their family having increased by 1844 to four boys, the house they had been occupying for some five years was found to be too small, and as they were enquiring of the Lord what they had better do, they received a letter from Capt. Buckle, Masulipatam, telling them that it had been laid very much on the minds of both himself and his wife that their house was too small for Europeans, and they would be glad to give any help in building an additional room. On enquiry they found the house they rented was mortgaged in such a way as made it very undesirable to spend money upon it. This led them to fix upon their new residence, which was in a very desirable situation in the centre of the town, and with a garden around it. It was the old Dutch factory, and required considerable alteration to adapt it for a dwelling-house. Mr. Bowden made an offer of Rs. 200 for it to Government, which was recommended for acceptance by the responsible P.W.D. Officer. But a wise and vigilant Government thought otherwise, and the officer received instructions from the Governor in Council to dispose of it by public auction. This was done, and it was knocked down to Mr. Bowden for Rs. 35 only! By August, 1845, he was in possession of this property, with its buildings and trees, for a paltry £3-10-0—8445 square yards in the heart of the town, where, in the writer's time, Rs. 50 has been known to be paid for a single yard! From the time they bought it, money came in from all quarters, and they soon had Rs. 1,000; yet, before it was completed, their funds appeared on the point of exhaustion. But Mr. Bowden said he should continue until the money was quite spent. As the last rupee was paid out, £20 came from Mr. Müller, who now had begun to send them help!

Haste in putting this work through was dictated by the coming addition to the family. For on October 26th was born in Masulipatam their fifth son, Edwin Skinner Bowden, who was called of God to be his father's immediate

successor—father and son covered by their labours an unbroken period of 88 years, down to 1924—and who, by his godly and powerful personality and exceptional abilities, became the leading European brother in the mission. Attending this happy event was another striking instance of God's providing care. Their resources being drained by the alterations to the new house, Mrs. Bowden left her husband supervising these with as much money as could possibly be spared. She arrived in Bunder with her money nearly exhausted, and suffering from dysentery. To her dismay she found the garrison had been changed, and with it had departed the medical officer who had ever taken a warm interest in them, and for the Lord's sake had freely received and treated them. His successor was called in, and prescribed arrowroot, port-wine, and other things, but to purchase these she had no money, and could but commit the matter to the Lord. Almost immediately came a hamper to the travellers' bungalow containing these very things—no less and no more! It had been sent by a Christian officer who had called upon her before the doctor's visit, and had sent them in ignorance of the specific need.

Only four were added to the little church during this period, but one was a notable convert. **T. Peter** was an elderly shoemaker who was a great devotee of the Hindu gods. As he was setting out on a distant pilgrimage he was arrested by hearing Mr. Bowden preach, and turned to the Lord. His wife and son also believed; the latter, **James**, became a leading evangelist, and figures largely in the later history of the mission. They, together with Charlotte D'Bras, were baptised on Sunday, June 6th, 1847. Noting this in his Journal, the humble Groves writes: "I have had two nice letters from Bowden and Beer. The former baptised four persons last Sunday, three heathens and one R.C. I sometimes lament my poverty, but the Lord knows what is best. If He makes our souls flourish, why we may well rejoice."

Of Peter we have it recorded later: He continues very zealous in speaking of Christ to all. He will not even let a Brahmin pass without speaking of the way of life. A bitter persecutor, a highcaste influential man, was at length won by him to listen to the Word; and one day Peter came to Mrs. Bowden and asked for a Gospel, saying he had brought someone to receive it. To her surprise she saw this bitter man behind looking quite humble; Peter, who knew that as a low caste man he could not give the book to the Brahmin, laid it at his feet and in an imploring way said, "Read this, accept what is right in it, and reject what you think evil." The man took up the book and went away. On another occasion he was in Bunder and went into Mr. Noble's school, full of Brahmins and highcaste men and boys, and feeling that they would not listen to a person who was of such low caste as himself if he entered, he placed himself at the door and stretched his arms so that no one could pass by without touching him, which would have defiled them, and thus he made an opportunity to secure their audience. Mr. Noble remarked how he felt the wisdom of the serpent had in this instance been combined with the harmlessness of the dove. Peter greatly impressed Mr. Heelis when he arrived in Palakol, for he wrote, "One of the brothers, an old man, does nothing but go among the poor natives and tell them of Jesus." And in the dangerous Mutiny times he bravely pursued his unwavering testimony. Paying a visit to Mrs. Beer in Narsapur, he stopped on his way to speak to a few people in the Bazaar. The great excitement of the time soon drew a large crowd around him, and Peter was asked what had become of his Christ, whilst some said the time had now come for all Christians to die. He replied, "My friends, you may hurt this clay, but you cannot hurt my soul; and if you hurt my body, by-and-by my Father will recompense you." Thus stedfastly did old Peter witness the good confession until the Lord called him Home in June, 1864, "leaving precious testimony of his faith to the last," as Mr. Bowden records.

CHAPTER XV

Andhradesa's Debt to Christian Laymen

The probity and disinterestedness of the British official in general were, perhaps, never better illustrated than in an exquisite incident attributed to that very bungalow in Rajahmundry wherein the Thomases had lived. "A certain Collector received a visit from a wealthy Zamindar, who sought a favour at his hands. The visitor was received in a verandah overhanging the river, and came accompanied, as is usual enough, by a tray containing some limes which form the visiting-card of India. The tray was put down beside the official, who, as conversation proceeded, began fingering the fruits, which struck him as remarkably heavy. Satisfied that they were golden presentments intended as a bribe, the Collector said nothing, but, as he sat and talked, from time to time he idly tossed one lime after another into the deep water alongside, while the Zamindar watched in futile anguish the gradual disappearance of his princely gift." Such righteousness and incorruptibility of the average official has been an immense asset in favour of the Christianity to which he may but nominally adhere, and we bear thereto most grateful tribute. But it is of those who have zealously forwarded the Christian Faith we now write.

We have arrived at an exceedingly important interlude in the missionary labours of the Bowdens, occasioned by the call to take up Gospel work amongst the thousands of labourers engaged on the Godavari Anicut works in the years 1847—1848, when they temporarily removed to Dowlaishweram. It calls for a chapter on the invaluable services of godly laymen in Andhradesa (as in India generally). It was by them in many instances Christian work was

initiated, pending the coming of missionaries to take it over and give it permanency. They commonly co-operated with and fostered such work as they found going on in the district in which they might be for the time. In all cases a sympathetic heart and generous purse were open to the cause—a remarkable instance of which was given at the Disruption of 1843, when the Scotch missionaries in Madras rendered themselves penniless by siding with the secession, and A. F. Bruce, Esq. (a friend of Mr. Groves) came to their rescue to the tune of an annual contribution of Rs. 3,000! Frequently the influence of the layman's godly life upon natives brought into contact with him in the course of official duty proved effectual in rendering the Indian mind receptive of Christian teaching, and even to the embracing of the Faith, where missionary influence in the case had been nil. In committee work of the Bible and Tract Societies the Christian layman has figured very conspicuously, and even in translation work he has taken important part—of nine names given of the Deccan Committee for the Revision of the Hindustani Bible only three are clergy, the other six being military officers, including a general, a colonel and two majors. All honour to the great services of these non-professional missionaries!

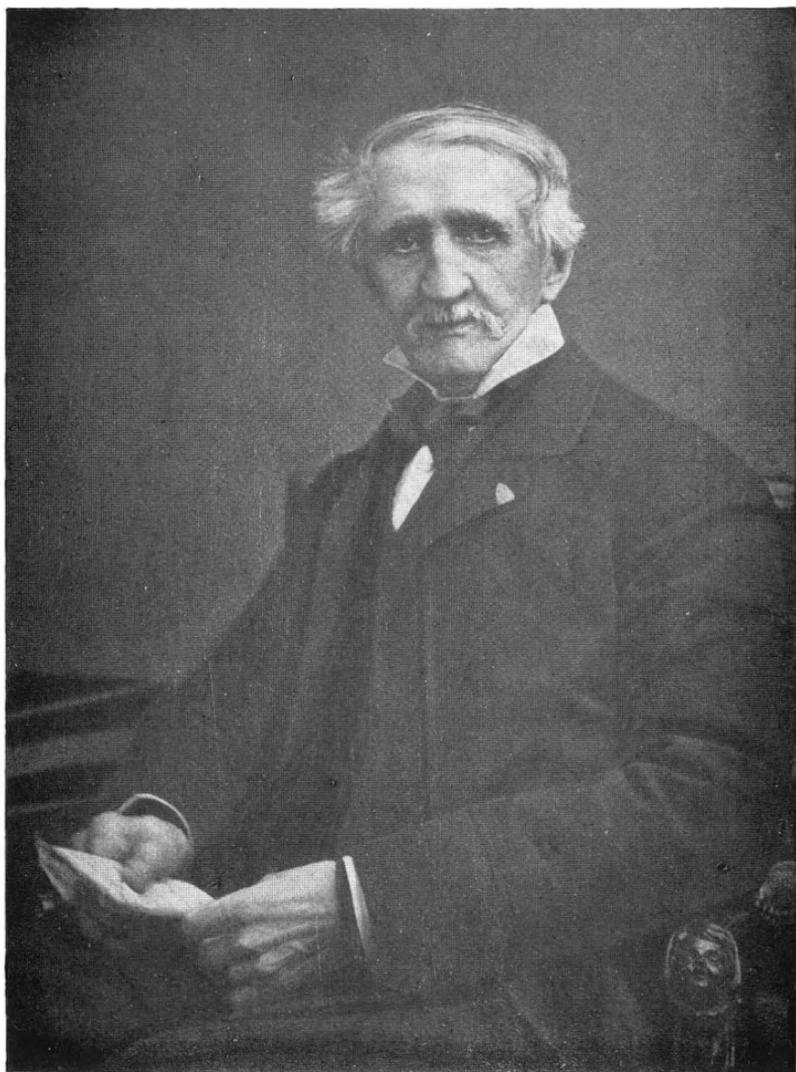
To mention individual civilians: There was Dr. Cooper, of Nellore, whose school of some years' standing was handed over to the Scotch Mission in 1840, so giving them their first footing in Andhradesa. At the same time and place Judge Walker proved a great friend to the infant American Baptist Mission. Judge and Mrs. Thomas did excellent preparatory work with their school in Rajahmundry. George Noble Taylor, following a few years later in their wake, was happy in initiating like effort of permanent character, still commemorated in the Taylor High School of Narsapur. There was J. Goldingham Esq., who in 1838 pleaded most effectively for the Telugus, and raised a fund of Rs. 20,000, and thereby secured the services of Messrs. Noble and Fox. Linked with him is H. Stokes, Esq., who

followed him in the Guntur Collectorate, and was the close friend of Groves and Noble, a supporter of the Bowdens and Beers, and who received Heyer and gave him and his colleagues all the support in his power. Amongst many other names worthy of mention in the roll of honour come Newell, Prendergast, Morris and Masters. And there was Judge Rodhe, of Rajahmundry, who, losing a dear girlie of four years in August, 1846, had inscribed on her tomb, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible: so shall we ever be with the Lord; comfort yourself together with these words. The time is short"—and five weeks later, burying his beloved wife, had inscribed on her tombstone, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

Of godly military officers the names are numerous: Capt. Knott, of Chicacole, whose wife led Purushottam Chowdhuri to Christ; his son-in-law, Capt. Richardson; and Adjutant Evelin, at the same station; Major Brett, of Vizagapatam; Major Buckle, frequently mentioned in this history; Majors Minchen and Awdrey, of Bunder; Major-General J. Bell, the leading supporter of the Brethren cause, who was so great a means of blessing to Doss Anthravady; Capt. Rundall, R.E., of the P.W.D. (afterward General, and Inspector-General of Irrigation); Captains C. Taylor and Woodfall of Ellore, who carried on a school there, afterwards made over to the C.M.S., and the former of whom gave his house and compound to that Mission, whilst, in fellowship with Capt. Stoddard, he got the Society to take up work in Amalapuram, for which he gave Rs. 3,000, and property in Bendamurlanka worth another Rs. 3,000. But the greatest of all are those brilliant engineers, General Sir Arthur Cotton and Major-General F. T. Haig, men of such bed-rock Christian principle that even when in charge of vast enterprises the essence of which was a race against time, would nevertheless strictly observe the Lord's day and close down all work on Sundays.

Sir Arthur Cotton came of an ancient Cheshire family that gave many men of note to India, and of him Government publicly put on record this tribute: "Colonel Cotton's name will be venerated by millions yet unborn, when many who now occupy a much higher place in the public view, will be forgotten."

Brought to know the Lord on board ship returning from the first Burmese War as a young lieutenant of twenty-three, he took his stand boldly with his characteristic decision and energy. Being greatly impressed by reading Mr. Groves' tract, 'Christian Devotedness,' he made a point of calling on him in Bagdad when returning from his first furlough by the overland route, and it was he who advised Groves to transfer his labours to India, inviting him to go on there with him. On the way, at Bushire, at 120° in the shade, Capt. Cotton was brought to death's door by a very dangerous illness, and his grave dug in readiness, and it was to Mr. Groves' skilful, unremitting care he owed his life, knitting yet closer the bonds of affection. In 1844 he was given charge of the Rajahmundry Division to investigate and report upon Sir Henry Montgomery's recommendations to retrieve the economic decay of the District by irrigation works. There followed those brilliant proposals he was further entrusted to carry out, entailing residence in Rajahmundry and Dowlaishweram over a period of about seven years, when he was appointed Chief Engineer in Madras. His concern for the souls under him was shown in his calling Bowden to evangelise his great labour camps. His biography says of those days: "He had the greatest love for Christian mission work; he loved the missionaries too. He hardly asked or knew the section of the Church of Christ to which they belonged; they were God's servants; they were carrying the personal message of the gospel, with its present blessedness and its future joys, to those around who knew not the Gospel. That was quite sufficient for him. The missionaries always had a ready access to the house, and a hospitable welcome when they came. Many



Arthur Cotton

and many a one could tell of his loving gifts and his self-denying kindness to them in their difficulties. On Sundays a service was held for the English people; my father would often conduct the service himself—reading the prayers, giving out the hymns, and finally reading a sermon from the works of one of his favourite divines. We often went to church at six o'clock in the morning, as later on the heat would have been very trying. His kindness to the people of the country was extraordinary and to all who worked under him; he was greatly beloved, and he is always looked upon by those who have benefited by his labours as their benefactor and friend. They could see the practical results of his toil in the free profusion of water, which passed from the channels which he cut, to their very doors, irrigating their fields and supplying their villages with the much needed streams which saved them from famine, and delivered them from the consequences of flood."

He lived to the great age of 96, rejoicing fervently in God to the last, always "very cheerful and bright, reading his Bible a good deal, but not inclining much to any other book." Shortly before the end, Lady Cotton records: "Early one morning he looked up at me with a strangely earnest expression on his face, as he used these words, 'I have had such a wonderful night,—a wonderful night,—a revelation, a manifestation of God to my soul. He showed me, in a way I could never describe, the finished work of Christ upon the Cross, the completeness of salvation,—all is done. I could never tell you what it was; no words can paint it.'" He fell asleep in Jesus in July, 1899.

Major-General Felix Thackeray Haig, extolled once in Parliament as 'the most talented and devoted Engineer that India ever had,' came from a well-known Irish family of distillers. Arriving in India in 1844, it was there he, in common with so many officers of those times, made that surrender to Christ that revolutionises the life. With him it was no mere profession. The same conspicuous intelligence, energy and force of personality that gave brilliance

to his engineering record, marked his Christian course—he was nothing if not out-and-out. Appointed to Major Cotton's staff for the Dowlaishweram Anicut works, his great promise was at once recognised by that experienced eye, whilst his energy was amazing. A young disciple, he endeared himself to his devout superior by his spiritual keenness and wholehearted acceptance of the call to be a fisher of men; for he earnestly sought the salvation of the souls about him. In Dowlaishweram he found a wife in Christian Anne Learmouth, the youngest sister of Mrs. Cotton, a kindred soul out from Tasmania, and yet in her 'teens.' They were married whilst he was still engaged upon those operations, and spared to one another over fifty years, and in her he found not only a lady of considerable literary ability, but one of gracious and consistent character, wholly one with him in his large-hearted labours, and like him, singularly unspotted by the world, generous, humble, a great personality, and mighty in the strength of her religious convictions.

In 1852 Lieut. Haig came into his own. In the incredibly brief space of three months he threw the great Gannavaram Aquaduct across a branch of the Godavari nearly half a mile in width—one of the most amazing feats in the annals of Indian engineering. Entirely submerged in times of great flood, it yet stands and fulfils its great function! A few years later we find Haig in charge of large operations at Dummagudem, connected with a finely conceived project of his planning to open up 500 miles of the Godavari River to commercial navigation. The great professional interest of the two brothers-in-law in the Upper Godavari awakened deep interest in the aboriginal Kois. In 1860 Col. Cotton published an appeal for the evangelisation of these hill tribes, as told in "The History of the Church Missionary Society." "Two things," said he, "are wanted, to make this country a garden: the natural water and the water of life." The former he was providing, under Government auspices; for the latter he appealed to the Society. But Haig had not waited for the Society. He induced

several engineers, officers and men, to join him in a prayer-meeting in behalf of the surrounding Heathen; and to this prayer God vouchsafed an immediate answer, in the conversion of no less a person than the head of the local commissariat department, a Hindu Rajput named I. Vencatarama Razu. To this man Haig had given a Bible. The very first time he opened it his eye fell upon the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, and he was so struck by it and its context that he at once began praying to 'the Father which seeth in secret.' Presently he came to Haig for instruction, and then a month's leave of absence was granted him to go to Masulipatam and be baptised, there being then no clergyman nearer. His wife threatened, if he went, to leave him for ever. He knelt down and prayed earnestly for her conversion. The next morning she told him that his God should be her God, and together they journeyed to Masulipatam, and were both baptised by Mr. Sharkey," just a month after Cotton's appeal appeared. On leaving Dummagudem, Haig gave the premises he had occupied to the Society, which have been the residence of the missionaries there ever since. On retirement, one of the first acts of General and Mrs. Haig was to go out in 1881 to Dummagudem to take charge of the mission station whilst the Cains took a needed furlough. Eighteen months they spent fostering the cause, and his unquenchable zeal would not let him rest content with just the local work—his yearnings went out to the totally unoccupied Bastar State, where he made his station on the first plateau at Mokpal, 80 miles from Dummagudem; and translating the Gospel of Luke and the First Epistle of John from Telugu into Koi, he had it printed in the Roman character.

Home once more, Gen. Haig's labours on behalf of missions were indefatigable. His plea for Aden in 1882 bore fruit in the going forth of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer, son of Lord Kintore, to pioneer from that centre. Not long after he himself spent two years on arduous travels to Suakin, Hodeida, Aden, Muskat, Bagdad and Damascus, all

in the interests of the Gospel—because of his efforts in behalf of Arabia's neglected millions he was called "the originator of nearly every modern effort to evangelise them." As the years passed, Ireland, Egypt, Algeria, France—all felt the touch of Haig's ardent passion for evangelism. Yet when there came to him a legacy of £15,000 from the whisky business—a huge sum that would have meant so much in the furtherance of all his Gospel interests—he would not touch a penny of it, coming from this tainted source! Worn out with his incessant labours, he fell asleep in Jesus in July, 1901. "There were no last words; they were not needed, for his whole life was a testimony to the grace of God that bringeth salvation." The saintly Mrs. Haig lived on to the great age of 94, passing Home as recently as Feb. 3rd, 1925.

A remarkable incident that occurred in Dowlaishweram during the ~~Ancient~~ works fitly closes this chapter. Told by Lady Hope, the daughter of the Cottons, it is related to her first recollections as a little child living there at the time—of seeing the towering Juggernaut car on its eight huge solid wooden wheels and its tier above tier of six diminishing platforms, surmounted by a canopy with tinkling bells. But what indelibly impressed and terrified her childish imagination was the monstrous idol with its six arms, great red eyes, enormous red mouth, and elephant's ears—this, and the dreadful din of the frenzied crowds, sent her hiding in terror beneath her bed. (What a contrast to the winsome Saviour, to Whom little children came so readily to nestle in His bosom!)

The hero of the incident (presumably, young Haig) had lately become an earnest Christian, and was finding welcome opportunities at Major Cotton's house for Bible study and helpful conversations opening up the truths of salvation. Returning with his Testament in his hand to his quarters on the river bank on the evening of the annual car festival, he encountered the procession, made up largely of the thousands engaged on the anicut works. Powerfully moved

as he saw them utterly carried away by their vain delusions, he could not hold his peace. Lifting up his Testament, he began to preach to them, and the car stopped on its course. "This is the Word of the white man's God," he said. "He has created the whole world. The true God speaks to you. He loves you. He does not want you to delude yourselves with these senseless ceremonies. Listen to what He says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.' 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.'" At this point the Brahmin priests became very excited and angry, crying, "Gag him! Drown him! He is speaking strange words against our god—tie him up and put him in the river!" "No, no," the workmen shouted, "he is a good man! He is our paymaster. He gives us all our money, and never holds back one pice; he pays it all. We will hear what he says." And the next moment the young officer found strong arms hoisting him up on to the platform of the car, and an expectant throng awaiting his message. Summoning all his powers in Telugu, he earnestly proclaimed to them what he had been learning of late of the glorious Gospel story of salvation. His message delivered, he jumped lightly down and slipped away to his quarters, the larger part of the awestruck crowd dispersing at the same time, to the chagrin of the priests.

That night, asleep on his cot, he was awakened by a touch on his shoulder in the dark, and a voice whispering, "Do not fear, sir! It is I, your maistry. You know me well. I have come to ask if you believe what you said on the car; is it true?" In low tones he again went over God's way of salvation and prayed with him, and the maistry stole away avowing his resolution to be a Christian and serve the engineer's God. He told his intention to his wife, who reviled him and refused to have anything more to do with him. Now an outcaste, he continued in his post at the works, protected by the engineers. Every week he placed money at his wife's door to provide for his family, which at length won her over to seek reconciliation, as well as win-

ning the respect of his neighbours. When the officer went on furlough, the maistry, coming to bid him farewell on the deck of the little steamer that was to take him down to the coast, begged one page of his Testament that he might look on it every day of his absence, and then broke down, unable to say another word. "You shall have the whole book," he said, and put the Testament into his hands. Years later he had the joy of hearing that he had diligently taught others what he learnt from the Book.

CHAPTER XVI

Dowlaishweram, 1837, 1848

Major Cotton's brilliant Report and astonishingly economical proposals to harness the Godavari where it commands two thousand square miles of the richest alluvial land, and make this noble river, which hitherto had run in comparative uselessness to the sea, send abroad in a thousand channels that fertilising fluid so precious in the arid East that it has been felicitously likened to 'liquid gold,' were unreservedly approved in Madras, and sanctioned by the Court of Directors in London in their Despatch of December 23rd, 1846. Cotton was allotted a set of four excellent officers—"the hardest working fellows I ever saw. Young Haig, I think, is the most promising engineer I have known"—and some very good non-commissioned officers. To enrol and administer labour for the works, the services of a most able Civilian, Mr. Henry Forbes, were requisitioned; his vigorous measures soon assembled a force of 10,000 coolies, 500 carpenters and 500 smiths for the operations begun in April, 1847. The preparatory works permitted the employment of women and children as well as men, but even afterwards, when the constructional work was restricted to male labour, the average number at work in the seasons of 1848, 1849 and 1850 was no less than 6,500.

The fervent Cotton could not see so many thousands gathered in his labour camps and remain indifferent to the claims of the Gospel in so unique an opportunity—some capable worker must be found to undertake their evangelisation. He was seeking aid of God for this, when one day he saw a tall, powerfully-built, sun-tanned European moving amongst the workpeople; somewhat shabbily dressed,

there was yet something in his presence and earnest address, and in the perfect familiarity he showed with the common speech and habit of the people, that captivated Cotton. Here was the very man he was seeking!—a keen Gospeller thoroughly at home in vernacular speech, willing to spend and be spent in the quest for souls. Also Bowden's connection with Mr. Groves was a guarantee of his being an evangelist of the right type for the work. Major Cotton cordially invited him to give himself to this work, and offered to put a dwelling-place at their disposal. An exercised heart concerning this great opportunity having brought Bowden up from Palakol, this earnest invitation confirmed it as a call from God. Without further hesitation they removed with their family of five boys, and took up residence in quarters allotted them in a tope on the river bank at Dowlaishweram. From camp to camp the untiring servant of God moved, proclaiming salvation by Jesus Christ to all, undeterred by the burning sun in the day, or by bodily fatigue at night. On Sundays, when work closed down, there were the Europeans to be ministered to. The unflinching kindness and sympathy of the Cottons sustained them; from that bundle of amazing energy, young Haig, came many a word of encouragement, for he too was intent on winning souls, and found one trophy those days in the conversion of a brother-officer. Comrades from outside, including Mr. Fox, cheered them by visits of co-operation. It was a most happy feature to have their constituency gathered to them *en masse*, instead of having to go out and find them in groups in their villages by wearisome itineration; and as large numbers came only for a limited time, and were succeeded by fresh drafts in periodical succession, the hearing was greatly multiplied. Like the engineers, their labours were incessant, but with this difference—for the time being there was practically nothing to show for them. But witness was borne to them by all godly Europeans who during this time had the opportunity of watching their work and zeal for the Lord. To Mr. Groves Col. Cotton wrote of

both Bowden and Beer, "What a blessing for India if such men could be found everywhere!" Capt. Rundall and Major Buckle bore the same testimony.

