

Babu Rajendra Lal Mitter
with K C Bose's best regards.

THE CLAIMS OF THE POOR.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

OOTERPARRAH HITOKORRY SHOVA,

THE 29TH APRIL, 1866,

BY

KOYLAS CHUNDER BOSE.

Calcutta:

PRINTED BY I. C. BOSE & CO., STANHOPE PRESS, 172, BOW-BAZAR ROAD.

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GENTLEMEN,

I RISE, at the request of your Chairman, to address you a few words in support of the objects of the Shova the anniversary of which we are here met to celebrate. I have listened to its last annual report just read with the greatest pleasure and have been satisfied that it is one of the few practical institutions for the achievement of great ends to which a body of intelligent, wealthy, and benevolent men can well direct their attention, interest and support. It is a young and a tender plant which has found a genial soil, and which, with a little careful nurture, promises to bear golden fruits. It contains within itself the germs of greatness which may assume gigantic proportions, even far beyond your own expectations. Human calculation would tire in the attempt to assign a limit to the capacity for good of an institution conceived by Benevolence, lapped and nursed by Fortune and watched over by some of the wise men of the East, under the direction of an Almighty Providence.

The story of its birth and of the great ends ~~it is~~ destined to compass, is told in a few words. I quote those words from its annual report. "The Hitokorry Shova was established at Ooterparrah on the 5th April, 1863," the great object of its founders being to "educate the poor, to help the needy, to clothe the naked, to give medicines to the sick, to support poor widows and orphans." These are noble words which can only flow from noble and generous hearts. They indi-

cate at once the desire and purpose for an organized charity, dictated by *true-hearted* and not by *pompous* benevolence. Money is freely given in this country in many cases to feed Brahmins or the poor, to liberate people from jail and the like. But this is done idly and indiscriminately. It may encourage improvidence, it may support idleness and vice ; nevertheless it is popular, because it meets with outside applause. The Hitokorry Shova is however destined, I fain and fondly hope, to give a new direction to Eastern Benevolence, to discipline our minds to the renunciation of ease, self-indulgence and leisure, and to subdue any unnatural hankering after personal fame and worldly renown. An unostentatious spirit is vital to the steady and energetic prosecution of any plans of benevolence. The Hitokorry Shova has already formed its plans in accordance with that spirit, and I shall advert to them in the order in which they are set forth in the report. First and foremost among them is the education of the poor. It is too common, alas ! it is too natural to entertain a prejudice against this class of our fellow countrymen. Many think that labor is their all. Nature has given them capacity but circumstances have denied them education. Labor is *not* the poor man's all ; for he has a vital interest in the property around him, and his labor could not without education command its reward. The uneducated poor, to every well-regulated mind, must ever be an object of warm interest and sympathy. Whether we think upon their numbers, their rude forces, or their formidable passions, it is impossible to deny them a large share of virtues.

The sympathy of the poor with each other, their true-hearted tenderness towards all who are more needy and more sorrowing than themselves, form their characteristic trait as well as impress upon them a high nobility. And

shall we despise those who bear one another's burdens, who weeping themselves, still weep for them who weep.

The claims of the poor to something more than the merest wants of life, to some thing that will contribute a motive to self-exertion and personal activity, energy and self-dependance cannot admit of a doubt. The age when ignorance was regarded as the mother of obedience, has faded into the past. It is now a sacred duty imposed upon the wise and the good to provide means for the education of the poor unlettered masses who expect something more in return for the labor they give for the enjoyment of the rich than to be merely housed and fed.

In a country like this, where popular enlightenment should subserve a great end—the establishment of social order—where the ignorance of the masses is a serious drawback on the general improvement of the country—where the relation between the zemindar and the ryot is that of the lord and the serf, nothing is of more immediate importance than a carefully devised scheme of popular instruction. The Indian ryot is not altogether a pauper living on public charity, but his condition is hardly better than that of a pauper. Educate him and he will rise to the position of a gentleman. But how is that result to be achieved? How are the poor to be educated and brought to understand their real position in society?—how can their enlightenment be made to react on the improvement of the higher and the middle classes? These are questions which I am sorry to say, have scarcely exercised the judgments of men who, by their position, wealth, and intelligence, are best able to give them a practical answer. They however shirk the responsibility and the question at issue is with whom the responsibility really lies? With the government of the country, or the wealthy and influential classes whom education has raised from the common level of their fel-

low-countrymen ? To enable me to answer this question I must lead you back for a minute to the history of popular education in England. It is there practically never left in the hands of the state, experience of continental kingdoms having shewn the dangers attendant upon an absolute resignation of this important charge in the hands of government.

