

**INTRODUCTION**  
**TO**  
**AN ESSAY**  
**ON THE**  
**SECOND MARRIAGES OF WIDOWS,**  
**BY**  
**A LEARNED BRAHMAN**  
**OF**  
**NAGPORE.**

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ON THE  
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THE Author of this Essay is a learned Brahman of Nagpore, a man of rank and wealth, and a son of the late Minister of the late Raghoojee Bhosla Raja of Nagpore. He is held in great and general respect; but I have no personal acquaintance with him. He has been urged, I understand, to stand forth as the champion of the rights of the females of his caste, solely by feelings of humanity and by the hope of inducing his countrymen to open their eyes to the endless and serious evils and degradation brought upon them and upon society in general by the unnatural law prohibiting the re-marriages of widows. The ruinous consequences attending this barbarous and partial law, he had long observed and lamented in secret, but he was not aware that he had any friends who sympathized with him and were discerning and bold enough to see and recommend the only remedy for the existing evils. A casual sight however of the little brochures of my Shastree, Soobajee Bapoo, who wrote under the title of "A Telingee Brahman" of "Purushooram Cshetrusthu" and others, printed a few years ago at Bombay, shewed him his error and inspired him with a hope of adding, by a renewed discussion of the question, a few more names to the now miserable minority amongst even the better educated Natives, who are prepared to uphold the rights of the fair. This Essay, as exhibiting the genuine

reflections and unbiassed arguments of a Native, and he a learned Brahman of wealth, rank and respectability, cannot but command the astonishment and admiration of every friend of India and of humanity. The tact and the freedom with which his arguments are urged, deserve infinite credit. And the learning displayed by him is equal to the high cause which he advocates.

2. (The restriction against the second marriages of widows is not confined to the Brahmans of India. It is equally strictly observed by all the more respectable tribes of Rajpoots, by almost all the tribes of Bunyahs, as well those who follow the Brahmanical doctrines, as those of the Jain persuasion, and also by the Kayuths and Khetrees of Hindoosthan. And so deeply rooted in the hearts and heads of all who observe the custom, is the prejudice in its favor, that a Rajpoot of family when anxious to show his supreme contempt of those poorer tribes of Rajpoots whose necessities have compelled them to abolish the restriction, fancies he most readily and briefly conveys the idea of degradation, when he tells you that they have recourse to "Nature" or the re-marriages of their widows. The great majority of the women themselves, whose unfortunate position in society affords matters of so much regret to every discerning friend of India, would greet the announcement of their recovered liberty with reproaches and execration. The boon we would bestow, they would regard but as a liberty to abandon a high and much valued privilege. Nay even the very wanton, who, detected in her course of profligacy, has utterly and irrecoverably forfeited her position in society and become a concubine, or common prostitute, still thinks that one step down the ladder of degradation remains to be taken, whilst she has not been guilty of a second marriage. Such is the force and depth of the existing prejudice on this subject.

3. There is one tribe of Bunyahs—the Mor Bunyahs, who came originally from Goojurat and are now settled in considerable numbers in Malwa, in which the custom of second marriages prevails.) I believe it is the only subdivision in the

tribe of Bunyahs in which the restriction has been removed. And its removal in their case is attributed not to any conviction of the moral benefits expected to arise therefrom, but to the violence and oppression of others. The women of this tribe were formerly, as now, remarkable for their beauty, and it is related that the licentious soldiers of some Muhumudan Soobah of Goojurat hearing of their great personal attractions, but failing by other means to get possession of their persons, tyrannically demanded of the caste these widows in marriage, averring that it was neither reasonable nor just that these, the fairest of God's fair creatures, should thus waste their loveliness in a fruitless widowhood. The tribe was seized with consternation on hearing this tyrannical demand, and knowing the licentious habits of their rulers, determined, in order to save themselves from the degradation and pollution which must follow their connexion with the cow-eating Moslem, to distribute in marriage all their widowed girls and women amongst the men of their own tribe. This was accordingly done ; and the custom of re-marrying their widows has since prevailed in this tribe. But so deeply rooted is the prejudice in favor of the restriction, that even centuries have failed to reconcile them to its abolition. Even now consultations are being held in Bhopal, at Seronge and elsewhere, in the caste, for the purpose of re-imposing the original restriction with which the idea of respectability is so universally associated throughout India. There is also one tribe of Brahmans, called the Maroo or Joudpooree Brahmans, who have adopted the custom of second marriages. And these Brahmans, though not of much consideration, hold hereditary offices of influence in several Rajpoot families. The hereditary Poorohits of the Rajas of Rajgur belong to this tribe.

4. Whilst the Mussulmans have not failed to work a gradual change in many other habits and practices of the Hindoos, and to communicate their own modes of thinking to them, in regard to this matter of re-marrying their widows the Hindoos have on the contrary made complete converts of all the more respectable Mussulmans of India. They now

regard the re-marriage of widows, though sanctioned by the example and word of the prophet himself, as utterly degrading. No idolatrous custom which had grown up amongst the modern Mussulmans of India, roused the eloquence and excited the indignation of their late martyred Wahabee reformer, Syud Ahmud, so deeply, as their prejudices against the lawful custom of re-marrying their widows ; and with such effect did this talented, eloquent and enthusiastic preacher inveigh against their injustice, oppression, and idolatrous feelings on this point, that he is said to have persuaded the Mussulmans of Delhi to waive their ill-founded objections, and to have himself celebrated the re-marriages of no less than 500 widows in a single day at that place !! His triumph, however, though so signal and honorable, has been, I suspect, but brief and local ; in most places this part of his doctrine excited strong opposition, and though he has many devout followers and admirers throughout India, few, if any, seem disposed to use their influence in maintaining his doctrine or practice on this point. I feel assured that there is no Muhumudan of any respectability in Bhopal, nor even a widow in any family of respectability or rank, who could be induced seriously to entertain the question of re-marriage, so inseparably connected with the idea of degradation, indelicacy, and loss of caste are all their associations of re-marriage !! This restriction indeed forms the single distinction, characteristic of the difference between the rich and the poor, between those of high and those of low degree. The rich and powerful neither possess nor pretend to the possession of the improved moral principles, or superior attainments and accomplishments, which it is the aim of education to give. They rather boast in their utter want of education, and aver that God allotted the sword and spear to them, whilst the pen and the pothee were for Mootsuddees and for poor begging Brahmans. When an individual of those tribes, in which re-marriages prevail, rises to wealth, he will sometimes shew his refinement and respectability by refusing to allow his widowed daughter to re-marry.