"The only immediately apparent results were that two men professed to believe in Jesus," records Mr. Bowden. "One of them died shortly after professing his faith in Jesus, and the other, a widower, followed me to Palakol with his two children, a boy and a girl; they remained there nearly two years, but without being baptised, and at the end of this period he removed to Mooramunda." Of the former case Lady Cotton gives some particulars in her *Reminiscences*: Bowden "was walking in the quarry, then a busy scene, and heard some of the workmen scoffing and taunting one of their number with belonging to Jesus Christ. Mr. Bowden asked the meaning of this, and while the man accused said nothing, the others persisted it was true, that he was always thinking of Jesus Christ and His Word. Mr. Bowden left the place, intending to take another opportunity of finding out more, and for that purpose went again to the quarry a day or two later. On entering it he met the man of whom he had heard these things, leaving his work stricken with cholera, his companions still following him with taunts: 'You need not be afraid to die; you'll go to Jesus Christ.' He died that night, declaring himself a believer, and charging his wife to allow no heathen ceremonies when he was gone." The other, Balla Subbanna, or Francis, after his settlement in Muramunda won Gollapalli Nathaniel for Christ, and through him became the means of establishing the very fruitful Gospel cause of the Eastern Delta. As the years passed they found abundant evidence of the seed-sowing of those two years having borne fruit (not a little of it reaped by other missions), so that the final results will endure after the last stone of the magnificent Anicut has crumbled to dust.

Another heathen-convert victim of cholera in Dowlaishweram those days was a Vellama youth, Venkatachala-paty, the firstfruit of Mr. Noble's school, removed there by

his people after his baptism to hinder his further profession of the Christian faith.

An instructive incident affecting the engineering operations is worth recording. His superhuman labours imposed upon an overwrought frame caused a break-down in health necessitating Major Cotton taking a change to Australia, when he gave over charge to his trusted and highly competent assistant, Capt. Orr. But with the change came a slackening in the strict observance of Sunday cessation of work. One officer, in charge of a particular section, systematically desecrated the Lord's day, going so far as to dismiss a European under-officer who, saying 'he never had, and he never would,' had refused to work on the Sabbath. It was precisely in this officer's section that serious breaches shortly after occurred, causing grave anxiety and very expensive measures to make good. And practically all the severe setbacks of this nature occurred during Cotton's absence: "it was as if the river owned its master's hand, and there is an immediate change of tone in the record, and even in the fortune of war," wrote one in 'Blackwood's Magazine.' We assert it was the sovereign hand of Cotton's God, for 'them that honour Me, I will honour,' He says.

Their residence in Dowlaishweram brought the Bowdens domestic happiness and sorrow. A widowed sister, Ann, had joined them from England, to find a home and to help with the lively handful of boys. Mr. Valett, of the Lutheran Mission, joined now in Rajahmundry by two colleagues, Messrs. Heise and Groenning, sought her hand, and they were married at the close of 1847. This temporary link between the two missions bore pleasant fruit in collaboration in Gospel itineration. For a little prior to the wedding, Beer, taking with him the young recruit, Heise, joined the ardent Walter Gunn (then holding the fort alone in Guntur) on a Gospel tour in the Palnad, which had first been visited by Heyer and Valett in 1843, and already showed promise of the big ingathering of the following years. Gunn and Beer were kindred spirits. Though the

fires of consumption were already sapping his physical frame, nothing could quench the flame of Gunn's passion for souls, that they might be truly converted to God—only spared seven years, to the end (on July 5th, 1851) he persevered in speaking of Christ to all who visited him in his sick room. To Judge Rohde, who visited him the day before he died, he feebly whispered, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

India took sad toll in those times of young wives and children, and in less than a year they were mourning Mrs. Valett's early decease—her tomb bears the date, Oct. 29th, 1848, and the words, "Who fell asleep in Jesus—To me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Within two months of this sad event the Bowdens were called to part with their beloved little Robert, the only one of their seven they lost in childhood. The circumstances were very touching. Whilst the child was lying very ill, came the time for Mr. Bowden to pay his monthly weekend visit to Palakol, and it was a question whether or not he should go that time. His accustomed strong sense of duty prevailed, and he decided to set aside domestic ties for the sake of the Lord and His needy flock. He went, and preached from the words, "Lord, that I may receive my sight," and as he preached the Spirit strove with one who had long attended heedlessly the Gospel ministry, Chedalada Francis, until he cried, "Lord, I need the eyes of my mind opened," and yielded himself wholly to Christ. On his return to Dowlaishweram Mr. Bowden found little Robert dead! They gave back to God a son in the flesh that day. In return He gave them a *son in the faith*, who for over fifty years was to be a fruitful witness for Christ to his own people, and a great comfort to their own hearts!

In 1848 came their second Pushkaram Festival, and as Dowlaishweram and Rajahmundry are points of the greatest sanctity, drawing huge concourses of pilgrims, their opportunity for special Gospel testimony was great. But

as the year drew to its close, the impression grew that, with two years given to this most important service in Dowlaishweram, his work there was done, and it was time to return to Palakol and resume regular service in that centre. Mr. Bowden all along had paid monthly visits, and in his absence Mr. D'Bras exercised such pastoral care as he was capable of. But promising developments called for the direct care of their father in Christ, especially in bringing on new enquirers who were coming forward. He talked it over with Mrs. Bowden. Her recent bereavements disposed her to move, but an approaching confinement made her hesitate. Just then one of the children had an attack of croup that obliged their getting medical advice five successive nights. The doctor strongly advised a change as soon as they could arrange it. This decided them. As soon as possible after the birth of their sixth son, Francis, they moved back to Palakol. Scarcely had they gone when a flood came and filled their house with water; and this was quickly followed by the last flood of that monsoon season, which destroyed the house altogether! The house was only a temporary structure, but its collapse crushed their furniture still awaiting removal, and God's deliverance of themselves was so marked as to cause much thanksgiving. When they heard of the destruction of the house and furniture, Mrs. Bowden especially regretted the loss of a little time-piece that stood on the table, and her little boy, Fred, a large Bible in which he could read nicely; but they learnt afterwards a friend had kindly removed both, and was keeping them safely to restore to them.

Just at this time came the sad tidings of the death in England at the early age of 31 years of dear Mr. Fox, on Oct. 14th., only a fortnight before the great Jubilee Meeting of the Church Missionary Society, for which occasion he wrote his famous missionary hymn, 'I hear ten thousand voices singing.'

We may record here too the birth in Dowlaishweram on April 30th, 1849, of Charles Henry, the youngest child

of Mr. and Mrs. Beer, who followed in the succession, and put in 55 years of service. Mother and son, living in the same house in Narsapur, maintained unbroken service from 1841 to 1921, and never took a furlough home! His widow still survives, after completing sixty years' unbroken residence in that house! She went 27 years before taking a furlough!

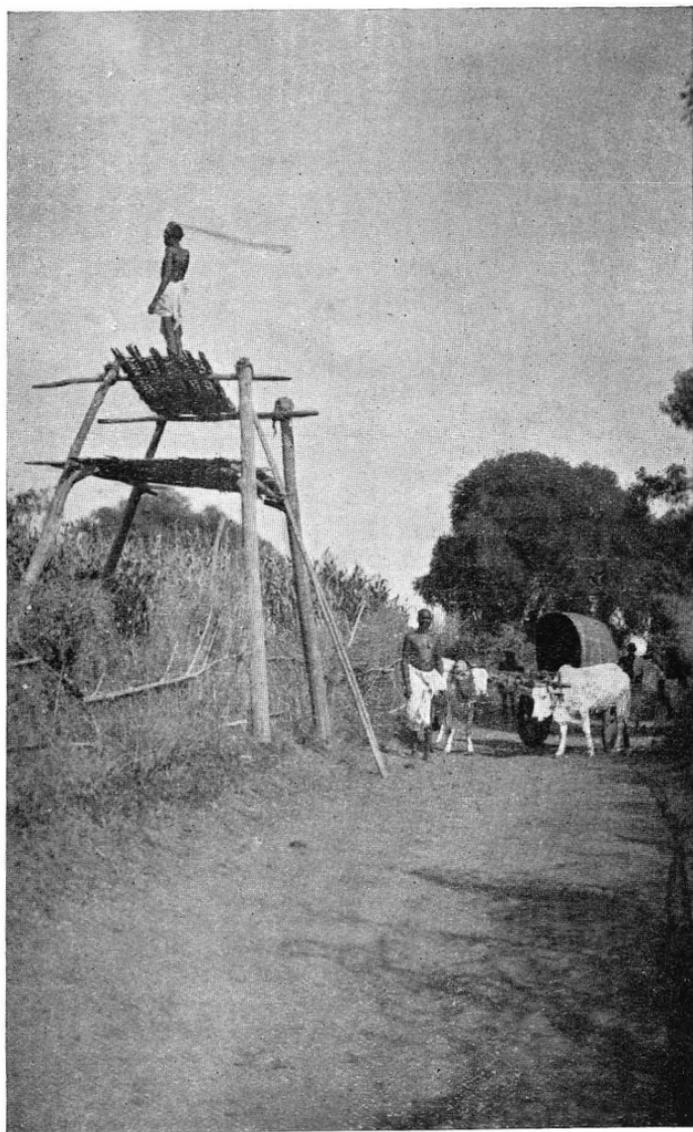
CHAPTER XVII

The Godavari Delta Mission

It is to the Dowlaishweram interlude we trace the origin of the above designation of the work that has had currency during the past ninety years, and finds natural employment in the 'Memoir of A. N. Groves.' It is interesting to see how it arose.

This tender-hearted man of God shared with some others a live concern at the scanty support afforded the Godavari workers. Writing May 9th, 1847, he says: "I am sometimes anxious about the Bowdens, Beers and Aroolappen; still I trust in the Lord for them; but the departure of Hull has been a great loss, for when I leave I can commit them to so few who have the means and inclination to help; however, we must wait patiently, and see what the Lord does for us in these matters." He had not long to wait, for his Journal on June 26th tells of four whom the Lord was stirring up for their help: "I have had a letter from George Beer to-day, wishing me to go up and work with them. He tells me Major Cotton, and Mr. Stokes, with Mr. Fox and Mr. Noble, are going to do all they can for them. I do love to see these brethren of the Church of England contributing to the support of poor, unordained Baptist missionaries. Truly I should hate myself, if I allowed any formal differences to rob me of their love, or them of mine."

Bowden's remove to Dowlaishweram awakened the Major's practical interest in their support. The trip to Guntur and the Palnad brought Beer into fresh contact with that missions' enthusiast, Mr. Stokes, and he was moved to assist with his generous means. Their frequent resort to Bunder made the noble missionaries there acquainted with



[Photo by Rev. C. G. Early

AN UPLAND SCENE
guarding the millet crop

their general temporal circumstances. It was they who now took the initiative, as the Journal informs us in August: "I have such a nice letter from Messrs. Fox and Noble, a circular on behalf of Bowden and Beer, so sweetly catholic. Their system may be sectarian, but they are not so; and it is ten times better to have to do with those who are catholic in a sectarian system, than those who are sectarian with no system. Dear good men! I do so love them, and hope to write to-day to Mr. Fox, and tell them how their grace and kindness refresh me. If the time should ever come that we have more than our own immediate work required, how happy we should be to help them, even as they have helped our brethren."

The effort thus launched soon saw funds flow in from the many who knew and appreciated the work of our brethren, and needed but a definite lead to be given them to respond generously. Brethren in Madras were found to act as treasurers. But how was the fund to be designated? 'The Narsapur Baptist Mission,' by which they had been known, no longer met the case, now the main centre of operations was transferred to Dowlaishweram, and reached out to all the delta area. Hence quite naturally the term, 'The Godavari Delta Mission,' was adopted, as giving accurate geographical definition of their activities, whilst divesting it of any token of denominationalism. By that name it has been known ever since.

Mr. Bowden states that for some three or four years this fund met their family necessities, and enabled them to support their schools and other means they used to extend the knowledge of the Word of God; but it did not suffice for extra expenses, as printing tracts, and taking long Gospel tours. Happily, in the early part of 1846, Mr. George Müller had the need of such brethren laid heavily upon his heart, and was now effectively wrestling with God for greatly increased means to minister to their necessities; and by this they also benefited. But Bowden, in his sterling uprightness, had a scruple about appropriating any of

the money given for the mission for the education of his children, and when pressed by his wife on the subject, constantly replied, "The Lord will show us His mind by sending us something for that express object"; and his steadfast faith did not go unrewarded. Indeed, the practical Cottons were not the people to see those five boys in the household and remain oblivious to the special need they presented. Another fund was set on foot for the children's schooling, and by this means the elder daughter of the Beers, and their eldest two boys, were sent to Madras for education.

The pertinent fact is not to be passed in silence that all this was coincident with the suicidal strife and division convulsing the Brethren movement at home, and that plunged the anguished Groves into the utmost depths of depression, as his Memoir reveals. It is an illuminating comment upon it all, that, with the honourable exception of the level-headed Müller, none amidst that shameful contention seem to have retained care for the Lord's needy servants in heathen lands. To their shame it has to be said that those years saw no new missionaries sent forth from their assemblies; and the few with claims upon them had to be succoured by solicitous members of the Establishment, and the institution by them of these special funds!

As usually happens, these local funds fluctuated. Just before Mr. Groves finally left India in August, 1852, the strife unhappily spread to Madras and played havoc with them, giving him new concern. To his comfort, Major and Mrs. Bell continued true to the cause he espoused, and in their house he found fellowship now refused him in many other quarters, a fellowship shared by the Anglican Cottons and the Presbyterian Bruces—"The steamer came in last evening, while the Bruces, Buckles, Cottons and ourselves were met for prayer"—the Bruces and Buckles being congenial fellow-passengers on the voyage home. Sadly turning his back on Madras' troubled waters, and oppressed with the calamitous effect upon the funds, Groves resolved to make

it his special business at home to arouse assemblies from their sinful neglect, and to set on foot definitive measures for their proper support. November found him in London, where he met with encouraging success. "I went to Tottenham, and endeavoured to interest them about missions; spoke of Bowden, Beer, and Aroolappen; and, in the evening, brought the subject before the church,—and they hope, in union with believers in Hackney, Orchard St. and other places, to form an effectual committee to care for these things. This has been a great comfort to me. I live in hope that the Lord will yet let His goodness shine upon us, and deliver us from every trial. I feel thankful I came home: many things have been accomplished by it." His bodily sufferings and weakness ever increasing, he still keeps this object in view, and in March he again writes: "Should the Lord give me a little strength again, which I quite hope He may, I think I could do a great deal towards the support of our missionary helpers, by laying their case before His people. There is an increasing interest about missions, especially at Tottenham and Hackney, and I expect something effectual will be done for the dear Bowdens, Beer and Aroolappen."

But the hand of death was now manifestly upon him. He had but exchanged the mental and spiritual sufferings of those last years in India for the agonies of cancer of the stomach. Yet the lofty faith of the war-worn saint triumphed over all. He who had, in his long-continued deep depression of spirits, characteristically found consolation in the reflection that "to feel ourselves the Lord's free-born children in the way of holiness, is a most privileged place, amidst all the bondage of earth's cares," now in anguish of body found rest in personal union with his Saviour. "I long to rest, I long to sink into Jesus' arms. I long to rest in the arms of my beloved.

'Oh! precious Saviour, friend unseen,
Since on Thine arm Thou bidst us lean,
I cling to Thee.' Yes, I do."

Murmuring 'Precious Jesus,' he leaned his head on his hand, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, in the house of Mr. George Müller, on May 20th, 1853, at the age of 58.

Mr. Groves had accomplished his self-appointed task. The meetings mentioned, with others, took up the matter heartily. The first missionary periodical, 'The Missionary Reporter,' was launched in July, with Mr. Van Sommer, of Tottenham, as editor, and ran its course for several years, to be succeeded, after a break, by 'The Missionary Echo' in 1872, edited by Mr. Henry Groves. Mr. Yapp at Orchard St., and Messrs. Heath and Berger of Hackney, earnestly co-operated, gathering helpful data and statistics to stimulate more intelligent interest, whilst the monthly publication of letters from the field (including those of Hudson Taylor in China) laid the foundation of that warm missionary interest that has since placed the Open Brethren in the very front rank in its missionary force proportionate to membership. It is wholly significant that those who fomented strife and division, with their extensive followings, have been as conspicuously non-missionary, as the Open Brethren they unite in repudiating have been the opposite. Which means, stated in other words, with whatever failings and inadequacies, the Open Brethren have ever essentially been keen Gospellers.

Then in India, revival blessing led to the starting, in July, 1860, of a similar undenominational magazine, 'The Indian Watchman,' which naturally became the organ for the Godavari Delta Mission Fund. In its issue for February, 1861, we read: "Of the Mission I would observe that a committee was formed in this country, consisting of Capt. Rundall, Major Dobbie and Capt. Haig—not for the purpose, however, of control, but to assist in providing funds for carrying on the work, and it is with great regret Capt. Rundall remarks there has this year been a great falling off in sums received."

Surveying the Brethren movement from a detached standpoint made possible by the lapse of 110 years since its inception, we presume few now would dispute the state-

ment that, from those connected with its origin, there arise three outstanding figures who, having left their mark upon it wholly for good, have won the approbation of the true church of God universal in these succeeding generations. Of this remarkable trio, Anthony Norris Groves was the inspired exponent of true catholicity of Christian fellowship, and its missionary enthusiast and pioneer; his brother-in-law, George Müller, the man of miracle-working faith and prayer that has given inspiration to the whole evangelical world of the past century; and Robert Chapman, their mutual friend, the man of exemplary holiness that entered deeper than others into God's blessed secrets.

Yet it is a remarkable fact that in that province the devoted Groves made peculiarly his own—missions to the heathen—he virtually failed. No one brought to the task a more consecrated spirit, a greater loyalty to Scripture, a finer example of the mind and spirit of Christ; allied thereto were great energy and natural intelligence of the highest order. But nowhere did he succeed in establishing amongst the heathen a work instinct with self-propagating power from above, giving it continuance to the present time. Many were converted under his English ministry, and some native converts became fine witnesses for Christ to their fellows. Permanence of church testimony, however, is lacking. When in December, 1854, his son handed over the Chittoor work to Dr. Henry Scudder, of the newly constituted American Arcot Mission, there ended a most interesting and instructive experiment in mission work amongst the heathen. To more able and godly hands than those of the famous three Scudder brothers, it could not have been transferred; and they appreciated Mr. Groves as "an English layman of undoubted zeal and piety, but holding unique and independent doctrinal views." But now the work was merged in an organised Mission, and lost that simple, independent—yet Spirit-dependent—standing for which Mr. Groves strove, in his ideal to restore the pattern of the New Testament churches. The experiment of those seventeen years yields

valuable lessons to those who read his 'Memoir' closely. But his aim failed of achievement.

Yet where the able, consecrated Groves failed, the humble Godavari brethren succeeded. Lacking his advantages of birth, education and ministerial gift, how are we to explain the laying by them of foundations so deep and solid that the work not only abides to-day, but steadily grows with the passage of time? We would suggest their very obscurity and isolation were of advantage. But the true secret of their success undoubtedly lies in the fact that, whilst scarcely second to a Groves in devotion and godliness, they brought to their task a Devonshire doggedness that made them stick resolutely to the first essential—a thorough equipping themselves with the speech and idiom and thought of the people, so that they won to the very first rank as *vernacular* workers. 'This one thing I do' was the animating spirit. Thoroughly equipped, they pursued their missionary duties with invincible patience and marvellous endurance. Groves, versatile and sanguine, lacked their simplicity of approach to the common goal, and eminent stickability. It is therefore to Bowden and Beer we must turn for guidance as to how most successfully to adopt and apply methods of vernacular work.

CHAPTER XVIII

Station Work in the Early Times

The New Year of 1849 saw the Bowdens settled again in Palakol. The first of the enquirers to be baptised after their return were Ganti Chelliah and his wife, of Tundururu, their first converts from the Malas, the other great, and higher, section of the outcastes. He left his village and settled in Palakol, and proved a steadfast convert, and was a great comfort to Mr. Bowden. The other family added to the church in 1849 was composed of Chedalada Francis, his mother, and a sister—the first of many worthy believers and workers bearing this honoured housename. Francis, whose conversion is told in Chapter 16, took the name of the infant boy in the mission house, whose merry play it was always a delight to watch; as did also his fellow-enquirer, Subbanna, who later removed to Muramanda. The next three years saw fifteen or so baptised, several of them members of the large Chedalada family, but also Kankiparti Mamidi, of Rayapadu, and S. Philip, who pointed Emberu, the first convert, to Christ—his matrimonial tangle had by now been unravelled, and with him were baptised his wife and two others of the family. So the household of faith grew, and with it pastoral care and responsibility.

A constant problem was how to arrange means of livelihood for those who had to leave their villages, and settle at the station. The raw denizen of a Madiga hamlet was quite unfit for indoor domestic service. In Peter's son, James, however, they found a promising young man to train, but when they took him in, their Pariah servants at once left, refusing to work with one from the leather-workers—so

strong are caste distinctions even amongst the outcastes! Capt. Haig engaged Francis and Philip as colporteurs. A few years later an attempt was made to solve the problem by means of a farm colony, in which scheme Chelliah, as headman, proved his sterling worth. But the problem yet evades a satisfactory solution.

The Breaking of Bread has always been observed in the Godavari on the Lord's day afternoon, a practice initiated by the lonely missionaries in the beginning to give themselves the pathetic satisfaction of knowing they were sitting down to the Feast at exactly the same time as their fellow-believers in Barnstaple. The weekly Prayer meeting was on Friday; a Scripture-reading meeting on Monday. Few outside the highest castes could read in those times, so a task of primary importance was the formation of a *literate* community, and hence the place given to schools as an auxiliary to their work.

However straitened they might be in means, the Bowdens always had a number of girls under instruction in the native language, to whom they gave rice, and every Sunday a clean jacket and petticoat. The Scriptures in Telugu then available—the New Testament, Pentateuch and Psalms—were the main school-books, from which the children daily committed portions to memory; in addition they had lessons in writing and arithmetic, and in needlework (including crochet work, for which the Godavari later acquired worldwide note). Instead of paper they had each a strip of the palmyra leaf, about an inch and a half broad and one or two feet long. This they held in the left hand, and in the right, instead of pen and ink, they grasped a style, which they rested against a notch in the left thumb nail, and scratched the words on the leaf, rubbing them over afterwards with powdered charcoal to make the letters black. Difficult and awkward as we would now think it, from long habit the natives wrote in this way quite neatly and quickly. Their books were of the same material, only the strips were shorter, and all cut to the same length and breadth, and kept together

by a string fastened to a bit of bamboo stick, long enough to allow the strips to be separated for reading, and when not in use, twisted round them.

For some fifteen years these girls came entirely from the outcastes, many of whose families yielded the first converts. Helena and Charlotte D'Bras, most intelligent young women, did splendid work in the school, and carried it on when Mrs. Bowden was absent on furlough. The value Mr. Bowden attached to their work is shown in an incident he records in 1858, when, newly returned from his first furlough, he writes of a Scripture-reading meeting attended by James, Francis, Jane, Susan, Julia, Helena and her mother: "I was greatly comforted in several ways. We read Ephesians, and I could not help saying to Helena the next day, 'Be not weary in well doing.' I referred especially to the fact that all the readers present, seven in number, were taught to read in our poor, little (to man's eye) *insignificant* school—seven young Christians reading and studying the Word of the living God; my soul was humbled and gladdened."

The school was an effective instrument in winning heathen converts. It was a sister of Francis who was in the school from its beginning was used for bringing that large and influential family into the Christian fold. And there was the girl of about thirteen years of age, whose mind had been favourably affected by the Word of God—forced into a marriage against her wish, she positively refused to pay homage to the idols worshipped on such an occasion; she acquired influence over her husband, who would sometimes let her read to him, and occasionally even kneel with her while she engaged in prayer. Such fruit was very valuable at that early stage of the work.