The misfortunes of France have been caused more by its scholastic regimen than by any other apparent cause. The minister of public instruction appointed by the state is the sole judge and arbiter over the destinies of millions. He is the master of the university, the regulator of school discipline, the lord paramount over academies, royal colleges, commercial colleges, institutions, pensions and primary schools. He has dependant upon him the functionaries of education who are the inspectors general of public institutions. Under his jealous care nothing can elude the immutable order of a well-balanced system. The educatory machine moves incessantly a dull monotonous round which no extra exertion on the part of the children of the soil or the pupils can obstruct or alter with impunity. All is blind surveillance, and passive obedience to intellectual despotism—the worst of all sorts of despotisms. Under a restraint like this, the mind is discouraged and debased, and receives the stamp of a royal device and patriarchal authority. Liberty of thought and action,—the natural birth-right of man,—is thus debarred from the French nation which is merely a tool in the hands of the state, a prisoner to the existing ruler or government led captive by the training which it receives at the outset of life, which binds it to uniformity, impresses it with helplessness and satisfies it with dependance. The people can never shake off the yoke which presses on them heavily.

They may quarrel, they may mutiny, they may sometimes overthrow the government; but in all their revolutions they merely exchange one yoke for another. The sovereign is their only god, and the purchase of their freedom consists in substituting one idol for another. The high-souled reform of the nation, the regeneration of the people never enters into their thoughts.

But the educatory machine in England is worked by a different agency. The parent and not the state is the instructor of the young, the former as natural guardian being better fitted for, and better disposed to, the discharge of the duty than the latter. It has always been the ambition of the wise and the good in England to preclude state agency from the work of public instruction, and to extend the benefits of education to the humbler classes of her people, by as much as lies in their power without aid or intervention from the government.

But what is the general opinion here in regard to this sacred trust, that of educating our poor and working classes. Perhaps you hear but one cry, namely, that the government should educate the poor, the government should educate the rich—in fact the government should do every thing for the improvement of the country—the children of the soil being ever helpless as children are. This demand on the government is however but an unsatisfactory return for the good it has already conferred on the people, and does not speak well of those who having benefitted themselves do not seek to benefit others. Government has already done much for the education of the higher and the middle classes. It has been earnest in its endeavours, liberal in its grants, energetic in its movements to educate the higher and middle classes first, that they may, in their turn, undertake the education of the masses of their fellow-

vital organs," said Sir Charles Trevelyan, in one of his minutes now on the records of the Council of Education, "the whole system will be reinvigorated ; the rich, the learned, the men of business will first be gained ; a new class of teachers will be trained ; books in the vernacular language will be multiplied, and with these accumulated means we shall in due time proceed to extend our operations from town to country, from the few to the many, until every hamlet shall be provided with its elementary school. The poor man is not less the object of solicitude than the rich ; but while the means at the disposal of the Committee of Public Instruction were extremely limited, there were millions of all classes to be educated. It was absolutely necessary to make a selection, and they therefore selected the upper and middle classes as the first object of their attention, because by educating them first, they would soonest be able to extend the same advantages to the rest of the people. They will be our school-masters, translators, authors, none of which functions the poor man with his scanty stock of knowledge is able to perform. By adopting them first into our system, we shall be able to proceed a few years hence with an abundant supply of books, and with all the wealth and influence of the country on our side, to establish a general system of education which shall afford to every person of every rank the means of acquiring that degree of knowledge which his leisure will permit."