5. The evils attending the restriction against the second marriages of widows are much aggravated by the laws and customs which enjoin on Hindoos the early celebration of the marriages of their sons and daughters. Marriages are generally celebrated, especially amongst the Brahmans of the Dukhun, when the girls are only four or five or six years of age, the boy being a few years older. On the girl's attaining to puberty she is conveyed to her husband's abode to occupy the station and undertake the duties of wife. But in a country where small-pox or other diseases so frequently rage unchecked, the number of the youthful husbands who die before their wives attain to puberty is very considerable. Were marriages therefore but deferred till girls attain to puberty, how many thousands would thereby be saved from becoming widows for life whilst still in their childhood, I may almost say, in their infancy. It is the miserable lot, especially of these young girls or "Balrānds," who are thus doomed to a life of perpetual widowhood, privation and misery and, I may add, of vice, which has excited the commiseration of those few more humane members of the Hindoo community who advocate a modification of the present total prohibition against second marriages. Zalim Sing, the late Raj Rana of Kota, shewed his deep sympathy for these miserable sufferers, by forbidding the celebration of the marriage of virgins of the Rajpoot tribe, whilst too young and weak to carry a second water-pot on their heads.

6. Religion and custom equally enjoin the marriages of all girls in all castes, before they attain to years of puberty; and hence the phenomenon of an old maid, so common in civilized Europe, is literally almost unknown throughout India. In Rajpootana I have heard of such in the families of a few poor thakoors, who, eaten up with pride of family, could not provide a dowry and other means necessary to secure the marriage of their daughters in those families with whom they were willing to ally themselves, and who refused to give them to others, with whom alliances could be effected. Now, as the widows of Brahmans, Rajpoots, Bunyahs and Kayuths



are forbidden from re-marrying, and as all the girls in these castes, are almost universally married before they attain to years of puberty, it hence follows that all those men of these tribes, who from losing their first wives, or from having no families by them, or from a vain desire to seek happiness from many wives, are anxious to re-marry, are compelled to provide themselves with wives from the class of young unmarried girls. It is to this class that their selection is unavoidably confined, whatever be their age; and hence it is that the number of connexions unnatural by reason of the gross disparity between the ages of the parties, is very considerable. I have known many instances of marriages in which the bridegrooms' ages have been above 50, above 60, and even above 65 years, whilst the brides' could not be more than 7, 8 or 10 years of age!!

7. (Such is the social system of the Hindoos with regard to marriage, and it affords matter of the deepest astonishment that a system so fraught with imperfections, so full of injustice and misery, and doing so great a violence to the dictates of nature and to the humane affections of parents and brothers, could have maintained its hold in the way it has, for centuries, I may say for thousands of years, on the minds of all the more respectable classes of Hindoos.) A high-spirited Pathanee lady of Bhopal, indignant at her husband's availing himself of his right to four wives, is said to have made most profane use of her prophet's name, and to have alleged that the wrongs she and other ladies suffered never could have been perpetrated on them, if they had had but a few Pyghumbers (prophets) of their own sex. (Our Hindoostanee ladies may, with still more justice, lament that none of their Avaters and Rishis were females.) Let the ladies of Britain rejoice in their better fortunes, and whilst they acknowledge with gratitude the blessings they enjoy in their Martineaus and Jamiesons and Ellises and their many predecessors, let them not fail to impart some portion of the revelations of their European prophetesses to their sisters of India!

8. To revert to our author, he maintains that the present

prohibition against the second marriages of widows, especially these infant widows, is highly impolitic and unwise, because, in the first place, it disappoints the palpable\* purpose of the Creator, in having sent them into the world; 2ndly, because it inevitably leads to great moral depravity and vice on the part of these widows; 3rdly, because it inevitably causes a frightful amount of infanticide and of abortions†; 4thly, because the maintenance of these widows in an honorable virtuous course of life causes a ceaseless, though fruitless, anxiety to their parents, and parents-in-law, &c.; 5thly, because these widows, inevitably rendered corrupt and vicious themselves by the hard and unnatural laws operating on them, cannot be prevented from corrupting and destroying the honor and virtue of all other females with whom they associate.

9. The evils here enumerated are neither of trifling number, nor of ordinary magnitude. Their existence, which any man of any knowledge of human nature would have predicated as the inevitable fruit of the existing social system, is thus broadly asserted by a most respectable witness, whose every prejudice and bias must be to conceal, palliate or deny them. But who that has any knowledge of the social and domestic life of the Hindoos as prevailing in Benares, Nagpore, Poona, Oojain, Indore or any other large city or town of India, in which the above mentioned tribes, arrogating to themselves the epithet of "ashraf" or respectable, predominate, can shut his eyes and avoid seeing the utter want of virtue, and the demoralization wrought by the state of the law and of the public feelings and customs on this point? Those friends of infant education, who maintain that the character and conduct of the man is formed by the education and training of his infant years, will seek no other cause for the existing depravity of the Hindoos beyond the obvious cause that their early years are consigned to the care of mothers, aunts or sisters, thus unavoidably corrupted and demoralized.

\* Munoo says, प्रजनार्थं स्त्रियः दूढाः

† Purushooram Cshetrusthu says, that the cases of abortions and infanticide in these tribes amount to hundreds of thousands!!

10. Still our author by no means enumerates all the forms of evil resulting from the existing system. It would be no difficult matter to render the catalogue still more full and frightful, swelling the list with murders of singular barbarity and cases of disgusting incest; but I will content myself with enumerating a few cases of immorality, crime, and murder which have come before me officially, even within the last few months, since I received the present work from its author with a request that I would print it.

1. About two months ago, the Nursingur Raja begged me to give him my opinion on the following case: A Rajpoot Thakoor of family had a nephew who had died some years before, leaving a young widow. She had lately been suspected of misconduct and her personal appearance gradually bore confirmation to the suspicion; shortly afterwards, however, her pregnancy was removed. But the Thakoor's enemies would not refrain from circulating the reports of her immorality. The Thakoor seeing their determination, and conceiving that the honor of his family could not otherwise be maintained, sent for the girl, drew his sword and killed her. Some suspected that the Thakoor was himself the author of the girl's pregnancy.

2. The widow of one of the Thakoors of Toree, also of Nursingur, was a few months ago suspected or convicted of incontinence. She also was deliberately destroyed by a brother of her late husband.