Dispensary work was another important branch of station activity, concerning which we quote Mr. Bowden's remarks, alluding in one of his letters to excessive preoccupation with the *nursing* of the sick in their community. "It will perhaps be inexplicable to you why their sicknesses should so entirely occupy my time; but we have here no

medical aid; and, from the Christians being a defiled caste, no responsible native doctor will touch them to ascertain the nature and extent of their disease." (NOTE:—Happily this no longer holds). "Then again, all their notions of disease and its treatment are so directly contrary to European notions that it is absolutely useless to prescribe for them, unless you nurse them also. I have had as many as five patients to prescribe for and to nurse at the same time. Many of the cases have been very serious ones—fevers of various types, liver and other serious diseases, which, from my knowing nothing of medicine, except as I have been forced by circumstances to consider something of it, has pressed very much upon my mind, as well as taxed my time, and I have had some anxiety from not having on hand the proper medicines indicated by the symptoms; and to give an idea how we are situated, I must say we are more than 300 miles from a druggist's shop, our nearest being Madras, and at that place medicines are highly priced and post charges are also high, besides the difficulty of writing for medicines except one ordered a quantity at once."

It is to be remarked that Mr. Bowden became a skilled practitioner of homœopathy and in the application of potent salves and ointments. It was he who originated a product afterwards commercially exploited and boomed as 'Homocea—that touches the spot!'; whilst a similar product of remarkable virtue, 'Bowden's Indian Balm,' perpetuates his name. Mrs. Bowden did not profess to share her husband's native skill, but nevertheless, in his frequent and long absences on itineration, had to carry on as best she could. When nonplussed as to how a particular case was to be treated, she settled the point by dispensing from the *fullest* bottle! But before and after doing so, she spoke to them of God's power to heal and prayed that He would bless the means used, and before dismissing them begged them to come again as soon as they were better that they might thank Him together. God so honoured her faith that cures were granted, and many a time thanks were returned to the

'good God' Who had heard their prayers! With her very keen sense of humour, she could not refrain from a reverent chuckle as she recounted these experiences in after years!

Then there was the never-ceasing witness-bearing, especially to the caste Hindus. "We endeavour to speak to all we meet of Christ, and to show them that neither their idols nor their supposed virtue can save them. They have their own ideas of God, the soul, and other things, which are directly contrary to the Scripture statements. These therefore we have to combat. Then caste distinctions have erected a formidable barrier to our free intercourse with the people, and humanly speaking, a great obstacle in the way of many to a profession of Christ." Then he mentions the case of Kondiah, of Penumadam. "An interesting youth of about 20 years of age who was in the habit of coming to this town almost daily from a village several miles off, one day fell in with one of the Christians, who spoke to him of Christ. He was much taken with the truth and usually called at this Christian's house daily, and heard from him more and more of Christ. He had previously a great desire to learn to read, and showed great feeling for the truth. I really felt attached to him, for he seemed to possess naturally much simplicity and truthfulness of character, with considerable intelligence, joined to much natural affection and care for the wants of those he had left. He has a father and a widowed sister; also an aged grandmother who is blind. The dear youth remained here for three days, and resisted all the attempts of his other relatives to draw him away to his home; but on the following Sunday his father and sister came and set up such a piercing lamentation, that he was unable to resist it, and went away with them. Now I know that except for the idea of the degradation of losing caste, none of his relatives would have thus tried him. Dear fellow, he came again this day week and sat for an hour; I read with him the 15th of Luke, and he left again for his home. The truth has, I doubt not, taken a deep hold upon his mind, and I look out that one day

he will have strength to confess publicly." Kondiah "has been here again to visit me, and a friend with him. I read a few verses with him. He mentioned to me that he rents a plot of ground for which he pays Rs. 10 a year, chiefly to employ his father on. For advance for the rent of this he is dependent on an uncle who is utterly opposed to his coming to me, even as a visitor. I have told him that I will make myself responsible for the amount he has to pay to Government—the first crop in December ought to pay nearly the whole amount; so that the help he will require will be but a trifle, and that to be repaid from the produce of the field. This is one of the ways we are often called upon to supply temporary aid to those around us."

Already encouraging evidences were being afforded that the impact of Christian life and ethic manifested in the converts and imparting to them new worth and dignity, was having its slow but sure effect in gradually relaxing the rigid bonds of caste restrictions. Mr. Bowden mentions two significant incidents in 1854. "Whenever a carpenter or other man of a caste was working at our house, he would not touch water for any purpose for which he may require it from the hands of any of our servants, whether Christian or otherwise. Now a worker in horn is sitting not far from where I am writing, making some crochet needles required for Mrs. Bowden's girls' school. James has brought some water to clean some household furniture; the horn-worker says, 'James, give me some water for my whetstone to sharpen my plane iron.' Eighteen years ago it would have been as readily concluded that men would have wings to fly with, as that a caste man would take water from the hands of one who had been a chuckler. I once saw a man of the artificer caste creep into a corner and make himself as small as possible, not to avoid the actual touch of a chuckler, but for fear the person would come within several feet of him." And again: "Philip and Francis distributed no less than 900 tracts at Wanapalle Festival—as 'Chucklers' neither of these men dared have appeared amidst the reading population; but,

as Christians, we behold the strange scene of thousands of people crowding around them, and 1,000 individuals taking from their hands the tracts which tell of Jesus Christ the only Saviour of men."

CHAPTER XIX

Converts from Caste, 1850-1851

It was at this time God gave Messrs. Bowden and Beer a remarkable accession of converts from caste.

Of these, the first was Vasa Panchakshari, of Tirupati-padu. Although of a high caste of weavers, he followed music and the drama, and taking the part of female characters, he acquired a high reputation from Nuzvid to Vizianagaram in the performances he gave before rajahs and rich people, and having relatives in Palakol, he was well-known there and often invited to perform by its wealthy inhabitants. He heard Mr. Bowden preach in the street, and being acquainted with Hindu philosophy, he became curious to know more about this Christian religion. He sought an interview with Mr. Bowden, and the result was a complete conviction of the truth of Christianity and an immediate acceptance of Christ as his personal Saviour, with a willingness to confess his new-found faith. Mr. Beer was summoned from Narsapur, and set off with him to his village. Arriving at night, Mr. Beer was lodged at the temple, and Panchakshari proceeded to his house. His wife, Saramma, at once noticed a great change in him, for he omitted his customary Siva puja and prayers. In the morning Mr. Beer was brought to the house, and there, before his assembled kith and kin, he announced his new faith, to their utter astonishment and consternation. His two daughters, already married, were at once removed from the house by their husbands' people. Panchakshari, abandoning house and property, removed to Mr. Beer's compound with his wife and two sons—one of whom, Kotiah Garu, at the venerable age of 90, was present at the Centenary Convention as the Grand Old Man of the Godavari; the other,

that great servant of God, Yohan Garu, than whom no greater nor more highly gifted son has yet been given to His church in the Godavari.

Panchakshari was openly baptised by Mr. Beer at Holland Wharf about 1850, when he threw into the Godavari River his cherished gold 'lingakaya' worn next to his heart, and the 'rudrakshas' hung with silver chains round his neck. He was given employment as Telugu pundit in the mission school. Later, when the Tirugudumetta colony of converts was formed, Panchakshari was transferred there to shepherd the congregation in the absence of Mr. Beer, and to superintend the temporal affairs of the colony. Needless to say, the singing of the congregation was a marked feature under his leadership! But alas! his valuable life was early terminated by fever.

His successor as pastor to the little Tirugudumetta flock was **Gadhamchetti Simeon**, of the neighbouring village of Pangidi, on the Madras-Calcutta trunk road, along which Mr. Bowden had carried the Gospel as early as 1841. Simeon was a farmer of the Balji caste, and had also been a Siva devotee, and a guru amongst his people. A grey-headed man of very lovable disposition, he is always spoken of as 'dear old Simeon.' He possessed considerable intelligence, and charming simplicity of character, and was marked by fervent, simple faith in the Saviour, keenness to increase his knowledge of the Scriptures, and habits of prayer and witness-bearing. He bore a very heavy cross for Christ, for when he was baptised and broke caste, he stuck to his village and home despite the furious persecution united in by all the caste and village, headed by his enraged wife and eldest son. This son, Palliah, was afterwards converted, and became Mr. Bowden's horse-boy. But the wife remained bitterly opposed to the end, treating her husband like a dog and putting food to him outside his own house, to which he meekly submitted that his bitter wife and children might not be cast out of their home by the villagers. All insults

and sufferings were patiently borne for Christ's sake, and only fanned the flame of his devotion to Him.

His hold on God was sweetly simple. Telling Mr. Bowden once of his deliverance from an embroilment by the unexpected visit and intervention of a Mala enquirer, he said: "The Lord is very gracious. He always puts me behind, and brings someone forward to be a shelter for me." Then, referring to a text that had been given them, 'A mother may forget her suckling child, but Jehovah will not forget His people,' he said, "Ah, that is true." His former position as a guru made it natural for him to take over the pastoral charge of Tirugudumetta, and being a good singer, he maintained its high standard of song. Having relatives farther inland, Simeon was a great help both to Mr. Beer and to Mr. Bowden in their first tours in the Reddisema and amongst the Kois; and the last we read of him is accompanying Mr. Bowden to Rudramkota and Rekapalle in his first attempt, in 1856, to attend the Bhadrachalam Festival. He had just come from the Antarvedi Festival, where he led the singing and was foremost in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was a worthy close to those years of great persecution and diligent witness. Mr. Bowden, who survived him nearly twenty years, was gladdened by fragrant evidence of the fruit they bore only a few weeks before he himself passed in to his reward.

Now follow the Tirugudumetta caste converts—**Chorapalli Thomas**, an elderly weaver, followed later in baptism by his wife, daughter and son-in-law; and **Durdala Samuel**, a Kapu farmer, joined afterwards by his mother. Their baptism at Rajahmundry in 1851 will be told farther on, as also the persecutions they bore. (Associated with them is a Madiga convert of Tirugudumetta, **Chedalada Daniel**, the forerunner of that other branch of the Chedalada sept that has yielded some of the foremost church-members and workers of later years).

Whilst their labours were being thus crowned with the ingathering of this remarkable cluster of converts from

caste, Mrs. Bowden and her five boys took the first furlough home. She had now been nearly fifteen years in the country, with only the one change in 1842 to Chittoor. In these years she had brought up six children, and the strain had told upon her health. There was, moreover, the important matter of the boys' schooling and placing out in life—for Madras had not been found satisfactory for this. All pointed to the desirability of going to England.

But the expense appeared prohibitive—£500 or so was the normal fare in those days for such a family party! And it was not the simple journey of to-day—she must be prepared for a voyage of anything from three to six months, sailing round the Cape, with a stock of clothes both for the heat of the torrid zones, and for the icy cold winds from the Antarctic and the bitter gales of the North Atlantic. Truly, a formidable proposition! But once assured it was the right course to take, none of the difficulties dismayed this woman of faith. The text God gave her to lay hold upon in this exigency was, "Behold, He taketh up the isles as *a very little thing*." If the British Isles were 'a very little thing' to the Lord, how could she doubt His seeing her through? Fortified by this invincible trust, the practical house-mother began to get together the required stock of clothes.

And now God began to work. Gifts came in from His people for this special need, even from far-away places in India. Gratifying as such tokens were, the sum total was quite inadequate to meet the ordinary fare. Yet, as with the few loaves and fishes on the grassy slopes of Gennesaret, in the Lord's hands the sum was amply sufficient. A letter came from a Christian gentleman in Bengal, telling them that, owing to some scandal on the outward voyage, one of the finest homeward-bound ships was being boycotted, and in consequence a passage was to be had at a nominal figure; nay, more—making enquiries of the captain on their behalf, he had volunteered to put in at Coringa to pick them up, and so save them the fatigue and expense of a long journey

to join the ship! Under these extraordinarily favourable terms, he had ventured to book them, and desired their confirmation. Thus wonderfully were they set forth upon their voyage in one of the best-found vessels of the day.

When the Cape was reached, after the cramped confinement of many weeks on board the passengers were all joyfully preparing to go ashore and spend in comfort and pleasure the few days the ship would be reprovisioning. Having no friends on shore, and unable to afford hotel expenses, Mrs. Bowden and her boys were the only passengers remaining on board. But scarcely had they dropped anchor when a state barge drew alongside, and an officer boarded them with a letter, enquiring for Mrs. Bowden. It was an invitation from the Governor of the Cape to be his guests during the detention of the ship in port, and she was to leave at once without delaying to pack, as all they needed would be provided—a severe storm was threatening, making haste imperative. They hurried into the barge and got ashore just in time. The storm set in and for two days stopped all communication with the shore—all the other passengers having perforce to remain on board those days, as they were unable to secure boats in time. The little missionary party meanwhile enjoyed every comfort and kindness at Government House! This unexpected hospitality was extended them at the request of a brother of the Governor, one of the Christian officers in India who took an interest in the Godavari missionaries.

The voyage dragged on wearily for six months, but at last Plymouth was reached in stormy weather. The Atlantic billows rolled in so fiercely that the captain would not allow any boat to be launched to go ashore. Mrs. Bowden went to him, thanked him for all the kindness shown them on the voyage, and firmly insisted he must land them. He said he deeply regretted not being able to send them ashore, but he dare not attempt it in such a sea. She, however, would take no denial, and at length he yielded, saying, "Well, Mrs. Bowden, if you *must* go ashore, I myself

must take you. I cannot charge another with so terribly risky a venture." He had a boat manned, and by God's protecting care brought them safely through to land. Taking coach without delay the seventy miles to Barnstaple, they were received by Mr. Chapman in a house he had rented and furnished in readiness for them, with a young girl, Matilda Mary Gilbert (later, Mrs. Wm. Bowden Jun.), engaged as mother's help. The next day the youngest son, Arthur, was born!

CHAPTER XX

Mr. Beer's Systematic Itinerations

George Beer was a man of a very strong constitution, allied to abounding energy. To anyone knowing the area concerned, the record of his itinerations is amazing. There is only one detailed narrative extant, and it is undated, but we place it in 1851. Being the only record we have from his pen, we transcribe it with the greater pleasure. In his clear, almost copper-plate, hand, he writes: "I left home to visit, if possible, every village in the three Talooks,—Mogultoor, Nagaram and Oondy—surrounding our own stations, which contain above 200 villages. I had long felt the necessity of adopting such a plan, and contemplated the benefits that must arise, if it could be effectually carried out. I first visited 60 villages in the Mogultoor Talook. In some of these villages Mr. Bowden or myself, sometimes both together, had preached before, and in some, many times over, had distributed hundreds of tracts and portions of the Scriptures, and had become acquainted with many of the people. Now I gave them another sprinkling of tracts and Scriptures, and in all these villages preached the Gospel. After visiting these 60 villages, which are only about two-thirds of the Mogultoor Talook, I went to Antarvedi. I stayed three or four days at the festival, and distributed a great many tracts and Scriptures. After the festival was over I proceeded to visit every village in the Nagaram Talook, in which there are about 50 villages; this took me about three weeks. I felt the necessity of itinerating more to give the people generally something like a knowledge of the Gospel; and its advantages and results were deeply impressed on my mind.

"I travelled slowly to Kortepally, visiting eight villages, and preaching as I went through the country. On



A TYPICAL DELTA SCENE

arriving at Kortepally I pitched my tent on the bank of the river. On the next day, Sunday, I found myself in the midst of thousands of people. I was very busy in reading, speaking, and giving tracts from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Hundreds declared there could be no virtue in the worship of stones and sticks and bathing in the Godavery; others, on the other hand, appeared zealous in defending their gods and ceremonies, and sacred books. There was evidently a division among the people. On Monday I was engaged as on Sunday, without any interruption. The banks of the river were so crowded that I could scarcely move outside my tent. Men, women and children could leave their homes, go miles, expose themselves to the sun by day, lie down in heaps as it were by night, without any shelter whatever, to worship Somesherado, a name of Sheva, bathe in the river, and all this for something, they know not what."

A sequel to this Scripture distribution came to light after Mr. Beer's decease. In 1854 Mr. Bowden, keen on getting into touch with the 'Koydoraloo' from the northern hill-jungles, struck out from Tirugudumetta to visit Gokavaram, a large market 20 miles to the N.E., near to an important pass from the hills. Leaving at 10 p.m., after the Sunday meetings, and travelling by moonlight, he crossed the Godavari, and about 3 a.m. was approaching Raghavapuram, when the guide informed him a tiger had been killed there two days before, and its mate was reported to be prowling round, so he feared to conduct them round the intervening hill. The last village was now too far behind to retreat to it. "We therefore put up," he writes, "and having arranged my mat and pillow on the ground, neither I nor my people were long in forgetting we were in the vicinity of tigers, and we all slept soundly till sunrise, when we pursued our journey." The day was spent in moving amongst the hill people who had come in to the market, some from great distances. Two Malas, one of whom had come a seven days' journey from a place 100 miles in amongst the hills, listened with great attention, and

finally asked earnestly for a Scripture. Surprised at the request from such a party, Mr. Bowden elicited that the man had seen a copy at a place about 20 miles from another pass, and had offered a Rupee for it, but the owner would not part with it. It proved to be a copy Mr. Beer had given at the Kotipalli Festival! A storm coming on, Mr. Bowden invited them into his tent and read several chapters with them, and finally dismissed them with the only Scripture he had with him for distribution, the four Gospels bound with Genesis.

Again there is a sequel. Eighteen months later he happens to be at Penumadam, 70 miles south of Gokavaram, and an audience of about thirty is listening to him for the greater part of an hour. Mr. Bowden writes: "Among the party were three men from the hills. Always feeling much interest in the hill people, I invited these men to my shed, when I learnt that their party consisted of five persons, two of whom were Koys. At my request these men were sent for, and I endeavoured plainly and simply to set Jesus before them all. After my conversation one of the men requested a book. This excited my curiosity, as I had not on this occasion distributed books, and I thought it strange that this man, a stranger from the hills, should know anything about our books. Upon enquiry I learnt that a relative of his had received a book from a European at a market near one of the hill passes, and that on the man passing to his village, about 100 miles further in amongst the hills, he had showed the book, and a portion had been read from it. I was much interested in hearing of this portion of Scripture so unexpectedly. It comprised the book of Genesis and the four Gospels, and had been given away nearly two years before, under circumstances of peculiar interest. That portion of the word of the living God is now nearly 200 miles from this place, in the heart of the jungles; and who can tell what a blessing it may be?"

To return to Mr. Beer's narrative—passing on from Kotipalli to Drakshavaram, he records: "In the forenoon

many Brahmins and others came and I had a long conversation with them. They did not oppose, but listened while I preached the Gospel to them. At last one of the Brahmins said to me, 'I came here as tall as a palmyra tree, but you have reduced me to a very small insect.' I told him that the Word of God had that effect on the minds of all those that listen to it attentively. It made the sinner to feel himself a sinner; whilst on the other hand it revealed the righteous and merciful character of God. I felt my visit to this place truly cheering. I only regretted I had not iterated more since the last ten years, and that I was not able to be out in the villages all the year round. At one time I confined my visits to the large towns, but have since found the benefit of going to every village. Hundreds of the quietest of the people, who scarcely ever leave home, are to be found in the villages, where the missionary may deliver his message in the plainest manner, without being opposed by mere cavillers. Old people, who are not much engaged with the affairs of this life, listen attentively to the heavenly message. Tracts and portions of the Scripture have been left in every village in the Nagaram Talook, and every person who can read has a tract or two, and many of them portions of the Scripture. It has appeared difficult to many of the natives to understand how I could preach against idolatry, when so many respectable Europeans could worship images. I informed them that God is no respecter of persons, that only those that did His will could be saved. He hated idolatry, and that all idolaters, whether white or black, must be turned into hell."

Passing on from one big festival to another, and filling in the intervening days with unceasing visiting of the villages in between, he is at length found at the Vanapalli Festival, the account of which is of special interest from the hook-swinging he there witnessed. "I distributed pretty freely the tract, 'The Jewel Mine of Salvation,' which is in poetry, another on caste, and some copies of the Gospels and Psalms. In the evening I went back to the swinging

festival where some were swung in honour of the goddess. I preached to the people against this wickedness, and pointed out a way more honourable to God than these wicked and cruel practices, which God had not commanded, and must be as vain as they are cruel. However, they told me that those who swung suffered no pain, for the goddess was in them, and supported them, or they would not swing like this. I gave some tracts and a few portions of Scripture to those that asked for them. Here I learned another way of swinging by proxy. It is disreputable for a Soodra to swing. Those that swing are low caste people. The higher caste pay a man for swinging for them. The principal reason is that the higher caste cannot use arrack and ganja (opium), which are indispensable on these occasions to deaden the pain. The lower caste use these things freely, which deadens the pain of having the hooks inserted and being tossed into the air."

This horrid practice has since been prohibited by Government, and is now only done in effigy. Mr. Heelis, who witnessed it at the same festival in 1860, gives this further account: "I witnessed myself the swinging of human beings, hooks being passed through the skin of the back—I saw myself the swinging of fifteen, and heard afterwards that thirty had gone through the cruel torture. They did not appear to suffer much at the time, being in a state of intoxication, but on the second and third day the pain is great. On the back of one who was swinging I counted a dozen marks of wounds from former swingings. It was distressing to see how the poor madmen fought and pushed each other about, each desiring to have the hooks first stuck into his back, by the barber of the village, to whom they must give a quarter of a Rupee for his trouble, or, if he has not been swung before, half a Rupee; also to the man that ties him to the swinging pole an anna, and to him who extricates the hooks, the same. I saw one poor man laid on the ground preparatory to taking out the hooks, but in consequence of his not having the fee ready, they kept him

in that position two or three minutes, till a friend gave the required sum. Whilst the swinging was going on it was almost impossible to make oneself heard, the noise being so great." Could anything more clearly demonstrate the wholly Satanic origin of these Hindu festivals?

Mr. Beer showed himself impressed with the possibilities of fruit amongst the outcaste Malas and Madigas, and as these classes have yielded an overwhelming preponderance of converts meantime, his remarks are of special interest. "The poor Malas and Madigas are entirely shut out beyond the reach of anything like reading or writing. They are not able to teach themselves, or procure teaching at any rate. They are numerous all over the Delta. Many of them are employed as domestic servants by Europeans. In many places many of them weave a coarse cloth, but generally they are employed just as slaves by the ryots to cultivate the fields, though in a few instances they cultivate farms themselves, independent of the ryots, and are become little farmers, though very much kept down by the other ryots. But education they can never procure." (NOTE:—The situation has wholly changed now; but when the words were written even Mr. Noble excluded them, that the higher caste might not be hindered from entering his school). "In many cases much good sense is manifested amongst them; and if they were generally educated as the other classes, why should they not soon become in other respects equal to them? and as they are not so shackled by caste, why should they not exceed them? The Gospel finds ready access to them; and many are not only reformed characters in and near missionary stations, but seem to have embraced the truth in the love of it."

This is a remarkable record of what a European accomplished *alone*, without native helpers beyond his servant. It is good to find how the Fund in Madras was serving its purpose in enabling him to meet the expense of constant touring and distribution of Gospel literature.

CHAPTER XXI

Mr. Beer's Closing Labours and Death, 1852-1853

As early as 1850 Mr. Beer was rewarded by seeing a church established in Narsapur, when he baptised **Kankiparti David** and **Martha**, of Ramannapalem—Martha being another sister of Francis, and fruit of the Palakol Boarding School. Thereafter the two brethren shared equally in the ingathering of converts. Mr. Groves, rejoicing in tidings of their success, wrote home in December, 1850, "The Bowdens and Beers seem going on very nicely, and the Lord is owning their labours"; and again, in the following July, "Bowden and Beer have continued accessions to their numbers."

Dowlaisheram was one of the centres where God was working, following up the Bowdens' two years of Gospel service there. In 1848 Mr. Bowden put up a meeting-room on a site given him by Government, and many of the out-castes had regularly attended his ministry. Two Malas applied to him for baptism, but whilst he hesitated in order first to assure himself they were truly regenerate, one was taken off by cholera, testifying faith in Christ in his dying moments, and charging his people not to burn, but to bury him, according to the custom of the Christians. The other applicant lost his wife from the same cause. Very remarkably, these were the only cholera cases occurring there at that time, and their neighbours, at once concluding these two were marked men because they had forsaken the idols, made free and pungent comment. Happily the families were not deterred, and Mr. Beer, visiting them in the course

of his strenuous itinerations, found glad evidence that the son of the one and the widow of the other were set on saving their souls, and evincing real love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Better still, they were influencing others too. In 1853 they came out. One, a farmer, drove his cattle to Palakol in the hot season, and returned to fetch his family. Early in August the two families came, bringing a third with them, and reported others were on the move to follow. So began the work in Dowlaiswaram that developed into a vigorous cause some years later, under that fine Gospel worker, **Nakka Thomas**.

