



THE LATE MR. JUSTICE M. G. RANADE, C.I.E.

BORN 1842. — DIED 1901.

TO
THE CHERISHED AND REVERED MEMORY
OF THE
LATE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MAHADEO GOVIND RANADE,

M.A., LL.B., C.I.E.

Whose gigantic intellect, sainted character, many-sided activity, unflinching devotion to duty and passionate love of motherland were the wonder and inspiration of millions of his admiring countrymen ; whose whole life was dedicated to the service of this beloved India of ours and was one noble record of glorious exertions and self-sacrificing labours for the regeneration of her teeming millions in all the departments of our activity in general and in the holy field of Social Reform in particular ; and who laid me personally under a debt immense of endless gratitude by the parental solicitude he evinced in the present humble undertaking from the very beginning of its inception to the last day of his life .

THIS VOLUME

IS DEDICATED,

AS A FEEBLE TOKEN OF GRATITUDE,

BY THE EDITOR

PREFACE.

In placing the present work before the public, I do hardly think any apology is necessary. In the holy task of India's regeneration, Social Reform has a very important part to play as without social efficiency, no permanent progress in the other fields of our activity can be achieved. That Hindu Society is at present far from being in a state of efficiency owing to the serious mischief wrought by the many evil customs that powerfully clog the wheel of progress at every step, is a fact that requires only to be mentioned for it to be admitted. Following in the wake of English education and our assimilation of the strong points of Western civilisation, a general awakening has taken place in India ; and ceaseless efforts have, for the last one or two generations, been put forth by the leaders of educated Indian thought to better the condition of our community politically, socially, intellectually and materially. The birth of that grand national movement, the Indian National Congress was followed by the foundation of its sister institution, the Indian National Social Conference ; and like the Congress in the political field, the Social Conference has reduced all the weak points of our social organisation to a definite shape, has devised various methods for remedying them, and has showed us who our leaders are in this department of our "progress. For the promotion of any great cause, a sort of literature should grow around it which would popularise it by dispelling all false notions and spreading correct ideas about it. Thus an immense mass of literature—and very useful literature—has grown up on the subject of Social Reform, and a calm and dispassionate study of it cannot, I venture to think, fail to convince any rational mind of the utility of effecting reform in our

social economy. It must also show that we who advocate a return to some of the more wholesome of our old ways, and not the opponents of our cause who blindly refuse to be guided by reason and expediency and persist in sticking to what custom alone sanctions, are the true conservatives, the true Hindus. It has been thought desirable to give to the public in one connected whole in the shape of a volume like the present one the best thoughts of our best men, of our intellectual aristocracy who naturally form the cream of our society on the overwhelmingly important subject of Social Reform, and how far I have succeeded in achieving this object, it is for the public to say.

My first thanks, in this connection, are due to my valued friend, Mr. K. Venkanna Pantulu, First Grade Pleader, Vizianagram, whose sincerity of purpose, ardent advocacy of the cause of Social Reform, and large-hearted liberality have alone made the publication of this volume possible; and I write only the sober truth when I say that but for him, this work could not have been undertaken at all. He has throughout been of immense help to me in completing it.

The late lamented Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade, C.J., whose sudden demise cast such a deep gloom over the whole land, rendered me every possible assistance in bringing out this volume, and from the very moment that Mr. Venkanna Pantulu and myself thought of undertaking this work, his mature counsel and kindly co-operation were entirely at our disposal. It is simply impossible to over-estimate the nature or the magnitude of the loss I, in common with all the rest of my countrymen, have sustained by his having been so prematurely called upon to pay the debt of nature. I mean no disrespect to the galaxy of the distinguished contributors I have been fortunate enough to secure when I say that this book has lost much of its value by going without the masterly Introduction from his

gifted pen, which he was kind enough to promise to me as soon as requested. It seemed to me all but impossible to fill the void created by his passing, and so the book goes without any Introduction at all. As a feeble mark of my deep gratitude to him for the noble services rendered by him to the sacred cause of Social Reform in general, and particularly for the great help he gave me in the publication of this volume, I have dedicated it to his sainted memory.

My most grateful thanks are due to the many eminent contributors who wrote for the book at considerable sacrifice of time and labour simply as a labour of love, accepting for their reward only the promotion of a cause dear and near to all of us. I doubt not their views on the respective questions dealt with by them, formed after deep study, mature reflection and considerable experience, will be given the serious consideration they so richly merit by one and all of my thinking countrymen and will also succeed in inducing courageous action in at least some quarters. I must also express my obligations to the late Mr. Justice Ranade, Mr. Justice Chandavarkar, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam Pantulu and Mr. B. Varadacharlu, the Secretary of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association for supplying to me the papers printed as Parts II, III, IV and Appendix, and to my distinguished friend Mr. G. Subramania Iyer for the excellent advice he has uniformly given me in seeing the work through.

It now only remains for me to express my great regret that it has not been possible to publish the book earlier owing to several unexpected difficulties over which I had no control.

MADRAS, 15th May 1901,

C. Y. CHINTAMANI.

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PART FIRST.

Original Papers.

I.—Social History of India.

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INTRODUCTORY.

Before entering on the subject of this paper it is necessary to give the reader a general idea of the comparative antiquity of the different portions of Sanskrit literature referred to therein. The hymns contained in Rigveda Samhita are the oldest; but they were composed at different times and some of them are much later than the others. The verses of these hymns when used for ritual purposes are called *Mantras*. The Brahmanas contain an explanation of the sacrificial ritual composed at a time when there was a very long interval between the hymns. Then we have the Aranyakas which are more or less Upanishads. There are treatises of the latter name in very modern and form by no means a part of Sanskrit literature though sometimes they profess to do so. Then these are the Srauta or sacrificial Sutras, contemporaneous with them or somewhat later are the Smriti. The Dharma Sutras in which the religious and civil law is laid down are still more recent. The *Samhita* and *Brahmana* of the Black Yajurveda are having got no type with disjunctive marks, the first without them."—E. G. B.

main the Mantra and Brahmana portions mixed together. Some of the *Mantras* may be as old as the later hymns of the Rigveda Samhita; but the Brahmana portion must be of about the same age as the Brahmanas of the Rigveda. Some of the hymns of the Atharva Veda may be as old as the later ones of the Rigveda; but others are considerably more modern. Buddhism rose in the latter part of the sixth century before Christ; and the death of Buddha took place about 477 B. C. The genuine Upanishads must be earlier than Buddhism. The grammarian Patanjali lived about 150 B.C. and Panini, the author of the Sutras on grammar, must have preceded him by several centuries. Yaska, the author of the Nirukta, which contains an explanation of the difficult words in the hymns must have flourished before Panini. From about the middle of the third century before Christ to about the end of the third after, Buddhism was the favourite religion of the masses. During that time Brahmanic literary and religious activity was a good deal impaired. In the fourth century Buddhism declined and there was a Brahmin revival; and the Brahmins re-edited some of the books of the religious and the civil law which had been written in the form of prose sentences called *Sūtras*, and gave them a more popular shape to them. Thus arose the *Smritis* or *Smritis* composed in *Anushtup-Sloka* now go by the name of *Manu*, *Yajñavalkya* and other sages of antiquity. They of course contained the same matter as the old Dharma Sutras; but they put the law up to the time. This species of literature came into existence in this way, other numerous works of the like nature came to be written subsequent to the Puranas were also recast about the period. Many new ones written. The *Mahabharata* was revised by Panini and in *Asvalayana's Grihya Sutra* consolidated into something like its present form three or four centuries before Christ; but

interpolated into it from time to time ; and it must have been retouched at the time of the revival.

CASTE.

More than four thousand years before Christ according to the latest researches, the Sanskrit-speaking people called the Aryas penetrated into India from the North-West. They were at first settled in Eastern Kabulistan and along the upper course of the Indus ; and thence they gradually descended the river to the south and spread also to the east in the upper part of the country watered by the five rivers of the Panjab. Their progress at every step was resisted by another race or races which in the Rigveda are designated by the name of Dasyu or Dâsa. The Dasyus are contrasted with the Aryas and are represented as people of a dark complexion who were unbelievers, *i. e.* did not worship the gods of the Aryas and perform the sacrifices, but followed another law. The Aryan gods Indra and Agni are frequently praised for having driven away the black people, destroyed their strongholds and given their possessions to the Aryas. "From day to day," it is said in one hymn, "he (Indra) drove the people who were black, all alike, from one habitation to another." Those who submitted were reduced to slavery, and the rest were driven to the fastnesses of mountains. The process was carried on in all parts of the country to which the Aryans penetrated. (The old word *Dasa* came to denote a "slave" generally, and the word *Dasyu* acquired the significance of a "robber," as those aborigines who had betaken themselves to mountain fastnesses subsisted on robbery. The latter word came also to signify "one beyond the Aryan pale" as these tribes of robbers were. While the Aryans were in the Panjab they were divided into a good many tribes, each having a king of its own and a family or families of priests. There were among them three social grades or ranks. To the first belonged the priests, who composed *Brahmans* (with the accent on the

first syllable), i.e., songs or hymns to the gods and knew how to worship them, and were called *Brahmans* (with the accent on the second syllable). The second grade was occupied by those who acquired political eminence and fought battles, and were called *Rajans*. All the other Aryas were referred to the third grade and were distinguished by the name of *Visas* or people generally. These three classes formed one community, and such of the aborigines as had yielded to the Aryas were tacked on to it as a fourth grade under the name of *Dasas*, which word had now come to signify slaves or servants. Such grades existed amongst ancient Persians also. In the course of time these grades became hereditary and acquired the nature of castes, and were called *Brahmanas*, *Rajanyas* and *Vaisyas* or descendants of the old *Brahmans*, *Rajans* or *Visas*. The fourth class came to be called *Sudras*, which probably was at first the name of the aboriginal tribe which had acquired a distinct position in the community, and was afterwards generalised. These four castes are mentioned in one of the latest hymns of the *Rigveda*. The first two formed definite classes with a definite sphere of duties and were the aristocracy of the community. Since the *Vaisya* class included all other Aryas, there was a tendency in it towards the formation of sub-classes or communities and possibly there were such sub-classes, which according to some formed independent castes. The *Sudras* being the aborigines, there were in all likelihood several castes amongst them corresponding to the several races which inhabited the country before the invasion of the Aryas. These were of course denied the privilege of keeping the sacred fire or performing the sacrifices; and were not allowed to read or study the *Vedas*. The two highest castes do not seem in the times to which the old religious literature refers to have split up into sub castes. No such are referred to in that literature, though they are supposed by some scholars to have existed. There were tribes of *Kshatriyas* or *Rajanyas* and

Gotras of Brahmanas ; but no castes.) With this social constitution the Aryas spread over the whole of Northern India, and the Sudra population incorporated with their community became so large that it influenced the future development of the country. The Sanskrit language was corrupted and the Vernaculars began to be formed.

The languages of Northern India including the Marathi are offshoots of the Sanskrit ; and they were formed not by a course of gradual corruption and simplification such as we meet with in the case of a language spoken throughout its history by the same race, but by a wholesale corruption of Sanskrit sounds, *i.e.*, mispronunciation of Sanskrit words by a race the vocal organs of which were not habituated to utter those sounds, and by a generalization of such grammatical forms as were in common use through ignorance of the special forms. Thus arose in very ancient times the Prakrits including the Pali or the language of the sacred books of Southern Buddhists ; and these have, in the course of time, become the modern Vernaculars. The phonetic difference between these and the old Prakrits is but slight when compared with that between the latter and the Sanskrit, which shows that there was, when the Prakrits were formed, a special cause in operation, *viz.*, the incorporation of alien races ; and this cause has ceased to exist in later times. The Prakrits and through them the Vernaculars have got some special sounds and also words which are foreign to Sanskrit ; and this points to the same conclusion. Thus then these dialects show that the new races that were incorporated with the Aryan community had to give up their own languages and learn those of their Aryan conquerors. The Prakrits and the Vernaculars bear the same relation to Sanskrit that the Romance languages, Italian, French, etc., bear to the Latin ; and just as these were formed by communities composed of the old Romans and an overpoweringly large element of the Celtic and the Germanic

races, so were the languages of Northern India formed by mixed communities of Aryans and aborigines. As a matter of fact some of the vocal peculiarities of the makers of Prakrits are displayed by the people of the different Indian provinces at the present day. Thus like the former the Gujaratis of the present day cannot pronounce the Sanskrit sound *au* but always make *o* of it, the Bengali cannot utter the conjunct consonant in *Isvara* and other words and invariably changes it to a double consonant, making *Issara* of *Isvara*, the Desastha Brahmins of eastern Maharashtra pronounce a dental nasal as a cerebral, and the Sindhi and also the Bengali cannot utter *ksha* but must make *khha* of it. The Bengali shows also the peculiarity of the old Magadhi speakers by his incapacity to utter the three different sibilants and his giving them all a palatal sound. This would show that among the speakers of the modern vernaculars there is such a large aboriginal element that it has overpowered the Aryan element; and they may as well be regarded as descendants of the aborigines as of the Aryas.

(And this preponderating influence of the aborigines is to be accounted for not only by their large numbers but by the fact that men from the Aryan community frequently married Sudra wives though the marriages were considered inferior, and sometimes Sudra men married Aryan women. The fact that some of the Law-books allow of the former and prohibit the latter shows that in practice there must have been many such cases since the law never deals with imaginary circumstances but always such as are actual. The origin of certain castes is traced in those books to such marriages and it is even represented that under certain circumstances and after the lapse of a certain number of generations the offspring of those marriages can attain to the caste of the original progenitor. If then the descendant in the fifth or sixth generation of a child of a Sudra woman by a Brahman, Kshatriya or Vaisya man could become a Brahman, Kshatriya or Vaisya when such marriages

were permitted, it must be understood that there is some aboriginal blood flowing through the veins of the high-caste Hindus of the present day. To Southern India the Aryans penetrated at a comparatively late period, when communities and nations of aboriginal races had already been formed. They did not settle there in large numbers and thus were unable thoroughly to influence the latter and incorporate them into their community. Hence they preserved their own languages and many of the peculiarities of their civilization ; and these the Aryans themselves had to adopt in the course of time. The Kanarese, the Tamil, the Telugu and the Malayalam belong to an entirely non-Aryan stock of languages.

(It was not possible in the nature of things that the castes should always follow the profession or calling which brought them into existence and which is laid down for them in the ancient Law-books. The Brahmans alone could officiate as priests at sacrifices and in the domestic ceremonies ; and a great many devoted themselves to that occupation. There were those who preferred plain living and high thinking, and taking a vow of poverty devoted their lives to study. But there were still others who took to agriculture, trade and other much meaner occupations and also to politics ; and there was in the olden times even a Brahmanic dynasty reigning at Pataliputra. But politics and war were the special occupation of the Kshatriyas. They also devoted themselves to philosophy and literature ; and in the Upanishads they are several times mentioned as teachers of religious philosophy and Brahmans as learners. In one place it is said that Brahmaildya was first cultivated by them. It was on account of this philosophic culture that religious reformers sprang from their ranks. Buddha was a Kshatriya and so was Mahavira, the founder of Jainism. Vasudeva whose name is closely connected with the Bhakti school either as the name of the Supreme Being or as a teacher, was a Kshatriya of the Yādava clan. A

Brahman may, says Apastamba, study the Vedas under a Kshatriya or Vaisya teacher when reduced to that necessity. The Vaisyas followed the occupation of trade and agriculture. The Sudras are condemned to be the slaves or servants of the other castes by Brahmanic Law-books. But as a matter of fact since by that name several social groups or castes were designated, it was impossible that that occupation should have been enough for them or have satisfied them. They often pursued an independent calling and became artizans. Patanjali mentions carpenters and blacksmiths as belonging to the Sudra class. The lowest of them, the Chandalas were in the same degraded condition as they are now.

(Endogamy, *i.e.*, marriage within and not without the limits of a group, is a characteristic of caste. But as already stated a man from the higher castes could marry a Sudra woman under the law, and generally a marriage connection could be formed by a man belonging to any of the higher castes with a woman of any of the lower castes. The marriages were, however, considered to be of an inferior nature, and the issue took rank after that of the wife of the same caste. Marriages in the reverse order, *i.e.*, of a man belonging to a lower caste with a woman of a higher were, like the marriage of a Sudra man with an Aryan woman alluded to before, strictly prohibited by the Law-books; but since they speak of the issue of such marriages and give the law with reference to them, there must have been in practice many cases of the kind. After a time however these became obsolete, and the marriage of a man of a higher or Aryan caste with a Sudra woman which had been allowed by the law before and frequently practised, was also prohibited by the later legislators. And in practice all marriages between members of different castes gradually went out of use.

The Brahmanic religious writers mention a good many castes which they assert sprang from intermarriages

between persons of different castes. The origin thus assigned to the castes is in a good many cases evidently fanciful. Some of them such as Vaideha and Magadha must have arisen from the locality ; others such as Rathakara or ' chariot-maker ' from the occupation, and still others such as Chandala from the race. But it will not do to throw discredit over the whole statement. The Indian authors are always inclined to reduce everything to a preconceived system. The castes are four, and if we find many more in real life they must have sprung by inter-marriages from these four. This is the theory on which they have gone ; and certainly its application to all cases must be wrong. But in order to render the conception of such a theory possible, there must have been a few cases actually of castes springing up from such marriages. But which of the castes mentioned by them are mixed castes of this nature it is not possible to determine. All the so-called mixed castes are considered Sudras, which shows that some of them at least were aboriginal tribes which had become castes. Similarly some castes are named which are said to have sprung from *Vratyas* or persons who had set themselves free from the Brahmanic ordinances about the orders, *i. e.*, had in practice given up the Brahmanic religion. The same observation as that made above is applicable to this case : *viz.*, some castes must have arisen from this cause, but which we cannot say.

Commensality within and not without a group is in almost all cases another characteristic of castes. But in the olden times we see from the Mahabharata and other works that Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas could eat the food cooked by each other. Manus lays down generally that a twice-born should not eat the food cooked by a Sudra (iv. 223) ; but he allows that prepared by a Sudra who has attached himself to one, or is one's barber, milkman, slave, family friend, and co-sharer in the profits of agriculture, to be partaken (iv. 253). The implication that

lies here is that the three higher castes could dine with each other. Gautama, the author of a *Dharmasutra*, permits a Brahman's dining with a twice-born (*Kshatriya* or *Vaisya*) who observes his religious duties (17, 1). Apastamba, another writer of the class, having laid down that a Brahman should not eat with a *Kshatriya* and others, says that according to some, he may do so with men of all the *Varnas* who observe their proper religious duties except with the *Sudras*. But even here there is a counter-exception, and as allowed by Manu, a Brahman may dine with a *Sudra* who may have attached himself to him with a holy intent (I-18. 9, 13, 14).

In modern times it is of the essence of caste that there should be connubium only within its limits and commensality also except in the case of a few sub-castes. But if in ancient times there could be inter-marriages between the three Aryan castes and also in times earlier between all the four, and inter-dining between the first three and some individuals of the fourth, in what respect are they to be considered as castes? Only in this that a certain dignity of position was transmitted from father to son and that marriage with a woman from a family of a lower hereditary position was considered to be of an inferior nature. For a long time the four castes preserved their original Vedic character as social grades though heredity had become associated with them. But we can plainly observe the operation of strong tendencies to greater exclusiveness, in the gradual contraction of the sphere of connubium and commensality which we have noticed above. We can also discover the operation of causes which lead to the multiplication of castes. The difference of locality gave rise, as we have seen, to a difference of caste in the case of *Sudras*. Brahmanic law-givers represent several provinces such as *Avanti*, *Magadha*, *Surashtra* and the *Deccan* as unholy and consequently not fit to be inhabited by the *Aryas* (*Baudhayana's Dharmasutra*,

1. 2. 13, 14), and persons who have gone to others such as Pundra and Vanga are considered positively to have lost caste and cannot be re-admitted except by the performance of certain purificatory rights. This shows a tendency to the formation of separate castes among the Aryas, on account of change of locality. The Magadha Brahmins are spoken of even in sacrificial Sutras as a degraded class. Udichcha (Northern) Brahmins are frequently mentioned in Buddhist Pali works in a manner to show that they constituted an order or even a Jati (caste) of Brahmins. This class or caste seems to have been regarded as highly respectable. The operation of race in the formation of castes we have already observed. The original Sudra caste and a good many others that afterwards came to be included in it were due to this cause. As the Aryans spread far and wide in the country these two causes came into full operation. A third cause is the same as that which brought about the formation of the Vratya castes. When the ordinances and usages of a caste are violated by some members of it, the others excommunicate them, or regard them as having ceased to belong to their caste. This cause came into active operation probably during the time when early Buddhism enjoyed ascendancy and was followed by the Kshatriya and Vaisya castes. Animal sacrifice was prohibited by the great Asoka in the first half of the third century before Christ; and along with that some of the ordinary usages were given up. The Brahmanas must have looked upon those who did so as having lost caste; and this fact is probably at the bottom of the view held by them that in this Kali age there are only two Varnas, the Brahmins and the Sudras, the other two having disappeared. The prevalence of Jainism and some of the other religious systems must have contributed to the same result. And the laying down of certain sins liable to lead to excommunication in the Law-books, shows that the practice must have prevailed.