3. A Kayuth girl of a respectable family of Babacheea of the Bairseea Pergunnah, was a few years ago left an infant widow. She had been led by circumstances to form an illicit connexion with a young Mussulman of the same place; her friends might have been blind, as Hindoos frequently are under these circumstances, had she erred with a Hindoo; but her taste offended them and they determined to expose her; she saw the coming storm, and sought protection in the Mussulman's house. The whole caste rose up in arms and loudly demanded the punishment of both the parties. She now declared herself a convert to Muhumudanism, was

married to her paramour and thus eluded the vengeance of the caste.

4. A Dukhune Brahman of great respectability of Sonecutch (Sindia Shahee) lost his son some years ago. His son's widow continued to live with him; last year she was seduced by, and became pregnant to, her father-in-law. The Brahman was a man of repute as an expounder of the Poo-rans; to save his character he determined to sacrifice his daughter; and he got a Byragee to promise to destroy her. She was accordingly made over to the Byragee on some pretence or other, but on getting into the wild jungles designed for the deed, she, suspecting that some foul play was intended, made an earnest appeal to the Byragee, and vowed that she would become his own humble slave girl if he would spare her life. He relented, confessed to her the murderous commission he had received, and took her to his own home in the adjoining district, and reported that he had destroyed and buried her. The Brahman afterwards was informed of her place of concealment, and conceiving that it was incumbent in him to call for the punishment of the Byragee, whilst he believed that his own previous high character would protect him from suspicion, boldly and basely accused the Byragee of seducing and running away with his daughter-in-law. Their counter-assertions caused a lengthened enquiry which ended in the revelation of the above facts.

5. The young widowed daughter of a Maratha Brahman settled in the Shahjuhanpoor Pergunnah, recently ran off with a low Goojur Kersan; she and her paramour were traced and seized in Soondursee and sent in to me by a Resaldar of the Bhopal contingent stationed at Soondursee, before whom her father and his friends had maliciously asserted, and almost persuaded their daughter and other witnesses to assert, that the Goojur and his associate had forcibly carried off the unwilling girl. The villainous and calumnious charge however wholly broke down, though favored by Sindia's wakeel and other Brahmans, and covered them with shame.

6. A Bunyance of Bhurkhera of Bairseea, who was left a young widow by her late aged husband, was seduced by, or herself seduced, her son-in-law, the son of a former wife of her husband.

7. The widowed daughter-in-law of a respectable Rajpoot chief, the Solunkhee Thakoor of Bhojapoor of the Bairseea Pergunnah, was recently seduced by, or seduced, the Thakoor's son, her late husband's brother. Her consequent pregnancy exposed her guilt to the wife of the Thakoor's son, whose jealous indignation led to its becoming generally known. The young Thakoor absconded; and the old Thakoor now applied to me for permission to destroy his daughter-in-law (a licence generally taken with impunity under Native Governments) or that she be removed out of his house and village, away from his sight.

8. In the same way, the widow of a Bunyah of Ashta of Bhopal was apprehended a few days ago for adultery with her late husband's brother or cousin; both of whom have been fined by the Nuwab's officers.

9. An aged brother of the present Deewan of the Bhopal minister, having lost his first wife, found no difficulty by reason of his wealth and interest, in getting a second, a young Kayuthanee girl, not of course arrived at puberty. The old man unfortunately died—a few weeks after his marriage, which was thus never consummated. The young widowed virgin was, as is usual, brought into the family of her late husband; which was bound to maintain her. She was recently found to have become enceinte. The Deewan, on discovering her guilt, was filled with indignation, and foreseeing that the family jealousies would inevitably expose her misconduct to the world and involve him and all the family in infamy and ridicule, resolved to make an attempt to sacrifice her life in order to save his credit and the reputation of his family. The poisoned cup was accordingly mixed and sent to her, with a stern message that she drink it, and thus atone for her folly by death. She however had no ambition to be the heroine of a tragedy;—she preferred a life with shame, to death with

honor ; indeed she is said to have asked how she was to blame, married as she had been, as a child to an old man, and then seduced by one of those who should have been her guardians. In a few days her guilt became generally known, and a report of it reached the Nuwab. The name of her paramour was still a secret, and every exertion was made to conceal it, and thus to avoid a further aggravation of the shame in which the family was involved. Through the Deewan's interest a packed Punchayut, a special jury, consisting of his own immediate friends, was convened—the woman who had been previously persuaded not to discover the real offender, was called up and interrogated by it. She mentioned the name of a poor Kayuth, who resided in the neighbourhood, and attempts were made to get his consent to bear the discreditable imputation. The leaders of the caste, offended at not being generally consulted, or at the previous bearing of the Deewan towards them, were determined to prevent the youth's collusion, and passing a sentence of excommunication against him, urged him to appeal against it, if falsely accused by the woman. He loudly declared his innocence and appealed to the Udalut, to the minister and the Nuwab ; but all in vain. The minister, however, instead of seizing and fining him as is usual in such cases, with native Governments, has shewn his distrust of the justice of the special jury's verdict by refraining from molesting him. The youth, the caste and others allege that another brother of the deceased was the actual seducer.

11. Within the period of a few months these melancholy instances of irregularity and crime, have come within my official cognizance. The three last mentioned cases have occurred within the last ten days ; how many more must have occurred, of which, having no magisterial powers except in Bairseea, no report has ever been made to me ! How many more instances must have occurred in which the removal of the offending parties has been effected by poison or other secret means ! Whilst the martial Rajpoot cuts through all his difficulties with the sword, the habits of the Brahman,



Kayuth and Bunya induce them to adopt the more noiseless and secret, but equally effective, process of poison. But the fancied necessity of consulting the honor and respectability of their families by the removal of all those, who (I do not say) have offended, but who are detected in offending against the laws of chastity, is equally acknowledged by all parties.

12. There is a general prejudice on the part of natives in favor of continuing to occupy, as an undivided and united family, the hereditary residence of their parents and forefathers, long after the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons and their widows have multiplied to a number so large as to leave no suitable accommodation to the overgrown family. The advantages arising from union, or the hope of sharing some buried hereditary property that may be discovered, may lead to this uncomfortable custom of thus crowding together. But others see in this custom temptations to and opportunities of incestuous crime (of the nature alluded to in cases No. 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9,) which they would avoid by a more systematic promotion of an early division of property and the separation of brothers before or on the deaths of their parents.