Mr. Beer passed on to Rajahmundry, where Valett had just left (March, 1851), leaving Heise undauntedly upholding the banner of the Cross alone. Here he found it convenient to baptise the three Tirugudumetta converts. They had for some time been seeking the truth, and the two caste men had visited Mr. Bowden the previous May, and secretly broken caste by eating at his place. Now had come the time to baptise them publicly. Mr. Beer's interesting account of it is as follows:—

"I had invited the candidates to come and breakfast with me at the traveller's bungalow on Saturday, that the caste point might be settled first. Not that I had any doubt respecting this point, but that the world might see what they were doing, and so crush the viper caste on the head at once. It happened, by divine providence, that the garrison sergeant-major, a devoted Christian, his mother, step-father, and other pious people, with Capt. Wroughten, came that morning and stayed during the day, without any previous arrangement. After we had taken off the locks of sacred hair on their heads, we all sat down to breakfast, and thus settled the caste question. The day was spent in reading the Word of God, in prayer, and in religious conversation. Early the following morning, after daylight, we proceeded to the river, and after an address to the candidates, I baptised them in the name of the Father, the Son,

and the Holy Ghost. We spent the day in reading the Word of God, in singing praise and in prayer, giving Him thanks for His love and grace manifested to us in Christ Jesus, and for turning our native brethren from the worship of idols to serve the living God. In the evening ten of us sat down at the Lord's table, to commemorate His dying love. Two of the spectators wept much as I preached of the love of the Saviour. I spoke and read both in Telegoo and English, for the edification of all parties. Very early in the morning all our dear friends were scattered, as it were, to the four winds. The native brethren expressed themselves as very happy, they said they were never so happy before."

As usual, the persecution that followed was most severe. Mr. Beer made a further 17 days' tour, in which he preached in 30 villages, and visited them in Tirugudumetta on his way home. Thomas he found shut out from his house by his wife and nephew, lest he should defile the whole house, and being a rented one, he did not persist, in case the owner should drive the whole family out at once. Leaving in the afternoon, Mr. Beer took the three converts along with him, and they remained a month at his place, during which he gave much time to instructing them in the Scriptures. Resuming his narrative: "They seemed to be happy, and growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. When they wished to go and see their families again, they left. On his arrival at home Samuel found his son in a great rage. He took a club to beat his father with, and would not let him come into the house. His wife and children were weeping and wailing, and all the people of the place, even the very Pariahs, abusing him and cursing him for leaving his caste. He remained outside for two or three days, until the rage of his son and wife should subside, and cooked his food himself. After they became a little quieter he got inside; and after a few days more, his wife consented to cook for him, and gave him food at a distance from the rest of the family. But he was not to go into the cooking-room, or touch any of the in-

mates; for if he did, they would not be able to get any water at the well; so he must confine himself to one room. These were hard conditions, but for the sake of his family he agreed to them. Still the barber would not be persuaded to shave him. The washerwoman would be defiled if she were to take away his clothes to wash them, and therefore she would not do it.

“Thomas found his wife and nephew not so outrageous, but he must not enter the dwelling, neither has he done so up to this day, but he stays outside in the doorway, and there his wife gives him his meals. Daniel found no difficulty with regard to his friends, but in the village he was hated and laughed at for being a Christian. Here these three men had to bear the weight of the cross, which, humanly speaking, was more than they could bear. But the Good Shepherd suffered them not to be plucked out of His hands. Shortly after I spent a few days in endeavouring to strengthen the brethren by telling them that through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom. I also gave them advice about doing something for their livelihood.

“At a later period I went up again to see them, and was glad to find them all progressing in the faith. But Thomas was in an uncomfortable position, not being able to enter his house or to work at his loom. He had nothing to do but to sit down and eat the meal his wife would give, and listen to the scoffs and taunts and abuse of the Brahmins and others, who gratify themselves by abusing him. The barber would not shave his beard, and his nails had been growing long for two or three months. His tall frame was somewhat reduced, and with his long white hair and long nails he presented an unpleasant appearance, as I had been accustomed to see him looking well and clean. He said, however, that he was quite happy in his mind, that he was trusting Jesus and not at all repenting having chosen Him for his Saviour. He regretted that he had no house

he could go into, that he might work. He wanted to work to engage both body and mind, besides getting something for his maintenance."

So closes the little we have from the pen of Mr. Beer. The prolonged sufferings of the Tirugudumetta converts made it evident nothing effective could be done to alleviate them apart from settling them in some manner independent of the village. Poor Thomas had to abide sixteen months in his miserable state ere Mr. Beer, by dint of great personal effort, and at much expense travelling to and fro, succeeded in obtaining from the Gutala Estate a grant of land on the hill from which the village takes its name. There he erected houses for their residence, allotting the first to Thomas, with provision for him to work at the loom, and he was then soon joined by his wife, Mangamma, and his daughter, Sheshamma, as also by a nephew who helped in the weaving. A place was next provided for Samuel and his mother, and another for Daniel. Mr. Beer also put up a place for his own accommodation, and for use as a meeting-house, and set a little school going. The little colony was put on a co-operative basis, and Panchakshari brought up and made overseer. The missionary's frequent visitation and pastoral care had its happy effect in leading to the conversion and baptism of other members of the three families. At Tallapudi, in 1852, Mr. Beer baptised his elder daughter, Mary Anne; Lanka Mutyalu and his wife, originally from Chintalapudi, near Bendamurlanka; and Joseph, the nephew of Daniel, and father and grandfather of later leading workers.

The general unhealthiness of the Reddisema was against them. 1853 was a year of much sickness in their community. In the early months four children were taken, including a child of one of the Tirugudumetta converts. Though considerably hindered thereby in their Gospel itinerations, both brethren got in visits to the upper Reddisema, Mr. Beer penetrating further among the hills after the hot season than they had ever gone before. He returned to find a desolating fever persisting in the little colony. Few

were exempt, and with some it took a dangerous turn. Thomas, his stamina undermined by his long privations, fell an early victim, the fever taking a violent course. Their tender-hearted missionary did all he possibly could to succour them. Weakened by his unremitting exertions, and travelling the fifty miles back home under the peculiarly dangerous sun of late September, a stroke laid him low with congestion of the brain.

Mr. Bowden came over to nurse him, and deemed it advisable to get him away to Bunder for efficient medical aid. The value of the newly-inaugurated ministry of 'The Missionary Reporter' was now demonstrated. The very day they were leaving Narsapur came a letter intimating a remittance. "We were both greatly comforted in the intelligence it conveyed of the contributions of the saints with you; especially so, as we had been hesitating to incur the expense of the journey, which was about the sum mentioned in your letter. We could not but trace the hand of a faithful God in this timely notice of it; and truly do we thank our brethren for their care for us, and the flock around us."

Arrived at Masulipatam, they were lovingly received into the home of the Darlings, and after a few days' treatment by the doctor Mr. Bowden was relieved to get a favourable report, being assured by him he need not fear, as the illness had taken no alarming aspect. His mind set thus at rest, he felt free to fulfil an engagement to join Capt. Haig in a reconnoissance of the upper reaches of the Godavari to ascertain their practicability for navigation—an excellent opportunity, not lightly to be sacrificed, to make the acquaintance of these parts hitherto unreached with the Gospel. Taking farewell of his beloved fellow-worker, he made the trip. He was absent only twelve days. Imagine how great the shock to get the news upon his return that Mr. Beer had passed away!

The particulars we give in Mr. Darling's own words, written presumably to Mr. Müller, in a letter breathing the

close and brotherly relations between the missionaries of those early days:—

“My Dear Brother in Christ,

Though a stranger to you, yet I trust we are one in the bonds of the Gospel, and this allows me the privilege of addressing you as I have done. I pray that the introduction this epistle gives me to you, will commend me to an interest in your prayers as a missionary labouring in a heathen land amidst many trials. I write at the request of Mrs. Beer, to acquaint you of her dear husband's removal from amongst us. He has gone to the bosom of our Saviour. He entered into the joy of our Lord on Sabbath evening last, Oct. 30th. His disease was congestion of the brain, produced by the exposure to the sun, while on his last visit to the poor Christian people at Tirugudumetta. He was laid on his bed of sickness for three weeks. Having been taken ill at Narsapur, where there is no efficient medical aid, he was brought into Masulipatam, and his last two weeks were spent under our roof, when it was our privilege to watch over and minister to our sick and suffering brother. During all our brother's illness he spoke but little, and for the last eight days of his life he lay in a state of great insensibility; but occasionally there were lucid moments, and at these seasons our brother's conversation was always in heaven. Still if it were the Lord's will, he wished to be spared as he had a desire to live a few more years for the sake of his dear family. On no other occasion did he manifest any anxiety for them.

He often named his dear Christian people and appeared to bear them in mind. He knew that some of them were ill, at a place where they could get no medicine, and this increased his anxiety. Once when he awoke from a state of great torpor, his first request was to be told how the Christians at Tirugudumetta were. He especially asked if Thomas was alive; he had died a few days previous of

fever. Now he rejoices with his dear brother before the throne of God in heaven.

After our dear brother became very ill, he spoke only at intervals, when the state of his mind would allow of it. Often he told me that he could not think, and that his mind was altogether gone: still he had collected moments. On one he called my dear wife to his bedside, and asked her to write for him to Mrs. Beer, and to quote to her two passages of Scripture, which he himself repeated partially: "I know Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day," and "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." The last words expressive of his sure and stedfast hope in Jesus were uttered to his dear partner, when he said, "to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." We committed his remains to the grave on the following evening, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

Mrs. Beer and her children are all with us (the latter did not arrive till after their father had been committed to the tomb), and, of course, feel their bereavement much: at the same time, they are greatly supported and comforted of our God, Who is, indeed, the Husband of the widow and the Father of the fatherless.

Who will be baptised for the dead? Who will take the place of our dear brother who has just finished his work?

Mrs. Beer and her dear children unite with me and my dear wife in sending you their Christian love, and I subscribe myself,

Yours very affectionately in Jesus,

THOMAS Y. DARLING."

Thus, at the age of 41, passed one of the finest missionaries ever sent to the Telugus—truly, “a man sent from God.” The loss was very great. “He was largely respected as an efficient and laborious missionary, and one of the religious periodicals of the Presidency noticed his death precluded the possibility of his saying much, but the little that he did say evinced the quiet and composure of his mind, and his rest in Jesus.” Mrs. Groves’ testimony was: “He is a great loss to our Indian Missions. He seemed a man of a very strong constitution, in the prime of life, and I hoped he would labour long for the Lord.” Finally, it is blessed to record the perfect harmony of the relations of these two brethren all through their association—not a jar seems ever to have disturbed their concord!

CHAPTER XXII

The Situation met with Fortitude, 1854-1855

To review the results achieved, as given in the 'Reporter': "Sixteen years ago the Gospel had not been known in this district; now, to a certain extent, it is known everywhere. There are already about 40 baptised believers at the three stations—Tirugudumetta, 8; Narsapur, 5; Palakol, 27. Nearly the same number stand as enquirers, and a much larger number are known to us as occasional hearers of the truth, yielding a partial subjection to its precepts, and in judgment acknowledging Jesus Christ as the only true God and Saviour. There are upwards of 100 children at the three stations who are daily instructed in the Bible truths; and had we the means and suitable teachers we could multiply schools to an extent." (The Rajahmundry Mission, also in the day of small things, returned 13 communicants, 8 day-schools, 225 pupils, and 1 baptism for 1853). "As to the general feeling in the country, it is much more in favour of Christianity than formerly. Hundreds and thousands listen when the Gospel is preached. There is, of course, much opposition by interested parties, but the people generally listen, and many of them attentively. We can truly say now what I could not have said some years ago, the harvest is great, we need plenty of labourers."

Alas! there was now but one lonely brother, separated far from all his loved ones, and a grief-stricken sister, to grapple with the vast task confronting them. But Mr. Bowden, in his massive strength, was not the man to give way to idle panic—it was in just such a crisis the serenity of his faith became most manifest. And he too, on his trip

to the Upper Godavari, had been stricken by the sun only less severely than his departed brother, and for six weeks was laid low with extreme pain and weakness. As soon as he could travel, he went to Bunder to escort Mrs. Beer home. John was left with Mr. Noble for the time being; in 1857 he was sent to England for higher education under Mr. Page, of Aylsham. Mary Anne stayed on with Mrs. Darling, helping her in her recently-opened high caste girls' school, later going to Madras with her sister for more schooling.

Then Mr. Bowden hastened to Tirugudumetta to do what he could for the stricken colony. Besides Thomas, an enquirer and his son had been carried off by the fever, and he found them in much misery. In compensation, however, he was visited there by three weavers, heads of families, professing willingness to throw off caste and idol-worship, and join the colony.

Mrs. Beer, back again in Narsapur by the New Year of 1854, and fired by what she had seen in Bunder of work amongst the caste people, now opened a caste girls' school, which soon had an attendance of 32, in addition to the 50 attending the caste boys' school. In Palakol, Charlotte D'Bras opened another. In Helena's school they now began to teach English. Increasing material prosperity was awakening a growing demand for English education. As a sign of the changing times, three boys of good caste were now sitting side by side with her other 34 outcaste boys and girls they would not touch out in the open street! The progressive Malas too were catching the infection, and beginning to apply for schools, led by Tsundaparru and Agarthipalem; but here it was very difficult to find suitable men to send them. It was in this July the Court of Directors promulgated its famous Despatch, inaugurating a scheme of public education for India.

Such multitudinous claims imposed a very systematic programme of work on Mr. Bowden. Giving Sunday mornings to Palakol, he was in Narsapur for the evening service.

Monday was given to examining the schools. Two consecutive Sundays in the month were given to Tirugudumetta, the intervening days being spent in visiting surrounding villages and markets. In each centre a great place was given to Bible classes.

Alluding to the imperfections commonly found in converts from heathenism, Mr. Bowden wrote at this time: "When we call to mind how much imperfection is attached to ourselves, and how marked and many were the imperfections of the early Christians, as referred to in the epistles of the Apostles to the churches, we may not be hindered in the prosecution of our work; but rather seek to prosecute it with more energy and more fidelity, and enlist in the work more labourers. Who can be surprised that souls, steeped in heathenism from their first entry into the world, should retain for a lengthened period after their conversion to God many ideas, and the relics of many false principles, imbibed in infancy, and which have grown up with them? . . . We have therefore reason to thank God that we see so much that is good, and evidently the work of the Spirit of God, and endeavour, by patient teaching of the Word and application of the principles and precepts of the Gospel, to remove those evils as far as God shall permit us to be the instruments for accomplishing so good and great a work. Still if we succeed in nothing, our duty and our privilege remain the same, viz. to 'Preach the Gospel to every creature'."

And truly, he was not neglectful of the all-important Gospel work, even under the pressure of his many other duties. Two glimpses show how faithfully he maintained it. It is the month of May, when few missionaries care to be on tour, especially after a recent touch of the sun. His little tent is pitched under a large tamarind tree at Buchempalem, and it is noon. Around him are gathered the Koi inhabitants, to whom he patiently unfolds the story of creation and the fall of man, leading up to the redemption that is by Jesus Christ, the teaching reinforced by snatches of

Gospel song by Christians from Tirugudumetta. That night is spent in Gudigudem, where Mr. Beer was very well-known, and the Hindu villagers sit on till late, listening and showing gratifying candour and free enquiry.

A few days later he is on his way home, and has reached Kanur. It is nine at night, and a grass mat and pillow spread on the ground are his quarters. A Vedantist teacher comes to him, with some of his disciples; he has several schools over the district in which he propounds his doctrines, and has long been known to the missionary. Mr. Bowden proposes to him a number of questions, to which he can give no answer. He follows up with a long discourse on the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the resurrection of all men at His Coming. The hours slip by, until they are surrounded with sleeping forms—only at three in the morning did the Vedantist rise to go, expressing himself he felt caste a great bondage; 'even now there will be a great hubbub because I have sat so long with you. People will say I have become a Christian!' An hour or so later the untiring toiler was himself on the road, having 23 miles to cover before the sun was well up. All his way was marked by great excavations and masonry works, for the Narsapur Canal was then in course of construction, and it was the peak of hot season activity in anticipation of the rains and floods.

Mr. Bowden's cup of domestic happiness was about to be refilled. On June 15th Mrs. Bowden, with her eldest and youngest sons, embarked on the 'Afghan' in London. But before that happy reunion, new trials were to be experienced. They lost the invaluable services of Helena D'Bras by her marrying, to their great sorrow, one who, they feared, was unconverted. Then the rains that year brought in one of the worst epidemics of cholera they ever knew.

Of all the physical ills to which mankind is subject in the Godavari, none perhaps has been more persistent and dreadful in its ravages than *cholera*, with smallpox an evil

second. The suddenness of its onslaught, the rapidity and deadliness of its course, the liability of each to be its next victim—all invest this disease with a terror peculiarly its own. In a few hours—so Major-General George Bell records his observations—‘the patient vomits the contents of his stomach, and the bowels are evacuated; the canal being completely emptied of its contents, a sudden feeling of exhaustion is produced, faintness supervenes, the skin becomes cold, giddiness sets in, with spasmodic twitchings of the muscles of the legs and arms; the pulse from the first is small, weak, and accelerated, and very soon becomes imperceptible; in all the external parts the skin becomes colder and colder, but is usually covered by a clammy moisture; the eyes are sunk in the orbits, the features of the face collapse, and the countenance becomes cadaverous. Thirst is an urgent symptom, but the tongue is moist, whitish and cold; a distressing sense of burning heat; the breathing is oppressed and slow, the breath becomes deficient in heat; the prison of the soul is broken up, and the shattered shell remains but a spectacle of poor humanity, reminding one that man is but a handful of dust—life a violent storm.’

For weeks on end it raged around Palakol and Narsapur, and there was scarcely a day that Mr. Bowden was not moving about, ministering to the sick and dying, himself preserved amidst the awful infection. Numbers fled from Palakol to avoid it, until the town was nearly deserted of its inhabitants. It lingered on into October. The promising schoolwork was broken up, and took long months to gather strength again—eight months after the scourge had passed the two schools together only mustered 40 pupils. The losses in their community were very severe, even though Mr. Bowden’s assiduous efforts had kept the mortality down to a third.

But it was such a visitation as this that brought out the genuine faith of the converts. “Yesterday a little boy was taken, whose parents had set their heart much upon him. In his delirium the dear little fellow prayed, ‘O Lord,

save me. O Lord, I am a great sinner,' and used similar expressions. He fell into a stupor, from which he did not revive. I saw the parents again this morning, and read and prayed with them. One of the enquirers, who lost two children a fortnight ago, said, as we were returning from the funeral, 'It is as if one were pointing out this and that person to be selected and gathered out'; thus clearly recognising the hand of God and submitting to it. It was cheering to hear one Christian pointing the bereaved parent to Abraham rising early to give up his son at God's bidding. Another, referring to David's words, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me'; a third, speaking of the resurrection as the ground of life; and a fourth, asking the sorrowing parents to leave their child with Jesus." Fruit of it was reaped ere the year was out, when **Paluri Tatiah** and **Dudday Durgiah**, and their wives, were baptised.

In Narsapur Mrs. Beer lost a member of her household, a sweet and most interesting child given her by parents who despised their offspring. "She had endeared herself much to my heart. Just before she died she looked at me and said, 'Jesus Christ is my Father, and I am His little child'." Dying of cholera in the house, all the school-children took fright and fled, and none attended for many days; at last a few were persuaded back, on being promised by Mrs. Beer they should go to another part of the house.

Amidst the gloom and sorrow of those days came one bright beam in the first consignment of the completed Telugu Bible—a combination of the separate translations of Gordon and Pritchett.

Exactly a year from the evening Mr. Beer fell asleep in Jesus, the 'Afghan' cast anchor at Madras. Mr. Bowden, ever putting duty before pleasure, would not forsake his post to go and meet them, and patiently awaited their coming overland. Then what a meeting for those two stedfast, loving souls, who had passed through so much in those three and a half years of separation!

The coming of William, now engaged to Mary Gilbert, was also a comfort to his father, who was anxious to hand over to him the secular concerns of the mission. In England he had learnt the tanning business, proposing to reorganise with improved methods this leading industry of the converts. Under his supervision, 'Merakapuram', the waste burial ground that now forms the site of the Christians' peta in Palakol, became dotted with tanning pits and shacks to house the working owners. Later he took up the management of the Tsundaparru farm colony, and in 1860 received his bride into an airy, straw-thatched bungalow that enjoyed to the full the salubrious sea-breezes denied to them in the Palakol house. Hard-working, capable, and a devoted Christian, Mrs. Bowden Jun. threw herself wholeheartedly into the work of the Lord awaiting her, and proved herself in the true Godavari succession. In particular, she discovered a great talent for dispensing—the remarkably rapid cure of a child believed to be dying established her reputation, and hundreds came to her for treatment.

In May, 1855, Mary Anne Beer was taken dangerously ill in Madras, and when she was sufficiently recovered to travel, it was decided to have her home to help her mother in the schoolwork. The two sisters came to Cocanada on the 'Malabar.' Mr. Bowden was there to escort them home, and met the second officer, **Thomas Heelis.**

CHAPTER XXIII

Mr. Heelis joins the Mission

When the fine new ship of the Green Line, the 'Mala-bar,' sailed from Portsmouth on July 15th, 1834, the favour of God was upon it. For this, its maiden voyage, was consecrated by the fervent labours for the conversion of passengers and crew of that 'Master fisher of men,' Samuel Hebich. He and his colleagues, Lehner (who married Miss Emma Groves) and Greiner, were going out to found the famous Basle Mission, upon whose earliest members Müller and Groves exercised considerable influence. Benjamin Bailey, pioneer English missionary to Travancore, and the laborious translator into Malayalam of the Bible and Book of Common Prayer, was a fellow-passenger. But whilst Hebich's companions spent most of their time in study in their cabin, he, who had been called to win souls for Christ, gave himself to his own special business, going to one and all on board, inviting them to come to Jesus.

Thomssen's biography of him tells the story thus: "He found the sailors very much hardened, hence they paid little attention to the foreigner with his broken English, just beginning to grow again his famous beard. He tried in vain to get a hearing from them, till one day he addressed them quite abruptly: 'Dear friends, I am a servant of Christ, and it is my business in His name to point out the way of life to all men, therefore also to you! I must do my duty, in order that none of you can say on the great judgment day: Lord, Thy servant Hebich did not care for our souls! He did not say a word to us on the ship! So now I am going to preach to you the Gospel, for I do not know whether any of us will be alive a week from to-day. I am going to preach to you now, then at least I have done my duty.' Yet

none of the sailors would listen to him. They remained busy about their own affairs in their narrow quarters in the fore-castle, smoking, chatting, sleeping, sewing, dressing, shaving, reading and playing cards. Hebich left them with a heavy heart. Telling God that they were too hardened to hear, he spent a short time in prayer in his cabin. He had hardly knelt down when there was a rap at the door; a sailor entered with a message, 'Come, Mr. Hebich, please preach to us. We are now all ready to hear what you have to say.' Three hours he gave daily to instructing some enquirers. "My most hopeful disciple is the mate of the ship, who comes at the third hour. He robs himself of an hour's sleep in order to have time to listen to the Gospel message. God's Holy Spirit has touched his heart. Unless he becomes ashamed of Jesus, I have great hopes of his becoming a true Christian." Was this mate, we wonder, the pious Captain Nocks who commanded the 'Malabar' fourteen years later?

Just a year before the 'Malabar' sailed on its maiden voyage, on July 19th, 1833, Thomas Heelis was born in the Rectory at Appleby, Westmoreland. He was to have joined a Liverpool ship in 1847, but God ruled otherwise. A broken leg sustained by this venturesome boy detained him a year, and then it was on the 'Malabar,' under Captain Nocks, a Christian, he entered in his fifteenth year upon his seven years' seafaring. He served his apprenticeship with zest, in all the light-heartedness of robust and fearless youth, thinking little of God and eternity. It was on his fourth voyage, when he was already third officer, he was awakened through the humble instrumentality of a lascar member of the crew—the ship's sweeper! This man had been won from heathen darkness to a sincere trust in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and the new life in Christ manifested itself in such a careful performance of his menial duty, as attracted the notice of the young officer by its very rarity. From curiosity he once enquired of the sweeper how it was he was free from the idle and drunken habits of his class. The poor illiterate fellow replied very simply that it was because

he was a Christian, and wanted to please God. The unexpected answer was an arrow of conviction to Heelis' conscience, reproving him that he, a gentleman by birth and education, and the son of a clergyman, was living his life without reference to God. It flashed upon him how terribly he would be condemned in the day of wrath, judged by the standard of Christian living set by this menial from the lowest grade of society, possessed of none of his advantages. Conviction of sin thus wrought, it did its thorough work in impelling him to find refuge for his soul in Christ. Once saved, with all the strength of his fine character he yielded himself to God, making it his business to seek to win those about him. A fellow-officer named Smith took a like stand, and they had Captain Nocks behind them.