What was said by this good man thirty years ago is now felt to be a necessity. The government of the country has done its duty to the wealthy and influential classes of its subjects, by establishing for their benefit, schools and colleges in different parts of the country. It now rests with them to extend the same advantages to the lower classes and thereby aid the cause of India's material and moral prosperity. There are now amongst us men eminent for

their learning, wealth and ability, to whom we naturally look forward. But the truth must needs be told. We miss in them that feeling of kindness and sympathy for the poor which is the only condition necessary to their improvement. In the eye of the zemindar, the ryot is but a slave, a being ordained to be miserable, and to be ever dependant upon his master whose land he cultivates for food and raiment. The condition of the Indian peasantry and the agricultural classes is indeed hard—too hard for endurance. The oppressions of the zemindar upon the ryot have become almost proverbial. Indian rural life presents a picture to the eye at which, in the words of Edmund Burke, “reason is staggered, morality is perplexed, and from which humanity recoils with a shudder.” Our visions of Arcadia and pastoral bliss vanish as we approach the wigwam of the Indian peasant. Instead of beholding him a gay and thoughtless butterfly floating on summer’s noon-tide air, we find him a despicable worm creeping on the earth, and trampled upon by every reckless passer-by. He sometimes resents the outrage by a venomous bite that costs the life of his aggressor. Brought up in chains, under tyranny and oppression, the ryot becomes in turn the perpetrator of the grossest crimes which can blacken humanity. He is thrashed and scourged in the day by the merciless zemindar; in the night he assumes a formidable shape, despises all law and order, and with all the brutality of a savage plunges his sword or tomahawk into his oppressor’s breast. He is a thief, a thug and a dacoit whom no law can reach, no blow can annihilate. Thus it is that crimes of the deepest dye are hourly perpetrated in the villages, and the life and property of dwellers in the interior staked at every moment. The zemindar and the ryot are engaged in continual hostilities,—harvests are blighted, villages deserted, hamlets burnt, and the trophies of the plough

displaced by those of clubs and matchlocks. Whence then is this order of things? The question is easily answered—Popular ignorance that great obstacle to the progress of native society. If the zemindar would have himself housed in peace, fed in security and clothed without apprehension, he must house, feed, and clothe the ryot in security too. He must give him an education which will elevate his mind, and enable him to enjoy at his leisure that harmless pleasure which the bare gratification of our brute appetites cannot afford—a pleasure which the mind feels at the approach of dawn or summer's twilight eve, enlivened by fancy and imagination and elevated by reason and philosophy. Unless the zemindar undertake to educate the ryot, it is hopeless to see him at any time better-souled or better-informed than he now is. But there is, perhaps, no part of the world where so much wealth and influence is possessed by persons so little able to make a good use of it as in the interior of Bengal. The substitution of a single humane and enlightened land-lord would be a blessing to a whole neighbourhood.

But I shall no longer dwell upon this painful subject. It is a matter of congratulation that the public spirit and charity which we elsewhere desiderate, have found in this small but beautiful town of Ooterparrah a manifestation which speaks volumes in favor of its noble-minded and distinguished citizens. The Hitokorry Shova is one of the many instances of their large-hearted charity, public spirit and munificence. Their good works will tell their story to posterity and will be an example for living and future generations to follow in their wake.

Having shewn that the education of the poor devolves upon the rich, I shall crave your indulgence to the consideration of the question, what education is best suited to the poor.

"Any education," says Dr. Hamilton, "is nearly worthless that is not intelligent. The mind must be roused to think for itself. Mental digestion alone produces mental life and health. Violent efforts of the memory often discourage even that lower faculty without strengthening the judgment. Let children be taught the reasons of facts ; and when this cannot be done, let it be shewn how reasonable is the ground of conviction in their approved truth. Why is it ? how can it be ? wherefore do you believe it ? are questions which will draw up the soul from its depths and liberate it from its fetters. This is the true praxis of education. Self-knowledge, self-control, self-examination, self-culture, will follow as effects. You have caused him who was created a thinking being to think ; you have done reverence to the Father of Spirits in the evocation of that spirit.

"We feel that something is wanting to raise the national mind ; it is oppressed by habitude and phlem. We desire to bring it to a greater force and quickness ; it stands in need of activity, perception, vigor. It has been long overborne by tyranny and besotted by ignorance ; it has been bought by gifts and suborned by bribes. There is a natural love of justice and tone of generosity in it ; it strongly inclines to independence but it has been worn down by neediness and beaten down by rigor. It comprehends all the elements of greatness ; it resembles some noble falchion capable of the keenest edge and the brightest polish, uninjured in its temperament even now, but blunted, soiled, threatened to be corroded by its rust. It must be awakened to exertion, and to greater confidence in itself ; it must be drawn from the low amusements which have hitherto been its only recreation. It is ready for growth in knowledge, it invites, it even thirsts for, education. Stimulated by that discipline which we inculcate, it will rouse from sloth ; possessing the motives for improvement, its inborn energy

will vindicate itself, it will stand forth in its vivacity without lightness, in its strength without violence, in its stability without grossness, in its activity without lubricity, in its ascendancy without disdain."