13. It may be contended that the custom of living together as an undivided family, must, by concentrating capital, advance the public prosperity—and empower a family to undertake speculations of magnitude wholly beyond the means of its individual members; and if these unions were based on the mutual affection and good will, and on any confidence in the integrity of its members, the public benefits arising from them would be considerable; but in the place of any mutual good understanding, we generally find mutual distrust, jealousies and dissensions reigning at the bottom of these seeming unions; and we see each member of the family secretly but perseveringly striving to appropriate and conceal from his copartners whatever he can conceal and appropriate with the least prospect of escaping detection. It is not under the prevalence of feelings of this description that any large commercial or agricultural speculations can, though wealth abound, be safely undertaken. I have seen several instances in which,

though the signal talents and great activity of one member of a united family appeared to debar all rivalry and jealousies on the part of his brothers or cousins, the union has operated most prejudicially; for though the talented member met with no open opposition, he still felt that he was labouring, not exclusively for himself or for his own children, but also for the benefit of dronish brothers and their children, and was thus deprived of the strongest incentive to the exertion of his utmost powers, whilst his acknowledged superiority, by discouraging all exertion on the part of the remaining members of the family, served only to incapacitate them and their children the more from ever becoming active and useful members of society. Could a separation have taken place without loss of credit in the eyes of the world, the talented member would have become still more active and distinguished than he was, and the now idle brothers, urged by the necessity of exerting their mental and bodily powers, would have given up their dronish habits and also become active members of society. Hence I am inclined to think that the constitution of these united families, is more frequently prejudicial than it is favorable to the advancement of individual or public wealth; and that the distrust, dissensions and dishonesty, by which they are, and must continue to be, distinguished (whilst the interests of the several members of the union are separate and different, and whilst the moral and intellectual condition of the people continues to be what it is), rob them of the power of diffusing the benefits expected from them by some. But whatever be their effects on the public prosperity, there can be no doubt of their being very frequently accompanied by most baneful moral effects. Were brothers separated by their father in his life-time or immediately on his death, they might still enter into a mercantile co-parcenary as strangers do, though living separately and separated by law. They may be influenced against separation by the law\*, which gives the pro-

\* In Bengal alone may the childless widow of an unseparated brother claim her late husband's share of property.



perty of a childless separated brother to his widow, whilst it declares the brothers to be his heirs, and his widow entitled only to a maintenance when he dies unseparated.

14. Few things strike the attention or indeed provoke the indignation of the young and inexperienced student of Hindoo and Muhumudan literature on his arrival in India more strongly than the asseverations so vehemently and invariably urged by both Hindoo and Mussulman writers, but especially by the Hindoo law-givers, as to the utter profligacy and want of virtue of the female sex. The father is warned against the seductions of his own daughter, and the son is told to beware of the mother that bore and suckled him! How, exclaims the young European student, could any son of woman give utterance to calumnies so grossly exaggerated? and why should the weak female, whose criminality is never unshared by a male accomplice, bear the whole weight of their virtuous wrath? Even Mr. Ward, the best delineator of Hindoo manners and customs, though one of the sacred profession, which wisely labors to impress upon us the utter natural depravity of both man and woman, seems scarcely less offended by these calumnious assertions, than the young Sciolist.

15. From the weight of these heavy charges, however, some deductions are in justice required; the casual delinquency of an individual daughter, or of an individual mother may, as does the instructive example of good king David, afford to the moralist a fitting text for demonstrating to the unwary the desperate but unsuspected wickedness of the human heart; when giving way to the impulse of passion, it will pay no heed to reason, conscience or religion—but such delinquency cannot be received as full and decided proof of the like general abandonment of virtuous principle and the like general disposition to delinquency. The specific warnings thus addressed to the father and son, should rather be interpreted as conveying a general caution against the danger of falling a sacrifice to opportunities and temptations to the commission of sins, of which man, in his vain folly and misplaced confidence, is too apt to believe himself utterly

incapable. In the next place some allowance is due to the early and barbarous age in which some of the Hindoo law-givers flourished. In those ages of the world which immediately followed the first location of one man and one woman on the earth, the commerce of the sexes was necessarily what we now regard as incestuous; in succeeding ages previous usage and custom must have justified and sanctioned what necessity originated. Virgil writing in the brightest age of Rome, did not apprehend offending the moral taste of his audience by describing Juno as "*et soror et conjux*" of Jupiter; and Abraham assures\* Abimelech that Sarah his wife, the chosen mother of the seed, was "*indeed his sister*," and when the daughters of Lot are stated to have become with child by their own father, the sacred writer does not appear to dissent from the arguments of the elder daughter, although his commentators of modern days, with a more prudent prospect towards the future than a just retrospect of the past, very significantly designate their conduct as "*most atrocious*." To this day it is customary among the Mewatees of Hindoosthan to give to a man of their tribe the refusal of the hand of his brother's widow; and it is only in a more modern age that the Jewish law was repealed by the Brahmans themselves as inapplicable to this age of iron. The early history of every nation abounds with instances of incestuous intercourse between the sexes—shocking to our altered ideas of right and propriety, though justifiable in the first ages of the world. It belonged to subsequent ages when population became more dense and when intermarriage with other adjoining tribes and families was possible, to inculcate a general abhorrence of incestuous commerce between near relations, in order to preserve the chastity and virgin bloom, and thus enhance the value of sisters and daughters.

16. But after making every just allowance for the circumstances of the early ages of several of the ancient Hindoo writers, it must still be admitted by every honest enquirer that female depravity in India and in Asia generally—is and

\* Genesis, chap. xx. 12 verse.

has been excessive and wide spread ; and far beyond what it is and has been in most European countries. When however we come to investigate the causes of this excessive and general profligacy and viciousness of the women, we at once see that it is the natural fruit of the voluptuous tyranny, the licentious selfishness, the ignorant pride, and unfounded fears of the men who first framed and who still preserve the laws, institutions and customs which regulate the social systems as well of Mussulmans as of Hindoos. Their law-givers allege that woman is vexed with passions much more violent than those of man, and still they assign four or more women to one man, in direct violation of the obvious intention of Nature and Nature's God who creates the sexes in almost equal proportion ! The endless dissensions between rival wives and their children, and the consequently embittered lives, the ruined estates, principalities and fortunes, of these pleasure-loving polygamists, have not yet served to open the eyes of their still voluptuary descendants, to the justice of that retribution from which they are suffering.

Again, they allege that the reason of woman is as weak as her passions are strong and uncontrollable, and still they idly condemn hundreds of thousands of young women to pass their lives in a perpetual widowhood.

Young widowers when they re-marry, are hence compelled to select their second wives from the number of young unmarried girls ; and here there is no further evil than this, that by this deduction from the number of women available for marriage, a like number of boys, whose natural mates are thus abstracted from them, are condemned to remain without wives at all.