The missionary world in 1852 was ringing with the tragic fate of Captain Allen Gardiner and his heroic party of seamen-gospellers on the bleak, inhospitable wilds of Tierra del Fuego, and the story of the dauntless seven could not fail to appeal to one of the stuff Heelis was made of, and he felt the first stirrings of the Spirit calling him to the mission-field. But it was not as a member of the new Mission to Patagonia launched that year that he was to serve in the Gospel; not in those frigid regions, but in the torrid zone. For God had wonderfully adapted this man of iron physique to withstand the intolerable sun of India. As Robinson of Salem wrote of him nearly sixty years later, in phrase more picturesque than strictly accurate: "The pioneer of one particular Mission is a Cumbrian of the hardest type, the son of a great dignitary in the Church. He himself is a simple warrior for Christ, who has been permitted to do wonderful things in the way of convicting sinners and shooting tigers. No man can work with him; the fault is not his, for he is the most genial saint that you will meet. The reason is simply physical. Fifty years under tropical suns have left him like Moses, with his sight not dim, and his natural strength unabated. Young men come out to try and do what he does, with the result that they

are invalided home; and his Society will not send young men to him. Clean and hard, tender as a woman, simple as a child, open like a flower to heaven, he is still in the sun every day doing his Master's work. Marvel of marvels, happily he wears no burden of great scholarship; he knows his vernacular better than he knows his mother tongue; he is the spiritual handyman you see once in a hundred years."

Not in the stormy seas and sparsely populated wilds of Patagonia, but by quiet Godavari waters, and amidst a teeming population, his life-work awaited him. He was to help fill the tremendous gap left by Mr. Beer's removal, and be the Gospel helper Mr. Bowden so longingly awaited. It was attending Orchard Street when in port in London, and hearing the prayers of Mr. Yapp supplicating God to fill that gap, that directed the thoughts of this young officer of twenty to the sphere God had appointed him. Had not one of India's sons brought him to the Saviour? Was it not from a part of India he touched upon in his voyages that the call came?

The good ship 'Malabar' celebrated the attainment of its majority by carrying out a remarkable missionary party, bent on conversions by the way even more than the party it bore on its maiden voyage. The most distinguished member of the party was the godly Bishop Ryan, going out to occupy the newly created see of Mauritius. But the real live wire was Mr. Lechler of Salem, with his devoted wife. "Mr. Lechler was no ordinary man. He possessed both the power to conceive, and the energy and determination to execute, great plans for the propagation of the Gospel, and the building up of a Christian church in India. His piety, zeal, earnestness, and reliance on God are worthy of imitation by all missionaries" is the encomium of his Society.

Of that memorable voyage of 1855 he writes: "The Lord seems to delay our journey to accomplish His own purposes of mercy in saving souls, so we do not complain, but rejoice in His salvation. Owing to the arrangements of our pious captain, we have prayers morning and evening."

After relating in detail their many spiritual activities, he goes on, "The Lord has heard our prayers; two of the officers of the ship and two midshipmen have joined our ranks and followed two of their number, Messrs. Heelis and Smith, who were already on the Lord's side. One or two more persons are under deep conviction of their sins, some more have received impressions, and we hope the Lord will stretch forth His hand for the salvation of a few more before we reach our destination." His intercourse with young Heelis had been most helpful in confirming his missionary call, so that when they parted in Madras on July 3rd, he was encouraged to broach the subject with his captain, who was very sympathetic, but could not release him at that stage, as he had discharged several men, and had to call at intermediate ports between Madras and Calcutta.

It was a challenge to the young officer to make this a definite matter of prayer, and a test of the Lord's leading. Mr. Bowden met him at Cocanada, and he got three days' leave to accompany him to Dowlaisheram, where they stayed with Christian friends, enabling him to see something of the work and to go out several times with Mr. Bowden to the preaching. He left confirmed that God was calling him to preach the Gospel to the Telugus. He returned to Cocanada to find the 'Whirlwind' in port, able to transfer to them the eight men they needed. He left with the full acquiescence of Captain Nocks!

"I left the 'Malabar,'" he wrote Mr. Yapp, "on the evening she sailed, about 8 o'clock. I shall never forget the parting. It was nearly dark when I went to wish all hands good-bye, and many of them, even those who were in such fearful darkness, wished the Lord to bless me wherever I went. I also parted with four or five brothers in the Lord, the remaining part of the little church on board. May the Lord be ever in their midst! As the boat left the ship they gave me four parting cheers," the captain at their head. His sea-chest, with all his earthly belongings, had been slung over into the boat waiting alongside, and when Mr. Heelis

sprang lightly down after it, and pulled away from the 'Malabar,' he turned his back for ever upon his dearly cherished profession. (Within five years the 'Malabar' was lost, a total wreck, upon the coast of Ceylon.) Engaging coolies to carry his chest, and with a palmyra umbrella to shield him from the sun, he tramped across country, and just before the end of August, 1855, arrived in Palakol, himself the bearer of the glad news the Lord had set him free.

Mr. Bowden was greatly impressed with what he saw and heard of him, and wrote to friends in England: "He has but one aim, and that is to serve and please his Master in heaven, and his presence among us has been not only a comfort but a blessing . . . He has given up all for Christ." Mr. Heelis' own words to Mr. Yapp were: "I feel altogether weak and helpless in myself, but when I look to God I feel a strength which nothing can withstand. I wish to feel myself an instrument in His hands, to be used just as the Master likes."

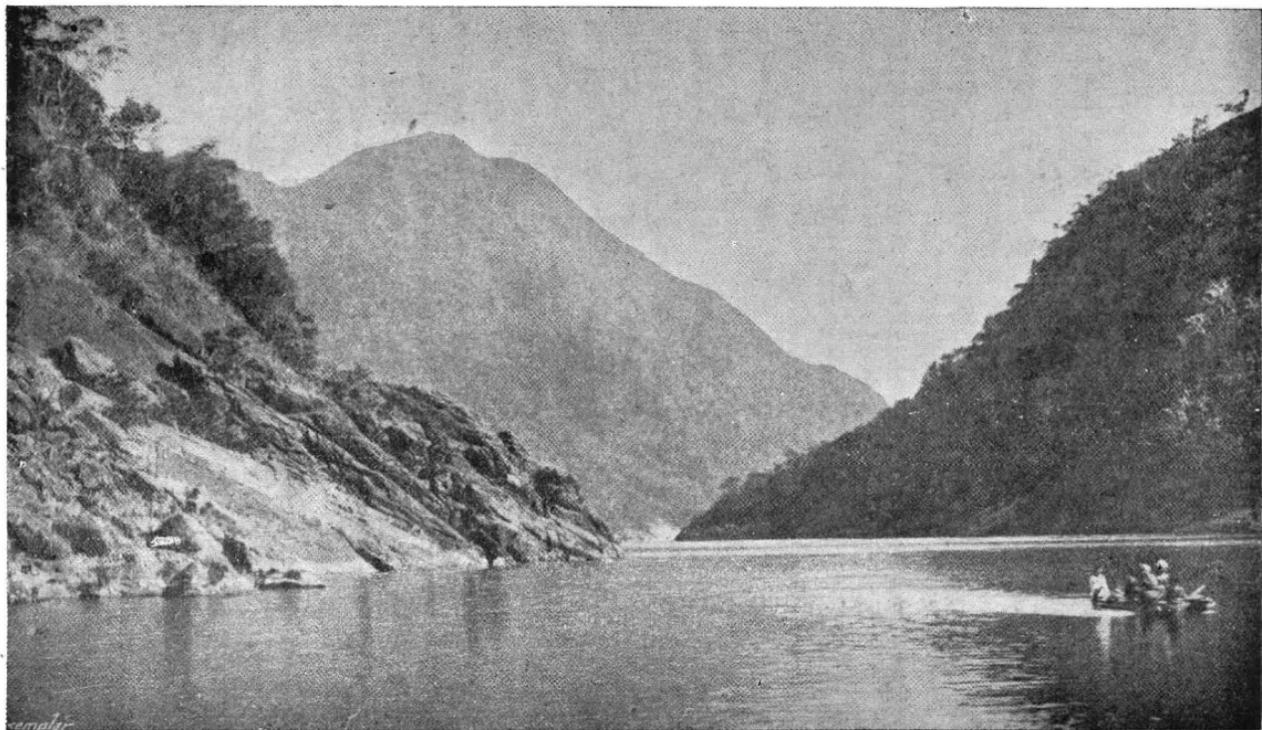
CHAPTER XXIV

Evangelising the Hill Peoples, 1856-1858

Mr. Bowden had long desired to tour the villages in the hills and ascertain the extent of population, the general circumstances of the people and whether they were Kois or others, and the facilities for evangelising them. A further objective was the great Bhadrachalam Festival, to which he heard huge crowds were drawn from the Nizam's and Nagpur territories who had never heard the Gospel. Now he was free to make the attempt. Heelis was devoting himself to the language study with an all-absorbing passion—brushing aside convention and dignity, he made natives sit by him on a mat and talk to him, and was making rapid progress. Mrs. Bowden and William were carrying on in the station. The little church had just had a record accession of members by the baptism of sixteen, of whom thirteen were from the heathen, and included three Malas; in a characteristic act of obedience to the Word of God, Mr. Heelis was immersed as a believer on the same occasion.

On January 16th Mr. Heelis was united in marriage to the godly Charlotte D'Bras, hoping much from her intimate knowledge of the people and the language, and the young couple accompanied the Bowdens to the Antarvedi Festival. It stimulated his keenness on getting Telugu—"I feel more and more desirous to know the language; it is in my thoughts all day, and I dream about it at times during the night."

Just at this time they were rejoicing in the conversion of **Alisahib**, their first Mohammedan convert, and one of



GORGE OF THE GODAVARI LOOKING UPSTREAM

the finest Gospel workers the Godavari has ever had. He was from the village of P. Polavaram, near Palakol, and practised medicine. Showing great zeal for his new-found faith, Mr. Bowden, with that sound wisdom that so marked him, took the young disciple and linked him with the older, ardent Simeon to accompany him on his first big journey into the hills, and so initiate him into Gospel service and all it meant. The keen young disciple, sharing such testing conditions with the veteran worker, imbibed his ardour and endurance. Thereafter he never flagged in his quest for souls. Ever going through the villages in the course of his professional calling, the Saviour Christ was his unceasing theme, till death overtook him eighteen years later when alone, neglected, and deprived of a word of Christian cheer, but still hot on the trail for souls!

Spending the first week-end of April in Tirugudumetta, they struck off by way of Gopalapuram and Buchempalem to Kopalle, where a young Reddi chieftain resided, who wanted to arrange a day's hunting in the forest in honour of his white visitor—Mr. Bowden told him he had come only to tell him and the people of Jesus Christ. Here he learned that their path onward lay through dense jungle and was very rugged, and fearing to take the old man on so tiring a journey, he sent Simeon with his horse round the hills to await him at Rudramkota. Taking a guide, and travelling as light as possible, he and Alisahib pushed on through Munjaluru and Ginnepalle, the track getting more and more difficult, the forest hamlets tinier and farther apart. Yet even there he met those who had heard the Gospel from him in the markets on the plains.

A very steep and rough descent brought them down to Koruturu, on the Godavari, and here they were disappointed to find no trace of the boat that had been arranged to meet them at this point. Instead of embarking here for Bhadrachalam as planned, Mr. Bowden had to set off back along the bank, in shoes almost to pieces after the previous rough walking. When after many miles he came upon

the boat, it was to find the crew refusing to proceed farther up stream for fear of fever, and the only thing to do was to return in the boat to Dowlaishweram and engage a new and bolder crew. The many days' delay made it impossible to reach Bhadrachalam for the festival, and he had to be content with going up to Rudramkota, thirty odd miles short of Bhadrachalam, to join Simeon and relieve the old man's anxiety at their non-appearance according to arrangement. They then crossed to Rekapalle and attended a market, enabling them to get into touch with some jungle people, whom they found very shy. Here Mr. Bowden found a hill rajah from the unexplored hill taluk of Bijji, far away in the Central Provinces, and had a long interview with him in his camp, giving him a tolerably full history of Christ and the reasons for His death and resurrection, with some Scripture portions. From thence they worked their way homewards, visiting each village they passed as far as Manturu, and were back in Palakol for the last Sunday in April.

Meantime Mrs. Heelis, having gone into a rapid decline, and passed away on May 21st, after only eighteen weeks of married life, his 23rd birthday found Mr. Heelis a widower. Relief from his sorrow was gained by plunging the more assiduously into his interrupted studies, and in taking the Gospel message to those about him. Anxious to address the higher castes acceptably in the vernacular, he took up the study of Telugu in its higher grammatical forms, with some Sanskrit, taking the utmost pains to acquire a pleasing accent. It was not in vain—his industry won him a place in the front rank of Telugu missionaries, and he became a cultured scholar, speaking in a chaste and simple style, with both the book and the colloquial forms of speech perfectly at command.

Under the fostering care of George Noble Taylor, the Sub-Collector, public education was spreading rapidly through the Division, and had its fountain-head in the Narasapur Central School. Shortly after he left the district in 1856, Mr. Samuel Ager arrived to take charge of the school,

and was glad to find a home with Mrs. Beer. A Christian man, he took active part in the work at Narsapur so far as his scanty leisure permitted, and within a few months became her son-in-law by taking to wife Mary Anne, in the charming bloom of twenty. The members of the Narsapur church had increased to fourteen, and Mrs. Beer's school work was flourishing again. Amongst many interesting cases of blessing just now was the little girl who had been some time in the school without attracting much notice, as she appeared very dull. She fell very sick, and Mrs. Beer went to see her, and speaking of sin as the cause of all suffering, asked her if she knew who could take away sin. She looked up and said, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.' On asking if she felt herself to be a sinner, she at once responded, 'If I say I have no sin, I deceive myself, and the truth is not in me. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; for the blood of Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin.' Mrs. Beer and the mother were astonished at her answers, as up to that time she had been too ill to speak more than a word.

By this time Mrs. Bowden's health had entirely broken down, making it imperative she should go again to England. No one being found to attend her in her invalid condition, Mr. Bowden had himself to accompany her, and they embarked on the 'Gloriana' in Madras on February 13th, 1857. His first furlough was thus forced upon him after full twenty years in the Godavari. The mantle now fell upon Mr. Heelis, and worthily he took it up.

In April, with Francis and Alisahib as helpers, he took his first trip up into the hills, getting as far as Koruturu. He was greatly taken with Paidapaka, and in this charmingly situated spot built a small hut as a base. The Kois they found very receptive—a middle-aged woman at Kondrukota, who showed them great kindness, never tired of listening, and to her Alisahib gave many hours, pouring into her ears the wonderful story of the Saviour. Alisahib had just

been raised from the brink of the grave. "I thought," wrote Mr. Heelis, "he was dying from rapid consumption, but, that our hearts might not be cast down, and for His own name's sake, the Lord has raised him up again to health and strength. His desire that poor sinners should hear of the name which he has so lately become acquainted with is very great indeed; especially he loves the Koys. He was the means of many hearing the good news. One night, after being tired with the day's work, as I lay down in a shed belonging to some Koys, I saw Bro. A. sit down on the ground before a dim lantern, with a book in his hand. On asking him what he was going to do so late at night, he pointed to a row of dark figures sitting near. He then began to read, and to let those who never before heard of God, hear of the Saviour through Whom alone they could approach Him. That night I did not sleep well; but, blessed be God, when half asleep and half awake, I constantly heard the voice of that dear brother, speaking quietly from the depth of his heart of the living Way, of the only Sin-bearer."

It was also Francis' first visit to the hills, and he tells of the effect upon him in an interesting letter translated by Mr. Heelis. After relating his conversion, he goes on, "For four years I fed on the milk of the Word, then the Lord called me out to preach the Gospel. O brethren, behold the wonderful love of God! The Lord chose me, one of the least in the world. If I go forth in my own strength, I am weak; but if in the strength of the Lord, I am strong. The Lord upholds me, so I make known His precious Blood. I know none who can tell its price. When I saw His blood, my joy was greater than the joy of those who rejoice in the fumes of nice wine; because these things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. May we praise the Father.

"In the month of April Alisahib and myself, with Mr. Heelis, went a short distance into the Koy country. There we saw the wonders of the Lord. That country is full of

mountains, hills, deserts, tigers and bears. Besides this, during the cold season, fever rages; and in the hot season, the heat is very great indeed. In that country the good news has not yet been preached. They listen attentively to the word; some appear to understand it well; and although others do not understand, they, not being learned, cannot dispute much. Dear brethren, I desire you to pray for those who make known the good news to them, and that they may see their liberty through the blood of Jesus."

Francis had well commended himself to Capt. Haig. In a letter in 1854 that speaks much for its writer, that godly engineer says: "I feel greatly drawn towards Francis. Last night, after my talk with two poor men, when going away he could not help weeping over their blindness and misery. I have scarcely had a talk with him, however short, that I did not feel quickened by it; he says little, but what he does say is weighty. I have several times wished to have a talk with him alone; I might learn much for him. He seems to have such simple childlike faith, and so much love and pity for his countrymen, with such lowly-mindedness at the same time. If it should please God to spare him and he could receive a little education, I cannot but think he may be fitted for a more active and prominent sphere of labour in spreading the knowledge of Christ among the heathen."

For Francis was then very delicate, and threatened with decline. His deep passion for souls would not let him spare himself, and he was indefatigable in Gospel work, though repeatedly prostrated by labours beyond his weak bodily powers. After their return in 1857, Mr. Heelis wrote: "Francis I think you have frequently heard of through Brother Bowden. He has for some years known the Lord, Whom he loves much; he has also been shown many things by the Comforter, so that he can exhort others. Though strong in the Lord, in body he is very weak, being consumptive. I think this year may be his last—the Lord knows. He feels joy in the thought of departing to be

with Jesus. His expecting so soon to leave causes an increased desire to work for his Master during the short time. I rejoiced to see his joy in speaking to the poor Koys; he said, poor fellow, that he felt quite well and strong when in the midst of action." But the anticipated departure was not to be for another 43 years! He outgrew his weakness, married, reared a large family of strapping sons and daughters, put in a half century of sterling work in association with his brother-in-law, James, and fell asleep, full of years and honour, on October 24th, 1900.

Alas, this was the last occasion for some time that they could move freely amongst the Koys and get good hearings for their Message. Already they experienced reserve and opposition amongst the hill Reddis, due to latent political feeling against the European, and a cloud was o'ershadowing the land. Soon after the terrible Mutiny broke out, leading to the 'fituri' of 1858, to which a separate chapter is given.

The life and death struggle into which the British were precipitated had its repercussions all over India, and writing July 29th, Mr. Heelis reported: "The war going on in the north has an effect upon the natives. They disregard more and more the good news, and say there will now be an end of both Christ and Christians. It is supposed by many that all Europeans will be put an end to." When the outlook was darkest, he had a boat and stores held in readiness to convey the local Europeans to sea, when he would have navigated them to a safe port for refuge. Happily this extreme step was not called for, and the ferment subsided. On November 1st, 1858, in the presence of large and respectful crowds, the Royal Proclamation was read in Narasapur, announcing Queen Victoria's assumption of the Government of her Indian dominions.

CHAPTER XXV

Subbareddi's Rebellion, 1858

“My visit to England has been a source of much spiritual profit and comfort, and the love of the saints with whom I have had the privilege of holding communion has been a source of great encouragement in the Lord, and has greatly refreshed my spirit . . . My passage is taken in the ‘Indus’, which sails from Southampton on the 14th August. My dear wife’s health has improved considerably, though not sufficiently to allow of her accompanying me now. She, and the four children whom I leave behind, remain in this place until her health will allow of her joining me.” So wrote Mr. Bowden from Barnstaple, upon the eve of his setting out in 1858 on return from his first furlough, on which he had been made a blessing to several souls—in particular to one hardened young woman in Ilfracombe. Though dying, she refused to allow anyone to speak to her about her soul. Her anxious parents besought Mr. Bowden to visit her, which he did, and by his very tactful dealing, and the attraction of his benign countenance, won a hearing, and left her rejoicing in Christ as her Saviour.

Landing in Madras in November, he made his way up country by road, visiting on the way the Jewetts in Nellore, and in Bezwada the Darlings (who, after eleven long years of faithful preaching without seeing a convert, were on the point of reaping abundantly amongst the Malas, headed by that splendid convert, Venkiah, of Raghavapuram). On the road he had a providential meeting that affected him greatly. Waiting some hours at a village for bullocks to take him on the next stage, he heard a party of prisoners in chains had been halted there in a shed. Going over to them “to

tell them of One Who had been in the lowest pit, in darkness and the deep for them," he found them to be Kois, sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment for the part they had taken in Subbareddi's rebellion.

"They smiled, and looked happy in their sorrows to be spoken to, and especially when I showed my acquaintance with their own hills. I read to them of Jesus, and His death and resurrection, and pointed them to Him as the only Saviour. They listened with great attention, and I was struck with their manly bearing in their chains. A low-countryman in these circumstances would have been all opportunity for help, but they asked for none; but after I had left them, one of them obtained leave to follow me a few paces, and asked if I could help them in the way of obtaining leave to be imprisoned in the Guntur jail, rather than the one they were going to nearly 100 miles below Madras, as their wives and children in that case would be able to know of them from time to time. Five of the hill-chiefs were hung on account of the rebellion, and I learnt from these men that I had met and known four out of the five. Mrs. Beer went to see one of these chiefs before he was hung, and he mentioned my name to her. Poor fellow, I had told him of Christ, and had left with his son, who has escaped and is at large, a copy of one of the Gospels."

Subbareddi's rebellion in the Reddisema was an aftermath of the Mutiny. Although the people in general had remained loyal, a good deal of sedition was preached by wandering mendicants. When other causes led to this outbreak, fresh courage was given to the ringleaders in fomenting this trouble by the tidings coming from the north—as Subbareddi, the leader, putting his hands together in the attitude of submission, said to Judge Morris, who tried the case: "May I be permitted to speak? I heard that Nana Sahib was advancing with his victorious army, and that whoever did most against the English would be rewarded most." Mr. Bowden put the story on record, prefaced by two other

incidents immediately preceding the rebellion, the three incidents coming within his personal knowledge, and illustrating the Bible statement that 'their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god.'

It is to be premised, he states, that "the Koys have the character of possessing great magical powers, so much so as to charm the tiger, and bind him to their plough. Such are, or rather were, the commonly received notions regarding them. They have, however, of late become better known; still they are objects of terror to those who would oppress them, which is especially the case with those landed proprietors who hold the hill districts; and, as these tracts of land are generally unhealthy from fever, and not largely productive, they have, at least in these parts, been mostly held by proprietors. The tract to the west of the river in this district formed part of one large estate, which subsequently became divided, and is now held by two families, one a Brahmin, the other a Banyan. The former has a house and small fort at Polavaram; the other resides at Yanam. Besides these, there is a class of independent Sudras, called Reddis, who sub-rent under these proprietors, and hold villages pretty much independently of them, and these have great influence in the hills, the Koys being for the most part their vassals.

"One case I refer to as illustrative of the text is that of the Brahmin proprietor at Polavaram, quite a young man. He was a good deal kept about the Collector's catchery, and, I believe, spoke English. After he obtained his majority, he wished, it is said, to obtain a counter power to that of the Koys, and commenced a series of magical rites in his own house. His mother, residing with him, became alarmed, as it was said by the magicians that he would be unable to bear the power of the god whose aid he sought; she therefore interfered to prevent its prosecution. But he determined to pursue it, and repaired with his young wife to a temple situated on a rock in the river, which is supported by the revenues from a village appropriated mutually

by the two families when the estate was divided. Here he recommenced the rites, and one night, as he and his wife only were seated in front of the idol, some Brahmins being in the precincts, it is said he touched the cloth which covered the idol when a squeaking noise was heard (probably that of a mouse, or other small animal). He started, saying to his wife, 'Don't be afraid.' She replied, 'I only thought you would be alarmed,' when he reeled and fell backward. He was taken up by the Brahmins and carried out. He threw up a lot of blood and in a day or two died. His widow may have been sixteen years of age. Thus ended his life and witchcraft.

"Another case is that of the proprietor of the other half of the estate. His house, it is said, has been haunted, so that at broad day it has been difficult to sit quiet at business; at least, such is the native report. Various means have been resorted to to turn out the evil spirit, without effect. At length a celebrated Biragee, or religious mendicant, was applied to; but he declared it would involve great indignity to the man himself, to which he would not consent. At length a plan was devised, whereby he might be dispossessed, and a young girl taken possession of in his stead. Here we see the cold-hearted, murderous selfishness of idolatry and demonology. A fine young girl, daughter of a servant, was taken and placed by his side while the witchcraft ceremonies were proceeding. At a certain stage of the ceremonies the girl screamed, and started out of her place in convulsions, and shortly afterwards died. Such is the report. An investigation took place by the police authorities, correspondence ensued, and at length an order was issued and the proprietor sentenced to three months' imprisonment. He and his wife made their escape, and are now in concealment. The result will be ruinous in a business point of view, and other sorrows will follow, even in this life.