A fourth cause also came into operation in the early centuries of the Christian era or even before. It was the formation of Srenis or trade guilds. They are mentioned in some of the Law-books and in the Nasik and Kanheri cave inscriptions. In these we have an allusion to a *Tailika S'reni* and a *Malika S'reni*, i.e., the guilds of oil-makers and gardeners. These guilds must have a regular organization, since charitable persons deposited money with them for the benefit of Buddhist monks, on which they paid interest from generation to generation. And in the course of time the guilds of oilmen and gardeners became the castes of Telis and Malis. Some or a good many—not all, as has been supposed by some writers,—of the modern castes have got an organization with a headman or President, and this they owe to their having sprung from such guilds or imitated their practice. The followers of each occupation thus formed a caste and the number multiplied. A fifth cause has also been in operation for some centuries. Religious schools or sects have given rise to different castes. The followers of the Madhyandina Sakha or rescension of the White Yajur-Veda form a different caste from that of the followers of the Kanva rescension, and those of Madhva from that of the followers of S'amkara, though there is commensality between them except in some cases.

These five causes have been in brisk operation during more than two thousand years, unchecked by any influence of a unifying nature; and the principle of division has become strongly ingrained in Hindu Society, and perhaps in the Hindu blood. During all this period various religious and philosophical sects have been founded. Religion has been developing and not quite on wrong lines, and spreading elevating ideas. But all these sects including that of the Buddhists occupied themselves with man's eternal interests, and thought it no concern of theirs to promote his worldly interests. The Buddhists and also some schools of the Vaishnavas considered caste to be of no value. Men from

all castes were admitted into the fraternity of Buddhist monks, and the Vaishnavas disregarded caste restrictions in their dealings with each other. But the reformation of Hindu society by relaxing the bondage of caste was not an object with them. Thus the result is that Hindu society, is now cut up into more than three thousand castes. Each of them is a community by itself, having no connubium or commensality with another and has developed peculiar manners and tastes which distinguish it still further from the rest and render social intercourse impracticable. Thus the two hundred and forty millions of Hindus living in India form about three thousand distinct communities, each on an average composed of eighty thousand people, *i.e.*, about two-thirds of the population of a single town of ordinary size such as Poona.

The germ of the caste system existed among some of the principal races in the West. For a long period there was no connubium between the Patricians and Plebians in Rome; and traces have been discovered, we are told, of the existence of restrictions as to inter-marriage and eating together among the Greeks, Germans and Russians. But those germs were trampled under foot there, while here they have found a congenial soil and grown into a huge banyan tree throwing its dark shadow on the whole extent of this vast country. And what is the reason? This is what M. Senart, the great French scholar who has recently published an essay on Caste is represented to say about it.

"M. Senart shows how the growth of strong, political and national feelings constantly tended, in the West, to weaken and at last succeeded in removing, these (caste) restrictions. He suggests that the absence of such feelings in India may be one reason why the disabilities have not also there been gradually softened away. It is, indeed, very suggestive for the right understanding of Indian History, that they should, on the contrary, have become so permanent a factor in Indian life."

M. Senart's theory appears to be that the innumerable castes of the present day existed even in very olden times and that the four Varnas or grades belonged to pre-Vedic times when the ancestors of the Parsis and Hindus lived together, and were traditionally handed down to the Vedic times; and these traditional grades were fused together with the numberless castes that really existed so as to form what he calls a "hybrid" system. The modern castes have not grown out of the old Varnas or grades. Hence he speaks of the caste restrictions as "not having been softened away." But agreeing as I do with Oldenberg, a German scholar who has expressed his dissent from M. Senart, and believing that the view I have put forth above is alone sustained by the evidence available, I should say that "the old slight restrictions have in the course of time become very heavy fetters that render all movement impossible." And this is the result of the entire absence of "political and national feelings." Pride and other feelings that divide man from man have had full swing in the history of India and sympathy or fellow-feeling has been confined to the narrowest possible sphere.

MEAT AND DRINK.

Connected with the question of caste is that of the use of meat and drink. It is generally supposed that abstinence from meat is an essential condition of Brahmanism. But according to all authorities the Brahmans and other twice-born used meat in ancient times. The flesh of five species of five-clawed animals is permitted to be eaten in the Dharma Sutras; and even beef is allowed by Apastamba (I-17. 30, 37). Most of the sacrifices of the old Vedic religion were animal sacrifices; and the animals killed by suffocation for the purpose were goats, sheep, cows or bulls, and horses. It is impossible that the idea of offering meat to gods could have originated unless men themselves liked it and used it. But the influence of Buddhism, and later, of Jainism threw discredit on the practice; and those who re-edited Hindu Law in

the fourth century of the Christian era and later, i.e., the writers of the Smritis of Manu and Yajnavalkya lay down the old permissive precept, but hedge it round with so many restrictions that it amounts almost to prohibition. But in modern times the Brahmans of Bengal, Mithila, Kashmir and Sindh do use meat ; while in countries which were for a long time under the influence of Buddhism and Jainism, such as Gujarat, even the lower castes abstain from it. But the killing of cows or bulls for any purpose whether for sacrifice or meat went out of use early ; and was prohibited in the books. Similarly in the Vedic times the popular drinks were *Soma*, a species of intoxicating liquid, and also *Sura* or fermented liquor. This last however was soon given up ; and we find the use of it enumerated among the seven deadly sins even in such an old work as Yaska's Nirukta.

POSITION AND INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.

In a list of the old teachers or Acharyas of the Rig-veda, given in Asvalayana's Grihyasutra, occur the names of three women, Gargi Vachaknavi, Vadava Pratitheyi, and Sulabha Maitreyi. The works of some of the male teachers mentioned therein have come down to us, and those of a few others are alluded to in other works ; wherefore it must be admitted that they were actually living individuals. So these ladies were not imaginary persons but really existed and taught. Gargi Vachaknavi is mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as having been a member of a large assembly of learned Rishis held at the Court of Janaka, King of Videhas, and taking active part in the debate on Brahman or the Universal Essence, that is reported to have taken place. Sulabha Maitreyi is introduced in the Mahabharata as discoursing on Brahman with King Janaka. In another part of the same Upanishad Maitreyi, the wife of Yajnavalkya is represented to have asked him when he expressed his intention to retire from family life and divide his property between her and

another wife, whether wealth could confer immortality on her. On Yajnavalkya's denying it she said she did not care for that which would not make her immortal, and begged of Yajnavalkya to explain to her what he knew about Brahman. And so Yajnavalkya discourses on it to her and she interrupts him with intelligent questions. This discourse is famous and often referred to in the Advaita Vedanta taught by Samkaracharya. Draupadi is represented as carrying on a keen controversy with Yudhishtira about God's dealings with men. The poet would not have brought forward such a scene, unless in his time there were women able to speak with such intelligence and knowledge as Draupadi shows. Among the Buddhists there was an order of nuns as of monks, and there exist works written by the female religious elders. All this shows that women in those days were not condemned to ignorance, but took part in the discussion of religious and philosophic questions, and even appeared in assemblies of men.

A wife and husband became by their marriage *Dampati* or "two masters of the house." "The gods gave her to him (the bridegroom) for house-keeping; their union was as permanent and intimate as that of the Earth and the Heaven; and she became his friend and companion." This is the substance of the Vedic Mantras repeated by the bridegroom at the marriage. And in keeping with the ideal here shadowed forth, the Vedic ritual makes her a partner in all the religious duties. The husband cannot keep the sacred fire without her; her presence and co-operation are necessary in all the great sacrifices. The fire kindled on the occasion of marriage had to be kept up; all the domestic ceremonies concerning him, her, and the children were to be performed on it, and when either died, he or she was to be burned by means of that fire. The fire was thus a standing symbol of their union. This ideal of the relations between the two was in all likelihood observed even in worldly matters in the well-conducted families as the fol-

lowing praise contained in the Mahabharata indica-
 " *She* is a wife who is diligent in household duties, *she*
 wife who has children, *she* is a wife to whom her husband
 is the breath of life, *she* is a wife who is devoted to
 husband. A wife is one-half of a man, a wife is the life
 of friends, a wife is at the root of the accomplishment
 the three objects of life (righteousness, worldly prosperity
 and satisfaction of desire) ; a wife is at the root when final
 deliverance is attained. Those who have wives perform
 their duties, those who have wives become householders,
 those who have wives enjoy peace, those who have wives
 are prosperous. In solitude they are friends, whose con-
 versation is sweet, in religious duties they are fathers, and
 in illness they are mothers. To a traveller they are a
 repose in the wilderness. He who has a wife is trustworthy ;
 therefore wives are our highest resource." (Mahabharata,
 I. 74, 39, &c.). When Buddha was going about preaching
 his gospel, his great supporters were women, who gave
 him and his numerous disciples many gifts and fed
 at their houses. One such female devotee frequently
 mentioned in the Pali Buddhistic books was a rich lady of
 the name of Visakha who resided at Sravasti, the capital
 of Kosala. She had many healthy sons and grandsons and
 was looked upon as an auspicious person. All men invited
 her to dinner first, whenever there was a sacrifice or any
 festive ceremonial. This gives an idea of the influence and
 popular esteem that a woman could attain. Her husband
 is nowhere mentioned and she is represented as doing things
 of her own motion, as also those females who belonging
 to respectable families gave up a worldly life and became
 nuns. This shows that women enjoyed a good deal of
 independence. In later times too a good many benefactors
 of the fraternity of Buddhistic monks were women and their
 names are found inscribed on the monuments of those
 times.

The picture has also another side. Though a wife was highly respected, a woman as such was held in little esteem. In the Taittiriya Samhita it is stated that women are substantial and consequently excluded from inheritance. *Ṛṣi* gives two views, one agreeing with this, and another to the effect that they can inherit. Those who hold the former, say that daughters on that account are exposed, given or sold; but the others retort that sons also are treated in the same way, and give the instance of Sunah-sepa who was sold by his father to Rohita, the son of Harischandra, a king of the solar race, to be sacrificed to Varuna in his place. Thus it will be seen that the general opinion of the Aryas was wavering and had not become definitely hostile to females. In the Rigveda times girls were free and could choose their own husbands, and enjoyed a great deal of independence. But a daughter is always a source of anxiety to the father on account of the difficulty of finding a suitable husband. Hence even in olden times as the Aitareya Brahmana, while the wife is a friend or companion, a daughter is spoken of as a source of] humiliation. In the Mahabharata "women" are said, "while enjoying themselves with men, deceive them; no man who has once got into their hands, can be free. All the wiles of Sambara, Namuchi, and Kumbhinasa are to be found in women. They laugh when a man laughs, weep when he weeps; even one they do not like, they subdue by endearing words. Usanas or Brihaspati does not teach a device that women do not know by their natural wit. What is false they pronounce to be true, what is true they make out to be false; how is it possible for men, O brave one, to watch them? There is nothing more wicked than women; women are a burning fire; they are the illusive jugglery of Maya; put the edge of a razor, poison, serpent and fire in one scale, and women in the other." (XIII.39 and 40). In actual life the relations between man

should be one who has reached womanhood. "But," they add, "it is best to marry one who has not arrived at womanhood." Manu and other writers of metrical Smritis require that a girl should be married before she has arrived at maturity. In these various injunctions we observe a regular downward course. Asvalayana is silent about the age of the girls; and the reason must be that late marriages which the Mantras that were repeated and the rule about intercourse on the fourth day presuppose, must have been a matter of course and alone in practice. When, however, Hiranyakesin expressly enjoins the marriage of mature girls only, the opinion of the Aryas about the time when he lived must have begun to become unsettled, and early marriages to be thought of as better. But when Gobhila first of all lays down a precept which in effect is the same as that of Hiranyakesin, and afterwards recommends an immature bride as the best, the opinion in favour of early marriage must have become more predominant. And it went on acquiring still greater predominance, until when the metrical Smritis were written, or the religious law was revised, it had completely triumphed and the other was driven out of the field. Manu, however, as the earliest of the writers of these works, has not entirely forgotten late marriages, and allows under certain circumstances a girl to remain unmarried for three years after she has attained womanhood. And since his time late marriages have become entirely unknown, and in these days girls are sometimes married even when they are a year or two old.

Boys.

The old law was that after Upanayana or the ceremony of making a boy over to a *guru* or preceptor, he should study the Vedas for twelve, twenty-four, or even forty-eight years and then relinquish the *Brahmacharya* or student's vow; or that he should give up the vow after he had

completed his studies without reference to the number of years he took to do it. It was then that he was allowed to marry. The Upanayana ceremony was performed in the case of a Brahman boy when he was at least eight years old and in the case of a Kshatriya or Vaisya boy when he was eleven or twelve. As the lowest period of twelve years for a student's life must have been fixed because the studies generally occupied so much time, a young man was free to marry when he was at least twenty years old. But as a rule he entered into that relation at a later age and Manu lays down thirty or twenty-four years as the proper age. Now here the law up to the time of Manu was entirely in favour of late marriages in the case of boys. But gradually the duration of student-life was curtailed; until now in the Maratha country it lasts for three or four days only, and the relinquishment ceremony (Sainavartana) is performed on the fourth or the fifth day. The Upanayana ceremony and the Vedic study have thus for a long time become a solemn farce, and a boy is married when he is about twelve years old. It is considered necessary for the reputation of a family that the boys in it should be married at about that age, and the delay of marriage till about sixteen is regarded as throwing discredit on it.

BURNING OF WIDOWS.

The custom of burying or burning a widow with the dead body of her husband prevailed among a good many ancient Aryan races settled in Europe. It was in practice among the Teutonic tribes and also among the non-Aryan Scythians. But in the whole of the Rigveda there is no allusion to the practice. Still it must have prevailed among the Indian Aryas before the time when the hymns were composed. For there are two verses, one of which occurs in the Atharva Veda Samhita and in the Taittiriya Aranyaka, and the other in the latter and in the Rigveda Samhita (Ath. V., XVIII, 3—1, Tait. Ar. pp. 651

and 652 Ed. Bibl. Ind. Rigv. X, 18, 8) of which the first is repeated when the wife of an Agnihotrin is made to lie down by the side of her dead husband on the funeral pile, and the other when she is raised from it by her brother-in-law or her husband's pupil or an old servant (Asv. Gr. IV. 2, 18). The sense of the first is, "O mortal, this woman, desirous to go to the world of husbands, lies down by the side of thee who art dead in accordance with ancient usage (*Purana dharma*), give her children and wealth;" and of the second, "rise, O woman, for the world of the living, thou art lying by the side of this dead [man]. The wifehood of a second husband stares thee in the face." The whole ceremony is a mimicry of the once practised custom of burning a widow, and the fact of raising the woman from the pile shows that it was afterwards given up. The word *Didhishu* which occurs in the latter verse is taken in an etymological sense by European scholars and Sayana in his commentary on the Rîgveda, and made applicable to the dead husband; but in the commentary on the Taittiriya Aranyaka, Sayana takes it in the sense of "a second husband"; and that is the usual sense of the word and that alone is appropriate here. But I must not go into the reasons in this paper intended for the general reader. Thus the Vedic Aryas had consciously given up the custom of burning widows; and there is no trace of it in the older books on the religious law. But it must have prevailed among some of the many Aryan tribes that migrated to India or among the aboriginal Sudras; and there is an indication of it in the story of Mâtri, one of the two wives of Pandu having burned herself with her dead husband, and in another part of the Mahabharata where a female dove is represented to have burned herself with her dead mate. She went like a human widow to the "world of husbands" and becoming re-united with him, lived happily with him. But when the deterioration of the Aryan moral

feeling had established itself, the custom was generally adopted from the tribes among whom it existed, and the precept about the burning of widows was laid down in some of the metrical Smritis, though, however, not without a protest from others. But the later Pandits in their exposition of the law denied the authoritativeness of the protesting texts and decided that the burning of widows was lawful. And so it became the general practice, though it was optional and looked upon by some as an irrational act, as is shown by the beautiful passage against it in Bana's *Kadambari* ; and was eventually prohibited by the British Government in 1830.

WIDOW MARRIAGE.

We have seen that the wife of the dead Agnihotrin was raised from the funeral pile by a promise of remarriage. The text which refers to this is one of the indications contained in the Vedas as to the existence of the practice of widow-marriage. There is another in the Atharva Veda in which it is stated that "when a woman who has had a husband before, marries another after his death, they are never separated from each other if they perform the rite of *aja panchaudana*." In the Aitareya Brahmana we have a third passage in which it is said that "one man may have many wives, but one woman cannot have many husbands *at one and the same time*." This last expression implies that she can have many at different times. The remarried woman was called a *Punarbhū* and the word occurs in the Atharva Veda and in the metrical Smritis. The marriage of widows however is not allowed by an express precept in the older works on the religious law. Of the metrical Smritis, two, that of Parasara and Narada permit it ; but all the rest are opposed. The fact appears to be that in ancient times, the practice of widow-marriages did exist and it continued to be followed up to the time when the metrical Smritis were composed. But in the meanwhile it

had come to be considered not respectable or had fallen into disrepute. Hence a controversy arose between the legislators. Some ran it down entirely ; but Manu argues with those who held it to be legal and says that the giving of a widow in marriage is not mentioned in the law about marriage, and makes a compromise by allowing the remarriage of a widowed girl who has not arrived at maturity. Others, however, represented by Parasara and Narada stoutly defended the practice and laid down a direct precept to legalise it. The writers on the other side admitted the fact of the existence of remarriages in so far as they put into the list of sons a *Punarbhava* or one born of a Punarblu or a remarried woman. But they gave him a low rank ; and allowed him a right to inheritance on the failure of those above him, or a fourth part of the estate if they existed. Yajnavalkya even rules that the debts of a man who has deceased should be paid by him who marries his wife. Thus there is no question that the practice did exist at the time when these works were written, that is from about the fourth to about the sixth century of the Christian era. It was not forgotten till the beginning of the eleventh century. For in a Jaina work written in 1014 A. D. to discredit Brahmanism and glorify Jainism, a certain legend is narrated in which a man is represented to have been excluded from the table by his fellows because he had become a recluse without going through the previous order of a married householder. He was advised to marry, but as no one would give his daughter to such an old man as he was, it was suggested that he should marry a widow, and in support of the suggestion the text from Parasara legalizing such a marriage was quoted. But though Parasara legalized the practice, it was not rehabilitated and continued to be held in disrepute. Hence it gradually fell into disuse and was entirely forgotten in later times.

We have thus seen how the disabilities of women gradually multiplied. But the tale does not end here. In still later times the disregard for the life and happiness of the female creature grew until it became almost abnormal ; and female infants were destroyed in certain provinces and girls to the number of a hundred or two were married to one man in another. The first practice has now been put an end to by the British Government ; but the second still flourishes. Again in these days a man marries a girl of twelve or thirteen after he has lost his first wife ; she dies after a time, and another is brought into the house ; this also meets with the same fate, and a fourth is married when probably the man is past fifty and even verging on sixty ; and she is left a widow before she has arrived at womanhood or soon after. Sometimes negotiations for the new connection are entered into in the burning ground while the dead body of the old wife is being consumed by fire. Now it is a fact that a connection between a girl of thirteen or fourteen years and a man of thirty-five or above proves fatal to the life of the girl. A great many instances are now before my mind's eye in which when a man married a second girl-wife, he had soon to marry a third, and a fourth. The husband thus causes the death of the poor girl. And still even highly educated men of the present day do not scruple to resort to the practice. It is in their power to marry a grown-up widow and make an unfortunate female creature happy, and secure for themselves a suitable companion, and to shun the guilt of causing the death of an innocent and helpless creature. But no, they have not the courage to withstand the criticism of the caste,—criticism, I say, not persecution, for in reality there is very little of that.

The downward course which began many centuries ago has landed us here. And anxiously thinking about the matter, one asks himself why should this degeneration have

gone on continuously for a long time without impediment. The reason seems to be that the tyranny under which the Hindus have lived from times immemorial has weakened their moral fibre if not entirely destroyed it. We have been subject to a three-fold tyranny ; political tyranny, priestly tyranny, and a social tyranny or the tyranny of caste. Crushed down by this no man has dared to stand and assert himself. Even religious reformers have shunned the legitimate consequences of their doctrines to avoid coming into conflict with the established order of things. The promptings of his better nature or the pangs of conscience a Hindu has had to suppress for fear of the three agencies, and now the better nature has almost ceased to prompt or the conscience to bite. At present, however, though we live under a foreign Government we enjoy a freedom of thought and action, such as we never enjoyed before under our own Hindu princes. But have we shown a capacity to shake ourselves free from priestly and social tyranny ? I am afraid, not much. But this is certain, that unless we rouse our conscience and cultivate the higher feelings of our nature and, with the strength derived from these, stand erect against priests and caste, there is no hope of our being able to turn back the current of deterioration and degradation that has been flowing from the very olden times and increasing in force as it advances.

II.—On Social Reform ; a Statement.