But the evil is much enhanced in the cases of the marriage of middle-aged and elderly widowers :—for provision for them also is necessarily made out of the same lot of unmarried young girls, who, alas ! when they attain to womanhood can no more revere, honor, or love the wisdom, the matured judgment, and wide experience of their aged and venerable

protectors, than the young Persian girl (spoken of by the admirable moralist of Sheeraz\*) who plainly tells her husband that she held the barbed arrow in her side to be a "preferable companion to her wise but imbecile old mate." And by way of removing their young wives, and their young widows (of whom few families are without one or two, and many have more) from all temptation, they delight in perpetuating their custom of living crowded and huddled together; young women thus unequally mated or without mates at all, with young men, as a united and undivided family!

17. How can any one, who has any knowledge of human nature be surprized that this cruel unnatural system, so degrading to half the human race and yet so full of needless temptation, should produce the fruits it does and has ever produced. Do not all the crimes, all the misery, all the shame and all the endless dissensions with which the families of the Hindoos and Mussulmans are visited, afford the most beautiful instance of the retributive justice of that God, whose obvious intentions and laws in regard to women have been so utterly neglected and trampled on? Are they not reaping as they have sown?

18. Our author adopting this just view of the question, earnestly calls upon his countrymen to remove the present restrictions against second marriages; and he shews that the Shastrus themselves fully authorize a partial relaxation of the restriction in as far as regards all those girls whose husbands may die before the consummation of their marriages. He asserts with much boldness, the equality of the sexes, and the right of woman to enjoy every liberty that can be justly allowed to man. The assertion of this doctrine so startling, from its novelty, to a Hindoo, merits singular praise, though I fear it will find little acceptance at present with his countrymen.

He also with much justice and learning contends that the Hindoo religion and laws have undergone successive modi-

\* Sadee, chap. vi. tale 2.

fications and changes whenever the ill-working of any portion of them rendered modification and change expedient and necessary. The arguments and proofs used by him in illustration of this point will not fail to be appreciated by those who wish to satisfy the ignorant Hindoo that the laws and religion he observes, have little right to the claim of "eternal," "immutable" and "unchanged," which he so bigotedly and blindly arrogates for them.

Despairing however of at once gaining by his arguments and reason, the general concurrence of his countrymen, he concludes his essay by calling upon the British Government to abolish the cruel and mischievous restriction, as it abolished suttees—by a legal enactment. In a previous portion of his valuable essay he contended for extending the benefits of education to females.

19. It now only remains for me briefly to enumerate the means by which the reformation above shown by our author to be so urgently required in the present social system of the Hindoos, may be promoted. The first, the best and indeed the safest means will be a liberal education, which silently but steadily withdrawing the misty veil of prejudice from the moral and intellectual vision of the people, will expose in their true and naked colours the tyranny of the present restrictions, the licentiousness and deceit which they naturally engender, and the general corruption they have wrought and are still working not only on the immediate victims of the oppressive laws, but on every member of native society.

It is only by a liberal education that our subjects will be able clearly to understand, what we now in vain attempt to impress upon them, *viz.* that it is not as they are apt to suppose, the peculiar viciousness of the detected offending woman, that is to be blamed, so much as the viciousness of the unnatural law to which she has fallen a sacrifice ; that it is not the individual but the system, which has broken and violated the law of nature, and that all human laws should be in strict consonance, as are all those which are truly divine,



with the constitution of nature and with the constitution of man, making due provision for the just and moderate indulgence of every passion and affection given to him by God, whilst they check only that excess which would be injurious to and incompatible with his own permanent happiness or the welfare of his neighbours—the public.

As nothing but an enlightened and liberal education will teach our subjects that their own true happiness will be best secured by the strictest justice to woman, and the impartial acknowledgment of her equal rights, so it alone can teach them how to fulfil their duties to their offspring ; it will not fail to inspire a just dread against exposing the happiness of children by one wife to the tender mercies of many other rival wives—of “novercæ”—who are proverbially and who by their position naturally become “injusta ;” it will not fail to point out that, whilst Monogamy alone secures and perfects the union and happiness not only of a man with his wife but also of their children, and ensures from the latter the fullest returns of gratitude and affection, Polygamy on the contrary inevitably introduces and establishes separate interests, utterly destructive of all real union in the family, and fatal to the happiness equally of himself, his wives and his children.

20. In the next place, though it would be as useless as it would be impolitic for the British Government, to attempt to enforce the second marriages of widows by any penal enactment, especially whilst the public opinion and feelings on this subject are as above described, still there are some points connected with the question, on which recourse might perhaps with safety and with good effect, be had to legislation. It has been and is the invariable practice of all the Native Governments, to enquire into cases of the pregnancies of widows, and of the removal of such pregnancies, and for them, in their acknowledged capacity of censors of the public morals, to punish not only the seducers of widows, but the widows, and her family ; thus aggravating the disgrace and misfortune brought on the family by the woman's want of virtue, by the infliction of a heavy fine. This prac-

tice, which no doubt originated in a desire to uphold the unnatural restrictions of caste, and its harsh laws, has been most zealously maintained, not so much from any regard for virtue and morality, as from financial considerations and the love of money. This we see in the case of offending married women—for not only are their seducers fined, but also the husband on the plea of their neglecting those precautions, which they were bound to take to secure the virtue of their wives. The damages which we should award for seduction, are not only never given by a Native Government, but no husband will ever demand them ; the delicate feelings of the poorest man of the lowest caste will not allow him to sanction the idea of having sold his wife's honor for a price, by accepting damages except after much persuasion.

21. Now the Bombay Code following, however rather the law of England than that of India, not only takes cognizance of cases of abortion, but justly apprehending that illicit pregnancies will be removed by violence, it also I believe empowers Magistrates to take security from the unfortunate females that they will not be guilty of procuring abortions, and from the authors of the pregnancy, that they will support and maintain the future issue by the woman—I would submit to the Legislative Council of India whether this law may not with propriety be introduced into the Code of India. Has its operation in Bombay been productive of any general dissatisfaction ? If not, and if the circumstances of the people of Agra, Bengal, and Madras do not justify any well-founded apprehension of its operating prejudicially in those Presidencies, I would advocate its adoption throughout India ; its collateral benefits in hastening the proper adjustment of the question under discussion would be great ; it would bring prominently before the eyes of the public and the Government, the evil consequences of the existing unequal laws against widows, and the exposure and disgrace it would inflict on families, would gradually dispose men of all castes to abrogate or modify the laws against re-marriages of widows as the best or only means of avoiding such shameful exposures.