"The third case is that of Subbareddi, resident formerly on the neutral ground between these estates and the Nizam's territory. He and his family were worshipping a hill god-

dess, 'Beera meyah,' to whom, it is said, human sacrifices were offered. He had been soured for a long time through the Government cutting off a kind of blackmail which he claimed on all goods passing through the Gorge at the foot of his village. I knew him, and have preached Christ to him, as also to sons of his, and one night I and two Christians, having late in the evening reached his house, slept on the verandah. I think Mr. Heelis also knew him. About the time of the outbreak a matter occurred which he considered disgraceful to him, and a man of another caste was involved. He and his friends plotted this man's death, when he fled and took refuge with the Collector. Here, after some parleying, the Asst.-Collector was betrayed into a trap to meet them with the fugitive in the jungles, when they overpowered the Europeans, and carried the man off and put him to death in the most terrific manner possible. The result of this was the combination of all the Reddis and others, which led to a party being sent up under charge of a European officer. They were then scattered, and numbers were taken prisoners, and Subbareddi and four others of his family, all men of influence in the hills, were publicly hung. Report says the officer rooted up the temple and destroyed it utterly, and that numerous human skulls were found there. Thus the Reddis are so far blotted out from these hills, their wives are widows, their children are scattered, and the influence of the class utterly destroyed. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death'."

Mr. Heelis also relates a case of fanaticism that occurred near his bungalow in May that year. "A strong, healthy young Mohammedan, aged about twenty, was attending to his usual work, when he heard someone call out, 'Snake! snake!' He rose up, and being confident in his power over the cobra, ran to the hole in the ground into which it had gone, thrust in his hand, and boldly seizing it, dragged it out, in doing which he received no injury. But not being content with this, but desiring also to make money of the

snake by causing it to dance on its tail, he foolishly attempted to break out its fang with his finger and thumb; in doing which the fang, full of poison, ran into his thumb, causing a slight incision. Someone near him, seeing the blood, warned him of his danger and advised him to take some medicine, which would have most likely caused his recovery. But he proudly said, 'I believe in Mahomet; he will save me. I am not afraid; I shall fight against death; I defy its overcoming me.' Then he even took the snake and played with it a bit. However, he was deceived. After a very short time he felt a strange sensation: his body began to swell, a mist came over his eyes which neither he nor Mahomet could prevent; then, seeing the light of this world for the last time, he fell down (still saying he hoped to recover), and breathing his last, entered a dark, awful eternity."

CHAPTER XXVI

The Gospel borne still farther afield, 1859, 1860

The New Year of 1859 found Mr. Heelis possessed of a boat of his own, to the ex-sailor's great satisfaction, for his 'Harbinger' put to proof the new splendid possibilities of touring, now that the canal linked up hundreds of miles of navigable waterway. Fitly, Antarvedi was the first to see the Gospel boat. In his irrepressible zeal he took Francis out at night into the main street, and by and by found themselves caught by the idol procession, a dangerous situation in such a den of fanaticism—it was only the kindly offices of an erstwhile strong opponent in screening him from observation enabled them to escape whole!

But the longed-for objective was the Bhadrachalam Festival. After prayerful counsel with Mr. Bowden, he set out on April 6th, with Alisahib and Francis, in a well-provisioned boat, allowing four days for the journey of 140 miles. In their inexperience they had failed to allow for the sandshoals impending navigation at that season, and after a time progress became hopelessly slow and tiresome. Bhadrachalam was again out of the question, but they succeeded in making Sriramagiri in time for a corresponding festival. Their advent here was quite an astonishment to the assembled pilgrims, who listened well, but was little relished by the temple Brahmins! No doubt God's hand was in the detention, for Bhadrachalam, which did not come under British rule till the following year, suffered a great plundering in 1859 by the Zamindar's lawless Rohillas, who, receiving little pay for their services, compensated themselves by looting the country round, lying altogether at their mercy.

The festival over, our party passed on to Rudramkota, where the Sabari joins the Godavari. They had heard much of the Kois on its banks, and seeing this almost unexplored river before them, were fired to take the Gospel to them. The water in the Sabari was now too low for the 'Harbinger' to make a passage, so they set out on foot, first visiting the Rekapalle market. When over, and the crowd dispersed, "I observed a solitary man, with his little boy, had come and seated himself under the tree where our dinner was being cooked. On my approach he salaamed and told me his son (the boy with him, about ten years old) was present when I addressed the others, and being struck with the wonderful things he heard, had begged him to come and hear also. I felt a pleasure in telling him and rejoiced to see his attention and interest. The boy's face beamed with joy, and he promised not to forget what he heard about Jesus. The man was a relation of the zamindar, and asked me to write a letter to him (he was then asleep) about these wonderful things. I gave him some tracts, which he gladly received and promised to deliver to the zamindar when he awoke."

At 4 p.m. they started, their rice, bedding, etc., borne by coolies. Shortly after a thunder-storm drenched them and a part of their provisions before they could find shelter for the night. "However, next morning, the sun coming forth in his wonted strength set all to rights again." Before passing on, they preached to the villagers. "Some listened very attentively and asked many questions, but the lowest caste natives trembled with fear as we approached them; however, after a little persuasion, believing we intended them no harm, they quietly listened to the Gospel. The man who provided us with shelter for the night was very friendly; he bore marks of tiger, from which he had a wonderful escape some years ago." Visiting ten or more villages on the way, on the fifth day they reached Kaleru, near the junction of the Sileru and Sabari, marking the border of the

Rekapalle Zamindari, and the end of the then tolerably civilised part of the country.

They now entered the domains of the Rajah of Sun-kum, a small place about 100 miles further up the Sabari. "The jungle along which we had come is considered by the low country as one to be dreaded; but it was not to be compared with the one on which we now entered. It was extremely dense, and the ground, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with a thick grass six or seven feet high, forming a hiding place for tigers, bears, etc. With two Koys as guides, we travelled along this wild country until, meeting with a small Koy village, we halted, and collecting them together as many as we could, we spoke to them of Jesus. At first some were frightened, being their first meeting with a European; but after gaining their confidence, they became very friendly. I found a great difference between them and the Koys to the south of Kaleru. They were more mean in appearance, with scarcely any clothing, and their acquaintance with Telugu was very limited; therefore our manner of address had to be most simple, otherwise the meaning was not understood. . . . So we continued our tour up this river to the distance of about ninety miles, meeting with villages, though not thickly populated, the whole way. Our reception was varied, but generally speaking, friendly, and the word was listened to with great surprise.

"Everything in my possession seemed to surprise them, but especially the lantern—twenty at a time would flock around it, examining the glass, door, etc., with the greatest wonder. Such is the state of those poor people. In the jungle tigers abound. In three or four different villages I saw cattle which had been killed, and some half eaten by them; and the poor Koys had many a mournful tale to tell about them; even of some of their own people having been killed by them when walking along the footpaths. So in addition to the many privations these people have to suffer, they are surrounded by many dangers. There are frequent disturbances also between the different zamindars, when these

poor people suffer, having their villages burnt down, or cattle stolen, they being obliged to take up their quarters in the jungle. Asked why they wore such scanty clothing, they would say that if they clothed themselves better, the rajah would immediately demand of them a larger sum than they were giving. When I listened to the mournful tales of having to flee to the mountains for safety, etc., I used to think, surely the Gospel will sound sweet to such?"

At length they reached the large village of Podivaypatnam, inhabited by Sudras who spoke Telugu well. Nearly 200 crowded into the shed to see and hear them, keeping the strictest silence during a two hours' discourse. Sunkum itself was now only a day's journey ahead, and they would have gone on, had not Francis been seized here by a severe attack of his old complaint. So they turned their faces homeward, the less reluctantly on learning no Telugu was spoken beyond Sunkum. Reaching Kaleru again, by which time Francis was much recovered, they made for Rudramkota along the Bhadrachalam side of the Sabari, finding bigger villages and much greater numbers of Kois, who received their Message most eagerly. One headman in particular seemed really to believe the good news. "If I stopped speaking for a short time, he would speak to the others, and explain how Jesus, the Son of God, had died for poor man, and atoned for his sin with His own blood. It was not once only, but he kept continually conversing about Jesus, and all he heard. He spoke of the darkness they were in, and the folly of idols, as if he had been acquainted with the news for years."

They went out of their way to visit a Reddi village perched on a mountain. Steep and difficult of access, and concealed by large trees, its inhabitants fled like frightened deer into the forest at their approach. Some Malas from below known to the Reddis happened to be there too, and calling them by name, shouted there was nothing for them to fear. At last the headman made his appearance, approaching very cautiously, and trying with a faltering voice to

persuade them he was not the least afraid. They sent him off to fetch the rest, and after waiting an hour or two, they had the satisfaction of seeing them drop in one by one and seat themselves to listen quietly. Proposing to visit a similar village, the headman assured them they would not even get a sight of the villagers, but offered to send for them. After another wait of two or three hours, these sons of the mountains came in also, bearing a bunch of plantains as a sort of peace-offering. Their nerves appeared a bit shaken, and they listened with fear, but the gift of some rice to cook a meal gave them more confidence.

These poor people had no cattle, as it is impossible to plough the steep face of their hills. They clear a bit of forest slope, and at the beginning of the rains poke holes amongst the stumps of the trees, the stones and the rocks, and sow their seed, which usually yields a good crop of millet, the only grain they subsist upon. Often they suffer very great privation; but they are excellent hunters with the bow and arrow, and eke out a living by its spoils—elk, deer, jungle-sheep and pig; the whole village turns out to the hunt, dividing the spoils equally among all.

The remoter village brought a blind boy of twelve to Mr. Heelis, in hope of his restoring the sight. "I told him, and those present, that it was not in my power to give him sight, but that if he believed the news I was going to tell him, he would have sight after leaving this vale of tears. The poor boy was anxious to know what I had to tell him; and on hearing the Gospel was greatly delighted." He had great difficulty in pronouncing the name of Jesus, which he was most anxious to keep in remembrance, and kept repeating it. "I told him he must simply believe what God says concerning His dear Son—that through His precious blood we have remission of sins, etc.; but on mentioning the name of Jesus, he would each time repeat the name aloud, as though afraid to lose it. Among his friends too, he would repeat that blessed name, and say, that if he believed in Jesus he would receive his sight hereafter."

They had got well into May, with its scorching hot winds, when they reached Rudramkota again. Almost immediately the whole party of six went down with fever, and Mr. Heelis was brought in to Rajahmundry at death's door. "I thought I should have departed to be with Jesus. During my greatest sufferings He kept my soul in perfect peace, cheering me with His presence, and enabling me to say, 'Thy will be done'." As soon as he could be moved, he was taken to Narsapur, and in nursing him back to health in its refreshing sea-breezes, Mrs. Beer found relief from a sorrow piercing her motherly heart—one Sabbath midday in April one of her loved caste school-girls had been accidentally drowned in the river behind her bungalow!

The following New Year they were cheered by a visit from Mr. Sharkey, with a band of his young men from Masulipatam. Mr. Heelis, who had now taken up permanent residence in Narsapur, found great pleasure in taking them to the Antarvedi Festival, and then on a longer tour, via Cocanada, Coringa and Yanam, to the teeming, noisy Kotapalli Festival.

But the Bhadrachalam Festival was the great lure; though not fully recovered from last May's fever, he could not rest with this goal unreachd. Francis and Alisahib were equally game for the venture. Their pluck and determination were rewarded, for this time they got there after a twelve days' journey, and suffered no sickness. Arriving just at the commencement of the festival, they found Capt. Haig, from Dummagudem, already on the spot to join them in Gospel witness. They encountered the fiercest opposition from the lawless temple Brahmins, enraged at this unprecedented invasion of their domain and religious authority. As usual, however, the common people heard them gladly.

It was on the return journey Mr. Heelis had his remarkable encounter with a tiger. "Seeing a number of peacocks along the bank, I landed with my gun, in hopes of getting one for curry. On ascending the bank I lost all trace of them, but hoping to find them amongst the bushes,



A FERRY ON THE UPPER GODAVARI

[Photo by Rev. C. G. Early

I walked a short distance into the jungle. But before going 100 yards, a monstrous tiger sprang up close to me, giving three tremendous roars, with the intention, I suppose, of intimidating me. Through the mercy of God, Who alone sustained me, I did not lose nerve, but was enabled to face him with the gun, upon which, turning to one side, he very leisurely walked off, every now and then giving me a side glance. I watched the noble animal until he was out of sight, when, fearing his mate might be near, I mounted a tree, gun in hand, and hailed my people, who soon came. They had heard the roar of the tiger, and in finding me in safety, seemed unable to express their joy and thanks to Him Who had kept me in the hollow of His hand. Praise the Lord, O my soul!" God had another fifty years of service amongst Telugus appointed His servant, and would not permit him to be meat for a tiger!

CHAPTER XXVII

“ Which doeth great things past finding out ”

Taking up work again after his furlough, Mr. Bowden was struck with the great change that had come over the people generally. The Mutiny ferment had died down. An increasing civility was being shewn to Europeans and Christians; a more earnest hearing given to the Gospel. But ominously, a new type of opposition to Christianity, mainly inspired from Madras, was manifesting itself. Western education divorced from the Bible, and an abundance of well-paid employment for the educated, together with increased general prosperity, were markedly tending to leaven the educated class with materialistic and rationalistic thought.

Heelis had devoted himself almost too exclusively to evangelism. Mr. Bowden found the little churches calling for increased care, and to this he set himself. Almost immediately he took boat for Tirugudumetta; then he went on to Undi, and from thence to Sesalu, where Chelliah had relatives showing an interest; his house at Tsundaparru had become the centre of very active testimony amongst the Malas. Interest in Agarthipalem had greatly increased. Aravilli was opening up. There about twelve were meeting every Sunday; none of them could read, but what any one of them had gleaned at Palakol was passed on to the rest. A visit from Alisahib stirred them greatly, and they turned their temple shed into a meeting-house. In Narsapur it was Mr. Bowden's joy to baptise another Mohammedan convert early in 1859—Yelluri Sooban Sahib, of Sakkinetipalli.

It was as much as he was able for just then, for all through 1859 his activities were much hindered by an

asthmatic complaint. He had, however, a most active helper in James; and about this time Mrs. Cowling returned a widow to Palakol with her little girl, Rhoda, and took up the care of the growing number of young women. But in his weakness God's servant was to accomplish far more than he knew at the time to send the Gospel far abroad beyond the Godavari. And a noxious fly was its indirect cause!

Among the factors contributing to make the season of 1857-1858 so unfavourable were the ravages among the cattle of a poisonous fly. Large numbers of cattle died, causing a glut of hides in the market. Into the Masulipatam and Rajahmundry Districts was attracted an unusual influx of shrewd Madiga merchants, mostly from the Nellore District. Spending long periods roaming the affected parts, they bought up hides cheaply and transported them in cartloads to their own parts. Some of these itinerant traders came into contact with the Palakol Christians of the leather-working class.

Such were the circumstances accounting for the presence of a stranger in the Palakol congregation on the second Sunday of 1860. A trivial matter? No, indeed; it had far-reaching consequences in the spread of the Gospel in central and southern Andhradesa! The stranger was a merchant of Ongole, with temporary quarters twenty miles from Palakol. Two years before, when Mr. Bowden was in England, he had been there on business, and falling in with some of the believers, had heard the Gospel from them for the first time. He was greatly impressed, and spoke about it to others as he moved around. Now, meeting Mr. Bowden, he was glad to learn more of these things that had become precious to his soul, and he spent a whole week with him before passing on. We next find him in Ellore, where he came upon Mr. Alexander preaching the same truths in the street. He settled there with his family, and placed themselves under Christian instruction. He was baptised by Mr. Alexander, taking the name of Vongolu

Abraham. Wherever he went he spoke of Christ, and was the means of persuading many of his caste to embrace Christianity, especially in the Masulipatam District.

Abraham had a distant relative, Yerragunta Periah, living in Tullakondapad, near Kanagiri. In 1862 he too came north after hides, and reaching Ellore, was introduced to Mr. Alexander, from whom he first heard the teaching of the Gospel. Then he passed on to Palakol to hear more from Mr. Bowden, and mixed there with believers of his own caste. He returned home under deep conviction. Informed that missionaries were coming to live in Ongole, he walked in the forty miles, only to find they had not yet come. He was about to return home disappointed, when he met Mrs. Shilling (whose husband was in the D.P.W.) in the street at dusk. Respectfully addressing her in Telugu, he asked if she could tell him about Jesus. She directed him to the bungalow, where she read the third chapter of John with him from her Telugu Bible, and pointed him to Christ. There and then he experienced the new birth. He went back and won his wife, Nagamma, for Christ.

In March, 1866, Mr. and Mrs. Jewett visited Ongole to interview them for baptism. They were delighted as they listened to the artless story of God's dealings with them, and saw their simplicity, faith and love. They were the firstfruits of the great mass of Madiga converts gathered from that area. Preachers sent to Tullakondapad were amazed to find in Periah a zeal for the souls of the people far outstripping their own. Long before daybreak he would stir them up to go to villages at a distance, and would lead the way, a great pot of buttermilk on his head for the preachers to drink from when thirsty, as it was the hottest weather. Dear Periah continued an earnest and fruitful soul-winner until his Home-call in 1897.

In March, 1860, Mrs. Bowden sailed again for India, bringing with her Mary Gilbert and four of her sons, only Edwin being left at home to finish his apprenticeship. As they were on their way, Mr. Bowden's ill-health came to

a climax. It was exceptionally hot that year, four natives in Palakol being carried off by the heat in one week. Mr. Bowden was utterly prostrated. But again in those weeks of suffering he had a special joy—it was in the conversion of a young man of the high Razu caste.

Vadapalli Subbarazu was from the same village, P. Polavaram, as Alisahib. He had heard the Gospel, and his heart was touched, leading him to seek peace. He fell sick and went to the missionary for treatment, when he was urged to trust in Christ. In April he came with the full determination to give himself to the Lord, and to throw in his lot with the poor, despised Christians. Mr. Bowden took him into his house. All through his illness this dear young man of high caste devoted himself to caring for him, watching by him night and day with great love and care, until the many prayers of the believers for his recovery were answered, when he returned to his village.

Very singularly, his mother allowed him to continue living with her, despite the persecution she had to endure in consequence. His difficulties were very great, for added to the scorn and opposition of his fellow-castemen were the great efforts they made to prevent his getting labour to cultivate his fields; whilst, with their countenance, the very outcastes united in abusing him—which was, perhaps, the hardest of all to bear. The Lord succoured him by means of a Madiga family that for some time had been listening to the Word. Bartala Venkiah rallied to his support in face of the great persecution, and with his help nearly all his fields were transplanted that year, and his crop reaped in good condition. In gratitude to God he put up a shed on his land, that His servants might occupy it and make it a centre for reaching round about.

News of the great 1859 revivals in America and Ireland had reactions in all evangelical communities. Narsapur and Palakol were deeply moved, and from September onwards special weekly united prayer-meetings were held there alternately, with an attendance often exceeding fifty adults

—in one gathering Mr. Bowden counted converts come originally from 22 different villages. Even Brahmins were moved; one Sunday morning six attended Mr. Heelis' preaching.

For mention should be made here of important administrative changes made at this time. In December the Masulipatam and Rajahmundry Districts, with their taluks, were reconstituted, and the Godavari District formed. Concurrently a thorough Survey and Revenue Resettlement were made of the Western Delta, with headquarters at Narsapur under Capt. Priestley and Mr. Masters, two Christian gentlemen. This brought in a large influx of Brahmin clerks, etc., of a progressive type, and it was from these some attended the Christian ministry.

On Sunday, March 4th, 1860, a mighty revival broke out under Arulappan at Christianpettah, and spread with powerful effect through the C.M.S. churches in Tinnevely, and even to Travancore. Month by month 'The Indian Watchman' gave tidings of the movement to the Godavari, and hearts were kindled afresh. As an earnest of what God could do, they had that hot season a remarkable case of conversion in a grass-cutter who for years had heard the Gospel in the Narsapur bazaar, and had shown much opposition. Bitten by a mad dog, he thereupon became a constant attendant upon the preaching and professed faith in Jesus. Hydrophobia set in and claimed its victim. Mr. Heelis constantly visited him, and testified he had never seen a case of more real conversion to God; during the paroxysms he seemed to have much spiritual exercise, and appeared to be defying the devil in the name of Jesus.

The Pushkaram bathing festival followed, but with greatly diminished numbers this time, owing to the cholera then raging throughout the Presidency, and which turned the terror-stricken people to a yet more frantic worship of Rama. But a new encouragement came to the Godavari workers in November in the baptism of an ex-dancing-girl,

for whom they had done much, and been rewarded in seeing her turn out a nice girl and get happily married.

Mrs. Beer now had 130 in attendance in her two schools, and many were cases of special interest. In December the power of God was displayed amongst them in a singular way. "One of our scholars, whose uncle died rather suddenly recently, was reading a portion of Scripture about 2 p.m., when he was taken with great trembling, and appeared to be in great terror, so that friends thought he was dying. But he shortly revived and told them that he was not going to die, but had had new life given him; that he had seen a little of Jesus' glory, and was now sent to tell all the boys in the school they were sinners, that Jesus had died for them, and they must believe in Him; for Jesus was soon coming to punish sinners and reward the righteous. His friends thought him mad and tried to keep him from it, but he would not be dissuaded. So, accompanied by his father, he came to the school, and going about the room, he told the boys what he said he had to make known to them." The burden of the message of this youth of nineteen was that 'Jesus was soon coming.' A little later they had another case of a young man being struck down in the open field, and, deeply convicted of man's sin, he bore testimony without fear to all around him to the way of redemption through Christ.

The notable feature of the revival in Narsapur in 1861 was the work that went on amongst Brahmins. In February came a most opportune visit from the scholarly Purushottam Chowdhuri, preaching in the great Palakol market, and arriving in Narsapur when the town was full of local ryots gathered for the Jamabandi; in the two days of his visit he preached five times in the open to large audiences. It was a joy to him on the Lord's day to minister to the congregation—the first church of Telugu believers of appreciable size he had met in his 200 miles' itineration since leaving Vizagapatam.

The young Brahmin intelligentsia proved surprisingly impressionable. Purushottam's visit added new ferment. There was one who took a decided stand about this time. Though young, he had proved himself the ablest of them all in the department, and was made the referee in all difficult Survey questions. He now denounced Hinduism, and pleaded for the truth of the Bible. He and several others came daily to read the Bible with Mr. Heelis, who often sat up till midnight with enquirers, such was the spirit of enquiry now abroad.

Those days Mr. Heelis certainly got his own back after a most godly manner on his inveterate foes, the Brahmins! But another event in 1861 even more menaced the citadel of Brahminism. **John William Beer**, his education in England completed, returned to India with high testimonials. He was offered a public school in Bengal, corresponding to the position of his brother-in-law, Mr. Ager, in Narsapur. Affording a comfortable independency, it was an attractive proposition. Just then he was soundly converted. Receiving Christ into his heart, worldly ambition vanished. He esteemed it more to the glory of God to carry on his father's work, and declined the Bengal offer. As an obscure youth of eighteen, without visible means of support, he joined his delighted mother, and started an English school for high class youths. Not once nor twice in the next thirty years was the Brahmin stronghold shaken by this unpretentious institution, as converts to Christ were wrested from it.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Planting of Village Churches

The following decade saw wide expansion, though its opening years were comparatively uneventful. Mrs. Bowden's health became so unsatisfactory, they had to repair to Bangalore, and permanent settlement there appeared likely. Before they left Mr. Heelis was married to Mrs. Cowling, and settled in the bungalow next door to Mrs. Beer that remained his home the rest of his days—a couple wonderfully equipped for the service God had given them. By 1864 the Bowdens were back again in the work. Soon after came the awful cyclone that destroyed Masulipatam with a death roll of 30,000, when Mr. Heelis hastened to the help of the stricken friends there, walking the forty miles midst harrowing scenes. The shock to dear Mr. Noble was too great—in less than a year he passed Home, followed not long after by the laborious Sharkey, his constitution likewise shattered by the ordeal.

Sunday, New Year's day, 1865, was celebrated in Palakol by the baptism of three converts, one of whom had been a Hindu convert to Mohammedanism, but in the Mutiny had left them, and was now a humble follower of Jesus. On the 9th there followed another baptism at Martair, when they had the joy of seeing their first village church established in this important centre. The following hot season was exceptionally severe, and was marked by a fearful epidemic of cholera. Its ravages in Palakol and neighbourhood were dreadful—many fled, the town was largely deserted, and jackals roamed the streets. The Christians were remarkably preserved, only one girlie of eight being taken, who, before dying, looked up and said, "The Bridegroom has come for me; I must go." God overruled it in

blessing to **Ravi Venkataswami**, an old Narsapur pupil, but careless hitherto about his soul. Fear now seized him, he cultivated the companionship of the brethren, and was soundly converted. His baptism the following April laid the foundation of the Agarthipalem Church.