BY THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR P. ANANDACHARI

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It is indisputable that the desire for improvement, under the designation of social reform, is wide-spread. The programme of its aims and objects has been expanding year after year. It has brought within its scope many items which—strictly speaking—may be said rather to relate to matters of convenience, of decency, of taste, and of thrift. On the principle, implied by the inclusion of these latter, the list admits of much further—I had almost said, indefinite—extension, involving changes down to such insignificant things as the use, by our respectable women, of umbrellas and slippers when, in making friendly calls or attending at marriage and other ceremonies, they have to walk, during the mid-day heat, over distances far too short for coaching, but far too long for pedestrian performance, barefooted and without a shelter for the head, as at present; for, in respect of “time-honored,” minutely regulative rules and in respect of the element of religiosity running through or coloring nearly every event of life, our community may be described, without exaggeration, as occupying almost the first place among the world’s civilised people and to be, on that account, out of tune with—if not also stolidly impervious to—modern ideas or rather the ideas that have come upon us along with our Western rulers. But, I think, it will be readily granted that the bulk of these features are features on which no serious, elaborate or “learned” controversy has arisen or could arise. To speak with precision, *they have really no two sides and they rest, almost entirely, on vis inertiae, pure and*

simple. If they, nevertheless, hold their ground as yet, as they in actuality do, it is (1) because a fictitious importance and an adventitious notion of corresponding difficulty get imparted to them by virtue of their place alongside of the more momentous and essential questions of reform and (2) because, a good number of those who are the virtual leaders or trusted guides in their respective sets and grades, which constitute our society and which, for purposes of inter-marriage and inter-dining, are mutually exclusive, seem *not* to be impressed with the urgency of betterment under these heads, in the degree calculated to coerce them into making up their minds. In my judgment, desirable as are *changes on these and similar lines to make ideal or perfect men and women*, one need not worry oneself or become despondent, if they are somewhat postponed; for, such of them as have a practical side are sure to follow in the wake and almost on the heels of success, as regards the more vital, complex and controversial problems, when these latter get solved or get near to being solved. It is human nature—at least it is the second nature of most men of the easy-going sort, who constitute the majority even among the intelligent and the cultured in every community—to unconsciously overlook or insensibly underrate lesser considerations when greater topics clamour for and demand the best part of their attention. It is, further, not quite so manageable in practice, as some people may wish, to get up an adequate degree of earnestness and readiness for instantaneous action on these minor points, especially when they are in juxtaposition with burning themes, on which men of equal intelligence and equal honesty are radically divided and take opposite sides or are visibly unconvinced and therefore lukewarm. It may therefore not be an altogether improper query whether—speaking seriously—there is not something of a waste of power in vehemently enthusing on these points or impatiently losing temper at

the paucity of results, so disproportionate to the strength of advocacy or disappointing when regard is had for the evident weakness of the case assailed.

One serious drawback which, to my mind, has told heavily all along the line and is apt to tell equally so for a long time, if things are left as they are, is that in these minor, as in graver, matters the effort has been, almost solely, on the part of *males*, and it is a feeling, which I cannot get rid of, that, so long as *this* is the case, so long shall we be working as with the lever without the fulcrum. A good percentage or a strong contingent of self-reliant, self-respecting and—let me add—self-assertive womanhood is what I look upon as that fulcrum; and it is my conviction that, with them for co-workers and—if I may say so—for active and belligerent mal-contents, the rate and amount of success ought to astound the sceptic and the sanguine alike. This indispensable and co-ordinate or contributory strength, at least in matters which involve *their* interests—and these cover most part of the battle-ground—can come about, only if we stoutly and self-lessly resolve to re-habilitate our women—of course with such modifications as the altered conditions of the present day would necessitate—in respect of *their claims* (1) to education and (2) to property which they may, consciously and correctly, call their own; for, I maintain,—and I hope soon to make it good—that the original, excellent provisions under these heads have been ingeniously whittled away and superseded—not to say, perverted—by later Smrithi-writers and Smrithi-expounders in lugubrious, though honest, apprehensions of degenerate times, which they feared were coming after them, and which they set themselves the task of anticipating, according to their lights.

If knowledge is power as held by Lord Bacon in the fulness of his philosophic wisdom and if property is also power as affirmed by Lord Macaulay, on the basis of his

study and mastery of matters in which he was quite at home, it cannot be that those dicta are true only as regards one-half of the intellects on the Indian soil but false as regards the other half. Nor am I woman enough to experience that ignorance, wedded to dependence on others for even bare subsistence, is a boon conducive to virtue, to happiness, to domestic duties and to the obligations of hospitality, laid specially on the Hindu housewife by the Aryan Faith.

As an earnest of what might be accomplished by the two factors, *viz.*, education and possession of property which absolves the possessor from dependence, even for bare sustenance, on grasping, to-the-woman-liggardly and autocratic male masters, one may point to how—even within the present very circumscribed opportunities and facilities—many a girl-widow in our parts has been able to score in resisting the relentless razor in its attempted havoc on her head of hair. Cases—by no means too few or disproportionate for the advantages secured—may be cited in which, when the girls, far more than their guardians and often in spite of those guardians, put their foot down and claimed to hold their own against being dispossessed of that “ornament of nature” along with the marriage symbol and other articles of embellishments, in the profaned name of religion and of morality, they decisively had their own way, without themselves being outlawed, or the families to which they belonged and the circle of friends and acquaintances that mixed with them being cut dead. Even unlettered womankind have been found to come round and become reconciled to the altered situation, when the revolt—I should prefer to call it the crusade—proceeded from the would-be victims under the forceful influence of even the present limited degree of cultured intelligence and of assured proprietary independence—especially when the claimants to this immunity from the

inhuman treatment showed a decided tendency towards a life of piety and towards literary and other innocently-diverting pursuits. I do not say that the rights of grumble went unexercised. The priests, I dare say, quoted Vyasa's text :—

विधवाकवरीबन्धोभर्तृबन्धाय जायते ।

शिरसेवपन्तस्मात् कार्यं विधवया तथा॥

*Vidhavakabareebandho bharthrubandhaya jayateh,
Sirasovapanam thasmath karyam vidhavaya tatha.*

Meaning :—The hair of the widow made up into knots or plaits, would act as fetters on the husband. Hence the widow should cause her head to be shaved.

The grandmothers of both sexes—ever on the alert to make a mickle of trifles—were not slow to take solemn notice or thunder out their customary anathemas. Those good souls too, who are so intensely and heroically unselfish as to be habitually more busy with other people's affairs than their own, readily contributed their expected mite to keep up the "venerable" nine days' surprise and scandal. Faces were drawn, as in duty bound, abnormally long. Noses and chins, as is their wont in such contingencies, went up high into the air. The waggish tongue, as usual, waxed censorious with redoubled captiousness. But the girls, calmly reliant on their innate or newly-acquired strength, stood their ground and went through their period of tribulation and suspense, which they felt sure would be but shortlived, with exemplary patience and unperturbed equanimity. They were soon rewarded by what ought to be a sight to the gods. The distorted and upturned faces and facial furniture resumed their accustomed dimensions and pose, while the voice of growl and gossip got lower and lower in key and finally died out into its wonted impotence. What has thus happened in a few cases in one sphere might happen again and again and in many more spheres,

and turn into a rule what are now but exceptions—apart from what males may choose to do or *not* to do—if, as regards education and as regards property-independence, our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters obtain their due as the descendants of the Aryans of old and if we, the males, would only abdicate a little of those all-absorbing sovereign rights which we claim for ourselves by the instinct of nature and by the pride and insolence of sex.

For all this tremendous handicap, I agree that it is highly expedient to be continually placing before the public eye, a list of wrongs—great and small alike—that require to be righted, as serving the important purpose of reminding those concerned as to how much of legitimate expectations yet remains to be accomplished before a feeling of undisturbed complacency may be allowed to develop and settle down.

Now, as to what seem to me to be the graver problems. These are:—

- (1) Early marriages.
- (2) Re-marriages of widows.
- (3) Liberty for our countrymen to travel or sojourn in foreign lands.
- (4) Women's rights of property.
- (5) Their culture.

At any rate, these I select for consideration. I may premise, at once and as applying equally to four of these topics, that on each of them, the last disputatious word, as I apprehend, has been already said from the point of view of *Shastras* on both sides. There is evidently no disposition on the part of either contending party to go over to the other or to lay down arms. There is no further resource or reason to be ransacked or brought forward. Each side has declared, at the top of its voice, that it is absolutely in the right and its opponent is egregiously in the wrong. The danger and risk, when matters have come to such a pass, are for things

to so drift as to place men of moderate unselfishness—such as characterises most men in most matters even in the cultured classes in a community—at a great discount. The perilous chances are to alienate and scare away probable converts and such as are passing, if I may say so, through the Chrysalis stage. Such men are too liable to be scandalised or deterred by the dilemma of either scoring for the honors of martyrdom involving a wholesale self-sacrifice and an ostracism from their kith and kin or of finding themselves denounced and pilloried as miserable specimens of unredeemed self-seeking and unmitigated poltroonery. When things threaten to arrive at such a predicament, it is prudent that both the zealous party and the party jealous of them must rise superior to the purely polemical function. Not only must they good-humouredly agree to disagree on the Shastric issues, they must also take care not to lose touch of each other. They must shake hands and—apart from the contest on the direct issues debated between them—meet each other half-way; for, it is quite out of the question that the apostles of change should retire from the field, humbled and chagrined, or remain there, only to keep up a mock-fight to save appearances, all the while chafing inwardly under a sense of wasted energy or of unappreciated and thwarted labours. It is equally out of the question that the passive upholders of the *status quo*, who have had an easy time of it all along, should sit doggedly where they are and rouse themselves to action, only to repel attacks that might be delivered against them. In my opinion, neither can afford to stand where they are. If the former are pressing forward with a well-filled programme, the latter cannot help realising that the elements of disintegration have begun to shew themselves and that things are simply drifting without chart or compass. Both have thus active, counteracting duties which they must neither blink nor shirk—to be consistent with their respective faiths. May

they not revise their positions and their methods, decide upon what amount of concession or recognition each might make or extend to the other, in a spirit of honesty, of calmness and of advance on right lines, and hit upon some harmonious action? Real success is barred or delayed by nothing so much as by the too common and too tempting practice of belittling the opponent's arguments and of denying him credit for an attitude dictated by good faith, however erroneously. It has been well said and it is well to bear in mind that "the faith of centuries is hard to root up and the old are only the last to make changes. The heart cleaves sometimes to a false doctrine rather than see the fabric, built up on the foundations of the past, totter and fall. If it is false, it will fall of its own weight and its votaries can neither save nor hinder." What is thus affirmed of long-standing faiths may be, with equal warrant and with equal force, affirmed of practices of ages—practices, which, by constant familiarity, have ceased to strike or startle as deformities or things which ought not to be. In combating these and such as these, there is little use in bandying hard words or imputing discreditable motives. Nor will it be of any avail to trust to time and go to sleep, as if it would ameliorate or work wonders by mere efflux. That which bids fair is effort—put forth patiently but not petulently—in the shape of a narrowing of the sphere of contention by separating the essential and cardinal from the accidental and conventional in the points under debate so that the parties, arrayed against one another, might still continue in mutual touch and give rise to something of a homogeneous action by suffering their angularities to be gradually rubbed off and by helping to create a substantial unity of purpose amid an apparent diversity of inclinations and views in other respects.

To my mind, such a narrowing of the sphere of

contention has long suggested itself, revealing a *modus vivendi* which seems to me to deserve greater prominence and sturdier insistence than hitherto and which is calculated to yield more fruit than has yet been harvested. It may well be that I am too sanguine. It may equally be that I am under a delusion. I am nevertheless unconvinced that the plan I venture to recommend has had its full and fair chance or that it should be laid on the shelf, on any *a priori* grounds, as a manifestly unserviceable hobby. The present, however, is not the first time I am stating it. Not long ago, while on a professional visit to Masulipatam, I allowed myself to be drawn into ventilating it in a speech, which suffered as I happened to deliver it extempore—lacking then the example of great masters, who, despite their high and acknowledged powers of elocution, uniformly and deliberately preferred, when they wished to avoid being mistaken by the outside world, the practice which has since been post-prandially chaffed (as I think) but classically stigmatised (as others fancy) as “Manuscript eloquence.” But my then auditors seemed to have been favourably impressed with what I said, and my friends, Mr. N. N. Ghose and Mr. Surendranath Banerjea—even on the basis of the imperfect and, in some respects, an erroneous, account of my utterances—said a good word for the position I took—the former in the tersely written pages of his *Indian Nation* and the latter in one of his delightful feats in his special sphere, the public platform. These encourage me to re-state it in an unmistakable and amplified form, with considerable additions which subsequent reading has brought within my reach as having a bearing.

Now, as regards early marriages. One of the grounds on which this system seems open to animadversion is that it precludes the possibility of free, mutual choice on the part of the wedding couple. To my mind, such an objection seems to be extremely wide of the mark and one that should be

put on one side for the present and for a long time to come—for how long few can tell. I, for one, cannot hopefully look forward to a consummation in this respect in any near future. The conditions of the Hindu Society, in so far as social intermingling between the sexes is concerned, are dead against it. Even if it stood by itself, the single lesson of keenly-sensitive feminine chastity—taught to almost every one of our women by the fact that their adored Seetha of the Ramayana refused to be borne away from Lanka, the scene of present danger and possible death, even by Rama's immaculate and saintly devotee, Hanuman, on the ground of his sex—is far too deeply rooted in their sense of propriety and esteem to permit of what may be generically called courtship, which would seem to postulate the irreducible minimum that the blooming youths, contemplating matrimony, should not only be thrown into the company of each other but also be now and then left alone for mutual study and mutual understanding, without shyness and without the restraint caused by the presence of third parties. As a companion case or converse instance of *male* repugnance for a maiden who has been in the company of a stranger, one may cite the fate which befell the princess Amba, whose life is, so to speak, woven into the lives of Parasu Rama and Bhishma—heroes of whom even the least cultured Hindu knows and knows much. For who does not know that the maiden Amba was carried away with her sisters by the lunar hero, Bhishma, in order that his half-brothers might wed them—that on her disclosing to him her prior and plighted love for another, he let her go so that she might join the object of her affections—and that the latter rejected her by reason of her having remained, though for a brief period, in the custody of a stranger, even although that stranger was a sworn-celibate of the austere type.

The whole tenor of the ideas and sentiments and of

the habits of thought and feeling, governing the conduct and moulding the relations of children towards parents among us, also militates against the speedy growth of the sort of individuality which the theory of mutual choice would presuppose. Equally adverse will be the deterring influence of the recorded accounts of daughters whom our women cherish as noble specimens of their sex and as the ideals their minds hover round or cling to, with all the glow of pride and keenness of pleasure. We read indeed of what is known as *Swayamvara* or the choice by the bride; but the best known instances, such as those of *Seetha*, *Damayanthi*, *Draupadi* and *Rukmani*, would, on examination, all be found to be not strictly in point as examples of selection, either independent of or in opposition to the paternal wish. Rigidly speaking, theirs were no *Swayamvaras* at all. On the contrary, they simply illustrate the several devices, adopted, not to override, but to give effect to the wishes of the father by securing, within reach, the presence of the bridegroom, rendered unattainable by one or other impeding cause. They are, if anything, examples of *concurrency* and not of antagonism as between fathers and daughters, and of no sort of paternal coercion as regards the male consort. Reference is indeed made and approval is also accorded to what is styled *Gandharva* form of marriage, in our law-books. But this is, not only plainly pointed at, all the same, as a sort of left-handed alliance, but is also restricted, in terms, to the ruling class, out of the same motive which extended the sacred name of wedlock to *Rakshasa* and *Paisacha* forms—forms which Mr. J.D. Mayne has chosen to describe as the lusts of the *Ourang Outang*, but which, along with the *Gandharva*, seem to me to be rather resolvable into a reluctant concession to *Might*, when the latter showed a recurrent propensity to trample over *Right*. Further more, it is a fact worthy of note that, in the few instances of *Gandharva* marriage which are

recorded to have taken place, the interviews between the pair were either stolen or accidental and unexpected, behind the back and without the sanction of parents or guardians. As to such a thing as honeymoon, it is wholly an unknown institution—the glamour and poetry of first promptings and gush of love being, as a rule, effectually checked by the occasions to meet and the latitude to mix being considerably reduced by the unavoidable presence of one or other of the members of a family group into which the young wife is transplanted amid environments calculated to make life prosaic and unsentimental and practical from the first—not to speak of the leaven of spiritual and spiritualising elements, introduced by our forefathers into the institution of marriage and still not altogether out of it.

Thus, it appears to me that the models of womanhood, valued among our women, would conspire with other causes to tell on the minds of our girls hostilely to a development in them of an inclination to choose their own husbands—models which must operate unless and until they are pulled down and smashed up, or until another Macaulay starts up to turn against our *Ithihasas*, *Puranas* and kindred writings his disastrous broadside of epigram and declamation without striving or caring to study their inner meaning—a luckily unlikely event in so far as the education of our fair sex is concerned. Another obstacle to the diminution or disappearance of paternal dominion is the widely-accepted belief that, on the paramount and well-known authority of *Manu* and of many other prominent authors of *Smritis*, marriage is in the nature of the earliest sacrament (*Samskara*) for girls, something like baptism for the Christian infant. It may be that this is not consciously realised by our womanhood as a doctrine. But few that have noticed the sincere and nervous anxieties of Hindu mothers to see their daughters, early enough, enter the holy precincts of married status, as

I have had frequent occasion to do—quite apart from the desire to take advantage of eligible matches on worldly or prudential considerations—will hesitate to admit its secret, instinctive working as a powerful and efficient, though dormant, factor. Add to that belief, the almost mandatory declarations in Smrithis that the father is bound to see to his daughter becoming a wife before three seasons elapse after puberty, with spiritual rewards—to him, to her and to their forefathers—attached to the fulfilment of that duty and spiritual pains and penalties levelled against its default, such as the following :—

Parasara :—

अष्टवर्षाभवेत्गौरी नववर्षातुरोहिणी ।

दशवर्षाभवेत्कन्या अत ऊर्ध्वं राजस्वला ॥

Ashtavarsha bhaveth gowree navavarshathu rohinee

Dasavarsha bhaveth kanya atha oorthwum rajaswala.

*Meaning :—*A girl is termed Gowree when eight years old, Rohinee when nine years old, Kanya when ten years old, and a Rajaswala thereafter.

Brihaspathi :—

गौरीददन्नाकपृष्ठं वैकुण्ठं रोहिणीददन् ।

कन्याददन् ब्रह्मलोकं रौरवं तुरजस्वलाम् ॥

Gowreem dadannakaprushtam vykuntum rohineem dadan

Kanyam dadun brahmalokum rauravumthu rajaswalam.

*Meaning :—*The gift of a Gowree secures the celestial region Naka ; the gift of a Rohinee secures the heaven Vyṁkuntha ; the gift of a Kanya secures the regions of Brahma ; while the gift of a Rajaswala entails an abode in hell.

Parasara :—

माता चैव पिता चैव ज्येष्ठभ्राता तथैव च ।

अप्यस्ते नरकयान्ति दृष्ट्वा कन्यां राजस्वलाम् ॥

*Matha chaiva pitha chaiva jyeshtabhratha thathaivacha
Thrayasthe narakum yan'hi drushtva kanyam rajasva-
lam.*

Meaning:—The father, the mother and the eldest brother, all the three go to hell by allowing a girl's puberty to supervene before marriage.

These seem, by the way, to give us an inkling into one of the powerful grounds which accelerate marriages among us long before the girls might arrive at the age to judge for themselves. All this has to be pulled up, root and branch, and cast away before the right of independent choice becomes approvingly exercisable. I am afraid, besides, that, owing to these several causes which I have glanced at, it will be as difficult for our girls to take to the foreign institutions of courtship, honeymoon and all the rest of it as it would be for their western sisters to forego them or to develop in themselves a penchant for a polyandrous life which every right-thinking person justly abominates. In the meantime, men would not be wanting who, deriving their ideas from the pages of the every-day novels of the west, would take alarm, shake their heads ominously and mutter and iterate the wish that flirtations, Gretna Green alliances and runaway matches, which rise as bubbles and wavelets on the rushing floods of fresh ideas, might never disturb the even tenor of the matrimonial stream in their midst. Let us put it seriously to ourselves whether we consider *this* feasible within a measurable distance of time. To my mind, there is, in all I have said, a cumulative argument against the expediency of retaining the objection in question on the card. To enunciate our position so as to ward off such an alarm and keep down such a wish is a manifest duty, in order to give the explicit and public assurance that we mean practical and practicable improvement and not merely a novelty and an innovation to which that character may or may not belong.

In maintaining this position, I by no means countenance the baleful practice of *child* marriages which seem to spread fast in defiance of the thunders against them. The most cogent objection to that practice is that thereby we are rearing up—unconsciously but inevitably nevertheless—a baby-born nation, as Dr. Smythe—now in Mysore service and one whom I have known for a considerable time and learned to respect ever since I began to know him—had the courage and candour to assert openly at a public meeting in Madras to the chagrin of many who do not relish unpalatable truths. I too was among those who were pained by the statement; but it was for the reason that we have been unwittingly working out such disastrous results. I would press this objection with all the vehemence of feeling and the strength of language I can command. I am not indeed unalive to the motives which mostly—and I would add, venially—lead to such marriages; and I must beg to differ from those who, on that account, condemn the parents and guardians outright and in unmeasured terms and deal out to those parents and guardians hard epithets. Neither by the employment of pungent adjectives nor by other efforts of rhetoric could we undo or replace their legal rights.

To work a sure, steady and progressive change in this respect, effort must be made, iterated and re-iterated to bring startlingly home to parents, uneducated in English, how physical deterioration, in virtue of Nature's unerring forces and stern, physiological laws, will grow more and more far-reaching and claim ever-increasing victims, dilapidated and stunted, as one generation succeeds another. I vividly remember how, so long back as five and forty years ago, my good and respected father ever had on his lips the moral that कुलहीन (Kulaheena) i.e., lowness of extraction is more endurable than बलहीन (Balaheena) i.e., lowness of

physical strength, in the choice of husbands for our girls. He both preached and saw it practised within the lamentably short span of life, vouchsafed to him.