"It is almost unnecessary to say, that the instruction of the child is as nothing, save as you imbue him with the taste and furnish him with the means of self-education. Every man, says Gibbon, who rises above the common level has received two educations :—the first, from his teachers ; the second, more personal and important, from himself ; once inspired to think wisely and religiously, it is not very probable that he will relapse. Study will be his habit and piety his inner life. Should he never rise in society, he has already gained an honorable and a holy position, he carries with him a blessed charm to lighten toil, to assuage affliction, to purify attachment and to conquer death. He has been trained in the way in which he shall go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

The poor of India must not only be taught to read and write, but trained up as moral and responsible beings who knew their duty to God, to themselves, and to their fellow-creatures. Moral training should go hand in hand with intellectual culture. In a system of popular education it is not necessary to introduce the higher branches of science and literature, which the wealthy and influential classes only should cultivate, having by their more fortunate position in society ample means and leisure to devote to intellectual acquirements which the indigent and working classes can scarcely command. But the morals of a nation can only be elevated by a well regulated system of public instruction which is now wanted to regenerate Indian society. The mind should be as much an object of concern as the heart, though in the systems of education adopted in our public schools for the higher and the middle classes, the

latter is so sadly neglected as to leave the tone of public morality in India almost unimproved. To suppose that the cultivation of the intellect will be followed by a happy influence on the morals of a nation, and that it is of itself calculated to check the growth of vice is an altogether false philosophy, and presupposes a total ignorance of human nature. On the other hand it is more probable that a mind once liberated from its fetters and taught to think wisely and religiously will take an elevated turn and evince not an unnatural aptitude for those refined enjoyments which spring from pure intellectual exercise. If therefore any education is to be given to the masses of our people, it must be one which would most effectually alter their evil habits and propensities, establish among them social law and order, and strengthen the tie which would bind them to the performance of duties which, as subjects of this earth, they owe to their king, and, as those of the world to come, they owe to their God.

But all this may appear an Utopian theory unless we can satisfactorily prove that the masses can be enlightened with as great success as has attended the efforts of our humane Government in the education of the higher classes of native society. But where is the impediment to this noble undertaking?—the people surely do not oppose it now as they might have done a few years back. There is an evident indication from all quarters that the people want instruction. They are most feelingly alive to the discomforts of their present situation. They have been made to understand that their misfortunes are principally owing to their own ignorance—that if they knew how to read and write, they would have been spared the necessity of signing their names in important documents and title deeds by false and gratuitous marks, and thereby have protected themselves from forged signatures and arbitrary taxes and impo-

sitions. If therefore we apprehend no opposition from the people, what possible show of resistance can be offered to the progress of educational movements. Let the shoulder be applied to the wheel and all obstacles, fancied or real, will disappear. Let the learned and the rich of this land join in the enterprize which is worth all that can be spent upon its execution; and its fruits will appear within an incalculably short period.

In order to be able fully to appreciate the expected happy results, let me impress upon you that the children of the poor would be brought up to honor, usefulness and virtue, instead of rotting for ever in that dreadful gulf in which they are now plunged by the circumstances which surround them, by permitting them to receive at our hands the benefits of that education which we can most successfully impart to them without making ourselves dependant on the state. The wealthiest zemindars who are now the greatest sufferers from the effects of popular ignorance, should, with a due regard to their own interests, if other motives apart from selfishness be not sufficiently strong to draw them to the enterprize, undertake the education of the ryot and the pauper at any cost, as the advantages that would flow from the increased knowledge and improved good conduct of the ryot would more than repay their first outlay, and enable them to employ with profit to themselves and to the country in general a race of well-trained subjects to the peaceful pursuits of agriculture to which there are so many impediments at present from the prevalence of mutual misunderstandings—oppression and disobedience—injustice and lawlessness—force and retaliation. There should be in every district within a limited area a school-house for the education of the poor. The zemindar should impress on all his ryots the necessity of sending their children there as a matter of duty, in order that no laxity may

be endured from the apathy or indifference of the people to learn. But to surmount most effectually the obstacles that may be offered by the stubborn idleness of the few who may not easily be persuaded to appreciate the value of education, there should be held out promises of pecuniary favors or money rewards to the most qualified students in the district pauper schools, which will have more effect than any other expedient.