Alisahib, Francis and James played a great part in village visitation, and had many an encouragement, as when Alisahib once found a seeker on his death-bed—embracing Alisahib most affectionately, he said, "I am going to Jesus, Who died for me," and the next day fell asleep. Years of fostering care by Mr. Bowden brought to fruition the work in Korumilli and Aravilli, and two more village churches were established when the first baptisms took place in 1867 and 1868. As early as 1860 eleven heads of families in Korumilli had designated themselves as 'Christians,' with interest of the keenest. Long into the night they sat under his patient teaching, though they had to be up and about their work very early in the morning—their appetite for the Word was insatiable, and their attention never flagged, however long he continued. The leading figure was **Tumpari Matiah**, who became a prominent worker. One, **Mariah**, when the lawless caste people sought James' life, nobly shielded him, taking the blows upon himself, until he was felled senseless at James' feet: when revived, he took it all so quietly, whilst James, beaten black and blue, prayed so fervently for their enemies, that a profound effect was made by this exhibition of the Spirit of Christ in them.

Churches were also founded in Maddur and Velivenu in 1868, and in the latter case we meet with another remarkable convert, **Dudday Bramiah**, or Noah, as he came to be called. He was an ardent idolater. For two or more generations there had been an altar in his house frequented by the villagers. He was the priest, and his mother the oracle. Her hair was dishevelled and matted, and at times she became possessed. Bramiah attended the Rameswaram Festival in 1867, when he drew Mr. Bowden's attention, who repeatedly spoke to him of Christ. He was impressed.

Some time later Alisahib was in Velivenu, treating some patients. As usual he preached Christ to all, including Bramiah. Powerfully wrought upon of the Spirit, he received the word in all sincerity. His first act was to place a crowbar in Alisahib's hands to dig up the shrine, whilst he broke up the iron apparatus and put the utensils away in the garret. From his person and house he removed every token of heathenism, and got his mother to have her tangled hair removed. He set himself to learn hymns, and to teach others what he knew of Jesus, often keeping up the meeting until midnight. Throughout that neighbourhood he became known as the 'Christian.'

He attended Rameswaram in 1868 as a glowing disciple. Bowden, Heelis, Alisahib, James, Francis, were all there. That night they had a gathering unique in festival experience, lasting nearly to midnight. One after the other preached to the people in great power, and the climax came when Noah stepped forward and gave his testimony as one who only the previous year had come as an idol-worshipper, but now had found salvation and joy in Jesus, apart from Whom is no deliverance from sin. It was arranged to baptise him on their return from the Maddur baptism. Up to this point Noah's wife had been a willing adherent, but had shown no signs of spiritual life. Calling at her village, Alisahib told her how sorry he was her husband would be baptised alone—"How I long you should believe in Jesus also." The word went home; she was convicted of her need, and trusted in Jesus. Applying to be baptised with her husband, she said, "I have been very proud, but the Lord filled me with sorrow for sin, and enabled me to believe that Jesus put away all my sin." Her happy peaceful countenance confirmed her words, and they joyfully baptised them both.

The same year they baptised their first Mala convert of Velpur—then a veritable seat of Satan, and a great centre of sorcery and of a secret sect amongst whom the vilest practices were carried on. Mr. Bowden had taken into his

normal school a youth named **Chinniah**, the son of a noted priest. He was bold enough to tell of Christ in a festival, and was beaten. He opened a night-school in Velpur in 1868, openly professing himself a Christian, and teaching his youths to sing hymns and repeat texts. He was violently persecuted, and handed over to the police under a false charge. After his baptism God wrought amongst the Malas, and many became Christians.

The outstanding convert was **Visukupati Venkataswami**, who married a sister of Ravi Venkataswami, of Agarthipalem. "He was hopelessly entangled," wrote Mr. Heelis, "in Satan's net. But He Who says, 'Is anything too hard for Me?', set the captive free to become a preacher of the Gospel, while he works as a weaver for his daily bread. Venkataswami was looked upon as a devil-doctor; one who could heal diseases and expel evil spirits by the power of certain incantations. In this way he would make as much as Rs. 20 in one night, it was so lucrative. However, he speaks with shame of all his past life now, and is as bold for Christ as he once was for Satan. When I last saw him he invited me to come and preach the Gospel in certain parts where its sound had scarcely been heard."

Space fails to enumerate the many churches planted in the Western Delta in the next few years. But let us tell of what the simple village believer often had to put up with. It happened in A. Chikkala in 1870. He "was seated under a tree near a public tank, writing his alphabet, when a Brahmin approached to bathe. His path was eleven yards from the man; still on seeing him the Brahmin told him to move off. On telling him the second time, he got up and walked away a pace or two. This was all that transpired. Then the Brahmin, with the help of three false witnesses, asserted and proved that the poor man had obstructed him and attempted to take the vessel with which he pours water over himself in bathing. So he was put in jail for fifteen days. When liberated, he paid us a visit; he seemed very happy, saying, 'If I had deserved it, I should have felt very

much ashamed, but as I was innocent, I feel quite happy. Did they not persecute our Lord and His disciples? Whilst in jail I sang hymns and spoke to the prisoners about Jesus.' Then he added in great simplicity, 'Does not Jesus receive all the blows that strike us?'"

Such simple believers knew not only how to suffer wrongfully for Christ's sake, but how to die triumphantly in Christ. **Chedalada Ramiah**, of Mandapaka, was a poor, illiterate believer brought to Christ through Francis, and baptised in 1870. He was most diligent in Gospel testimony, but soon called Home in November, 1873. Early in the day he departed he said to his wife, "Lay me on the bed; I see the Cross, He is calling me"; and then, as if speaking to the Lord, he said, "I am coming, Lord; I am coming." To Miss Cowling he said, "Many salaams; I am going to Jesus"; and then, stretching out his arms and looking up, he said, "Lord Jesus, into Thy hands I commit my spirit; take it to Thy feet." Hearing John 14:1-3 read, he said with emphasis, "He is now here with me"; and stretching forth his hands (already cold in death), he said, like a little child, "Reach out Thy hand and take me, Father"; and about two hours after he quietly breathed his last, and in his end there was perfect peace. His daughter and grandson have been a joy and inspiration to the Godavari missionaries down to this century year.

Concurrently a wonderful soul-saving work went on in the Eastern Delta, centred round **Gollapalli Nathaniel**—that foremost figure in Telugu evangelism. He was a grandson of Mr. Bowden in the faith, being led to Christ by Francis, of Muramanda, one of the two definitely known converts won by the Anicut-works' evangelisation.

After two years' residence with Mr. Bowden in Palakol, Francis returned to his native village, where he obtained good employment supplying labour to a sugar plantation newly opened by a Madras firm. His position was influential, and he made it his business to tell all under him of Christ and His salvation. Among his workpeople was a

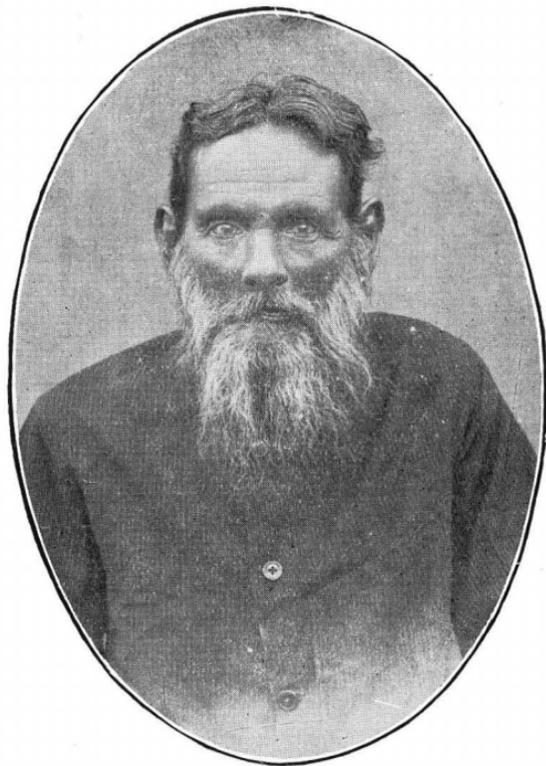
very intelligent young casteman, Appiah. Like all of his class in those times, he had no schooling, but was very apt in Hindu song, in which he gained a reputation at the early age of twelve, and Francis found in him an ardent worshipper of Rama. One day Appiah came upon Francis engaged all alone in the sad office of burying his boy, who had died. He entered into conversation as to why he buried, instead of burning, the body. Told it was because of the hope of resurrection the Christian has, his curiosity as to Christian doctrine was thoroughly roused, leading to long conversations to elicit all he could. When Francis could tell him no more, he advised him to go to Palakol and learn more from Mr. Bowden.

Appiah walked the 45 miles to Palakol, but found Mr. Bowden was in Bangalore. He went on to Narsapur and had earnest talks with Mr. Heelis, "who greatly rejoiced to find the Word of God bearing fruit in unexpected quarters." He was soundly converted, and returned rejoicing in his new-found Saviour. In his zeal he used to walk in twenty miles to Rajahmundry on Sundays to attend the godly ministry of Mr. Groenning, who baptised him, got him to learn to read, and counselled him to settle amongst his own people and strive for their conversion.

When Nathaniel, as we henceforth know him, returned to his native village, his father would have none of his Christian teaching and cast him out. Every door was shut to him. He found a home in Kaleru with his sister, Atchamma. The second night in her house he had a vision, warning him he would suffer great persecutions, and he wrote his well-known hymn, 'Daily art Thou our refuge, O our God.' It was speedily put to the proof. An enraged village turned upon him and did its utmost to make life unendurable and drive him out. But Atchamma stuck to him, and he painfully won through, but not until he had suffered a false charge they concocted, had spent a night in the stocks, and been taken handcuffed before the Magistrate; but whether in the stocks, or before the Court, he



THOMAS HEELIS
taken in 1879



GOLLAPALLI NATHANIEL

ceased not to sing Gospel hymns and preach Christ to the bystanders, and they were fain to let him go! It was then he composed his famous hymn, 'Will you not serve Jesus Christ?' It was out of such experiences, hammered on the anvil of affliction, his greatest hymns were born.

God now began to give Nathaniel souls as the reward of his faithful testimony, and a fine convert was won in a Madiga, Moshai. But he was greatly hampered by lack of a place in which to gather his disciples for teaching and prayer, for no one would sell him a plot. At length an influential man, who had taken a leading part in the persecution, relented and sold him one. He built himself a house, where for seven years he gathered the little flock. (Then Mr. Bowden bought him a site of 80 cents from funds supplied by Mr. Müller, who supported him for many years).

Trouble of a new kind arose in Muramanda, where Nathaniel's great friend, **M. Philip**, was teacher. Francis and his daughter, grounded originally in Palakol, questioned the Lutheran mode of baptism, and in particular the sprinkling of infants. Questions led to much argument. Palakol and Narsapur were again resorted to. Bowden (who now met Nathaniel for the first time), Heelis and Beer referred them to the Scriptures. The point was settled for good. Nathaniel refused from conscientious conviction to bring his newly-born infant to the font when called on to do so. He was dismissed his post and excommunicated till he recanted his error. Similar circumstances brought his friend, Philip, into a like position. In August, 1866, they and their wives were immersed by Mr. Bowden in Cocanada, followed later by Francis and his daughter and many others, mostly Nathaniel's converts.

From this point Nathaniel went on from strength to strength, happy to burn out for God. Himself the leading figure in the evangelisation of the Eastern Delta, he had splendid associates in Philip at Muramanda, Thomas at Dowlaishweram, and (for all too short a time), Thomas

Gabriel at Cocanada, the four representing vigorous churches in their respective centres. Many were saved and added to their numbers; among them, **Kathora Rahelu**, a Kamma, baptised in 1868 and immediately turned out of the house by her aunt with whom she lived: she was brought to Narsapur and lived with Mrs. Heelis—a dear old soul that loved her Saviour with all her heart, she was spared for 21 years of most faithful witness to all about her. At every festival these brethren heralded forth the Gospel with power—of their visit to Korukonda in 1870, Mr. Heelis wrote: “Nathaniel was like a fountain, through which the water continually flowed from our living Head; his heart seemed to be filled with Jesus, and out of that fulness his mouth spake.” Much might be written of this dear man of God. Suffice it to say, he was spared until April, 1914, faithful to the end, and went to his reward, leaving an imperishable name as long as the Telugu language lasts to be the vehicle of his magnificent Gospel lyrics.

The mention of **Thomas Gabriel** calls for a paragraph. Of a Mala family of Rajahmundry, as a boy he received schooling in the Narsapur School, when the teaching of the Bible led to his conversion. Also his wife had been in Mrs. Bowden’s school in Dowlaisheram, and as a pupil under Helena D’Bras had received the Word into her heart. Thomas was a pushing lad, and at a time when plentiful openings awaited the few with schooling, he obtained a footing in the Telegraph Department. Ambition spurring him on, he mastered the details of signalling and was entertained on the staff, rising to the high pay for those days of Rs. 70. In 1867 they were in Madras, and coming under the ministry of that remarkable man, Dasu Anthravady, Mess Writer of the 41st. Regiment of the Madras Native Infantry, were immersed and joined the Baptists. Just then he was appointed to Cocanada, where they united with the local gathering, and with a heart fired for the conversion of his fellows, he gave himself in his spare time to street-preaching. God owned his efforts, and many were converted.

In particular, he was used to the conversion of his sister, Helenamma, who learnt to read during seven weeks she spent with the Bowdens in Narsapur—her husband, Karre Samuel, and his brothers, Peter, the great preacher, and Jacob, were the foundation of the great work of the Canadian Baptists on their Akidu field.

Gabriel now longed to be wholly free for his fruitful service. Sacrificing his post and the pension it carried, he resigned. His earnestness and power in preaching were tremendous, and many more were saved. Then, unhappily, pressing unsuccessfully the strict views on communion prevailing in Madras, he withdrew and ran his own separate cause, obtaining ordination in 1870 from the Strict Baptists. He got into financial difficulties, which sorely pressed him. An appeal to the English Strict Baptists to take over his work was declined from lack of funds. He turned to the Baptists of Canada, then desiring to take up a field of their own in India, and they accepted. In March, 1874, Mr. and Mrs. McLaurin arrived and took charge. Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Bowden, living in Cocanada since 1870, were privileged to show them hospitality and render much assistance whilst they were settling into their new sphere. When the Bowdens moved on to Calcutta, our Cocanada cause soon merged into the great work of the Canadian Baptist Mission. Before the McLaurins had been in charge a year, dear Gabriel went to be with his Lord he served so well—on New Year's Day, 1875.

CHAPTER XXIX

Mr. John Beer and the Narsapur School

Endowed with a full share of his father's great energy, and inheriting his parents' aptitude for the vernacular, John Beer's command of Telugu was altogether exceptional, his speech and written composition a model for all. Under him the Mission School developed rapidly, in a keen rivalry with his brother-in-law's Central School healthy for both institutions. But John's school made the Bible the basis of education, and the opening Prayers attracted many outsiders, who came crowding on the verandah to hear the exposition of Scripture clothed in his beautiful vernacular speech.

On New Year's Day, 1866, at Dummagudem, he was united in marriage to Margaret Anne Midford, who, though only in her sixteenth year, made him an excellent helpmeet. The same year, with the school steadily growing, he was glad to welcome his brother, Charles, recently converted as an usher in Mr. Nash's school in Ootacamund. In February, 1869, they lost their stedfast mother, who, after a fortnight's illness, died on the 33rd anniversary of the memorable Farewell Meeting in Gideon Chapel, Bristol. Dear Mrs. Beer's last audible words were:—

“Thou shalt see My glory soon,
When the work of grace is done,
Partner of My throne shalt be!”

In 1870 John started “The Witness” (which became the “Rayabhari” in 1877), for Scripture exposition to help build up the extending Christian community. He also compiled our fine Hymnbook and Catechism. In 1879 his at-

tainments in Telugu were acknowledged by his appointment to the Bible Revision Committee.

But important as were John Beer's literary activities, the School was his great passion, engrossing his toils by day, his thoughts by night. Developing it to a strength of over 200, and successful in matriculating large numbers and passing them out into well-paid employment, his dominating aim was the conversion of their souls. Such concentration and prayer could not but succeed. So convincing was his presentation of Christ that first one, and then another, abandoned faith in Hinduism and turned to the Saviour. As early as 1867 they were cheered by seeing some sufficiently bold to preach Christ openly to their people at the time of the Antravedi festival, despite the rage and blows they provoked. In 1869 it was reported of two youths, "they express a hope that their sins are washed away by the blood of the Lamb, and are not backward in confessing Him with their mouth." The following year John was taken by an ex-scholar to see a dying sister; putting Christ before her, she responded, "I have no concern for myself, for I know I am going to Jesus Christ"—she had accepted the Truth through hearing her brother and others reading and discussing their Bible lessons!

At length, in July, 1871, two who had always seemed the most interested of them all, came to the determination to brave everything in confessing Christ. They were immediately withdrawn from the school, but remained unshaken by intimidation and ill-treatment. Seeing their stedfastness, their mothers, whom they loved dearly, began to despair of them and to look upon them as already dead to them, with every mark of abandoned grief. It was too much for their affectionate hearts, and what blows had not accomplished these passionate tears effected. They compromised, and 'for the present' gave up their intention of confessing Christ in baptism.

Four more years passed, and finally the Beer brothers reaped tangible fruit of their labours in the baptism of

Jumpa Venkataswami, or Venkatachellam, as he afterwards became known. His people were attracted to the School solely by its excellent results in securing Matriculation passes and good Government posts. Entering July, 1873, for long Venkataswami was not only indifferent, but even opposed, to the Christian teaching he received; and once, when a tract was given him, wrote across it, "This is all a falsehood." Then a serious illness brought him low. His utter inability in Hinduism to conquer his secret sins greatly troubled him. When he recovered, he sought to square conscience by greater strictness in religious observances. But peace was denied him. He searched into Hindu religious books, but all the time something was telling him it was useless—he must go to *the* Book, and understand what the *Bible* taught about Jesus Christ, the *only* Way of salvation.

He took his Bible and retired to a lonely place. For the first time he prayed to the true and living God, and said, "O God, if I am to find salvation through this Book alone, show it me through some text in it." "As soon as I opened the Book I found John 3:16. It seemed as if it was printed in special type, and though it was a well-known text to me, it came with fresh force—if God loves the world, India is a part of the world and I am one of the Indians; therefore He loves *me*; and it says, '*whosoever* believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' Oh! I can't express the peace and joy I found then and there. I got up from my knees a different man altogether. Praise God! then I could truly sing with all my heart, 'At the Cross, at the Cross, . . . now I am happy all the day'."

At once he began to testify to others. His new faith became known to his people at home. Every effort was made to turn him from it. They took his Bible and burnt it, but he managed to hide his small Testament and read it secretly at night when all were asleep. On the last day of 1875 a final prolonged endeavour was made to turn him, but the Lord strengthened him to stand firm through it all. He was forcibly taken to a neighbouring town, but managed

to make his escape after some days, and succeeded in getting to the Beers. That same night, January 8th, 1876, Mr. Heelis baptised him in the Godavari. His relatives, in mingled rage and despair, performed his funeral rites—an apt ceremony, seeing his baptism marked an irrevocable break with Hinduism.

For eight years he was a valuable teacher in the school, exercising great influence for Christ over the students, and seeing two of them brought out—**Boddu Narayanudu**, of the fisher caste; and **Rachamalli Venkataswami**, of the toddy-drawers. Then his wife's health took him to Bangalore. Long years after, when he had become grey-headed in his Master's service, it was his joy to see several members of the Jumpa family taking the same step at different times.

With health undermined by intense labours prolonged beyond twenty years without a furlough home, Mr. John Beer had a touch of the sun, and in April, 1884, came a complete breakdown. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bowden were just then returning to England for good, and generously providing the passage money, they took the family home with them. So universal was the love they had won in the hearts of the people that, however poor they might be, all united to make some contribution towards their expenses—the young men of the normal school having no coin to give, begged to be permitted to pull the boat up the canal. With many tears they parted from their beloved missionary—had they a presentiment they would not see his face again here below? To Charles his parting words concerning the school he so loved, and for which he had sacrificed his health and shortened his days, were: "There is nothing in *religion*, nothing in a grand school or a grand mission; all is *nothing* without *Christ*." He had scarcely reached home, when he died in Exeter on October 16th, 1884. His widow, likewise greatly beloved by all, had not long returned to India when she passed away in Narsapur on May 13th, 1888.

Charles Beer did his best to carry on the sacred trust, but lacked his brother's driving power, and the means to maintain the school in the efficiency demanded by the progressive times. But he was encouraged in his earlier years of struggle by the baptism of two Brahmin converts, *Atsanta Narasimhamurti*, baptised in 1885, and *Goteti Sambamurti*, in 1890. The former case was sensational. Saved through *Venkatachellam* as early as 1880, *Narasimhamurti* came forward, asking to be baptised. It was alleged he was under age, and an interview was arranged in Mr. Heelis' compound, at which the *Tahsildar* was asked to be present to maintain order in the face of the great excitement prevailing. With his connivance, however, at a given signal a powerful relative suddenly seized the youth and, surrounded by other relatives, hurried him to the bolted gate and threw him over bodily to a waiting mob, which bore him away, above their shouts being heard his heartrending cries, "I will not come! I will not come! I have found the true salvation!" He was removed to a distance and the closest watch maintained, with all the usual efforts to turn his mind. All was in vain, for he was one of God's elect. As years went by precautions were relaxed; his opportunity came; he escaped and sought asylum with them. Mr. Heelis immediately baptised him in the *Godavari*. The news spread through the town and an enraged mob gathered. This time a European Superintendent of Police was in *Narsapur*—Mr. *Prendergast* took effective measures to prevent the mischief on foot; armed police patrolled the street outside, and he sat armed inside the compound gate! For some years *Narasimhamurti* gave valuable help in the school.



MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM BOWDEN
taken in 1871

CHAPTER XXX

The Passing of Mr. Bowden

Mr. and Mrs. Bowden returned from their final furlough at the close of 1871, and spending a little time with their sons in Madras and Cocanada, they reached Narsapur on February 15, 1872, in time to join the rest at the Antarvedi Festival. At Ramesvaram Mr. Bowden was much encouraged to learn of a woman in a near village who on his last attendance there had opened her heart to the Lord Jesus, speaking of Him and praying to Him up to her death—now her son and daughter-in-law were showing great desire. Touring a further fifteen days, he met Christians from ten different villages and found several applying for baptism. In one hamlet of very poor and dirty people, with only one resident Christian, he records the testimony of an old woman, almost blind, squatting listening at the door of her miserable hut: "I asked her if she knew of Jesus Christ; when in a clear strong voice which took me by surprise, she replied, noting the main facts of His sufferings and death for sinners, and added, 'He suffered this for me.' I asked her where He now is; when she pointed upwards and spoke of His resurrection and ascension. I was taken with glad surprise to hear such a white-haired, feeble old body express such confidence in Jesus."

Meantime Mr. Heelis, in his venturesome spirit, narrowly escaped a great tragedy. Delayed in starting for the Kotapalli Festival, he decided to attempt to get there in time by taking his party round by sea in his lifeboat! As soon, however, as they crossed the bar at Antarvedi and got into deep water, almost all were prostrated by sea-sickness, leaving no one who could help Mr. Heelis to handle the boat. As only he could read the chart and compass, and

steer, from 5 a.m. until 9 p.m. he had to remain at the helm without relief, taking food at times with one hand and steering with the other. A dark night set in, and they had not yet reached the channel from the sea into the Kotapalli branch of the Godavari. Without light now to read chart and compass, he had to steer as best he could in the darkness by the line of surf parallel to their course. In the neighbourhood of the Sacramento Shoal, where a fine steamer of that name had been wrecked only five years before, he was hopelessly confused amidst its maze of sandbanks, and was alarmed to find himself hemmed in by two lines of surf. He let down the sails and dropped anchor. It was too late—they were already in the surf, which made the boat toss and strain fearfully. As it slowly filled with water, every big wave threatened their destruction. Yet he was marvelously helped in keeping the doomed boat afloat. The hours wore slowly on. The morning star and moon arose, and in their pale light gave fresh hope. Then three large waves rolled over them, and swamped them. It was vain to keep the fight up longer. With superhuman strength he hauled up the anchor and let the boat drift to shore. They reached it in the mercy of God, but the boat was soon broken up in the surf. Poor Alisahib lost his all—clothes, books and medicines. But when he saw how the fisherfolk on that remote coast listened as they preached to them, he said, "Never mind the things I have lost; one thing gives me joy; these people who have never heard before have now heard the Gospel!" Such was the spirit in which these workers served their Master!

The dear fellow never fully recovered from the shock to his system, but was active to the end. In November of the following year he left on a tour of villages along the sea-coast and reached his sister's house, and there was taken ill. Being a Christian, no care was taken of him, and he lay for several days in an open shed exposed to the cold easterly wind. At last they sent for his wife, and she carefully brought him back by boat, but it was too late. He

was too weak to speak, and was already insensible when the boat reached Narsapur at sunset, and by midnight he was dead. He had sacrificed his life, taking the Gospel to his people! So closed Alisahib's eighteen years' intense, fruitful service in 1873.