That which lends color to attacks such as I have alluded to is that, in a few cases, girls are bartered for filthy lucre—though, even this heartless procedure of turning maidens into so many gold mines has a silver lining about it, in so far as it induces the disposers of them to postpone marriage to the nearest limits of puberty in order to command an abnormally high price for them. Barring the few cases which lack this latter feature and barring also *all* the abominable cases in which girls in naive twelve are yoked to decrepit age with one foot in the grave, an unbiassed observation cannot help recognising that prudential considerations for the girl's welfare, which is taken to comprehend her enduring, though not poetic, happiness, coupled with a nervous anxiety to see girls well-settled in life, underlie the practice.

In making Sir Joseph Graybrooke in "Miss or Mrs." to tell his daughter "My dear Child! that is a matter of experience; love will come when you are married", and in representing her aunt Miss Lavinia as adding "Dear Natalie, if you remembered your poor mother as I remember her, you would know that your father's experience is to be relied on," Wilkie Collins may be said to be unconsciously hitting off what most Hindu fathers say to themselves in selecting, for their dear ones, husbands, not only agreeable but also capable of keeping them in comfort—with this difference, however, that the bridegrooms of their choice very seldom turn out such scoundrels as Richard Turlington. Further, there was quite as much practical truth as retort in the reply that the Hindus learned to love whom they married—a reply which is said to have been given by the late Mr. T. Gopal Row, the foremost of the most sober-minded, clear-sighted, and

universally-esteemed products of the Madras University, to a European friend who twitted him on his countrymen not marrying whom they love.

Eligible matches are, further, not always ready at hand within the limits of the period of puberty—the Rubicon that should not be crossed. There is therefore an eagerness—not altogether unpardonable—to take time by the forelock and to bring about the tying of the indissoluble knot where there is an over-supply of girls to cope with. This eagerness sometimes overshoots the mark by degenerating into absolute baby marriages. But such a result is an abuse and is unquestionably regrettable; but then it is, in the nature of things, *not* altogether preventible, any more than fortune-hunting, title-hunting and other kinds of unequal and unrelished matches elsewhere are. I say this notwithstanding the impotent and easily-evaded make-believe of legislation by the Mysore Durbar. To most parents, thus limited to the period of puberty for exercising their right or rather for performing their duty, the differences in age between 5 or 6 on the one hand and 11 or 12 on the other would unfortunately convey little appreciable meaning.

The narrowing therefore of the sphere of contest in respect of early marriages seems to lie in one or other of two things, without abstracting paternal rights, without denying to fathers the credit of caring for the welfare of their children and without seeking or striving to invest our boys and girls with an unchecked privilege of choosing their partners in life. Those two things are (1) that our Brahmins should imitate the Namburis in the Malabar Districts who disregard the limit of puberty and with whom, accepted as good *vipras* (Brahmins) as themselves, they intermix and interdine as I am told, (2) that accepting that the rule to marry before puberty is insuperable and that a marriage attains finality on the completion of the Saptapadi—a stage in the series of conjugal rites—

we should systematically and rigidly postpone consummation which we can do with perfect impunity, for some years after puberty, i.e., for as many years as would insure against the physical deterioration, enlarged upon by Dr. Smythe as already alluded to. This, in my opinion, is one perfectly practicable *modus vivendi* for which we may hopefully and profitably agitate. Strictly speaking, the Brahmin alone has to make up his mind in this respect in our Presidency; for the text which threatens degradation in case of marriage after that limit is this:—

Parasara.

यस्तांसमुद्रहेतुकन्यां ब्राह्मणोमदमोहितः ।

असंभाव्यो ह्यपाङ्गयस्सविप्रो वृषलीपतिः ॥

*Yastham samudrahēt kanyam brahmano madamohitah
Asumbhashyo hyapanktheyassavipro vrishaleepathah.*

*Meaning:—*That Brahmin who, blinded by passion, marries such a girl (Rajaswala) is unfit to mix with or eat with—such a one is called Vrishaleepathy.

I am aware that, notwithstanding the fact of Kshetriyas, the caste above them, not respecting any such limit, the Komaties, who claim to represent in this Presidency the third of the four recognised Hindu castes, as also all castes in Bengal and elsewhere, equally rigidly observe this rule and that many, even among the classes who do not consider themselves bound by such a rule, do, in practice, behave often as if it was obligatory on them. It goes without saying that the task to shake themselves out of such a practice is, on that account, more easy for them. If they would not go this length, which they have an unqualified liberty to do, may I not point out to them that, even with their self-imposed restraints, there is nothing to handicap them, if they resolve to assimilate themselves to the bulk of the non-Brahmin Hindus, so far as to defer consummation, as I have just suggested to the Brahmin to do. To inaugu-

rate this departure, little more than a convention or compact among the leaders in each interdining set or class to stand by one another or rather to sit and mess by the side of one another is needed ; and it were to be devoutly wished that no considerable part of these sets and classes would hesitate or lose further time to join hands in this respect. Mere mob-help or the co-operation of illiterate relations will never do. That will be like a wave of caprice. It may ebb and recede as fast as it may flow and advance. It may oftener do harm than good, being invariably led by private and personal regards rather than by public and impersonal or altruistic considerations. It is too fickle, too weakly-grounded, and too unsubstantial to be depended upon. If men, keen about the amelioration in question, yet see reason to fight shy of my proposal, there is another on the question of commensality, which offers a solution—commensality happening to be, rightly or wrongly (wrongly as *I* think) the pivot on which all reform is made to turn. It applies to this and many others which I shall deal with in this paper. I may therefore once for all formulate and dwell upon it in this connection, so that I may simply refer to it, by and by, as occasion may arise to quote it as a solution.

Of commensality, there are two views to take. But, before noticing these views, let us see what the essence of the objection is. It is little more and little less than this:—that food, which is unexceptionable on any ground of its inherent properties, becomes contaminated by being taken in company with one who has sinned against a Shastric rule. On the very face of it, the objection is no higher than a conventional one ; for it would be ridiculous to hold that an article of consumption, acceptable in all other respects becomes metamorphosed into something intrinsically deleterious by reason of the mere touch, look or proximity of a person, obnoxious as above noted. Taking it then as

a conventional canon, the next question is who is to use it and for what purpose. As I have said, there are two views to take. The view generally entertained about it is that it is a privilege with which society is armed and which is granted or withheld by society as such, in proof of its condonation or condemnation of a person who incurs its displeasure by offending against one or other of the rules, the observance of which it has the prerogative to enforce. To my mind, this is a grievous mistake, as, on a comprehension of the true scope of our Shastras, the society is nowhere constituted into a tribunal with an inherent jurisdiction to exercise any collective power of pronouncing outlawry, as I shall soon endeavour to shew. In the meantime, let us assume it to be correct and see what honest way is open to us to overcome the barrier thus interposed. To look upon it as *the one* arbitrarily-devised mode of signifying the pleasure or displeasure of Society, would be a palpable error. On the contrary, it is, at best, *only one out of the few signs and tokens* by which aloofness from unclean persons—unclean in the eye of the Sastras in a certain sense and for a certain purpose—is secured. I say advisedly that commensality is only one of the signs and tokens; for, there were others which exemplified a greater rigour of avoidance in times gone by, but which have silently dropped into disuse and become obsolete. The following verses are in point:—

Parasara :—

त्यजेदेशं कृतयुगे त्रेतायां ग्राममुत्सृजेत् ।

द्वापरे कुलमेकं कर्तारं कलौ युगे ॥

*Thyajetthesum krithayuge threthayam gramamuthsrujeth
Dwapare kulumekumthu kartharam thu kalau yuge.*

Meaning : Avoid the country in Kritha Yuga, the village in Tretha Yuga, the family in Dwapara and the sinper alone in Kali Yuga.

कृते संभाषणादेव त्रेतायां स्पर्शनेन च ।

द्वापरेत्वनमादाय कलौ पतति कर्मणा ॥

*Krithe sambhashanathera threthayam sparsanenacha
Dwapare thwannumadaya kalau pathathi karmana.*

Meaning : One becomes a sinner in Kritha Yuga by merely speaking (to the sinner), in Tretha Yuga by touching (him), in Dwapara Yuga by partaking of food (from him and in Kali Yuga by committing sinful acts.

Note.—As Madhavacharya and others have explained, the substance of the above verses may be put thus :—

(1) Whereas in Kritha, Tretha and Dwapara Yugas, one becomes a sinner by merely talking to, touching and eating the food of, a sinner, in Kali Yuga, one becomes a sinner only by committing acts of sin.

(2) Whereas in Kritha Yuga the whole kingdom (wherein the sinner resides), in Tretha the whole village (where the sinner lives), in Dwapara the whole family (to which he belongs) must be shunned (to escape taint), in Kali Yuga we have only to shun the actual sinner.

This is not all. Even the rules which relate to the question of permissible food are demonstrably in the obsolescent stage—a circumstance which must be evident to the least observant, when he notes how, out of the interdicted edibles and drinkables, onions, potatoes and other articles of consumption among the solids and aerated waters among liquids, though bottled by hands, whose touch is proscribed for the Kali Yuga, are—to instance a few out of many—freely used by many who were once squeamish about them. Surely the liberty, thus enjoyed as to *things* regarded as *intrinsically* objectionable may, with a safe conscience or rather without any subterfuge or charge of evasion, take the further form of eating by the side of a person, who, if I may say so, is only metaphorically tainted. In these circumstances, it will be a clear narrowing of the

sphere of contention, if the prohibition as to interdining goes the way that its companion-prohibitions have gone, with the single exception of intermarriage which, by the way, involves many other, complex and personal considerations, than that the youth concerned is open to exception, in the light of what Shastras counsel—though even in this excepted sphere of action, I can cite a number of instances showing that considerable latitude and laxity have set in and are unconditionally assented to, which are diametrically opposed to the Shastric utterances in that behalf. Let then the sets which now interdine unite, covenant, and practically bring into vogue this narrowing of the sphere of contention; for, what a convention may make, it can well unmake.

Such a task may receive an impetus, without any reasonable fear of doing wrong, if the second and the other view of commensality, which I shall proceed to propound as the more accurate one, commands acceptance. Paradoxical as it may sound to many, it is a fact—quite capable of proof—that rights of individuality are nowhere so fully vouchsafed or so thoroughly acknowledged as in the Shastras as I read them—it being left to each man to work out or to wreck his salvation and his temporal well-being, of which the former is particularly set forth as the ruling end and aim of all earthly existence and which he is reminded of, in connection with almost every event or incident of life—great and small. The Shastras give him the rules, give him the chance and give him the advice to qualify for and strive towards that goal; but, at the same time, it leaves him the option to utilise them according to his pleasure and to the best of his power, except in one particular which will be presently noticed. They do no more and they profess to do no more. The following texts bear me out in this construction:

Apasthamba Sūtras :—

सर्ववर्णानां स्वधर्मानुष्ठाने परमपरिमितं सुखं ततः परिवृत्तौ कर्म-
फलशेषेण जातिं रूपं वर्णं बलं मेधां प्रज्ञां द्रव्याणि धर्मानुष्ठानमिति
प्रातिपद्यते. तच्चक्रवदुभयोलोकयोस्सुख एव वर्तते ॥

*Sarvavarṇānām swadharmānushtāne paramaparimithum sukhūm thathah parimithow karmaphalaseshena jathim roopum varṇam balum medham pragṇam dravyāṇi dharmānushtānamithi prathipadyathe thachchakravathu-
bhayor lokayos sukha yeva varthathe.*

Meaning : By acting up to the rules prescribed for the several Varnas (castes) and Asramas (orders), not only does eternal happiness await a person in the next world, but he also secures in this world on re-birth such good fruits as good lineage, good looks, good caste, good physique, good intellect, wealth, &c.

Manu :—

आचारालुभ्यते ह्यायुः राचारार्दाप्सिता प्रजाः ।

आचाराद्धनमक्षय्यं आचरो ह्यलक्ष्णम् ॥

*Acharallabhyathe hyayuracharatheepsithah prajah
Acharaddhanamakshayyam Acharohyathyalakshanam.*

Meaning : By Achara (conduct according to Shastric rules) is attained long life, good progeny, endless wealth, &c.

दुराचारो हि पुरुषो लोके भवति निन्दितः ।

दुःखभागी च स ततं व्याधितो ल्पायुरेव च ॥

*Duracharohi purusho loka bhārathi nindithah
Dukkhabhāgīchecha sathathum vyadhitholpayurevacha.*

*Meaning :—*By improper conduct, a person becomes in this world odious, unhappy, sickly and short-lived.

Kaṇva :—

आसनाच्छयनादानात् सङ्घापात्सहभोजनात् ।

संक्रमन्तीह पापानि तैलबिन्दुरिवाम्भसि ॥

*Asanachchayanaddanath sallapath sahabhojanath
Sankramantheeha papani thylabindurivambhasi.*

Meaning: By sitting with him (the sinner), by sleeping by his side, by making gifts to him, by talking to him, by eating with him, sins spread themselves like drops of oil on water.

Brihaspathi :—

एकशय्यासनं पङ्क्तिभाण्डं पङ्क्त्यन्नमिश्रणम् ।
याजनाध्यापनेयोनि स्तथाचसहभोजनम् ॥
नवधासंकरः प्रोक्तो न कर्तव्यो धर्मैस्सह ॥

*Yekasayyasanam pankthybhandam pankth jannamishra-
nam.*

*Yajanadhyapaneyonisthadhacha saha bhojanam
Navadha sunkarah proktho na karthavyodhamyssaaha.*

Meaning: Sleeping on the same bed, sitting on the same seat, partaking of food from the same vessel, eating in a line at a general repast, helping in the performance of religious rites, giving lessons in Vedas, and interdining—in these nine respects, you should avoid contact with a sinner.

Devāla :—

सल्लापस्पर्शनिश्वासात् सहशय्यासनाशनात् ।
याजनाध्यापनाद्यौनात् पापसंक्रमते नृणाम् ॥

*Sallapasparsanisvasath saha sayyasanashanath
Yajanadhyapanadyaunath papamsunkramathe nrunam.*

Meaning: Speaking with a sinner, touching him, being within reach of his breath, sharing in the same bed, sharing in the same seat, interdining with him, helping him in the performance of religious rites, giving him lessons in the Vedas, intermarrying with him, are ways of contracting sin

¹ In the Brahmin preceptor Sukra Charīar sanctioning the marriage of his daughter with the Kshetria monarch

Yayathi who demurred to take the step on the ground that it inverted the Shastraic order—in the sage Vyasa authorising Drowpaḍi to wed the five Pandavas, notwithstanding that polyandry was forbidden—in the holy Vasishta taking for consort an unhallowed Chandali—and in the Brahmin Pandit Pandita Rat uniting himself to the Mahomedan princess Lavangi and throwing down the gauntlet for those who contended that he thereby outraged Hindu faith—in these and similar acts of seeming defiance of the Shastras, we recognise an unequivocal declaration of independence as though the sway of Smrithis were, strictly speaking, optional. It would, in my judgment, not be a tenable argument to say of these and the like that they were the deeds of towering personalities who rose superior to the petty little rules, meant for the common herd, just as a giant would pass through a gossamer network of cobwebs spun by the most skilful of spiders; for, law is no respecter of persons, be their mental and moral altitude however exalted; and an obligation is an obligation all the same, on all. Nor do I think that the text which tells us to do as great men *bid* and *not* as they *do*, affords any explanation; for it looks to me rather to be but the later outcome of a policy to discourage isolated instances of defiance of Shastras, whimsically and in a spirit of levity.

It is perhaps in recognition of this aspect of the Shastras that an eminent Shastraic expounder, whose name or treatise I cannot just now recall or lay my hands on, enunciated the thesis that they discharge a threefold function, i.e., they are in part प्रभुसम्मिति* (sovereign-like), in part मित्रसम्मिति† (friend-like) and in part कान्तासम्मिति‡ a winsome damsel-like), the plain English of which classification is that they are partly authoritative, partly advisory,

* Prabhūsammiti.

† Mithrasammiti.

‡ Kāntasammiti.

and partly persuasive. They are obviously authoritative of course where they convey dictates to emblems of temporal power, how to settle reciprocal rights among the members of a family, how to decide the rights of the family as against an outcaste, whose fall entails his extinction in it, how to adjudicate upon and decide disputes between man and man and how to punish crimes and misdemeanours. Beyond these limits, which might be compendiously designated as defining the domain of civil rights, the Shastras seem to me to fall under one or other of the remaining two heads. Even where they sound authoritative in these other matters, they will be found, on examination, to be but canons which one ought to conform to, at the peril to one's spiritual welfare and at the risk of one being shunned—not by the rank and file, and much less by the tag-rag and bob-tail, of one's caste, sect or creed—but by pious men—called साधवः* शिष्टाः† and so forth in the Smrithis—who strive to live the life, such as is mapped out and held out as beautiful by the Aryan faith to each of its adherents. A man's salvation of his soul and the advancement of his temporal interests are indisputably his own concern; and I believe that it will be conceded on all hands that no other man—much less any collection of men—has any right to coerce him or punish him in these respects. Even on the momentous affair of preparing himself here for the hereafter, the Shastras appear to me to be but like a friend, मित्रसम्मिति‡ and no more. Whether I am correct or incorrect on this point, it is, I think, abundantly clear that, in all other matters he is a thorough free-agent to make or mar himself. From such a right in one man, it is but a corollary that every other man has an identical right to do as he pleases. It follows then that if truly pious men—Sadhavah(साधवः)and

* Sadhavah.

† Shishtah.

‡ Mitrasammiti.

Sisthah शिष्टः of the Smrithis—see fit to avoid a delinquent, they do so in self-defence, *i.e.*, compelled by an honest desire to safeguard themselves against what they regard as contamination, imperilling their best interests. The dullest man must note the broad and marked distinction that exists and is discernible between this conduct and the so-called ostracism of the present day by a pack of ignorant or spiteful persons, not often one-tenth as good as the one they persecute, taken all in all. Their pretensions are entirely without warrant and without foundation.

Parasara :—

चत्वारो वा त्रयो वापि य ब्रूवैयुदपारगाः ।

सधर्म इति विज्ञेयो नेतरेस्तु सहस्रशः ॥

Chathwarova thrayo rapi yam brooyurvedaparagah

Sadharmathivigneyoh netharysthu sahasrasah.

Meaning : That which four or three persons well versed in the vedas declare is to be viewed as law—not anything else although declared even by a thousand.

अत ऊर्ध्वं तु येषि प्राः केवलं नामधारकाः ।

परिषत्त्वं न तेष्वस्ति सहस्रगुणितेष्वपि ॥

Atha oorthwam thu ye viprah keralam namadharakah

Parishattwam na theshwasthi sahasragunitheshwape.

Meaning : Henceforth, nominal Brahmins, even although they count by thousands, shall not possess the character of a Parishad (an assembly for solving Dharma).

यथा कष्टमयो हस्ती यथा चर्ममयो मृगः ।

ब्राह्मणस्त्वनर्धेयानस्त्रयस्ते नामधारकाः ॥

Yatha kashtamayohasthee yatha charmamayo mrigah,

Brahmanasthwanadheeyanasthrayasthe nomadharakah.

Meaning : Just as is an elephant made of wood and just as is an animal (doer) formed out of skin, so are nominal Brahmins uninitiated (in the Vedas).

प्रायश्चित्तं प्रयच्छन्ति ये द्विजाः नामधारकाः ।

ते द्विजाः पापकर्मणिस्समेता नरकं ययुः ॥

Prayaschitham prayachanthi ye dwijah namadharakah.

Tha dwijah papakarmanassmetha narakam yayuh.

Meaning : Whenever nominal Brahmns prescribe penance, they thereby become sinners and they are doomed to Hell.

It may not be out of place here to explain the only trace of an organisation which the Shastras countenance, viz., a Panishat, as it is technically termed. To begin with, it has no inherent power to call itself into being. It is the outcome—the sheer outcome—of the man who considers himself a sinner and who wishes to regain his lost position, out of qualms of conscience and out of a desire to resume the duties and the course of life, prescribed to every Aryan.

Parasara .—

वेदवेदाङ्गविदुषाम् धर्मशास्त्रविजानताम् ।

स्वधर्मरतविप्राणां स्वकंपापंनिवेदयेत् ॥

Vedaredangavidusham dharmasastram vijanatham

Swadharmarathavipranam swakum papum nivedayeth.

Meaning : A sinner should confess his sin to Brahmns versed in the Vedas and the Vedangas, acquainted with the principles of the Dharma Sastras, and devoted to the rules of life prescribed for them.

Parasara :—

अव्रतानाममन्त्राणां जातिमात्रोपजीविनाम् ।

सहस्रशस्समेतानां परिषत्त्वं निवेद्यते ॥

Avrathanamamanthranam jathimathropajeevinam

Sahasrasassamethanam parishathwam navidyathe.

Meaning : Those that do not live up to the rules of their order, those who have not been duly initiated, those that live nominally according to their caste, are unfit for

the function of a parishat, even although they muster by thousands.

अज्ञात्वाधर्मशास्त्राणि प्रायश्चित्तं ददाति यः ।

प्रायश्चित्ती भवेत्पूतः किल्बिषं परिषद्भजेत् ॥

Agnathwa dharmasasthrani prayaschittham dadathyyah

Prayaschithe bhaveth poothah kilbishum parishadvrajeth.

Meaning: Even although the penance is prescribed by a man ignorant of the Dharma Shastras, the penitent becomes purified, though the sin attaches thereby to the person that so prescribes.

Note: The significance of this verse lies in the prominence it has given to the penitent's attitude.