As to the kind of instruction to be given, I have already maintained that there should be a system of moral training which will so elevate the condition of the Indian peasantry that they may discriminate between good and bad, between right and wrong. All religious instructions should of course be carefully excluded—at least for the present, and only practical truth inculcated without reference to any of the superstitious beliefs of mankind—a truth that will abide by its own test, being warranted by philosophy and experience. Religious and moral teaching apart, the labouring classes, for whom the higher branches of learning are not a necessity, should be taught to read and write in their own vernacular, with a two-fold object—first, that they may derive some knowledge of themselves from books and pamphlets touching their own occupations as laboring and industrious classes. The industrious classes in this country are chiefly agricultural and to them nothing can be of greater value than lessons of a practical kind in the art of cultivating the soil and improving the harvest. Such lessons can be imparted most effectually through the medium of books. Some may deride the idea of a “bookish theoric” for a rude peasantry like that of India. But I can only meet their derision with contempt. I regard them as men who are far behind the age; who are too selfish to be liberal; and who are too narrow-minded to be able to think rightly on the subject. Book knowledge is as essential to

the pursuit of a trade or profession as the knowledge gained through practice. The latter kind of knowledge by itself, however, is more akin to the instinct of animals than any thing belonging to rational creatures. The unlettered mechanic, artisan or ploughman follows his profession and does his business much in the same way as the architects of the ant-hill or the bee-hive. There is a dull uniformity about his work which under the slightest pressure or variation of circumstances and position comes to a stand still until things resume their wonted course. Thus man the lord of the creation, is degraded into the condition of beasts of burden, yoked as it were to a country oilmill incessantly going their round blindfold. When that large-minded statesman who now fills the office of Lieutenant-Governor of our country, conceived the idea of an Agricultural Exhibition he did calculate upon results which but for the ignorance of the agricultural classes would have by this time astonished the world by their magnitude. These Exhibitions have gone a great way towards exciting curiosity, and the desire to learn and to improve. It now rests with us to bring within their reach the means whereby that curiosity and that desire may be gratified. Let Agricultural schools be sown broadcast over the land, let the classes of people for whom they are intended go through a regular course of instruction, theoretically and practically, in that branch of knowledge, let them be taught to think and to speculate and then be left to their own resources. They will, I am confident, with the improved knowledge and appliances at their disposal be able to "produce two blades of grass where one grew before."

In speaking of Agricultural schools, I cannot refrain, and I shall not excuse myself if I did refrain from pointing your attention to the munificence and large mindedness of your distinguished fellow-townsmen who lately went up to Government with an offer, no less remarkable for its liberality

than for its appropriateness, for the establishment of the first Agricultural School in India. The Government perhaps felt its hands tied up by the terms of the Education Despatch from alienating any portion of the public funds applicable under existing rules to purposes of general education towards the furtherance of a special object like that contemplated by Baboo Joykissen Mookerjee. But that I hope will not be felt as a discouragement or as an obstacle to the carrying out of the project which commends itself as much to the good will of the Government as to the support of private benevolence.

In teaching the ryot to read and to write, I said, that there must be a twofold object—first, that they may derive from books a knowledge of their own profession and its requirements,—second, that they may, in the course of their professional instruction, improve so much in general knowledge that they may be able to conduct themselves with grace and propriety towards the society of which they are members. In these days of mental activity, books, tracts, and newspapers are not only a help and a necessity to learning and to learned men, but they are the common channels of instruction to the masses who, more or less, are indebted to them for their knowledge of things and objects, for their obedience to the laws of the country and for their cultivation of sympathy and fellow-feeling for one another. “The instruction obtained from newspapers and political tracts,” says John Stewart Mill, “may not be the most solid kind of instruction but it is an immense improvement upon none at all. What it does for a people, has been admirably exemplified during the cotton crisis, in the case of the Lancashire spinners and weavers, who have acted with the consistent good sense and forbearance so justly applauded, simply because, being readers of newspapers, they understood the causes of the calamity which had befallen them,

and knew that it was in no way imputable either to their employers or to the government. It is not certain, he continues, that their conduct would have been as rational and exemplary, if the distress had preceded the salutary measure of fiscal emancipation which gave existence to the penny press."