Though the wealth of Shets and the influence of Zumeendars may enable them to escape from such exposures, the bare fear of detection would be as operative with them as the actual exposure with others, in disposing them to reform the existing laws. Where the purda has most to conceal, jealousies and feuds most abound ; and though these jealousies may lead to false charges, a Magistrate would be wise in availing himself of the good they may produce, not acting on information supplied at their prompting, but investigating its truth ; and punishing wilful and calumnious falsehood. The great defect of the practice of the Native Governments, is, that they make all negotiations for the amounts of the fines to be paid by wealthy offenders, as secret and private as possible. Were the investigation and punishment of the offences of the wealthy, influential and the respectable (the Ashrafs) as public as they are in the cases of the poor, the general exposure must, long ere this, have led to a reform of the evils of the present social system. Much as I distrust the integrity of our Police, still, under active and discerning Magistrates, its proceedings will be more honest and impartial than those of Native Governments ; and the people, and especially the unfortunate females, will in a few years learn that the operation of the proposed enactment tells wholly in their favor, giving them a provision for their children, which as out-castes they must otherwise want, and that unlike the Native Governments it does not seek to make the sins of individuals contribute to the necessities of the State.

22. (The legal enactment I recommend would soon bring under official cognizance and expose clearly to the public view, the misery, crime and profligacy engendered by the customs prevailing amongst those arch-polygamists, the Kooleen Brahmans of Bengal. Some of the poorest of these Brahmans marry a kingly number of wives—as many as 50, 60, 70, or even 100. These wives however are not even taken to their husband's homes, nor even visited by him except when he is in want of money. In that case a single night's cohabitation with his wife is purchased by her or her parents



by the payment of a large bribe ! ! This secured, he proceeds to another village, the abode of another wife, to follow his abominable trade. Who that has the head to understand and the heart to feel the unspeakable value of God's gracious bounty when he bestowed on man a companion so admirably suited to every part of his constitution—physical, moral and intellectual ; who that has sense to appreciate the endless joys, the sober and certain bliss, the perfect and assured happiness, with which wedded life abounds—*whenever the reasonable and just requirements of that pure and holy state are duly fulfilled by both husband and wife !*—can dignify such brutal prostitutions with all the misery so inevitably and retributively attaching to them, with the sacred name of marriage ? Who that is graced with a common love of his species, with a love of reason or of common decency, can witness these foul abominations, this utter wreck of a people's happiness, and rest until he has delivered himself of his commission and brought it home to the convictions of all, that a sensuality so gross, equally outraging the pure and just laws of nature, reason and of God, can be productive only of vice and wretchedness ?

23. I have above stated that from a long association of the idea of respectability and as it were of social nobility, with the prohibition of second marriages, there is ~~a~~<sup>a</sup> very general repugnance against sanctioning second marriages. ~~But~~ though this feeling is general it is by no means universal. Individuals are to be met with, who are most anxious to remove the prohibition, and who cordially approve the bold, but brave attempts made by the celebrated Raja Jy Sing of Jypore, by the Raj Rana Zalim Sing of Kota, and by the Putwurdhun, one of the Jageerdars of the Dukhun, and by a few

\* An old Brahman of Chinnorr, on the banks of the Godavery, who was celebrated for his learning and high character, became a warm convert to the scheme of re-marrying widows : but when in his old age he expatiated on the sin and profligacy wrought by the prohibition and recommended its removal, the people of the town thought he had gone mad and was doating in his old age.

other humane, discerning and sound judging men of former and modern times, to remove this fruitful source of offence. In the 5th and 15th paragraphs I have shewn how by allowing widowers, old and young, the liberty, denied to widows, of re-marrying, and by allowing others having no children by their first wives, the liberty of marrying a second and third wife, there must be a vast number of poor young men left without any wives at all. The proportion of these poorer unmated youths in the respectable Rajpoot tribes is vastly increased by the abominable practice of female infanticide. Now these poorer Brahmans, Bunyahs, Kayuths and Rajpoots are in many cases fully sensible, and in all they may soon be made sensible of the cause of the expense and difficulty of procuring wives. They are made to feel, and in many cases even grievously, the hardships of their position; and in some towns they are said to have absolutely undertaken the discussion and consideration of the question of the prohibition against the second marriages of widows.

24. In the town of Shahjehanpoor of Malwa, a body of these young bachelors by compulsion, is said to have boldly come before their assembled caste with the following question: "We cannot get wives;—if we offend with other women of any respectable caste, we are seized, disgraced and fined by Sindia's Amils; if we sin with women of the less respectable caste or with courtezans, you excommunicate us and thus inflict upon us a still heavier fine in the expenses necessary to secure our re-admission into the pale of the caste. In this dilemma what are we to do?" Will not all similarly situated, throughout India, be readily disposed to listen to and eventually joyfully to co-operate with the European friends of India in promoting the reform of the law, which robs them of all power of getting the helpmates designed for them by God. This class is unfortunately uninfluential and poor; but it may still render us most essential assistance in exposing the evils of the present customs, and in inculcating the vast profits of a more natural system.

25. In the next place there are many men, the fathers-in-law, and the brothers-in-law, and fathers and brothers of these unfortunate widows who in the innermost recesses of their hearts fervently wish for a reform of the law, as it would free them from endless anxiety on account of their daughters-in-law and sisters-in-law and daughters and sisters ; but a fear of the world would keep them all silent at first, or even make them outward opponents of reform.

26. The example of one man, and he a much respected man and also of a respectable Brahman family, deserves to be separately recorded as giving the most decisive proof of the justice of the saying—

“ *Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.*”

His name is Lal Sing ; he is and has long been the Jemadar of the company of Burkundaz sepoy's of the purgunnah of Bairseea in Malwa. He had an only daughter, whom he gave away in marriage whilst still a child—shortly afterwards her husband died. Lal Sing, though a Brahman, could not bear the idea of allowing his dearly loved daughter to undergo all the temptations to sin and misery of a perpetual widowhood. He determined therefore to brave all the obloquy, which he knew he must incur, by violating what religion and custom required of him and to give her away again. He found a respectable well behaved youth, who was ready to receive her, and engage to keep her through life as his wife, and to him he consequently gave her, treating the youth as his son. She has now a family ; but the connexion, being illegal, cannot be regarded as a marriage. The children by this issue will not be given or received in marriage by Brahmans. But the oppressive devastations of Pindaras, having scattered and intermingled all tribes of the people of Malwa, the number of mixed castes of bastard descent and springing from all the regular castes is more numerous there than elsewhere in India, hence questions of intermarriage which would be of impossible adjustment elsewhere are soon arranged in Malwa.