Be it noted—and this cannot be too emphatically pointed out—that it is the penitent sinner and none else who can convene a Parishat and that it is from his voluntary submission and from no other source is its power derived. In this respect, though in this respect alone, a Parishat is like arbitrators, whose jurisdiction to adjudicate is conferred by the parties to a dispute, by the exercise of their volition and by that alone. But, unlike arbitrators, the Parishat has no disputes to set at rest and no blame to apportion or to lay on this or that of the contending parties, each of whom claims approbation of verdict as against the other. The Parishat, on the contrary, has as his premiss that he who convenes it confesses himself to be in the wrong and only seeks that the fitting atonement for that wrong may be indicated to him. It is, I think, self-evident that a machinery, thus constituted, and constituted for such a purpose can have no power to penalise or chastise; and, save and except this machinery, no other is contemplated or warranted by the Shastras.

In these circumstances, the power to excommunicate or pronounce verdicts of guilt or innocence, claimed by or for the heads of mutts and the leaders of the several sects is a

downright usurpation, originating in ignorant surrender on the part of those over whom they exercise control. Such a surrender and such a tyranny do but afford an illustration of the sage saying that the slave makes the tyrant and not *vice versa*.

It may be asked how has it come about, that caste-meetings are held and the power of *mutts* and of similar pretenders to authority is invoked to bring breakers of caste-rules to book. I am inclined to think—and it may be a mere speculation on my part, though I trust a speculation not altogether without the semblance of warrant—that the higher castes—ignorant of their privileges—have servilely, though insensibly, imitated the non-dvija population, which, for want of other recognised guides, has long been in the habit of electing its headmen and convoking caste-assemblies—called जातिकूटम् (Jathi cootam)—to adjudicate on the thousand and one disputes which arise among them, not on caste questions only but also on many others, foreign to them.

On the important ground that thereby we shall avoid outraging but shall, on the contrary, nourish, foster and conserve feelings of self-respect and discourage the growth or spread of dissimulation, I lay superlative stress on this method of getting rid of the existing embargo on commensality, and every right-minded man must decidedly prefer it to the prevalent plan of requisitioning the moonshine of an expiation. The origin and motive of all penance is primarily penitence, without which all acts of atonement are a hollow pretence, if not also an impudent mockery. Now, let us put it to ourselves whether we are so blind as not to know that nine men out of ten, who consent to go through the formality of purificatory rites are really proud of the conduct for which they profess to subject themselves to those rites and whether they are not laughing in their

sleeves at the folly, the simplicity and the easily-gratified formalism of those who ask to be thus deliberately cajoled or imposed upon. The degradation of the soul and the lowering of character involved in an affectation of repentance or in conduct implying repentance when none is really felt or when there is an inward chuckling over the success of an undisguised *ruse* are too much of a price to pay for what is literally selling one's soul for a mess of pottage. The threatened demoralisation and callousness to moral sensibilities, consequent on this sort of diplomatic stooping to conquer, must make us strike a halt betimes, *i.e.*, before we become largely committed to lives of plausible falsehoods and to a course of pious frauds. Let us be done with the policy of hood-winking the unwary lest we end with hood-winking ourselves and vitiating our moral susceptibilities. It rests, not on individual effort, but on the leaders of inter-dining classes who have it in their power to unite in solidarity as I have humbly recommended and to make it no longer necessary for honorable men to debase themselves and go through a feint—excepting always that pious men who, in good faith, regard the innovator as tainted and tainting, shall be free to stand aloof. I know that life is a series of compromises. What I recommend is also a compromise, which will possess all the merits of a compromise without the demerit of compromising those who accept it or acquiesce in it.

Next, as to re-marriage of our widows. Here again, there is room for narrowing the sphere of contention. Despite all that is asserted to the contrary—on the meaning of divers words and on the interpretation of divers texts—the single fact that there is a distinct and recognised status conceded (1) to the Punarbhu, a twice-married woman, as distinguished from “Swairini” (adulteress) and “vidhava” (widow) and (2) to Pownarbhava, son of a twice-married woman marking him off from a “Kunda”, bastard son

born of a married woman and "Golaka" bastard son begotten on a widow, would seem fairly to establish beyond all cavil, that re-marriages of women were in vogue for all practical purposes of life at one period in the history of our people. The sole question therefore is how to revive it and what prevents the revival. That the Pownarbhavas were declared unsuitable for consecration at Shraddhas need not trouble us ; for so were also many of legitimate extraction, on the ground of ignorance of the Vedas and on other grounds, which—be it said by the way—did not then and do not now in the least disqualify them for commensality on all ordinary occasions. We should, I suppose, be quite content—at least as an initial expedient—to see the children of re-married women lifted above proscription and assigned just the status and privileges which Namadraka Brahmins and like Hindus now occupy and enjoy. Now, the prohibition against the recognition of the practice in the present day rests on a text of Smrithi-writer Kratu and on a list of things forbidden for the present Kali Yuga, *i.e.*, the Yuga in which we live—a list drawn up, it is said, in the beginning of our Yuga by a conclave of unnamed sages, for whom authority is claimed on a Sutra of Apastambha.

धर्मज्ञसमयः प्रमाणवेदाश्च ॥

Dharmajñasamayah pramanam Vedascha.

Meaning : The verdicts of men versed in Dharma are as authoritative as the Vedas.

That list I do not reproduce here as it is ready to hand in nearly all the Nibandhana Grandhas or treatises, in print.

To the prohibition thus laid down, it is bad logic to deny a binding force (as is often done) on the principle enunciated in the following verse,

Sangraha :—

श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणेषु विरुद्धेषु परस्परम् ।

पूर्वपूर्वबलीयस्यादितिन्यायविदो विदुः ॥

Sruthismrithi purāṇeṣu viruddheṣu paraspāram

Poorvampoorvam baleeyassyathithi nyayavido viduh.

Meaning : Learned men have said that where there is a contradiction among Sruthi, Smrithi and Purana, each foregoing one is stronger than what follows.

I say it is bad logic, principally because it is a fallacy to talk of a contradiction between propositions which are correlated as a general rule and as an exception grafted on that rule for a specific period as in this instance ; for an exception must axiomatically place limitations on the rule and must, to that extent, override it. A contrary supposition must be palpably absurd as getting rid of all possibility of laying down exceptions, besides convicting our voluminous Smrithi and Puranic writers of having been so many purposeless and laborious triflers. I would therefore unconditionally accept the authority of the exception and seek a clue to an honest way out of it, just as the father of Vikramarka must have found to marry wives from castes below his and just as Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja and other universally-respected personages must have discovered for entering the order of Sanyasins—in the face of the fact that the course they respectively pursued was inhibited in the same identical list. Is there then any analogous, justifying course available to the reformer of the present day ? It has long struck me that in all cases in which there is a widespread repugnance for anything laid down in the Smrithies there is, on the unequivocal authority of an eminent Smrithi itself, which will be presently cited, a perfect right or rather a manifest duty to over-ride it. The text which allows or prescribes this course might well be relied on as our sheet-anchor, provided we feel sure

that the condition precedent, viz., of a general antipathy, (लोकविद्विष्टम्)* does in fact exist—a condition precedent which is indispensable to safeguard majorities from being bored by the tyranny of minorities. I assume that, in respect of interdicting our women from re-marrying, there is such a general antipathy and I point to the text whose authenticity, authority and applicability to cases such as the present have been placed beyond doubt by interpretation and illustration by many recognised writers, notably by the widely-esteemed author of the Mitakshara. The text runs thus :—

Yagnavalkya :—

अस्वर्ग्यलोकविद्विष्टं धर्ममप्याचरेन्नतु ॥

Aswaryam lokavidwishtum dharmamapyachorenna-thu.

Meaning : One should cease to do that act which is calculated to bar entrance into heaven or is generally felt to be repugnant notwithstanding it may be laid down as Dharma.

In three different contexts and for three different purposes, the author of Mitakshara has cited and applied this text so far as I am aware, viz :—

(1) In deciding that shares of sons are equal at partition contrary to Manu's declaration that a larger share shall go to the eldest son.

(2) In setting aside a certain rule as to pollution which it is needless to enunciate here.

(3) And in giving his approval to the non-observance of certain prescribed rites of ancient dates.

In bringing the rule against the remarriage of our widows within the purview of the text in question, there ought further to be the utmost readiness, as already a good part of the rule has been an actual dead-letter for ages

* Lokavidwishtam.

past; for, though, on the texts of Kasyapa and Bodhayana, which I subjoin, there were seven classes of Punarbhus, nearly half the number have been clean outside the ban for hundreds of years, if they ever were under it.

Kasyapa :—

सप्तपौनर्भवाः कन्याः वर्जनीयाः कुलाधमाः ।

वाचादत्ता मनोदत्ता कृतकौतुकमंगला ।

उदकस्पर्शितायाच याचपाणिगृहीतिका ।

अग्निं परिगतायाच पुनर्भू प्रसवाचया ॥

Saptha punarbhavah kanyah varjaneeyah kuladhamah

Vachadatta manodatta krithakowthukamangala

Udakasparsitha yacha yacha panigriheethika

Agnim parigatha yacha punarbhooh prasarachaya.

*Meaning :—*Punurbhava girls are of seven classes, and being base ought to be shunned (in marriage), viz., verbally-given, mentally-given, one who has had the matrimonial wrist-thread put on, one given with the pouring of water, one accepted by the hand by the bridegroom, one who has gone round the bridal fire (one who has passed the Saptapadi) and one who is born of a punarbhu.

Bodhayana's Sutra :—

वाग्दत्तामनोदत्ताग्निं परिगता सप्तमं पदं ।

निहिता भुक्ता गृहीतगर्भा प्रसूताचेति सप्तविधा ।

पुनर्भूः तां गृहीत्वा न प्रजां न धर्मं विन्देत् ॥

Vagdattah manodattagnim parigatha sapthamampadam

Nihita bhuktah griheethagarbah prasootha chethi sapthavidhah

Punarbhooh tham griheethwa na prajam na dharmam vindeth.

*Meaning :—*Verbally-given, mentally-given, one who has gone round the bridal fire, one who has completed

the Saptapadi ceremony, one who has sexually known man, one who has conceived, one who has borne children. These are the seven classes of Punarbhu. By marrying them, neither lawful progeny nor Dharma would result.

There are indeed some, who—deeply impressed with the fact that many a widow actually fulfills, in Hindu families, the benevolent and noble function of the “Maiden-aunt” and of a guardian angel of young couples who set up separate homes of their own—might entertain the selfish fear that those humane classes might dwindle in numbers if not into nothing, in case widows were given the chance to marry again. To take away motives or facilities for the development and multiplicity of such angelic characters might indeed be a general misfortune, though to be governed by such a consideration, would be to put the happiness of others before the happiness of the widows themselves; no body—either of legislators or of ordinary men—has the shadow of a right to insist on such a slavery or to stem the tide, if it should swell, surge and advance. But, in my humble judgment, no such tremendous result would follow. Except where tenderness of age supplies the motive power, and except when the sweets of married life were utterly untasted, the gloomy vaticinations in question are unlikely to be verified in results. Our national temperament is against it. Throw open the portals, and you will nevertheless find that few and far between—except in respect of the above excepted exceptions—will be the instances of advantage being taken of the new liberty. Do we not know that a great many of the men among us, who are entitled to take fresh wives in supersession of or in succession to prior wives, are averse to do it? Do we not know also that, even among the nations, amongst whom widowhood is no badge of unfitness for matrimony, there are heaps of women who do not care to enter upon a conjugal life, after losing the objects of their first choice? The passions of the flesh do

not always overmaster the pleasures of an intellectual kind where the resources for the latter have been fairly developed, while the joy of playing the angel of unselfish goodness is keener than the relish for carnal gratification. If, therefore, there are among us any number of male persuasion, who are oppressed by the fear in question, they may rest assured that their interests would remain best protected, notwithstanding all that men and women, legislators and reformers, might do tending to the contrary.

Thus then there is an honest mode of reviving a practice once prevalent, and no one need be under any apprehension of incurring sin ; for, whatever act was once consonant with loyalty to Hindu faith, must—other things being equal—be no less consonant with it in the present day. Here again, the amelioration will be an accomplished fact, if a convention or compact among interdining classes, such as I have alluded to as regards early marriages, takes place and is given practical effect to. Even if such men are not prepared to enter into such a convention or compact, there is the other solution, in respect of commensality, which I have formulated and enlarged upon and on which they might well fall back, if there is any earnestness about the matter.

As to travel or sojourn in foreign lands, the Smrithis themselves show how the horizon of liberty has been gradually widening from time to time. Not to tire by quotations, I may succinctly state that, from having been confined to limits which were pretty-well defined, we were allowed, as time went on, to wander into Anga, Vanga, Kalinga and other then forbidden regions, on condition of re-performance of Dwija-making-rites and finally no one at the present day dreams of any taint or penances in residing in those countries. It looks as though the rule was originally conceived by the Aryan settlers in this country in order to maintain their distinctiveness and,

perhaps, their superiority when they were a small band, and as though it was made slacker and slacker as they multiplied and as the exigencies for extended elbow-room became more and more pressing. The gradual relaxation of the original rigid precept, eventuating in a final *carte-blanche* to roam over the length and breadth of this country, is perhaps due to the welcome experience that their views and methods of life insinuated themselves into the affections of those they came into contact with and found favour with them and because they feared no contamination or reaction from those others. It is intelligible and explicable that this liberating process should make a dead stop where the limits of their influence met with a definite check by the intervention of the sea-board. At this stage, they would naturally be filled with vague alarms of conditions unknown to them and therefore uncontrollable by them and they therefore planted their foot at that point and decisively declared the inutility of even penance to wash the sea-gone man clean. If I am right in these ideas which I admit to be no better than speculations on my part, one thing is quite clear that ignorance of the countries beyond the seas must have played an important part and formless risks of possible, inexpiable pollution in going or residing there must have flitted against their timorous fancy. I am not sure that, even in the present day when a great deal is known about those countries, there is not, for all that, quite an amazing lack of correct and reassuring knowledge among the generality of our countrymen, to block the way of further liberation. In these circumstances I for one am at a loss to see how, on this question, which, of all the questions now agitating the country, has secured the smallest strength numerically,—though the largest in intensity—a narrowing of the sphere of contention is quite as feasible as in other cases; for I am not satisfied that, in discussing the strictly Shastric issue

arising on this topic, the wish of the heart has not, too often, been the parent of thought of the head or that reasons have not been, equally often, found or conjured up to uphold a foregone conclusion, on both sides. This is but natural. On one side, intuitive notions of fitness of things claim to determine the standard of right and wrong, while on the other side comes into play the still-lingering veneration for sentiment and for hoary and seemingly approved ideas of admittedly sagacious men—sagacious in and for their time from the modern point of view but sagacious beyond comparison in the eye of the orthodox erudites. In the midst of this exhibition of overflowing pugnacity all round, what has appeared to me, by the light—such as it is—of my own humble researches, as the best and soundest opinions are the opinions embodied in the well-reasoned and calmly-expressed exposition by the late Sree Krishna Thatha Chariar, one of our earliest Mahamahopadhyayas and perhaps the greatest of them by reason of his versatile powers and his varied and many-sided Sanskrit learning. Leaving it to my readers to read his neat little brochure, which, owing to its not being printed in Devanagari, has lacked the wide publicity and the respectful attention it deserves, I shall just state his findings and his verdict. Combatting the intolerant view that there is no penance to wash a sea-gone man pure, he has affirmatively established, with chapter and verse and with his power of logic, that, as a fact, there is such a penance and what form that penance should take. By way of disillusionising persons who, in an excess of unconscious bias, jump to the conclusion that, where there is penance, there is the disappearance of all taint, he admits the view as generally correct but as only correct, in this respect, to a qualified extent, i.e., only to the extent of re-instating the penitent in his lost chances to work for his salvation by the means and in accordance with the scheme, formulated by the Aryan

faith in that behalf. Lastly, he examines, with quite a judicial precision, the genuineness and the true significance of a text which in terms vetoes association even with the expiated sea gone man in Kali age and records his frank conclusion that the text alone blocks the way and could not be fairly explained away. As I have said already, I for one accept these utterances ; but nevertheless I maintain that there is a hopeful way out of it by agitating to create a general repugnance against it, such as would render it a dead letter on that score, on the strength of the text already once dwelt upon—unless indeed the Gordian knot is cut by a consensus of opinion, brought about to abandon the restrictions on commensality on the grounds I have heretofore indicated.

Whether the requisite degree of repugnance exists, is the question to which we may narrow the issue on this topic, if my view on the Shastraic provisions is accurate. If it did, then it would be a mere matter of convention or compact, on this point also, on the part of interdining sets, similar to what I have suggested more than once in the earlier cases. If however they do not exist, then agitation for immediate action in a social sense—is, to my mind, premature ; but, an agitation is necessary all the same for opening the eyes of those who do not realise the precise situation and for getting them to develop repugnance on what at present virtually cheekmates a decidedly serviceable move. This may perhaps be the fittest place to notice the cry of impatience with which an advice to conciliate the general public is often received. The occasion is at least as good as any other. To the touching—may I not say, touchy—exclamation, “are we to wait till the ‘ multitudinous donkey’ is taught up to the mark,” my answer is that we need not imagine any such animal as requiring to be reckoned with. If I may speak in like metaphor, what we do meet with is rather a few flocks of multitudinous sheep, each with its

bell-wethers. To win over these bell-wethers is the most that is needed in each fold. Do this and the pens will empty and their sequacious inmates will follow as meekly and submissively as the body does the will or as the tail does the trunk. To expect triumph in bringing foreign travel into vogue even without this measure of successful effort is, as I venture to think, a trifle too unreasonable—notwithstanding that every one who makes bold or finds it possible to pioneer the way is entitled to unambiguous and unstinted praise.

I shall next briefly dwell upon the paramount question of rights of property which should belong to our women—rights which, as I have said, constitute one of the two¹ Herculean pillars on which I build great hopes of advancing the aspirations under the several heads in the reform programme. It is impossible for a lawyer to avoid talking shop to a certain extent on this point. But I shall endeavour to be untechnical and unwearisome and I shall try to bring myself down to the level of the lay mind. I may well start with asking the general reader to take the following for granted, *viz.*, (1) that Manu and Yagnyavalkya are admittedly the foremost Smrithi-writers, (2) that the latter of them is fuller and more systematic of the two in laying down the principles of inheritance and succession, governing the bulk of us, (3) that as Yagnyavalkya is virtually the prince of Smrithi-writers, so is the author of the Mitakshara, his most accepted commentary, the prince of Smrithi-expounders, (4) that, while professing to do no more than to elucidate the meaning of Yagnyavalkya's texts *seriatim*, the author of the Mitakshara has brought to the task his wide and varied range of learning and his high logical powers and produced, in the result, a treatise coming up to a comprehensive code embracing nearly all subjects which one need know, outside sciences and the tenets of religion, (5) that the

authority of Mitakshara is accepted all over the country except in Bengal and except in a small area in the Western Presidency where Nilakantha generally follows in his footsteps, differing in some few respects, but reverentially bowing to him and (6) that in recognising the claims of women to property, the schools of Bengal and Nilakantha have gone further than even the author of the Mitakshara who, as I shall presently show, has, however, laid down (as one may well say) quite enough to give them a fair amount of practical independence on that score. It would therefore suffice to notice what is expounded in Yagnyavalkya Smrithi and in its great commentary, the Mitakshara, on the subject in question. The following texts of Yagnyavalkya are in point :—

Yagnyavalkya :—

यदि कुर्यात्समानं शान् पत्न्येः कार्याः समांशिकाः ।

नदत्तं स्त्री धनं यासां भर्त्रा वा श्वशुरेण वा ॥

Yadi kuryāth samanamsan patnyeh karyah samamsikah Na dattam streedhanam yasam bharthra va suashurenava

Meaning : If he make the allotments equal, his wives to whom no Stridhanam has been given by the husband or the father-in-law, must be made partakers of equal portions.

असंस्कृतास्तु संस्कार्याः भ्रातृभिः पूर्वसंस्कृतेः ।

भगिन्यश्च निजादंशादंशांश्च तु तुरीयकम् ॥

Asamskruthasthu samskaryah brathribhih poorvasamskrithyeh

Bhaginyascha Nijadamsath dathwamsamthuh thureeyakam.

Meaning : Uninitiated sisters should have their ceremonies performed by those brothers who have already been initiated, giving them a quarter of one's own share.