I have up to this moment advocated the claims of the able-bodied *poor* or the labouring classes of our country, who work and earn their own livelihood and to whom education would be a boon. But there is another class of our fellow-countrymen who are more directly the objects of our sympathy, and whose wants are of a material kind though not less pressing and urgent than those of others to whose case I have already drawn your attention in so prominent a manner. The class I now allude to comprehends the able-bodied *destitute*, who, from want of employment and the necessary means of livelihood, go starving. Education is not their want, for it would be ridiculous and false philanthropy to talk of educating men who are dying of hunger and have not the means of keeping body and soul together. They ask for bread, and it would be cruel to mock them with a stone. In all civilized countries, it is admitted to be a right principle that the rich should support the needy. It is almost a divine law that human beings should help one another and the more so, in proportion to the urgency of the need; and none needs help so urgently as one who is starving. The claim to help, therefore, created by destitution, is one of the strongest which can exist. The wildest speculations respecting the foundation of morals or of the social union will not absolve us from this solemn and sacred duty. It may be true that if the habits of all classes of people were temperate and prudent the demand for help would have ceased to exist. But what if thoughtlessness, intemperance and improvidence were the immediate causes of the destitution of a people? What

if it were so? Will it be an argument for those in affluence, enjoying a superfluity and a superabundance of wealth, to hold back and say—why should we help them, they have brought on their misery by their own folly. Thank Heaven! human nature is inherently neither so selfish nor so mean as not to be moved at the sight of distress, or not to be roused to activity to bring relief within the reach of the sufferers without reference to the immediate causes of the suffering. In what light can we regard men, who, on seeing a house on fire with the imminent risk of its inmates being burnt to ashes, or a boat full of human lives at the point of sinking and consigning its burden to a watery grave, instead of rushing to the rescue, were to hold a council of deliberation as to whether the blazing house before them was not an abode of robbers who deserved to die a fiery death, or whether the sinking vessel was not a boat of pirates of whom society would be glad to be rid. In much the same light shall we regard men who tie their purse-strings at the approach of improvident wretchedness and cover their want of charity with a plea. But all wretchedness is not owing to improvidence. It is a misfortune incident to every society; arising from either limited production, over-population, unsatisfactory diffusion of property, or from the accidents of drought, inundation or famine. But be the causes what they may, there is *prima facie* the amplest reason for making the relief of so extreme an urgency as certain to those who require it, as by any arrangements of society it can be made. You know what those arrangements are in the British Islands, the land of our rulers, the seat of that sovereign authority which holds under its sway and beneficent care the destinies of 180 millions of people, the centre of commerce and civilization, the picture of moral and material prosperity upon which admiring Europe looks with awe and wonder. The

as applied to a system of public charity is contained in the Poor Laws of England. The relief of her able-bodied destitute is not left to individual charity which almost always does either too little or too much ; which lavishes its bounty in one place, and leaves people to starve in another. Some of the highest authorities in Political Economy consider it to be desirable that the certainty of subsistence to those in want should be held out by law rather than that their relief should depend upon voluntary charity. Their argument is made the more forcible by the consideration that since the state must necessarily provide subsistence for the criminal poor while undergoing punishment, not to do the same for the poor who have not offended is to give a premium on crime.* But the strongest reason for legal charity is that it renders it impossible for any person except by his own choice to die from insufficiency of food. The state acts as trustee of a public fund, administers it by an equitable and a well-defined law, distributes it with an equal hand with reference more to general than to individual interests, guarantees all persons against absolute want, provided always that the assistance is not such as to dispense with self help, by substituting itself for the person's own labor, skill and prudence ; for if assistance is given in such a manner that the condition of the person helped is as desirable as that of the person who succeeds in doing the same thing without help, the assistance, if capable of being previously calculated on, is mischievous. If the condition of a person receiving relief is made as eligible as that of the labourer who supports himself by self-exertion, the system strikes at the root of all individual industry and self-government. It creates a feeling of dependance and reliance on others, deadens the active faculties and makes the recipients of habitual aid sink into a state of desperate inertness and help-

* Principles of Political Economy—By John Stuart Mill.