27. This man has, in the eye of the law, deliberately and in the face of day made his own daughter a whore, but he has

not thereby forfeited the respect of his neighbours ; and this fact may I think be assumed as a proof that the people are not utterly deaf to the voice of nature and its pleading. I have heard some men speak even with commendation of his humane, but unlawful, proceeding ; and the existence of such sentiments afford a sure prognostication of a successful issue to the continued agitation of this question.

28. Fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law become on the death of a son, the guardians of their widowed daughter-in-law ; they, and not the widow's own parents are bound by law also to maintain her, even though she may not, previously to his death, have reached an age to live with her husband. The father-in-law and his family thus regarding her as having entered their family, are most concerned for the preservation of her honor ; her own parents, though also generally anxious to preserve her honor, feel themselves more deeply concerned in the promotion of her comfort and happiness. The strict and vigorous treatment adopted by mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law with a view to preserve their virtue, not unfrequently drives these widows to run away to the homes of their own parents, whom they find too willing listeners to their pitiful tales of the unfounded suspicions, ceaseless surveillance, and other wrongful, harsh and cruel treatment of which they have been the helpless victims. Their long and sad list of grievances and wrongs are received with the blind confidence natural to ignorant affections, and in requital and indemnification of past misery, they are now allowed by their parents to enjoy an unrestrained freedom of action. And it is here that indulgence and affection soon expedites the fall which harshness and suspicions as assuredly provoke when they remain under the protection of their abigail mothers-in-law. Their parents may be generally ignorant and innocent of all connivance in their daughter's infamy, but many cases have come under my cognizance in which parents, but especially mothers, loving their daughters, " not wisely but too well," and regarding them as the unfortunate victims of a cruel law that would deny them a taste of what appear to

their carnal sensuality, the first and most natural of pleasures of life, have decided the question between the conflicting claims of honor and of nature, by actually becoming secret panders to the infamy and dishonor of their own daughters!! If pregnancy ensue, its concealment and removal are equally promoted by her parents, whether they originally connived in, or were innocent of all connivance in their guilt.

It may be supposed that the instances of depravity here alluded to, were found in the families of the refuse of Indian society. No, I have seen these things enacted in the families of Nuwabs and Rajas, Rajpoot chiefs, Brahmans, Syuds, Kayuths and Bunyahs; some have been rich and powerful; others poor and powerless; but it must be recollected that the education and moral discernment of the poor Syudanee, and of the powerful Beebee or Begum, of the poor Brahmanee and the wealthy Ranee, of the poor Bunyanee and the rich Shetanee are exactly the same; they are all equally ignorant and equally devoid of moral culture.

29. Some worthy Brahmans frightened by their books into believing woman utterly insensible to good and kind treatment, and incapable of appreciating or properly enjoying the liberty of re-marriage, apprehend that they may take to poisoning or otherwise destroying their husbands, if allowed the liberty of choosing a second mate. Who can fathom, they ask the depth of woman's heart and understand the intrigue and iniquity lying at the bottom of it?

“Tiriyā churitrū jane ko,ee  
Puti mārkur, Suti ho,ee.”

“Who can understand the guile of woman;

She will destroy her own husband, and then become Suti with his corpse?”

Solomon with all his experience of the fair sex, still seems to have found the study equally unpromising and fruitless; indeed he also frankly confesses his utter inability to understand this too wonderful subject. To these ignorant men the experience of all European nations can afford no proof of the idleness of their fears. But do they see instances of wives'

poisoning their husbands more frequently in those poor tribes where second marriages are now allowed than in their own tribes ? I suspect not. The woman who can deliberately plot the murder of her husband, would never be restrained from the crime by the fear of becoming a widow without the power of re-marrying, more especially as we have shewn that the lives of the mass of these widows (I believe there are many exceptions) are not generally distinguished by those austerities and privations of all indulgence which have been prescribed for them but with so much futility.

30. India has suffered grievously from the oppression and tyranny of its Hindoo rulers ; from the wholesale massacres and heartless exactions of its Timoors, Nadir Shahs and other Muhumudan Emperors, it has suffered still more. From the British Government and its unchecked native officers, it has also suffered, and those sufferings (which arose as well from our imperfect acquaintance with the people, and their institutions as from their ignorance of us and of our institutions) have been much aggravated by the Tariffs of Great Britain and of India, which have combined deliberately and wilfully to transfer the chief portion of the profits arising from the commerce of the two countries into the pockets of the people of England, involving India's manufactures in ruin without at the same time allowing her agriculture scope to afford the indemnity it was calculated to afford.

But still the spirit of improvement has never wholly slept. Since the day of our first connexion with India, every age has been distinguished by the production of men who have devoted all their great energies and high talents in promoting the prosperity and happiness of our Indian subjects ; and since the arrival of Lord William Bentinck in India as Viceroy of this Empire, the progress of reform and improvement in every department of Government has been still more rapid and satisfactory to India's best friends. Much still remains to be done ; but it is in the people themselves and not in the Government or its officers, whether in England or India, that we now can observe any backwardness to entertain and



promote the successful issue of any question in which India's good can be shewn to be involved.

All civil disabilities have been removed ; the tedious and ruinous delay of our courts have been partially corrected. And the land revenue (in the North Western Provinces at least) has, by the energy of a few men, been made moderate and of easy payment. The present illustrious head of the Government of India has not been deterred by wars and threatened wars, which must have engrossed all the time, cares and energies of a less talented ruler, from crowning the noble works of his predecessor by adopting the most liberal measures for improving and extending the cultivation of India's staple productions, and otherwise developing and throwing open to the enterprize of Native and British capitalists the hitherto little known resources of the country, and by extending the blessings of a liberal and scientific education to all who can be induced to receive it.