I may say at once that I, for one, would be quite content with a practical acceptance of the law as is here enunciated in lucid language, as it would not in the least dislocate the existing rules of inheritance but merely reduce, by but a comparative trifle, the shares that sons would, otherwise, take. But the earliest expounder of the principle of law contained in these texts, Bharuchi, attempted to pervert it by whistling away the distinct and fixed fraction therein given to sisters and fathers' wives at partition among brothers or their representatives and by substituting for the fourth share specified therein, merely an indefinite and variable quantity, limited to what might suffice for maintenance, marriage expenses and so forth. This construction was however refuted and set aside by Medhathithi, a later expounder of great repute—one who earned the honoured title of Asahaya, which no less than the illustrious author of the Mitakshara has ungrudgingly acknowledged. The result was that when the Mitakshara came to be composed, the narrower or rather the erroneous interpretation by Bharuchi had already been set at rest and our women became, once again, fully entitled to their absolute rights to the definite allotments of the texts, under the sanction of Medhathithi. On this latter and liberal or sound exposition, the author of the Mitakshara placed the stamp of his high approval, pointing out the fallacy of construing a self-contained definite dictum into a vague utterance which is to be the caper ground for individual caprice—be it the idiosyncrasy of the partitioning parties or the eccentricity of the Judge who may have to adjudicate on it. One would think that, in common fairness, this thrice-blessed authoritative declaration must be decisive—made as it indeed was, not as a matter of first impression, but by the plain terms of the text, made, if possible, plainer by a verdict of preference on a full consideration of the only conflict which had been raised on it. But this was not to be. Up rose,

at a later date, I would fain say, a pretender, a third expounder, the author of *Smrithi Uhandrika*, whose illiberal views are only equalled by his extravagant pretensions which reached the climax when he hurled at such a universally revered personality as the author of the *Mitakshara*, epithets like "prattler," "self-sufficient man" and so forth. That this consequential scholiast was really as old as he was taken to be, at the time he was smuggled into a position of authority, is not established; while there is good room to suspect whether he does not enjoy a false and adventitious importance originating in his *Dattaka Chandrika* being confounded with a treatise of that name attributed to the great Madhava Chariar, distinguished by the honoured epithet *Vidyaranya*. Add to this the exposure of him and his *Dattaka Chandrika* by that ripe scholar, the learned Tagore lecturer Gopal Chander Sarkar, and we should have no hesitation in repudiating, as spurious and unsound, the deliverances of that Sir Oracle. To see that our courts go back and, if they would not, that we ourselves disinterestedly go back, to the logical, sound and clear law as enunciated by two such eminent exponents of *Smrithi*, as *Medhathithi* and *Vignaneswara* is a duty which lies heavily on every apostle of reform and there ought to be no difficulty on the score of the length of time for which the error has had the lease. We should remind our judges and we should remind ourselves that a like error was rectified more than once; for instance, in the case of the sister's and the sister's sons' claims and in the case of the creditors' rights to enforce a son's pious duty to pay the debts of the father, where they were neither illegal nor immoral. In the face of these precedents, I recognise neither justice nor reason in any plea, based on the longevity of the mischief, worked on the strength of a pretender to authoritative weight and antiquity. Nothing short of a mistaken sense of shame to frankly acknowledge that we have been

led astray under false pretences ought to bar our return to justice and fair play to our women in this matter of superlative moment. Let feelings of chivalry, if we really have them, stimulate in us a readiness to put our convictions into practice in this regard. This is all that is needed. If we further adequately realise how this property-independence—which, I maintain, is legitimately theirs—will, like all forms and measures of independence, is bound to benefit not only its possessors but every one within the reach and influence of such possessors, our very instincts of selfishness should prompt us to move heaven and earth to obtain a reversal of the blunder, the effects of which degrade our women and derogate from our character for straightforwardness and generosity. Before I pass away from this subject, I wish to emphasise that I desire no legislation under this or any other head of our internal economy. In the first place, it is next to impossible to get the bulk of our legislators, who cannot have our keenness on such points, to realise how dreadfully earnest we are on them. At best, they will give us the half-hearted help which is the *sine qua non* of good-natured and soft-hearted souls who cannot bring themselves to say a brutal nay. In the next place, we must despair of achieving any good on matters in which the Government are not interested, under a system of legislation which seeks for none and swears by none but high-placed official and officialised voices and ears and therefore hears not murmurs and spies not muddles on lower, plebeian planes—which makes no provision for taking evidence to gauge the public feeling as in the case of the recent Malabar Marriage Act—and which is resolved to get through the largest amount of cut and dry law-making, within the shortest space of time. Let us further note and take warning from the mode the work was done by the good souls who passed the Widow Marriage Act. All honour to them and may God and man bless their

memory ! For all that, who can fail to detect that, in their overflowing sympathy, they gave us a law, which, in their nervous fear of bringing a hornet's nest about their ears, they managed, as it were, to render quite abortive. They were between the devil and the deep sea and they contrived to scuttle out of the job, offering solatium to one side or administering solace to the other side to the question. But they either forgot or conveniently ignored how the dullest person believes that a bird in hand is two in bush. That they should have ever seriously persuaded themselves into hoping that matrimonially-disposed widows would begin with giving up the certainty of present possession for a problematic prospect of being no worse, would be incredible without a pile of affidavits in support. In putting our houses in order, we might therefore take a warning not only from that piece of legislation but also—if I may say so, without the risk of being misunderstood as pleading for my little bantling—from the manner the ill-conceived and ill-framed Pagoda Act came into being—an Act which has stood untouched, notwithstanding that it has been an unremedied scandal for nearly two score years, without raising a single, solitary beat of official pulse at the frightful spoliation of property, innocently but piously endowed for charity to man and service to God—though to a “heathen” man and to a “heathen” god.

The only remaining topic on which I have promised observations is the education of our women. There are, on the topic of education of women, certain general arguments which apply equally to all latitudes and longitudes, where germs, aptitudes and plastic energies exist for a progressive or regenerative change. These are put in a delightfully humorous, yet trenchant and popularly-convincing manner in a paper, contributed to the then youthful and vigorous *Edinburgh Review*, nearly a hundred years ago, by Sidney Smith, one of the most robust-minded and plain-

spoken men of his day. If it were in my power to dovetail in this connection large extracts from that storehouse of masterly exposition and felicitous expression, I should indeed be glad—if only to illumine thereby the views I hold and venture to express here. It is however not in my power to do more than cite or adapt but a very few, pithy sentences of his, as conclusive answers to certain platitudes, forebodings and nervous fears, which run away with the judgments of not a small percentage of men. For the benefit of the affrighted paterfamilias who dreads decadence of maternal duties in the disappearance or diminution of female ignorance, he points to the stern, consolatory truth that nature has so imperatively and rigidly provided for the fulfilment of her functions that no mother could or would forsake her children for a quadratic equation. Upon the dictatorial major domo of the household, who would relegate and restrict womankind to ministrations in the sick chamber and like spheres for the display of tender and benevolent emotions, he retorts that—excellent, noble and heroic as it is to compassionate,—one cannot be compassionating from eight o'clock in the morning till twelve at night, *i.e.*, from day-break to bed-time. To the simple-minded and easily-gulled domestic autocrat who would asseverate that, seeing how all-engrossing have been the demands of kitchen duties and nursery requirements on our women's time, the claims of intellectual or literary culture could secure little or no appreciable leisure and have little or no chance, there is the apt reply that, if performed with an eye to the value of time and with the perception of other and higher vocations, those duties and requirements would actually take a tithe of the time which is now seemingly absorbed. To the complacent soul which is not observant enough to be struck or scandalised by prevalent disparities between men and women, in an educational sense, he has the cruelly uncompromising frankness

to ask why should a woman of forty know less than a boy of eighteen ?

To these dialectic tit-bits, each and every of which literally applies to the exigencies in our midst, I venture to add a few remarks of my own, as suggested by the special conditions under which and the special purposes for which female education has to be pushed forward among us. Say what the exceptionally ardent of the English-educated sections may to the contrary, it is no use mincing matters or hiding the fact that there are heaps of parents and guardians, not to speak of husbands also, who discount—mentally at least—the education of our women on the ground that it is forced upon us by the uncongenial example of our present rulers and on the ground that our girls are placed beyond the needs of earning a livelihood by the injunction in our *Smrithis*, *i. e.*, the repositories of the wisdom of our forefathers, that, as a rule, every boy shall marry and beget children as a matter of inviolable, religious duty and that every girl shall, equally as a matter of inviolable religious duty, be ushered into an early wedded life as an act of first indispensable sacrament for her and as the indispensable help-mate of man in his discharge of obligations to his god and his forefathers.

Being thus, as a matter of unfailing course, provided with a bread-winner, the girl lacks the earnest motive, say they, which, despite all vehement hortatory homilies in favour of seeking knowledge for its own sake, will practically govern conduct. In plain English, education to our fair sex is but an exotic luxury and no such luxury need be enforced in right earnest, though a make-believe of it must be kept up to save appearances. To this specious plea there are two answers.

Taking the latter argument first, a little reflection will show how that very plea supplies, singularly enough,

the most cogent piece of reasoning in favour of educating our women ; because, *ex hypothesi*, there must be on their hands a number of hours and vast stores of energy over and above what are requisitioned by the most exacting domestic and household duties—extra hours and extra energies which, with the faculties and aptitudes with which they are endowed as human beings, they ought to usefully employ but which they could not altogether use up in talking scandal, in sighing for rich articles of jewellery and clothing not possessed, or gloating over those possessed, in indulgence in forced, half-wakeful slumbers or in dawdling over the laborious trifles of decorating and performing the toilet of themselves, their daughters and the daughters of kinsmen and neighbours—the bulk of the occupations, now open to a good proportion of our women to fill up and kill vacant time. Viewed even in the light of getting rid of *ennui* and even in the light of turning into resources of personal happiness the talents and capabilities with which the Maker has dowered them, education seems the best means to adopt ; for, as has been well said, no entertainment is better and chaster than the recreation of reading. As to its being a foreign hobby thrust upon us, the forefathers of those very forefathers who are relied upon and rightly relied upon, as absolving our women from toiling in search, of an unassured means of keeping themselves in decent comfort, had, I think, insisted, with equal stress and as a matter of necessary implication, on education of our girls (1) by conceiving or representing the deity, presiding over learning, as a *Goddess* and (2) by having prescribed *Oopanayana* for them as well as for boys so much as to give the former the option of living out their lives as pious, learning-devoted celibates under the designation of *Brahmavadins*, as distinguished from *Sadyovadhus* whose *Oopanayana* was to be on the eve of marriage which was immediately to follow. I find the texts bearing on this point, cited in the

great Madhavachariar's Commentary on Parasara Smrithi and in the works of Vaidyanatl Dikshit, a learned and highly honoured writer of over three hundred years ago and one too, whom the High Court of Madras has accepted as an authority. As many persons of no inconsiderable erudition seem not to be aware of them, I take the liberty to reproduce them here. They are :—

Hareetha Sutra .—

द्विविधास्त्रियो ब्रह्मवादिन्यसद्योवध्वश्च तत्र ब्रह्मवादिनीनामुपन-
यनं अग्नीन्धनं वेदाध्ययनं स्वगृहे भिक्षचर्येति सद्योवधूनां तूपस्थिते विवा-
हे कथंचिदुपनयनं कृत्वा विवाहः कार्यः ॥

*Dwividhastriyo brahmavadinnyassadyovadhwasha tha-
thra' brahmavadinenamupanayanam agneendhanam
vedadhyayanam swagrihe bhikshacharyethi sadyo-
radhoonam thupusthithe vivahē kathanchith
upanayanam krithwavivahah karyah.*

*Meaning :—*Females are of two classes, viz., Brahma-
vadins and Sadyovadhus. Of these, to Brahmavadins
belong rights of Oupanayana, of sacred fire, and of religious
mendicancy within home—To Sadyovadhus, a sort of brief
Oupanayana at the eve of their approaching marriage must
be performed and then the rites of marriage.

Yamah :—

पुराकल्पेतुनारीणां मौजबिन्धनामिष्यते ।

अध्यापनंचवेदानां सावित्रीवचनंतथा ॥

पिता पितृव्यो भ्रातावानेनामध्यापयेत्परः ।

स्वगृहेचैव कन्याया भेक्षाचर्यं विधीयते ।

वर्जयेदजिनंचीरं जटाधारणमेवच ॥

*Purakalpe thu nareenam maunjrebundhanamishyathe
 Adhyapanam cha vedanam savithreevachanam thatha
 Pitha pithrivyo bhrathava nynamadhyapayethparah
 Swagrihechaiva kanyayah bhykshacharyam vidheeyathe
 Varjayethajinum cheerum jatatharanamevacha.*

Meaning :—In former kalpa, girls had mounjee put upon them (had Opanayana performed). They were instructed in the Vedas and were taught in Savithree. They were taught Vedas either by their fathers, or uncles or brothers and by none others. They carried on the religious mendicancy in their own homes and they were exempt from using deer-skin, the bachelor's clothing and matted hair.

It being thus clear that female education is neither an alien crotchet nor a negligible commodity from an Aryan stand point, the next question is what form it should take with us.

It may be roughly stated that there are four theories on the subject of education of women : viz., (1) that which will enable them to have in themselves resources for personal happiness and to command respect and deferential esteem or "the personal happiness theory;" as we may briefly call it : (2) that which will make them a bundle of accomplishments and entertaining companions or "the personal accomplishment theory" as it may be termed : (3) that which will turn them into rivals of the sterner sex and drive them into battling against the latter for university honors, for civic and other public functions, and for distinctions and preferments in the many exacting walks of life, which men now monopolise or predominate in ; or "the new woman theory" as it may be styled by way of utilising a prevalent expression of the latest date : and (4) that which will render them partners in life of their husbands, in the sense of earnest and sympathetic auxiliaries of the latter in their life's altruistic work and aspirations or "the

lever and fulcrum theory," as I should designate it to convey my meaning.

I have little to say on the first two of these theories, beyond remarking that, so far as they go, the results are unquestionably good but that, if there is no wider ambition, there is but an intelligent self-love at bottom and that the women, educated up to those standards, are therefore practically no proximate helps in the *general* advance of their sex or the community to which they belong, though as so many units augmenting the numerical strength of cultured intelligence in the community, they are inestimable and are worthy of honourable mention as so many shining lights in its midst. Even if education should make no greater advance than to swell the numbers falling under these two theories for a generation to come, the result would still be beneficial and cheering enough, having regard to how much has to be confronted, conciliated and subdued. As sure as the day follows the twilight, so surely are altruistic tendencies and cravings of the modern kind bound to develop in them, when education has grown more common, when educated women have become more numerous and when the possession of educated intelligence and its advantages shall cease to be distinctions by themselves or when they shall not suffice as merely minstrant to mutual pleasure for cultured couples, united for life and blest with abundant energy.

As to the third or the new woman theory, it need not vex our souls or embarrass us, at least for a very, very long time to come. It is however worthy of note that to us Hindus the conception is by no means an altogether novel one; for unless I am seriously mistaken, the Brahnavadins to whom I have alluded and of whom I have given some idea already, of remote ancestors, were but concrete instances of the theory in question. What is of far greater moment for us to note is that our early forefathers not only anticipated the conception of the new woman but also realised

the limitations, to which it was necessarily subject, as shown by their leaving it to individual cases to become Brahmadins or not. That so few had taken advantage of the option is perhaps a practical adumbration of the strong objection which is now levelled against the theory and its products. Be that as it may, the fact is indisputable that there is a dead set against the class and it is worthy of note that it is not the outcome of any such idiosyncratic intolerance as invented the epithet, the blue-stocking. So far as I am able to judge, it has a deeper origin and a far solidier basis in the ultimate physical and physiological data and it is well to take note of the weighty anti-new woman theory, while yet we are on the threshold of it as a people. In this view and as a timely warning, I subjoin, for the benefit of the general reader, a few extracts for which I am indebted to my scholarly and brilliant friend Dr. T. Madhavan Nair.

(a) "There is a growing tendency around us," says Sir James Crichton Browne, "to ignore intellectual distinctions between the sexes, to assimilate the education of girls to that of boys, to throw men and women into industrial competition in every walk of life and to make them competitors in social intercourse and political privileges."

(b) "The anatomical distinction between men and women," says Dr. T. M. Nair in a paper he read before a select yet highly-appreciative audience, "involves every organ and tissue in the body. They extend from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, for, according to Broca, the female cranium is less elevated than that of the male."

(c) "It is a matter of scientific observation," says Dr. T. M. Nair in the same paper, "that in all peoples and races without exception, the absolute weight of the entire brain is on an average greater in man than in woman, though of course individual women do sometimes possess larger and heavier brains than individual men." In explanation of the

fact insisted on in this passage, Dr. Nair gives certain figures which I omit here, to economise space, more especially as they may be dry and uninteresting to the general reader.

(d) "That this difference in the weight of male and female brains," I still quote from Dr. Nair, "is a fundamental sexual distinction and is not to be accounted for by the hypothesis that environment, educational advantages and habits of life, acting through a long series of generations, have stimulated the growth of the cerebrum in one sex more than in the other, is made clear by the fact that the same differences in weight have been found in savage races. It is an established fact that even an extra ounce of brain matter might involve an enormous mental difference... As to the quality of the grey matter in the brain, it has been found by Sir James Crichton Browne that the specific gravity of the grey-matter in frontal lobes (the seat of intellect) in the male is 1036 or 1037 whereas in the female it is only 1034. . . . It is ascertained . that there is a difference in the blood supply of the two brains as well. And we know that blood supply is in some degree a measure of functional activity."

(e) "In a high school for girls," says Sir James Crichton Browne, which he once examined in England, "out of 187 girls belonging to the upper and middle classes, well fed and clad and cared for, and ranging from 10 to 17 years of age, as many as 137 complained of headaches, which in 65 cases occurred occasionally, in 48 cases occurred frequently and in 24 cases occurred habitually."

(f) "This return (*i.e.*, in the preceding extract) represents," continues Sir James Crichton Browne, "no exceptional state of things. A very large proportion of high school girls suffer from headache; neuralgia is common among them and they display multifarious indications of nervous exhaustion."

I wish I could, but I dare not, give more extracts from

the excellent and thoughtful paper, the whole of which is worth reading for its high medical value and its sparkling literary grace. It may be that, in this matter, doctors have taken violent views to spite the usually egotistic pedagogue and the self-opinionated college-professor. But, making the amplest allowance on that account, it is expedient for laymen to act upon them rather than set them at nought. It is, besides, noteworthy that, on the subject of female education, there have been within this century a succession of dogmatisms which one may aptly call the game of battle door and shuttlecock. First, the rage was all for accomplishments. Then there was a reaction and it favoured the propaganda which took no account of any original differences in the conformation of male and female minds and intellects—a propaganda to which even so level-headed a man as Sidney Smith unconditionally succumbed. That has gone on, gaining strength with the lapse of years ever since and it has matured into a means of producing the new woman. This has apparently caused a widespread alarm and the result is—to borrow the coinage of a great writer—a re-reaction, converting the female educational triumph, which had fascinated while yet an unaccomplished fact, into a target for medical, social and political shafts envenomed with sarcasm and sharpened by masculine intolerance. The equilibrium may yet be reached before we shall have gone too far. But, for all that, we should do well to do nothing which might force the theory of the new woman on our sisters and daughters and drive them into multiplying as the modern counter-parts of the Brahmadattins of old. For all that men may do, there will always grow up a few who, like the wives of John Stuart Mill and Mr. Fawcett of recent years and like Mrs. Marcet, Mrs. Somerville and Miss Martineau of a remoter date, may rise superior to the deliverances and vaticinations of doctors, physicists and political seers and may brave the strictures of social and

satirical censors. When they burst into view, without headaches, with healthy skins and with plenty of blood-laden corpuscles, let us honor them with unfeigned pleasure and ungrudging praise, though we should, at the same time, shrink from marking them out as exemplars for wide imitation.

I shall next and last proceed to make a few remarks on what I have called "the lever and fulcrum theory" of education for women. In doing so, I have first to point out, in express terms, what the reader has probably already perceived, that, in indicating the categories falling under the theories which I have ventured severally to enunciate, it has been no purpose of mine to define mutually-exclusive classes. My object was simply to call attention to prominent, *differentiating* features. Freedom and upward progress from ignorance constitute the thread that runs through them all ; and, while the second is but an advance on the first by the addition of a further distinguishing mark, the last two are distinct divergences from the vantage ground, attained by the successful application of the first two theories. To educate with a view to develop powers of pleasing husbands and pure-minded friends is, as must be obvious, only a forward step upon the system of education for personal happiness of its recipients. From being self-centred in the main, a move is thereby made to take into the reckoning also the pleasure of others, though of a comparatively limited number. When we come to the third, there is a parting of ways, if I may say so. Thence there is a deflection in two different lines. The aim or rather the effect of the former of the last two theories would be to further accentuate the self-centered resources, while the object and the result of the latter of them would be beneficially to enlarge the circumscribed circle.

The glory and the crown of heroic absolute self-sacrifice are indeed too sublime to descend on the pate and cranium

of every mortal man or woman; for they are essentially divinely-bestowed and they are reserved for men who count for a million each and whose number is extremely small in the economy of nature. But it is given to most men and women, if they are so minded, to live not a little for others' sake as they do for their own. In this work of moderate philanthropy, man's strength of purpose and of aspirations, where they exist, will redouble itself, in case his wedded consort is also fitted by suitable education to unite her sympathy and co-operation. What then is the suitable education, which is needed?

The education of our girls, as of our boys, is a good deal in the hands or under the direction of men, women and bodies hailing from far off lands and with systems of social forces, prepossessions and preconceptions not altogether in unison with even the enlightened opinion which pervades our social structure.

Their ideas and methods are indeed as unexceptionable as their motives from their point of view, arising as they do and suggested as they are by the motives that operate and the experiences that have been acquired in their respective places of birth and growth or in other less ancient, less advanced and—as some would be inclined to say—less penetrable peoples than ours happen to be. For this, among other reasons, their efforts, without the least blame attaching to them, have been and (I fear) are destined to be, far from efficacious, for all their zeal.

They have, as is only too natural, borrowed from the personal accomplishment scheme which still holds ground in their land and, as the result, the needle and skeins of thread have played an important part in the girls' curriculum of studies, irrespective of the condition of the family to which she belonged or into which she might expect to be grafted. A smattering of their mother-tongue, and not unoften of English as well, finishes

their school career by the time they reach the borderland of pubescence, which, so far as the caste-girls are concerned—and they make up the bulk—is the ultimate thule for one and all of them, for going out of doors. This is often referred to, with regret, by school-managers as handicapping the work they take up but cut short on that account. For my part, I do not think that it should actually intercept the course of education, though it may put an end to continuance in school. Between the period when this interdiction takes place and the period of the girls joining their husbands, the interval is far too short to sap the foundations that have been laid or to quench the thirst that has been created. In the years which ensue till they become mothers of children, at least a few half-hours a day may be made easily available, if only each husband will realise that, in accepting the bride as a gift, he has accepted the role of leading her in the path of usefulness and rectitude. For such a work, if not for love's dalliances, our social framework may be made to afford scope without hitch or dislocation or disruption. Time and reasonable facilities being thus secured, the kind of studies that should be chosen is the only further question. There may be much difference of opinion on this point in matters of detail. But I think all will agree that, so far as "the literature of power" is concerned we have enough and to spare. It is "the literature of knowledge" which does not so much as exist for our women unless indeed English is made the vehicle of learning.