His beloved father in Christ too had discovered he was no longer the man he had been. The early weeks of activity following upon the return from furlough were succeeded by great lassitude. Mrs. Bowden also suffered much from severe bronchial trouble. But where the need was so great, they could not be idle. She started a school for caste girls, and he set to, erecting sheds in the compound to house those he gathered in from distant villages for an adult school, to which he daily gave hours of patient instruction in the Scriptures.

1873 opened with the passing away of their old and constant friend, Mrs. A. N. Groves, who fell asleep in Jesus in Bristol on January 12th. Mr. Bowden found strength to tour on the Ellore Canal, baptising four at Prattipadu, of whom one had been a devil-doctor, and greatly opposed in former years when the Gospel came to his village. He also attended the Pattisema Festival, after which he was joined by Mr. Heelis to buy logs in the Gutala timber market for the houseboat the latter built this year to replace the boat that was wrecked. Opportunity was taken to visit the Kois as far as Devipatnam, and on his return Mr. Bowden baptised seven in the villages of Chikkala and Duddukuru. It was fitting that Mr. Heelis' new boat, the 'Harbinger,' on its maiden voyage took the Bowdens to Cocanada to meet Mr. and Mrs. Fred returning from England.

In 1874 Mrs. Bowden spent the earlier months in Madras, seeking relief from her bronchial trouble. After touring in the Western Delta and baptising in several villages, two of which were new, Mr. Bowden went to bring her home, and whilst at Madras paid a visit to Coimbatore. Finding on his return from there a native vessel sailing for Narsapur, they took passage, and after only 46 hours' sail-

ing arrived at the mouth of the Godavari and were piloted in over the bar just in time to escape the fury of a storm that broke with fearful effect upon Madras and the adjoining coasts.

The next year Mr. Bowden sought treatment for himself under the godly Dr. Condon, of Madras, and on the way thither visited Cuddapah at the invitation of Mr. Sharp, the Judge, who was anxious regarding the soul of one, Gurriah, a goldsmith whom he had to sentence to death for a fanatical murder—shedding a relative's blood in sacrifice to procure access to alleged hidden treasure. The godly Judge's efforts resulted in the man's bright conversion; he was baptised in the Jail, and three days later walked calmly to the scaffold repeating the name of Jesus. (Mr. Sharp incurred the displeasure of Government in this, and was reduced in rank, with the loss of some thousands of rupees yearly income). Another fortnight in Coimbatore, and visits to other places, gave Mr. Bowden more ministry in English than in any other three months of his missionary life. In April he was back home again, getting a small boat he had built for himself ready to take the water when the canal reopened.

But poor health laid him aside month after month. In October, however, he decided to accompany his son, Fred, on a business trip to Dummagudem, where he preached on the Lord's day from Romans 10 : 9, 10, and visited the bazaar and near villages. On the point of leaving again, Fred was stricken with malaria, and they had to make a hurried journey, instead of visiting villages on the way, as intended. He got worse, and his father took him to Cocanada for treatment, where he left him, and on his way home made a visitation of villages within a radius of twelve miles from Chettipeta, and marked out the foundations of two new meeting-houses.

Mr. Bowden followed this up in December with a shorter visitation, during which he met with an accident

that led to his death. We give Mr. Heelis' account of his last days:—

“On one occasion, when stepping from the bank of the canal into his boat, his foot slipped, and he fell into it head foremost, cutting his head and right cheek, and bruising his right hip; but not feeling much pain at the time, he continued out for about ten days, when he returned home quite cheered in spirit at what he had witnessed in the villages, alluding only cursorily to his accident.

“On the 6th January he met with us at Br. Beer's, and gave a nice address, especially to the children, on the good and great Shepherd, quoting two or three times Isa. 40:10, which he said had been much on his heart lately. After taking tea he looked very ill, and complained of pain in his hip and cheek. Before leaving he was feeling so weak that I had to support him to his push-chair. . . . (Two days later) Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bowden took him to Rajahmundry for medical treatment.

“There the doctor pronounced the rising on his cheek to be a carbuncle, and lanced it. On hearing this I hurried off in my boat with Sr. Bowden and Br. Beer. We arrived there on the 13th, at two o'clock in the morning, and hastened to the house where he was. On opening the door of the sick-chamber we were almost overwhelmed by what we saw. There was our dear brother and teacher lying on his back on the bed, a perfect wreck; and his dear daughter-in-law was lovingly dressing the carbuncle on his cheek by the light of a lantern held by a servant. From that time he rapidly grew worse.

“During his remaining days he spoke little, but suffered much. About five days before his decease his son had to leave on urgent business. When they parted, he said, ‘Pray for me; I will pray for you. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.’ He seemed pleased when his dear wife repeated to him such texts as, ‘He put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in *unto him* into the ark’; ‘Fear thou not,’ etc. (Isa. 41:10); ‘With His stripes we are

healed'; and, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms'; and when his spirit departed, on the morning of the 26th, just as the sun was shining upon him through the venetians, his eyes were bright, and his face assumed a calm and happy expression as though a vision were before him, which filled him with joy and surprise. Whilst his daughter-in-law said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God,' he fell asleep in Jesus." He was 64 years of age.

So remarkably bright was his dying look, that, as another letter expressed it, "it seemed like a glorious awaking in His presence." This feature of the war-worn veteran's passing deeply impressed Mr. Henry Groves. In the number of 'The Missionary Echo' that told of Mr. Bowden's death, he wrote an editorial on 'The Heavens Opened.' After dwelling on the case of Stephen and Saul of Tarsus, he continued: "There is a mighty power in these dying visions, of comfort to the dying, and of strength to those who remain behind, trembling, perhaps, as the overshadowing cloud passes over them. We are reminded of this precious scene as we read the details of the dying hours of our brother so lately called away from his labours in India, and whose remains now lie on the banks of the Godavary. 'The valley is dark, but there is light in the distance,' said a dying saint to one standing by; but here the very valley of death is made bright by the glory that streams from yonder shore. We do not sufficiently grasp the wonderful word of our blessed Lord, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My word, he shall never see death.' Surely it is the happy privilege of saints to sleep in Jesus without seeing death, and, like Stephen, die in full vision of the glory."

He died "in full vision of the glory," as was to be expected of so blameless a course and such faithful service. After closest examination of the material at his disposal, the writer has not found in the records left of Mr. Bowden, in act, word, or report, one indication of defect in character or conduct—a marvellous testimony where forty years of a

full and public life are in review! He is convinced few will be found more advanced in the eternal glory than this humble, faithful man of God, whose memory yet abides glorious after sixty years.

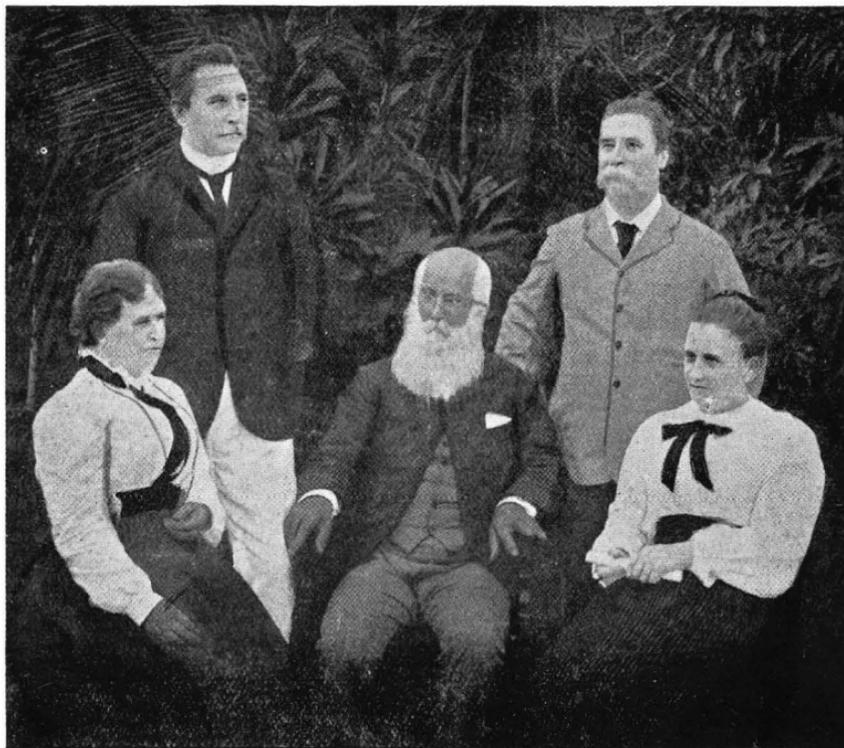
CHAPTER XXXI

Mrs. Bowden's Homecall and the Family Succession

His father's removal was the call to Edwin Bowden to fill the gap—which he did most faithfully for 48 years. He was in business in Calcutta at the time. After much prayer, in April he threw up his good position—a real step of faith, for he already had three little ones to provide for, and in the following month our Miss Bowden, of Chettipeta, was born.

A man of great gifts and personality, Mr. E. S. Bowden was an exceptional acquisition to the Godavari, and his coming a great comfort to Mr. Heelis and the Beer brothers. Naturally his sympathies were drawn out to the rapidly developing work in the Western Delta that had so largely engaged his father's activities, and after studying the language he took this up in all earnestness. The better to provide for the many new openings presenting themselves, he gathered around him in Narsapur a band of active and promising young men whom he carefully instructed in the Scriptures, even as he himself as a young man had been thus nurtured by Mr. Robert Chapman. He provided them with some needed schooling, and taught them the use of tools, in which he was most expert, as he demonstrated in 1885 in the building in his compound of a fine houseboat, the 'Water-lily,' to replace his father's small boat, the 'Echo,' that was falling to pieces—the new boat's exquisitely made and fitted venetians were the work of his own hands.

From his entrance into the work, the care of his ailing mother, to whom he was passionately attached, had been a



A GROUP OF GODAVARI VETERANS TAKEN IN 1904

Mr. E. S. Bowden
Mrs. E. S. Bowden

Mr. Thomas Heelis

Mr. C. Beer
Mrs. C. Beer

sacred charge. Cut off from active work by increasing infirmity, in her retirement Mrs. Bowden enjoyed wonderful seasons of fellowship with her Lord, at times passing into a trance in which "visions and revelations of the Lord" were vouchsafed to her. Yet, brought back again to the realities of earth, nothing could be more sane and practical than her outlook, seasoned as it was with a lively sense of humour. Writing in December, 1882, Mr. Heelis remarks: "Dear old sister Bowden is nearing home. I was with her a little yesterday, and felt it a privilege to be near her, and hear her condemnation of self, but loving words about Jesus and His love. 'Free grace' escaped frequently from her lips. Br. Bowden looks weary, having to be up a good deal at night."

The end came very peacefully on January 9th, 1883, at the age of 71. Mr. Macrae wrote: "Dear Mrs. Bowden has been taken home. We had all learned to call her mother, and such she was indeed to each and all of us. She passed away quietly in sleep. Latterly she suffered much from extreme weakness; but her mind was calm, and full of joyful expectation. We are all so glad she ended her days amongst us. Her testimony will not soon be forgotten. At the grave Brother Heelis spoke with much power to the many who assembled. She was laid beside the late Mrs. Beer, and as I saw the numbers of Christians assembled on such short notice, I could not but think of the time when they and their husbands came to these parts alone, almost the only witnesses for Christ among the Telugu people." So passed the last of the four pioneers.

Having buried his mother, three months later Mr. Bowden took his family to England on a well-earned furlough. Back at his post at the end of 1884, he began to lay his plans for the occupation of **Chettipeta**, where he owned a property bought in his business days. Ideally situated to command all the canals of the Western Delta, which spread out fanwise from this centre, here he built his bungalow in the hot season of 1886. Ere he could move in his family, eighteen families of the local Christians had to take tem-

porary refuge in it! For in one night the Godavari rose two feet higher than the previously recorded maximum, burst its banks in many places, and did enormous damage, destroying their little *peta* amongst many others. As usual, cholera followed the flood. With his characteristic kindness and generosity, Mr. Bowden was unsparing in his ministrations of succour. When at length they moved into the bungalow, they were accompanied by the Misses Tayler and Bearne, who, with Miss Rachel Lynn, had arrived in Narsapur the previous November—the *first single missionary ladies* from home to take up work in the Godavari.

In 1890 the Bowdens started the Chettipeta Girls' Boarding School, which has been doing invaluable work ever since. At first it was the special charge of their eldest daughter, Lily; but when she left in 1894 to marry Mr. Thomas Tilsley (the present Associate Director of the late Mr. George Müller's Orphanage), her youngest sister, Hetta, succeeded to this work, and continues in it to this day.

In 1920 it was Mr. Bowden's joy to welcome his grandson, Crawford Tilsley (named after his uncle, the late Dan Crawford, of Central African fame), as his successor in the work. This brought the *fourth generation* of the family into the ranks of the Godavari missionaries! Happy in this gracious dispensation, the worn-out toiler died in harness in Coonoor on April 23rd, 1924, in his 79th year. His widow fell asleep in Jesus at Chettipeta on August 15th, 1927, at the advanced age of 87.

CHAPTER XXXII

The Macraes and the Amalapuram Field

Like Heelis, a son of the manse, **James Norman Macrae** was born at Glenelg on Christmas Day, 1842. They were highly connected, and he claimed a cousin in the second duchess in the British peerage. His father, Rev. John Macrae, had a parish stretching sixteen miles along a lovely Highland coast. On leaving Christ's Hospital, the famous Bluecoat School, Norman came to Calcutta in 1862, seeking the good offices of a relative who was head of one of the largest firms there. The result was three years' planting in Kachar, when severe malaria sent him home again. The next ten years he spent in business in Glasgow, during which time he was converted. He was present at a large missionary meeting there in 1871, when he heard Mr. Bowden tell of the great need of the Godavari for workers and suddenly thrilled the gathering by rising from his seat and modestly offering himself for the work. Mr. Bowden's death announced to him that God's time had come. Marrying Jessie Junor, the daughter of a godly Peebles doctor, he sailed that same year.

They were welcomed in Cocanada by Mrs. Bowden, almost her first words to them being one of her sage counsels, "In this land ye have need of patience." Arriving in Narsapur on December 9th, 1876, they at once made their mark upon the work by their devotedness and capability. Their first term was spent in Narsapur and Palakol, during which they set Mr. Heelis free for his one and only furlough in 1878-79, and ably looked after Mr. E. S. Bowden's field when they took their first furlough in 1883-84. Then a

sunstroke broke down Mr. Macrae's health completely, and they had to take long furlough from June, 1885 to November, 1889.

During their first term, **Frederick Northcote Miles**, of Worcester, came into the work, arriving in June, 1881. Two years later he married Rhoda Cowling, daughter of Mrs. Heelis by her first marriage, who had been doing much work amongst women. Mr. Miles took special interest in the work in the Central and Eastern Deltas, and during Mr. Macrae's long absence started schools in two or three of the villages beyond Amalapuram, and shortly before his return baptised our first converts there. But by this time he had made **Dowlaishweram** his station, and was building there. An attack of cholera, followed a few months later by smallpox, necessitated a furlough. In his ardour he was back again in less than a year, too soon to re-establish his health. Within a month he was accompanying Mr. Heelis upon a 160 miles' journey into unexplored country amongst the Kois. A few weeks later he was taken with malarious dysentery of a terrible kind, and passed away very peacefully in Narsapur on July 29th, 1891. He was not quite 31 years old, and being an earnest evangelist, with a good colloquial knowledge of Telugu, the premature ending of this promising life was a great loss.

Shortly before returning to India, Mr. Macrae negotiated with the Church Missionary Society to take over their work and properties in **Amalapuram**. The Society had begun its occupation in 1875 in response to earnest appeals from Cpts. Stoddard and Taylor, who held property in Bendamurlanka, and donated Rs. 3,000 for this purpose (the latter later gifting the Bendamurlanka property as well). Mr. Asanta Subbarayudu, a Brahmin convert of Mr. Noble, was sent there and in 1877 built the old bungalow and started an Anglo-Vernacular School with the primary purpose of reaching the caste people. About 40 Malas came forward at the beginning, asking instruction with a view to material advantages, but finding no worldly gain forthcoming

they all withdrew, save **Boola Subbiah**, who was baptised in 1879. Another convert was **Nagabathula Viraswami**, who as a youth had heard and received the truth from Mr. Heelis in his own village of Peddapatnam—he became our leading evangelist on that field, and was spared to a great age, falling asleep in May, 1935.

His negotiations brought to a successful conclusion, Mr. and Mrs. Macrae, joined by the Misses Lynn, took up residence in Amalapuram in August, 1890. Ten days before, whilst touring some outlying villages, Mr. Macrae founded the most prosperous of its village churches at **Pataladibba** by the baptism of **Sarilla Abraham** and Sarah and others—this worthy couple being the grandparents of the Rev. S. S. Subbaya, Archdeacon of the Dornakal Diocese, and the first Indian to be appointed to such a post.

Situated close to where the middle branch of the Godavari joins the sea lies **Bendamurlanka**, a former small trading station of the East India Company. This was opened in 1896 by **Miss Ruth Lynn** as an outstation to Amalapuram. Its first indigenous convert was found in an Ediga (toddy-drawer caste) cultivator, **Padchetti Subbarayudu**, baptised in 1901. Later that year Miss Lynn was joined by the **Misses Robertson** and **Marshall**, who gave all they had and were to the prosecution of the work there for a quarter of a century. The indomitable Miss Lynn, leaving the work in such capable charge, passed on to open up new stations—first at **Vadravupalli**, in the Nagaram Island, in 1902; and finally at **Tanuku**, in 1910, where she still labours indefatigably, expecting very soon to celebrate her jubilee of service in the Godavari.

Meantime the Macraes were steadily laying the foundations of a fine work in their large and important field, fortifying it by a Girls' Boarding School, a Caste Girls' School, and numerous village schools, and they left it with great promise when at length they resigned its charge in 1914, retiring shortly after to Coonoor. There this greatest Christian gentleman the Godavari has known passed away, full

of years and honour, on April 23rd, 1925, the exact anniversary of the death there the year before of his colleague, Mr. Bowden. Mrs. Macrae returned to Scotland and passed Home from Peebles on September 30th, 1935, at the age of 84.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Rounding off of our Story

Of those with a personal intimate connection with the mission from its very beginning, only one was spared to enter the twentieth century. Received as a child into the home of the Bowdens at their entrance into the Godavari, included as a girl of thirteen in the first baptism in 1842 of the little band that formed the mother church in Palakol, the leading helper in the schoolwork there, and finally for forty years the faithful helpmeet of Mr. Heelis in his labours—the part played by **Helena Heelis** was unique. With the passing of Mrs. Beer and Mrs. Bowden she became the acknowledged 'mother' of the Godavari Christians, and from the seclusion of her bungalow where she closed her days as an invalid she exercised a wonderful influence. Great was the mourning for this mother in Israel when she fell asleep in Jesus on February 28th, 1901, aged 71.

But there was yet another surviving in England with a claim to partnership in the founding of the work in the Godavari—Mr. Robert Chapman lived on till June 12th. of the following year, when he fell asleep in Barnstaple in his hundredth year.

Of Mr. Heelis after returning from his only furlough, the following incident is worthy of record. In 1882 there arrived in Rajahmundry Messrs. Pohl and Bothmann, pioneers of the Schleswig Holstein Mission appointed to the then almost unknown Bastar State. It was Dr. Schmidt's task to get them through to the capital, Jagdalpur, lying on the banks of the Indravati. About 150 miles as the crow flies, dense unmapped jungles abounding with wild beasts lay between. Heelis was the only one acquainted with those regions at the 'back of beyond,' and Schmidt invited

his co-operation. The call made its instant appeal to his adventurous nature. The party set forth on the 15th, March. With difficulty they got 80 miles by boat up the Godavari and Sabari. At the southern border of Bastar they took to foot, and preaching on the way as long as Telugus were found, covered the remaining 120 miles by 18th April. They were a month in Jagdampur, long enough to prove the covert hostility of the rajah by the effectual obstacles he placed to the settling of the German brethren there. Very early in their stay unwise exposure to the sun knocked out Mr. Heelis, who thereafter was but a passenger. They found allies, strange to say, in the robber Rohillas, who warned them of a plot laid by the rajah's brother to massacre the party and helped them to get bearers to flee overnight. Taking the prostrate Heelis slung in a cot, they got safely through the 70 miles to Koraput, in Jeypore. Here in those cool altitudes the two brethren settled in, and the others descended to the plains and immediately found themselves plunged into unbearable heat. All save Schmidt went down with fever, four of them in delirium. Somehow they got through to Vizagapatam and found a steamer to Cocanada, where they arrived dreadfully weak and emaciated. It was June 21st. when Mr. Heelis reached home, and it took months of nursing and care to set him right again.

Despite such assaults upon his physical system Mr. Heelis continued active in itineration up to the age of 75. He eschewed changes to the Hills, in which he indulged only when duty took him there to join with his fellow revisers of the Telugu Bible in their labours. At length, however, even his herculean frame felt the weight of years, and the time came when he had quietly to sit at home and patiently await the slow dissolution, the end coming on January 25, 1911, at the age of 77. He had been 55 years in this work. With him passed the last of the real Godavari pioneers, and his like we may expect never to see again.

The one surviving link with the early generation is found in Mrs. **Henrietta Beer**. Related to the Midfords,



VASA YOHAN

she came out to marry her cousin Charles. Arriving July, 1876, they were married in Ellore by Mr. Alexander on October 2nd, and thereafter, as a devoted wife and mother, she threw all her energies into helping her husband. He too was permitted to put in 55 years of quiet, steady service, proving himself a very faithful pastor, and passed hence on January 9th, 1921, the 38th anniversary of Mrs. Bowden's death. It is a remarkable circumstance that the occupation of the Narasapur bungalow by Mrs. Beer, her husband, and her mother-in-law spreads over the full century!

With Mr. Charles Beer will always be associated that grand servant of God, Vasa Yohan. Although to a unique degree the servant of *all* the churches, his office of colporteur attached him to Mr. Beer, whom he survived only 17 months and then succumbed to an attack of cholera in Amalapuram on May 28th, 1922, when about 70 years of age.

The youngest son of Panchakshari, he was brought up under the care of the Beer family. He was baptised by Mr. Heelis in September, 1881, and two years later entered the service of the Bible Society. By his indefatigable labours he proved himself an exceptionable salesman, frequently heading the annual sales in the Madras Auxiliary, and when he died he was the doyen of the colportage staff. But the true value of his service was seen even more in his power to convey to those with whom he came into contact a sense of his own deep reverence for the Word of God, compelling their respectful interest. To hear him uplift the Crucified and Risen Saviour was an inspiration, and few could remain unmoved as he dilated upon the Cross, ever the central theme of his preaching. The contemptuous and argumentative antagonism of the proud opponent was usually quelled by his obvious sincerity and spiritual power in the presentation of the Gospel. Pre-eminently an evangelist, he was not less valued for his great pastoral and eldership gifts. His ministry of the Word was invariably with unction and bore marks of his unceasing feeding and meditating upon the Scriptures, much of it on his knees in the secret presence

of his Lord. What further made his visits so welcome was his unflinching sympathy with all in their joys and sorrows, and his wise counsel was never sought in vain in any family difficulty or church trouble. His portrait well depicts the calm, dignified demeanour with which he would carefully take in all the particulars as they were poured into his ears, and often he would maintain silence until the tale was finished, when he would utter a few words of earnest counsel, the wisdom of which would be apparent to all, and which he often couched in a powerful Scripture quotation. Tender in his love and sympathy, he yet felt deeply anything bringing dishonour to the name of the Lord, and when occasion required he could be stern in his reproof of the evil-doer, and fearlessly expressed opinions he knew to be unpalatable to his hearers. All knew his own perfectly sincere and upright character, his unaffected love and zeal for the Lord and His Word, and this impelled respect even on the part of those who knew him to be the unbending enemy of their evil ways and works; such may have hated and persecuted him for the time being, but they have not hesitated since to pay homage to his memory. A rare gift to the Church of God in the Godavari was Vasa Yohan, and perhaps the greatest of her sons in the century under review—if he shares the position with another, it is with Gollapalli Nathaniel alone.

Our tale is told. When during his convalescence at home it was the privilege of Mr. Macrae to pay a visit to Barnstaple in 1886, the jubilee year of the Godavari work, the elders there, Messrs. Chapman and Hake, who had daily laboured in prayer all those fifty years on its behalf, made earnest enquiries as to its welfare. They made it evident how little they cared for any statement of *numbers* converted—their interest was chiefly in the accounts of those who had then finished their course with joy. Stories, however interesting, of those still in the body did not seem to affect them as much. It is upon this principle the narrative has been written. Those still living and working find scarcely any place in its pages.

Of those whose record is given it may confidently be said they were "*sent from God.*"

For all the saints, who from their labours rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be for ever blessed. Alleluia!
Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their
Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.
Alleluia!