31. But satisfactory and gratifying to contemplate, as are the wise and liberal measures and projects of the Government, it is not by the Government alone, or by any measures emanating from it that the social well-being and happiness of our Indian subjects can be completed, or their prosperity be perfected. That glorious consummation must be the work of the people themselves, with whom and with whose leaders alone rests the removal of those evils still calling for reform. Those evils cannot be touched by a legislature which has wisely bound itself to tolerate them ; they are the fruits of a vicious social economy, and of vicious social laws and customs wholly at variance with the laws of nature. They are evils arising from ignorance and priestcraft, the joint effects of the despotism, tyranny and superstition, under which this country has groaned for ages. The interference of the Government having been already carried as far as it could, with justice and safety be carried, it now remains for the enlightened and educated leaders of native society, for the native moralists philosophers and reformers of the country to come forward to complete and perfect the auspicious and promising measures

of their beneficent Government. For that purpose let them form themselves into Societies at the several Presidencies ; and let those Societies after a complete and impartial review of all parts of their social system, proceed to note all that is vicious and all that is good and useful. If they find that the ignorance and prejudices of their countrymen, prevent their carrying into immediate effect the reforms deemed necessary to secure their happiness and well-being, let them place clearly and palpably before the people the evil working of the unnatural and vicious customs and laws, with which they find fault ; and let them leave no argument or proof shewing the truth and justice of their views, unexplained or unillustrated ; let them appeal to reason and nature and experience, and enforce their appeal with all the eloquence and enthusiasm which truth should command wherever a wrong is observed, let those who suffer under the unequal law, and those whose natural affections and feelings are thereby violated, be called upon to co-operate, in securing its abrogation or modification. A well directed appeal cannot but awaken the sympathies of all interested in the reform of the law. In spite of all the malice and opposition which prejudice, ignorance and superstition may excite for a season, the cause of truth and nature will eventually be crowned with complete success. The better sympathies of our common nature may be overborne and apparently suppressed and eradicated by the violence of unnatural and civil laws, but, as the grass, that has been cut down, trampled upon and burnt down, revives and shoots forth with unabated vigor, the moment its hidden roots are refreshed with vernal showers, so they will again revive and spring up with irresistible force as soon as the depths of the heart are touched by the vivifying influence of seasonable argument and well spoken words of truth and nature.

The subjects for which I would solicit the consideration of the enlightened leaders of Native Society are—

1st. The laws and customs regulating the treatment of woman. Polygamy ; the prohibition of the second marriages



of widows ; domestic slavery, especially of women ; neglect of female education, and generally all those laws and customs as well of Mussulmans as of Hindoos, tending to debase woman, and disqualify her for contributing to the sum of human happiness to the extent that under a different treatment she may and in other countries does contribute.

2d. The laws and customs in regard to the institution of caste ; the prohibitions and penalties against sea voyages and extended foreign travel, by which the best informed members of the community are prevented from witnessing and examining into the working of the more enlightened social and political system of civilized Europe ; the grievous penalties and fines imposed by the caste frequently for neglect or violation of its rules, regarding trivial or indifferent matters ; and the total impunity allowed as well by the caste as by Society in general, to the grossest violation of truth, morality, honesty and the other weightiest matters of the Eternal law.

3d. The laws prohibiting Mussulmans from taking interest, which frequently inflict great embarrassment on respectable families, preventing arrangements by which they might be subsisted on the interest of their capitals, instead of consuming the capitals themselves. They fetter and embarrass lawful trade and commerce, and drive many to petty and mean subterfuges, preserving the letter, but violating the substance, of the law.

4th. The cultivation and encouragement of a public and philanthropic spirit in contradistinction to the sectarian spirit of caste ; the promotion of municipal associations for the purpose of deliberating on the best means of co-operating with the Government in establishing, maintaining and extending schools, colleges and hospitals, and of promoting their usefulness ; also on the best means of improving the means of communication throughout the country by roads, rivers or canals ; on the duties of municipalities in co-operating generally with the Government, not only for the apprehension and conviction of Dacoits and such like criminals, but also for the

impeachment and prosecution of all corrupt, rapacious and oppressive public officers, when their power and influence render such prosecution full of danger and risk to individuals; on the duty of all citizens and subjects to come forward as witnesses whenever they are cognizant of any crimes, and on the guilt of eluding the fulfilment of that duty, as is now too common, to the detriment of the public good; on Societies for the improvement of Agriculture and for the extension of Commerce, and for petitioning Government for the removal of grievances in these departments.

5th. The almost universal state of bankruptcy of all classes of the people; on the folly and guilt of incurring debt without any reasonable prospect of repayment; on the folly of extravagance in celebrating marriages and other ceremonies, Shraddhs, or festivals; on the follies of Astrology and of listening to and paying for its vain predictions; or for the promises of Alchemists, Jadoogurs, Charmers, &c.; on the propriety of saving the people from the injury too commonly inflicted on them by ignorant quacks, and of giving them the benefit of well educated physicians, Hukeems or Vydyus, whose qualifications should be attested by Diplomas to be granted by Colleges, and Schools, under the authority of Government, and of regulating the rates of remuneration to be paid by individuals for the advice and attendance of qualified practitioners.

6th. On the best means of putting a stop to vagrant mendicancy whether the beggars be Fukeers, Brahmans, Byragees or Gosacens, and of converting these useless drones, who prey on and not unfrequently also violently plunder society, into good and useful members of society; on providing the means of subsistence to all real objects of charity, such as the blind, the destitute, old and infirm; on making the existing religious institutions such as the Muths of Byragees and Gosacens and the Tukeeas of Fukeers in some degree conducive to the moral improvement of the people, by the Society resolving to grant support to such of them only as shall establish their right to it by the morality, literary attainments and sound

instructions given to their communicants by the members of these institutions ; on the propriety of abandoning the custom of indiscriminate charity, such as feeding a hundred or thousand Brahmans, and of employing the most learned of those hitherto benefited by such charity in teaching children, or in giving public lectures.

32. These are the subjects which seem to me to call for consideration. They are subjects of the deepest interest and importance, whether we regard the numbers who would be affected by any change, or the benefit which the considered change is likely to produce.

Some of the vicious customs alluded to will gradually disappear before the enlightenment shed by a liberal education ; others again, coming almost wholly under the class of customs regarded as religious observances, will never come under the review and criticism of the Teachers and Professors of a Government, which has wisely prohibited them from discussing such subjects with their pupils. Hence the duty and responsibility of correcting whatever is evil in the present customs of the people, naturally devolves on the enlightened members of Native society, who have received a complete and liberal education. It is they who are and should become the Pundits and Shastrees, the Moulvees and apostles of the people in the place of those frequently ignorant unenlightened men, honored with these high titles. But numerous and important though the subjects be which call for discussion, consideration and reform, there is none which is more deeply important than that of the second marriages of widows.

The enlightened and educated Native gentlemen of the Presidencies have been invested with a power, greater and more effective than that of Raja Jysing and of the Raj Rana Zalim Sing, despotic though that was, for effecting the desired reform ; I trust they will not shew less moral courage or less love of virtue, morality and humanity than those half-civilized worthies of by-gone ages, in boldly using their power.

July 20th, 1841,  
Bhopal Agency, Sehore.

} LANCELOT WILKINSON.