This situation presents, as regards our women in general, a problem which needs far greater practical consideration than I venture to think it has as yet received. Add to it the further problem of no less importance and urgency raised by the fact that European ladies are beginning—I had almost said have already begun and are regretting the paucity of their chances—to seek intercourse

with the better situated of their Hindu sisters, in a spirit of sympathetic kindliness. It is time that both these problems are earnestly grappled with. With a difference which will be presently specified as regards the latter problem, it may be stated, in short, that the creation of a good vernacular literature of knowledge, either by means of translations or of original composition, is a necessary condition precedent in respect of both. Once this desideratum is secured, I feel quite certain that its mastery by our keenly acquisitive girls is as good as accomplished. The equipment thus secured must be supplemented, as regards our more favoured classes, with a decent colloquial acquaintance with English to make them fitted to reciprocate the good feeling and friendliness of their European sisters so as to be productive of mutual respect, mutual pleasure and mutual benefit, none of which can be expected from the now-prevalent practice of our women being trotted out before their European hostesses with an exchange of bland smiles as in a government levee or being detained—each for a few minutes—for a scrap or two of pantomimic or interpreted conversation on trivial matters as in a garden party which would admit of nothing more and nothing else. Into greater detail I cannot go just at present, as I have already exceeded unduly the limits of the reader's patience. Enough to emphasise that to widen the horizon of their knowledge and make them read of other people must prove the solvent of many errors which must give way. Such a course may incidentally lead to some changes in dress and domestic furniture and so forth—changes at which some men would turn up their eye-balls and cry themselves hoarse that a deluge of denationalisation was coming, as if the tailor and the cabinet-maker, the shoemaker and the weaver conjointly settle the momentous question of nationality. The outcry, oftener than not, is the outcome of race-jealousy which is "fashed"

by the disappearance of *visible* marks of fancied superiority ; for who could be so green as not to see, in calmer moments, that the imitation they condemn is dictated, after all, by considerations of greater convenience and decency and is, in fact, a compliment, paid to those that are imitated. Assuming that some undesirable changes in these and like respects will creep in, to set the face against education in order to keep out these eventualities is like laming oneself, lest one may commit trespasses.

I have three words more before I conclude. The first is a word of apology for the length of this paper which, to use the well-known paradox, is long because I have had no time to write a shorter one. The second is a word of explanation for having cited, whenever I have cited texts, those ready to hand, irrespective of the question if they were the best to quote. The third is a word of hope that I may be taken to have done my utmost to avoid giving pain and to write without bias and with the purpose of suggesting to the average Hindu how best *he* could advance, without giving up or being set down as giving up his orthodox status altogether, and without violently breaking away from the fold to which he belongs, if he wished to be an intelligent and useful member admissibly within it.

III.—The Temperance Problem in India.

BY W. S. CAINE, ESQ., M. P.

The Temperance problem in India is almost entirely a product of British rule. The ancient Hindu no doubt had his own Temperance problem to solve. In the Vedas we find ample evidence of the drinking habits of the primitive Indo-Aryan who drank freely of the intoxicating juice of the sacred Soma or moonplant, with which he offered libations to his gods. But the Hindu was soon roused to a sense of the evil which he most manfully put down directly he became conscious of it. In the post-Vedic period of ancient Indian history, the strongest interdiction was put upon the use of all intoxicating liquors ; and at a still later period when the great law books were compiled, the drinking of spirituous liquors was named as one of the five mortal sins which a Hindu could commit. The practice thus strongly forbidden came henceforth to be confined to the lowest and aboriginal classes of the Indian populations who were then practically outside the pale of the Hindu community. Later on, however, a new religious cult arose, called the Tantra, under which drink was associated with religious exercises. In the sixteenth century there arose in Bengal a great Brahmin prophet, Chaitanya, who absolutely prohibited the use of intoxicating liquors among his followers, giving them instead what he called "the new wine of Divine love," with which (we are told) he was himself constantly drunk and in which "he finally drowned himself." Like Buddha, Chaitanya raised a vigorous protest against caste and the ceremonial sacrifices which involved the use of strong liquors, and as a result of his preaching the Temperance problem, as it affected the lower classes of the population in Bengal, was effectively solved. This movement was still in progress when the

British went to India. But it cannot be said that it was helped by the British occupation. It is true that for the first twenty-five or thirty years after the East India Company was invested with sovereign power no excise regulations were set up. But the Government soon became aware that a considerable revenue might be derived from this source and accordingly in 1790-91 the first excise regulations were promulgated, ostensibly for the purpose of suppressing the evils of drunkenness and illicit distillation. The greater evil of Government sanction and control soon became evident.

In 1799, Mr. Wordsworth, the Magistrate and Collector of Rungpore, in Bengal, sent a representation to the Government complaining of the increase in drunkenness, and the numerous vicious practices that are universally associated with it, which he most distinctly attributed to the new Excise Regulations. Opinions of other magistrates were called for, who also, to a large extent, supported the views expressed by Mr. Wordsworth.

Practically nothing was done to change the policy of the Government, and the Excise system was gradually extended in one form and another until it covered the whole of the British dominions in India. The results were most deplorable. Liquor shops were opened all over the country. Officials of the Government openly encouraged the sale of drink, and the supreme authorities, blinded by considerations of revenue, did nothing to check the evil. Many Indian social reformers became alarmed at the prospect and urged the Government to introduce restrictions. They were so far listened to that a commission was appointed in 1883-84 to enquire into the liquor traffic in Bengal. Very little came of this commission although it had to admit, in its report, that not more than two-fifths of the growth of the revenues could be attributed to such normal causes as the growth of population and the increase

ing prosperity of the people. This report made it very clear that at least 50 per cent. of the increase in the Excise revenue was due to the action of the Government and its officials in forcing up revenues at the expense of the physical, social and moral welfare of the people.

I think I may claim to be the first Englishman who seriously investigated the Excise policy of the Indian Government. I made my first visit to India in the winter of 1887-88. My attention was drawn to the subject by a deputation which waited upon me in Bombay, consisting of some of the leading gentlemen of that city. They expressed a strong desire that some organization should be formed in England with a view to Parliamentary action, and also for the purpose of promoting and guiding an agitation throughout India for Temperance reform. I made some further enquiries into the matter, and convinced myself that India was threatened with all the *evil results* of the drunk traffic with which we in this country are so familiar. On my return to England a meeting of members of Parliament and Temperance reformers was convened at the London residence of Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., at which the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association was formed with the avowed object of resisting the spread of drinking facilities in India and of promoting total abstinence among the natives. Mr. Smith was elected President and I undertook the Secretaryship.

I returned to India in the following winter and made a prolonged tour with the Rev. Thomas Evans. We formed Temperance societies in nearly every place we visited and much enthusiasm was aroused in favour of Temperance reform. During this tour I made a complete study of the Excise administration of the country. I found that the methods of administration differed considerably in the various provinces, but that it was everywhere based upon

what is known as the "farming system." This system still prevails in certain districts.

Licences for working distilleries of ardent spirits and opening liquor shops for their sale are granted for certain defined areas to the highest bidder. In some provinces the spirits are manufactured by the Government, and the right to retail only is let to farmers. The Government of India contended that this system was calculated to produce the maximum of revenue with a minimum of drunkenness; that the principles on which it was based were these—*viz.* : that liquor should be taxed and consumption restricted as far as it was possible to do so without imposing positive hardships upon the people and driving them to illicit manufacture. They contended that they had been completely successful in carrying out this policy, and that the great increase of Excise revenue, taken as evidence of drinking habits by those who only looked upon the surface, really represented a much smaller consumption of liquor and an infinitely better regulated consumption than prevailed in former years. I found this opinion maintained, with few exceptions, by the English official class in India; but in my intercourse with educated natives I found a strongly contrary opinion universal, and this was also held by every missionary with whom I came in contact. Native opinion maintains with great pertinacity that the increase of Excise revenue—which is still going on, as I shall presently show—represents a proportionate increase of intemperance throughout India; that the Government, under the thin pretence of suppressing illicit manufacture, are stimulating the extension of spirit licences for revenue purposes; and that they have established liquor shops in a large number of places where formerly such things were unknown, in defiance of native opinion, to the misery and ruin of the population.

On my return to England steps were immediately taken to bring the matter under the notice of Parliament,

and on 30th April 1889, Mr. Samuel Smith, M. P. moved the following resolution in the House of Commons:—

“That, in the opinion of this House, the fiscal system of the Government of India leads to the establishment of spirit distilleries, liquor and opium shops in large numbers of places, where, till recently, they never existed, in defiance of native opinion and protests of the inhabitants, and that such increased facilities for drinking produces a steadily increasing consumption, and spread misery and ruin among the industrial classes of India, calling for immediate action on the part of the Government of India with a view to their abatement.”

I recorded the motion in a speech based upon the fact to which I have already referred and a long and interesting debate followed. Sir John Gorst, then Under-Secretary for India, speaking on behalf of the Government, met the resolution by a direct negative. The motion was also opposed by Sir Richard Temple, an ex-Governor of Bombay, and Sir James Fergusson, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who described it as “a very severe vote of censure on the Government of India.” But in spite of this strong official opposition, and notwithstanding the fact that the Government had a large majority in the House, the resolution of censure was carried by 113 votes against 100, a majority of 13.

This was a great triumph for the cause of Temperance reform. The Secretary of State, Viscount Cross, sent a despatch to the Government of India embodying the resolution of the House of Commons. The Government of India took the matter up seriously, a thorough inquiry and investigation into the administration of the excise departments of the various provinces was instituted, and the defence of the Government of India was, after a lapse of eight months, published in a ponderous volume of 400 pages. That the policy of the Government was largely influenced by the resolution of the House of Commons will

be seen by the following extract from the *Gazette of India*, 1st March 1890 :

“POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN
MATTERS OF EXCISE.

“103. Looking to all the conditions of the very difficult problem with which we have to deal, we have after careful consideration, arrived at the conclusion that the only general principles which it is expedient or even safe to adopt are the following :—

- “ (1) That the taxation of spirituous and intoxicating liquors and drugs shall be high, and in some cases as high as it is possible to enforce
- “ (2) That the traffic in liquor and drugs should be conducted under suitable regulations for police purposes.
- “ (3) That the number of places at which liquor or drugs can be purchased should be strictly limited with regard to the circumstances of each locality ; and
- “ (4) That efforts should be made to ascertain the existence of local public sentiment, and that a reasonable amount of deference should be paid to such opinion when ascertained.”

Thus the Government of India, always slow to move, at last instituted really serious reforms in many districts of the Indian Empire, and the alarming increase in the excise revenue was checked. But I regret to say that in recent years the excise revenue has again advanced. The effect of Parliamentary censure, I am afraid, has worn off and it is to be feared that the “general principles” set forth in the despatch already quoted, by which the excise department is professedly governed, are more often ignored than regarded. A comparison of the figures during the last twenty-five years will show how rapid the increase of the revenue has been :—

Net Excise Revenue of India

1874—75	1883—84	1894—95	1898—99
£1,755,000.	£2,840,000.	£3,965,000,	£4,127,000.

These figures reveal the startling fact that the revenue from intoxicants sold by a Christian Government to people whose religious and social habits are opposed to

the sale of liquor and drugs altogether has more than doubled itself during the last twenty-five years. The figures themselves may seem small as compared with the consumption per head in Britain; but it must be borne in mind that the average income per head of the population in India is only one thirtieth that of the United Kingdom and that India is still practically a nation of total abstainers, the consumption being confined (at present, at any rate) to about fifty millions of the population.

As I have said, it is to be feared that the restrictive regulations of the Government of India have been considerably relaxed of late. Many instances of this have been brought to the notice of the Committee of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association. Any sign of a diminishing revenue from excise appears to fill the officials of the department with grave alarm. One example of this is to be found in the last report on Excise in the Madras Presidency where it is stated that there has been a decrease in the consumption of liquor during the year 1898-99. And also a falling-off in the number of shops. Any satisfaction which the friends of Temperance in India might feel with regard to this is, however, neutralized by the comments which the Madras Government make in their review of this particular report, for we are told that "*it is to be doubted whether the reduction has not in some cases gone too far*"; and further that "the Board of Revenue has settled, in communication with collectors, the maximum and the minimum number of shops to be opened in each district." As this indicates a change of policy on the part of the Madras Government, and having regard to the fact that similar views are finding favour with some of the other provincial Governments, the reader will agree with me that the time has come when the attention of Parliament and the public ought once more to be directed to this matter. Mr. Samuel Smith, M. P., has accordingly

rounding villages, to submit memorials to Government against the opening of liquor shops, and generally to foster the growth of a sound Temperance sentiment among the people.

The progress of the movement would undoubtedly have been much more marked had it not been for the recurrent famines which have devastated India. These dire calamities have naturally diverted the attention of those influential workers to whom we have to look for the effective prosecution of the Temperance cause; for it must be remembered that the men who are taking the lead in this great movement are also in the forefront of every effort that is being made for the social and moral amelioration of the people of India. But although the struggle against famine and plague has made great demands upon the time and labours of some of our best helpers, the more permanent conflict between sobriety and intemperance has not been neglected by them. On the contrary, they realise that it is from the impoverished peasants of India that the greater portion of the Indian Excise Revenue is drawn, and that this is the very class which first succumbs to the privations imposed upon them in these recurring periods of scarcity.

The Excise reports for the past year have not yet been issued and it is therefore not possible to arrive at any conclusion as to the effect which the latest famine will have upon the Excise returns. At the end of the previous famine, however, I made a careful study of these returns and I found that for the first time for many years there was a marked decline in the next Excise receipts for the two years which were affected by the famine. Taking the Central Provinces as an example, in 1894-95 the net receipts from Excise were Rs. 27,21,007 while in 1896-97 they fell to Rs. 20,55,696, a drop of nearly 7 lakhs, or about 25 per cent. The Excise Commissioner, in his report,

frankly attributed this falling off to famine; he wrote :—
“In a famine year it is only natural that there should be a much smaller consumption by the public of Excise articles, and so the Revenue must fall.” This was amply confirmed by reports from the districts. The Collector reported that the continued agricultural distress which made the liquor an unattainable luxury for the great bulk of the drinking class was the cause of the fall in receipts.

All this points to the melancholy conclusion that the customers of the liquor and drug shops of the Indian Government are mainly drawn from the very poorest strata of Indian society, that which falls at once into public relief at the first touch of famine. There can be no doubt that when the returns for the current year are issued this sad fact will be still further emphasised.

I invite the earnest attention of social reformers in India to the facts set forth above, and I appeal to them to lend their valuable aid to a movement which seeks to prevent their native land from falling under the baneful influence of a traffic which has wrought untold misery among the nations of the West, and which will, if not speedily checked, prove a no less potent instrument in the moral and social deterioration of the people of India.

IV.—The Hindu Woman : Our Sins against Her.

BY DAYARAM GIDUMAL, ESQ., B.A., LL.B., I.C.S.,
Judicial Commissioner, Sind.

Our society is unfortunately honey-combed with evils. Our moral sense is again so much atrophied that we hardly realize the sins we commit against those dearest and nearest to us. Do you think, my dear friends and brethren, I am exaggerating? Do you think we do not sin against woman from her birth nearly to her death? Can you deny that, owing to that sinning, women among us are ordinarily no better than

Household stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
 But fit to darn, to knit, to wash, to cook,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish and to scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.

You will say they are not slaves, but my dear friends, what is the meaning of the Asura form of marriage? Is it not a fact that excepting a few upper classes, the rest treat woman as a chattel? Is her birth welcome to those who do not put a price upon her but have to pay large dowries? Is she not a marketable commodity among those to whom her birth is welcome? Look at the matter either way, and then say if you are just to your womankind.

Justice indeed! Why our little ones are barely a few days, or a few months old, when we inflict tortures—brutal tortures on them. Have you not seen little babies withering and shrieking under the agony of the pins or needles passed through their tender ears and nose? From 16 to 18 holes are made, and I should like one of you to undergo the operation in order to realize the suffering of the little

ones—the future mothers of the nation. Have you not seen their tiny chests heaving and panting, their little breath coming and going—their young eyes—new yet to sky and earth—full of a quickening flood of tears with every prick of the torturing pin in the delicate lobes and cartilages? How tender women can stand such a sight passes one's understanding. We have Shakespeare's word for it that, even a philosopher cannot bear the tooth-ache patiently—and yet here are little mites of humanity subjected to the boring operation, in the teeth of the Penal Code, in the face of their very guardians and protectors, and no one heeds their cries. Is this humanity, my brothers? Is this civilization? Is this our manhood? Is this the glory of our education? But alas! those grey-haired sisters—I should say witch-sisters—Use and Wont—with the glass of hoary fashion in their hands, and the mould of obsolete form, have cast their spells over poor India to her grievous ruin. Their Medusa-eye has transfixed us with its stony stare, and petrified us into fossils—curious moral fossils—with a wonderful power of sinning against our own children!

This, however, is but the first Act of woman's tragedy. Sinning against her as a baby—do we cease to sin against her when she is no longer one? Do we not sin against her play-time? Do we not see the little one amusing herself in a way which is most pathetic? Is she taken out to fields carpeted with verdure? Can she tell the names of more than a few birds—of more than a few animals? Is she ever told what beauty God has given to the stars above her—and to the works of Nature around her? What is her outlook? What is the horizon of her little vision? Is she not “cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in” to the four walls of her little house—often with no play-mate at all—often with all play tabooed? There is hardly any play-time indeed for most of our girls, and that means

loss of joyousness, and alas! often loss of health. It has been said that, "lovely human play is like the play of the Sun... ..See, how he plays in the morning, with the mists below, and the clouds above, with a ray here, and a flash there, and a shower of jewels everywhere; that is the Sun's play; and great human play is like his—all various—all full of light and life, and tender as the dew of the morning." Do you provide such play for your girls? Do you even provide one-half as good—or indeed any play at all?

The child grows, and one would think it is time to send her to school. But do we send her there? What is the total number of our school-girls? And is it not a fact that even those who attend—attend, because their schooling costs nothing? Let a fiat go forth that every school girl must pay a poor anna as a fee per month, and the schools will be empty to-morrow. But let a fiat go forth that every boy is to pay double the fee he now pays, and the boys' schools will remain on the whole as full as before. Why is this? Why is it that a girls' school must not only give teaching gratis—but provide even books, slates and pens for the little scholars? Why is it that you do not spend a pie on your daughter's education? Have our girls no souls? Has a girl no eyes or ears, no hands or feet—no "organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions"? Can she not be "noble in reason, infinite in faculty, in form and moving express and admirable—in action like an angel—in apprehension like a god—the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals?" Have we had no Savitris and Sitas—no Dayamantis and Draupadis—no Gargis and Maitreyis? Can we rise in the scale of nations, if our women do not rise? Do you not know that,

"The woman's cause is man's : they rise or sink,
Together, dwarf'd or god-like, bond or free."

If you do—why is it that you make no sacrifice for her

education at all? Is this creditable to you? Do you not know that this whole universe would have lain buried in the abysmal profound of nonentity—if there had not been a primeval sacrifice? If you believe in the Upanishads and in the Gita, you ought to believe in sacrifice. The greatest poet of this century, who was also a seer, tells you :

“No sacrifice to heaven—no help from heaven.
That runs thro’ all the faiths of all the world.”

But, alas! we the descendants of those who believe the whole of life to be a result of God’s own sacrifice, we the descendants of those, who saw God in everything—and whose whole span of years in this world was a Yagna—we know so little of sacrifice that we cannot even spare an anna a month for our girls’ tuition!

But is this all? Do our sins stop here? I wish they did. But one of the blackest of our sins is yoking our little child to a husband before her school-time is over—nay sometimes even before her poor playtime is over. When in Gujarat I was told by a Sub-Judge of a widow, and what do you think was her age? Why—a year and a half! All our people have not yet sunk to that depth of demoralization. But is it not a fact that we marry our children too early, and the result is often a breakdown of the constitution—followed by disease—by domestic fret and fever—division and discord, and even by the supersession of the poor wife? Is it not a fact that the very women we would save have so utterly degenerated that they press for the continuance of the cause of their degeneration? Even a man like Telang could not resist such pressure, and I am afraid, even Keshub Chunder Sen was in part a victim to that kind of pressure. But who is responsible for all this ignorance—for all this degeneration? When the war between the North and the South broke out in America, did any one hold the slaves responsible for the continuance of slavery

—even though they sent up petitions after petitions that they wanted no interference with their lot and were well content with it? The crown of degeneration, believe me, is always complete ignorance of that fatal state, the crown of slavery is the feeling that there is no enslavement at all. We hardly know—at least we hardly realize, that the violation of physiological laws is a sin. Indeed we have become so enslaved to that sin that we are utterly unconscious of the rottenness it has spread in ourselves and in our society. Keshub Chunder Sen collected the opinions of eminent experts on this very question, but we are wiser than those experts! We seek the opinions of doctors in our Courts of Law and act upon them—but why should not we ignore them when our own children are concerned? Can a doctor tell us what is the proper age for marriage—though his opinion may be of value in questions of life and death? No; certainly, all doctors, all experts are fools, when they tell us there is a vast difference between pubescence and puberty—that what is called a sign of puberty is merely a sign of pubescence—that the reflex action of early marriage leads to premature sickly development—that such development means not seldom death in child-birth and, generally, unhealthy progeny and, always, a stunted life. Let us continue to defy the advice of experts—let us continue to make martyrs of our little ones and then protest that we do not sin at all! But if there is a God in heaven—believe me—no real sin, whether you acknowledge it or not, ever goes unpunished; and even now we are paying the penalty in the paralysis that has siezed both our common sense and our moral sense on this point, and in the continual degeneration of the race apparent to everyone but ourselves.