lessness. These reasons so outweigh with me, in the consideration of this subject, the arguments in favor of individual or private charity, that I do undoubtedly advocate state agency and state interference in the regulation of an organized charity for the relief of public distress. I am too jealous of such interference in the social affairs of a nation when it is pushed beyond legitimate bounds, when it encroaches upon a province which belongs more to the governed than the governing body, when it unnecessarily thrusts upon the former compulsory duties which detract from the merit of private enterprise and benevolence. But I am yet too sensible of the weakness and imperfectness of human nature to admit that a man will periodically and ungrudgingly and systematically part with any portion of his earnings and income to relieve distress without pressure or compulsion. Charity, like all other human sympathies, is moved, though not often and by the same object, by direct and personal appeals. Unseen and remote distress seldom works powerfully upon the feelings, and is therefore less pitied and less thought of. I do therefore strongly believe that the duty of affording relief to paupers devolves upon the government, which has as much a right to levy contributions from its subjects who are not paupers for the relief of those who are, as it has a right to levy taxes for the administration of justice and good government. But Sir, while I advocate a state agency for the administration of public charities, I do not undervalue the importance of private charities by bodies single or corporate. They distinguish between one case of real necessity and another, they discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving indigent. They give more where more is due and abstain from cases which come within the meaning and cognizance of state relief. And such I believe are the chari-

ties dispensed by your Association ; for if I mistake not, it purposes to support poor widows and orphans, not of paupers and the utterly destitute, but the widows and orphans who might have seen better days in their lives, and to whom the pittance doled out by laws and regulations by the dispensers of public charities might be an inadequate relief. Private charity cannot find worthier objects than those whom you have undertaken to relieve.

I shall touch upon another point before I conclude. From the able-bodied poor and the able-bodied destitute, the mind naturally turns to those whom God intended for the highest purposes of life, but whom the accident of misfortune has cast upon society as an encumbrance. The sick, the decrepit, the deaf, the dumb and the blind are objects of tender solicitude. Already stricken down by the hand of Providence, their poverty intensifies their suffering and turns life into a burden. To them relief is due not on the principle which governs the distribution of public relief funds among the able-bodied destitute, but on a higher principle, *viz*, that of giving them with an unstinted hand with a view that their position may be made as comfortable as it is possible for one man in the full possession of his active powers and organs to make for another who is destitute of them. Charity in their case can not be reduced to regulation limits. To whom much is given, of him much shall be required. But what are the arrangements in our country for helping these pitiful objects. They are, like all mendicants, left to casual charity. They beseege our doors, they pitifully cry in our public streets and thoroughfares, and we send them away sometimes with a small coin, sometimes with a threat to call the Police upon them for unlicensed begging. God help us from licensed beggars! If the necessity for an organised charity is more needed in one ~~case~~ than in another, it is in the case of the *disabled*.

destitute whom I have introduced to your notice. Their number cannot be large, though I have not the requisite data upon which to calculate the proportion they bear to the able-bodied of our country. But be their numbers what they may, the founding of hospitals and asylums where they may be cared for is pointed to as a duty which should take precedence before all works of charity. Our millionnaires and billionnaires, Rajahs and Maharajahs, Ranees and Maharanees have spent a great part of their wealth in temple endowments, in ghats and sanctuaries. But can we call to mind a single instance of an endowment for the relief of the disabled destitute. I, for my part, am not aware of any, and shall be glad if some one of my audience here will either rectify or ratify my impressions on the subject. But I do fervently hope that the Hitokorry Shova is already acting upon the principle which I have hinted at for the consideration of those who may act independently of you and who may now or hereafter seek objects upon which to bestow their charity.

I have thus, Sir, most imperfectly though sincerely endeavoured to say a few words in behalf of the Hitokorry Shova. If my ability had been equal to my wishes, I would more worthily have performed the duty which your kind confidence entrusted to me. But my prayer is that every one connected with this Association will do his duty in the respective sphere he is called upon to occupy. Great is his responsibility and in proportion to its greatness he will meet with his reward. There are dangers and difficulties with which good works are always beset; but they vanish like breath on the polished mirror when confronted by virtue, fortitude and endurance.

“Let us, then, be up and do it,”

With a heart for any fa-;

Still achieving, still pursuing,

Learn to labor and to wait.”