Let us now pass to the fifth Act of woman's tragedy—the Act in which she is called upon to play the part of a daughter-in-law. Torturing her in her infancy—curtailing her play-time—curtailing her schooling—saddling her too

early with the duties of a wife—you must needs also hand her over to the tender mercies of a mother-in-law. And what a life is it? Can you tell me how many waking hours you actually spend with your wife? Do you make up to her for all she suffers at the hand of an unsympathising mother in law? Do you even spare as much time for her as for your cow or for your horse? You have all sorts of resources.—What has she? You can improve yourselves in a thousand ways. You can learn what may profit your soul.—But what can she learn? Here is Mrs. Annie Besant lecturing to you about the doctrines of the Vedas. But though Mrs. Besant is welcome to read, mark and digest those Scriptures--our women are supposed to be disqualified to even taste a little of their honey! Is not this a monstrous doctrine, my brethren? Do not lay the flattering unction to your souls that you are doing your duty to your women to the best of your lights? No! you are not. None of us is, so long as our women have no equal opportunities for intellectual, moral and spiritual culture, and are consigned to a domestic tyranny which fritters away all their energy in patient suffering. I know there are daughters-in-law who prove themselves a pest to their dear mothers-in-law, but on the whole you will agree with me that the mother-in-law has the best of it, and the daughter-in-law the worst, in Hindu homes. It is in our power to take out the sting from this sort of life—it is in our power to prevent no little pain by exerting all our natural influence, by sweet reasonableness, by loving remonstrance, by prudent and considerate interference. But our hearts have grown hard and callous, and we seldom realize the sufferings, silently borne in our homes, or lift our little finger to alleviate them. Is not this our fifth sin?

The sixth Act of this sinful tragic drama is early maternity. Ignoring the laws of sexual intercourse—ignoring the teachings of physiology—some of us used to

perpetrate what the law now punishes as a crime. But there are still violations of physical and moral laws, which are not treated as crimes, but which nevertheless bring their own punishment with them. We sin deeply against our women not only as wives and daughters-in-law, but as mothers of our children. There is a beautiful description in the Ramayana of the care Rama took of Sita, when she was in the condition which Englishmen call interesting, but which is not very interesting to us. Do we take such care of our wives? Do we even see that they have proper medical help when their terrible travail intensified by early marriage is upon them? It was only the other day that the lady doctor at Shikarpur told me that if she had her way, she would hang all the midwives in that city. Do you know how their bungling and blundering often entails permanent injury, and, in no few cases, diseases hard to cure? I requested several gentlemen at Shikarpur to get us Dais who might be properly trained in the Dufferin Hospital. But though promises have been given to me from time to time, not one of them has been fulfilled. So much for our ten er-heartedness! Again, woe unto the child-wife who gives birth to a daughter. A gentleman told me the other day he was going to get his son married again because his daughter-in-law brought forth only children of her own sex. And he actually believed that the poor woman was responsible for the result! It is thus we add insult to injury—brutality to injustice! What hope is there for us, so long as one-half of our race is treated in this fashion? An English poet sings of a time when there will be

“Everywhere

Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,

Two in the tangled business of the world,

Two in the liberal offices of life,

Two plummetts dropt for one to sound the abyss,

Of science, and the secrets of the mind.”

But can we look forward to such a time in our own

land, when we have not yet learnt the barest rudiments of justice to our own wives, our daughters, our sisters, our mothers, and are ignorant of even our own ignorance ?

I come now to our seventh sin, the last Act of the tragedy, and the saddest. I mean the sorrows of widowhood. Lay your hands on your hearts, and say if you have done your duty by the widows in your community. I know that in some castes widow re marriage is allowed. But there are numerous others, in which it is not, and the condition of virgin-widows specially is deplorable. But I care not if you do not marry them, for marriage is not the sole end of a woman's existence. But if you do not marry them, give them at least some training which may make them useful members of society. Believe me, women careless for physical pleasures than men. It is men that brutalize them by their sensuality. It is men who do not even respect the sanctity of the period of gestation or even the first few months of nursing time. It is men who impose their wills on their wives in sexual matters and place no restraints upon themselves. If women had their own way in these matters, they would follow the healthy instincts of nature, and their own ingrained modesty. Therefore let us not assume that woman is fit only to be a wife or widow. Even if you assume this, see that your widows become ministers of mercy, angels of grace. But alas ! what have we done to them in the past ? If we had but a little imagination, if we could transport ourselves to the bourne whence no traveller returns, if we could with our mind's eye see our own daughters as they are after their term of earthly toil and trouble, they would tell us : " Oh, father ! I came to you a divine embryonic soul, I was a trust in your hands. You should have let my little soul grow and expand its wings and see the Father of all light and life. But you imprisoned me in my bodily shell, and you did nothing to help it to emerge thence into the sun-light

of God's beauty. There were no true pleasures for me, no pleasures of Memory, none of Imagination, none of Hope, none of Communion or Divine Vision. See my little unfledged, stunted, blindfolded soul. It is no better than it was. You have violated your trust, for you opened not the windows of my soul, and I have yet to grope in darkness and ignorance—darkness and ignorance that bring their own curse and that spread a blight on your future. Be wise to-day, and be more merciful to your own flesh and blood." But alas! we neither hear the still small voice in our own breasts, nor have faculties for seeing what we have made of woman in the past, and what we are likely to make of her in the future.

Emerson has a golden saying. He tells you "*Be and not seem—Be a gift and a benediction.*" Would we made every one of our daughters a gift and a benediction—would we ceased to *seem* and lived a true *life* and washed away our manifold sins against woman. We hurry her from her infancy—through physical tortures—through a joyless childhood, without opportunities for playing or learning, into the bonds of early matrimony—into the miseries of early widowhood. We sin against her as a baby—we sin against her play-time—we sin against her school-time—we sin against her as a wife, as a daughter-in-law, as a mother, as a widow. And what is more, we are hardly conscious of sinning—so benumbed has become our sense of duty—our sense of fair play—and even our common sense as to what is good for us and for our country. I do not want you to revolutionize your society, I do not ask you to introduce Western fashions and Western modes of life. But I do ask you to give up your apathy—to rouse yourself from your terrible lethargy, and do the barest justice to your women. Do not shut them out of the light—do not starve their intellects and their fine sympathies and imaginations and spiritual insight—give them a wider

sphere of usefulness, and greater opportunities for self-improvement, and above all for acquiring "Self-knowledge, Self-reverence, Self-control," and that true wisdom which makes life a Divine harmony : and, believe me they will not only become your help-mates, if not your better halves, but the curse of our seven sins may, by Divine grace, be removed, and God's blessing be once more upon us.

V.—The Hindu Joint Family System.

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When we talk of Social Reform, we have social progress in view. If we do not care for progress, then no reform is needed, although without progress, stagnation and eventual decay are sure to set in. No healthy society can exist without constant and conscious endeavours towards a better condition. To be satisfied with existing conditions is to invite deterioration. That was the mistake that our ancestors made. When Hindu Society lost its virility and capacity for progress, its leaders adopted a policy of feeble compromise with every fresh environment that changing political and social conditions brought about. Compromise is, indeed, essential for smooth progress; but while it is adopted to overcome temporary difficulties, the ideal should ever be kept in view, and what remnant of evils compromise has left uncured, should again be combated until the ideal is reached. To approach the ideal, not to recede from it, should be the aim of every endeavour. For the time being the ideal may be too remote, and, judged from existing conditions, it may be impracticable. Still a rational ideal is always needful for a potent incentive and rightful guidance. Herbert Spencer truly says: "If amidst all those compromises which the circumstances of the times necessitate, or are thought to necessitate, there exists no true conception of better and worse in social organisation, if nothing beyond the exigencies of the moment are attended to, and the proximately best is habitually identified with the ultimately best, there cannot be any true progress. However distant may be the goal, and however often intervening obstacles may necessitate deviation in our course toward it, it is obviously requisite to know whereabouts it lies." Nothing

can be more fatal to social well-being than the motto of "let alone." Many people are satisfied with the existing state of things. "Are we not sufficiently happy with our social institutions? There is unhappiness in every conceivable system of social organisation. Heaven knows that your so-called reform may make the last state worse than the first. Is it not wise, therefore, to let things alone?" Such an argument, it will be observed, is generally advanced by those who happen to enjoy more than their fair share of the good things of this world, or by ignorant men who are incapable of a conception of improvement. The former are actuated by extreme selfishness, and are entirely bereft of sympathy with those who are less fortunately placed than themselves, while the latter are only a step raised above the condition of brutes who are entirely guided by their instinct and by their wants of the moment. In fact a policy of "let alone" is impossible, because it soon sets at work the latent causes of deterioration. It assumes that the given social system is perfect, that its evils cannot be mitigated, and that persons who suffer from them are entitled to no redress. Though perfection is not attainable, there can be no limit to progress. We see in every part of the world statesmen, patriots, and philanthropists ceaselessly at work conceiving, concerting and carrying out measures for the amelioration of the condition of mankind.

There are those that admit the inevitability of change and progress, but are not satisfied with the direction in which they proceed. Many an intelligent Hindu has a longing for the reappearance of the times and of the social system depicted in the institutes of Manu, if not in the Vedic literature, when the community was divided into four castes based on birth, when the most intelligent class took little or no interest in the activities of life, but, being maintained at public expense, spent their life in sacerdotal

rites or in secluded contemplation, when trade and industry were despised, and when the great bulk of the population were forced to be content with a lot of menial service rendered to the higher castes, without a chance or a hope of rising to higher standards of life. The mind that can conceive that such going backward is possible can be entitled to no respect. India can no more go back to that primitive state than the great British Nation can go back to the age of the Druids. I do not know how these people imagine that the stupendous achievements of human heroism, intelligence, religion and science, during these four thousand years, for the development of man and human society, can be effaced. Even if, by some miracle, all the forces that drag society forward along lines of progress, and are bound to grow in number and strength as the modern system of international relations deepens the interdependence of nations, and by overcoming the obstacles arising from distance and time, tends to raise the condition of the various nationalities to a uniform standard, are destroyed, and Hindu Society is revived in all its primitive glory, how is it proposed to save it from the decay and ruin that seized it in ancient times? The Vedic social system was tried and did not succeed. A resuscitation of the ancient institutions of Hindu Society is impossible unless a huge PRALAYA or deluge sweeps over the whole world destroying all existing nations, and man starts his career afresh from a primitive state. Such an assumption is too grotesque to be seriously entertained. In fact, it may be laid down as a principle of social evolution, that no extinct institution can be revived in its identical shape, without adaptations to suit the change in the environment which time in its efflux consequencelessly effects.

Human mind, in its constant onward progress, acquires fresh truths as the result of its natural development and organic growth and will not relinquish them. The child,

in its innocence and lack of responsibility, is indeed much happier than the adult, it is more beautiful, blithesome and gay; the man, the grandfather, may yearn for the pleasures of childhood, but if they are once past, they are past for ever, and no effort of the will can recall them. We can strike a man dead, but it is beyond our power to make him again the pretty, merry, happy child of his earliest years. In the same way it is impossible to make the men of to-day, the men of two thousand years ago. All our knowledge, all our enlightenment has come to humanity in the course of its natural development, and as the result of its internal vital energies. To attempt to oppose the operation of these elementary forces is as objectless and fruitless a task as to attempt to prevent the earth from revolving on its axis.

Progress consists therefore in moving forward and not backward; and any attempt to move backward on our part while the rest of the world moves forward will only end in disastrous ruin. No nation in modern times can persist in an independent career not in harmony with the movement of the stronger and more forward races. The strongest nations of the world have in their hand the moulding of the destinies of the weaker nations, and where the Western nations lead, the Eastern nations must follow; and if they do not, ruin will seize them. India is being dragged by England in the tail of her onward career; but China, Japan, Persia, Turkey and Egypt—what does the present state of these countries illustrate? Japan would have fallen a prey to the disease germs that, imbedded in her own social system, were eating into her vitals, or would have been swallowed up by Russia, if a great revolution had not so changed her social and political system as to bring her institutions and her own ideals into harmony with those of Europe. And what is the fate of China, which persists in the preservation of her antiquated civilization refusing to

fall in with the ideals of the leading nations of the world ? The modern history of Turkey, Egypt and Persia teaches the same lesson, the lesson, namely, that either submission to the Western forces or ruin is the alternative open to what the Marquis of Salisbury described as the dying nations of the world.

Selection and competition, or the survival of the fittest, is the law that determines progress in nature. It is no less applicable to human society than to animals and plants. In an organised society individuals who are superior to their fellows in some respects assert this superiority, and continuing to assert this superiority, they promulgate it as an inheritance to their successors ; this is how progress is originated and maintained. And what holds good in regard to a single society holds good in regard to the community of nations. The marvellous inventions of modern science having annihilated time and distance, the remotest parts of the world are brought into touch with one another, and the stronger communities constantly exert their influence and assert their superiority over any community which by its weakness is exposed to foreign influence. No nation can develop its destiny in these days independently of the influence of other nations. Exclusiveness or isolation is impossible without producing disastrous results. In fact, no exclusiveness or isolation is allowed, because the aggressive tendency of the more forward and progressive nations constantly seeks openings for the exercise of their energy and the employment of their resources. For purposes of trade, for the employment of their capital, for the settlement of their surplus population, for political convenience, or for the mere glory of territorial aggrandizement, they establish their ascendancy in strange countries, add to their spheres of influence, and thrust their articles of industry. There is no longer a single corner in this wide world which is safe against the encroachment of the manly races of the

West. What is taking place now has always taken place since the beginning of the world—ceaseless and inevitable selection and rejection, ceaseless and inevitable progress. The history of the world, ever since history began to be made, contains numerous instances of kingdoms and empires which, being unable to stand this stress and storm of the world's competition, fell back and disappeared. As we trace the growth, decline and disappearance of the great powers of antiquity, the Babylonian, Assyrian and Persian Empires, as well as the history of the later organisations, the Greek States and the Roman Empire, we perceive the operation of the same law. Our own country has not been free from the results of the same conditions of struggle and success in its long history of an endless succession of vicissitudes. "In the flux and change of life," says Benjamin Kidd, "the members of those groups of men which in favourable conditions first showed any tendency to social organisations, become possessed of a great advantage over their fellows, and these societies grow up simply because they possessed elements of strength which led to the disappearance before them of other groups of men with which they came into competition. Such societies continued to flourish until they in their turn had to give way before other associations of men of higher social efficiency." An intelligent student of the history of our country can call to his mind stages in the career of our race illustrative of this important truth.

The progress of the Western nations, more especially of the Anglo-Saxon race, marks the lines on which the progress of our own country should be directed. The Hindu civilization based on the ancient Aryan institutions is doomed. The cycle of human evolution which it dominated is past and, in the fresh cycle that has succeeded, the Western races lead the progress. The only civilization that is destined to and will eventually dominate the world is

what the Anglo-Saxon race will direct. There is no part of the world where the British nation, the Germans or the Americans do not exercise a dominant influence. To India, for special reasons, no other progress is possible. India cannot hope to dispense with all those appliances of modern life which Western science has placed at the disposal of man ; she cannot escape from the influence of Western thought ; she cannot help imitating the institutions and assimilating the ideals of the West ; any resistance to such influence will only throw back her progress and render her more unfit to carry on the struggle for existence, which, as we have pointed out, is the condition that marks the life of man as well as other races in nature. India lost all vitality and force necessary to pursue an independent career of progress more than two thousand years ago, when she first began to shake at the repeated knocks of foreign invaders at her doors. She at length succumbed to the superior force of the Mahomedans who ruled over her for over six centuries and whose civilization she adopted in many respects. But the decline and overthrow of the Mahomedan power and the establishment of British domination in its place illustrates the law of social evolution. We have been laying stress upon the law of the rejection of the weak and the success of the strong in the ceaseless war of competition and struggle that the human races are waging. For a short time the Hindu race appeared as if it would muster her latent powers and win independence. But the event proved that, like the Chinese, the Indian race had become too antiquated for modern conditions of success, and as in the physical fight between nations, bows and arrows and wooden guns are out of date, so in what may be called the moral fight between nations, the old Hindu institutions constituting their social and political system were too old and effete to stand the crushing onslaught of the Western forces. And

it is only too obvious that the indigenous institutions that served their purpose well enough when India was the mistress of the world and feared no attack from outside will prove increasingly feeble and unsuited to stand or resist the pressure of the younger and more vigorous nations who press forward with facilities and aids which the latest inventions of human mind to enhance the effects of physical as well as moral effort, place at their disposal.

This is the standpoint from which we are called upon to examine our institutions, the standpoint, namely, how these institutions can be so modified or reformed that they may be most serviceable and helpful, in holding our own, in preventing further deterioration, if not in achieving fresh progress, amidst the ceaseless rush, jostle and conflict going on in the arena of this wide world. Social institutions must work by promoting individual freedom and stimulating the capacity for corporate action. There can be no national progress where these two qualities are wanting. Under a social or political system which takes away liberty and independence from the individual and gives him no scope or inducement to work for the good of his neighbours and his country at large, no progress can be possible. This is the basis of the contrast between the nations of the West and the nations of the East. Even among the nations of the West, their growth or decadence has been exactly as this great quality was fostered or crushed by Society and the State. No other fact in the history of nations is more prominent than that the tyranny of society, of priests and of rulers has proved the most effective weapon to kill the latent forces making for the development of men and the growth of the nation. The Hindu race has suffered less from the tyranny of their rulers than from the oppression and selfish greed of their priestly class, who were also their legislators and leaders of thought. There is absolutely no other instance of a naturally gifted race, intelligent, indus-

trious, and docile, capable of high developments, which has been kept down and degraded by a unique system of organised priestcraft. The social institutions of the Hindus which are the embodiments of the wisdom, the self-seeking wisdom, of the priests, have produced the same melancholy effect by killing all individual freedom and crippling the best faculties of the human mind. There is no other country in the world where caste and custom have greater influence than India ; and where every incentive to action and every ideal are judged with reference to the dictates of these two worst of tyrants. The Hindu has not lost the subtlety of his mind, but he can no longer boast of originality, enterprise, or self-reliance. Supposing a highly educated Hindu and an Englishman of ordinary intelligence are both taken to a distant, strange land and there left to shift for themselves, we have no doubt but that the Hindu will find himself helpless and unable to get on, while the Englishman by his pluck and energy will soon win his way to a position of respectability and affluence. The Anglo-Saxon will work hard, grapple boldly with his difficulties, and successfully rough it out in the end. The success that he is winning everywhere in the world, the ascendancy he establishes wherever he goes, his wonderful enterprises and huge accumulation of wealth are due mostly to the individual freedom he enjoys in his native country. This is the secret of the wonderful dominance that England enjoys among the nations of the world, while other countries like Spain, Portugal, Austria and Italy have fallen back in the race and acknowledge the lead of their more masterful neighbours. The tendency of all progressive nations is to allow the fullest scope for the free expansion of the latent powers of the individual and the fullest liberty for him to follow wherever his powers lead him. With the extinction of feudalism and the military type of Society, the slow emancipation of the masses commenced,

and in modern times, it is not only the political emancipation of the individuals of the humblest lot in society that is aimed at, but also to give to them along with the most favoured classes equal opportunities for general advancement.

Not only is personal freedom a great factor in national progress ; but a capacity for joint action either in the interest of a body of individuals or in the interest of the community at large is also important for a successful national life. The great qualities that distinguish man from the inferior animals are his reason and his sociability, and these two attributes impose on him the double obligation of improving himself and improving in co-operation with others the community of which he is a member. In the primitive stages of society, man thinks more of his own individual interests than those of his society, and considers these latter as necessarily hostile to or incompatible with his interests as an individual. But as Society reaches higher stages of development, the interdependence of its various members and classes deepens, and man learns to consider the joint interests of society as well as his own, until at length a condition is reached when his development as a separate individual is less important than his development as a member of society. At first, man under his selfish impulses refuses to recognise an obligation in serving the interests of others, but as the complexity of the social structure increases, he learns to identify the interests of the community with his own, and realises his duty to his nation as well as to himself. Where the interest of the individual and of society clash, it is now recognized in all civilized countries that the former must be subordinated to the latter. The late Mr. C. H. Pearson, the author of that remarkable book, "*National Life and Character*," attributes the downfall of the Roman Empire to the fact that there was no sense of national life in the common-

nity. " Unless the general feeling in a people," he says, " is to regard individual existence and fortunes as of no practical account in comparison with the existence and self-respect of the body politic, the disintegrating forces of time will always be stronger in the long run than any given organization " What great part this feeling of self-effacement in the service of the best interests of the body politic, patriotism, in other words, has played in the history of nations, we need not say. The latest instance is the marvellous heroism that the small Dutch community of South Africa has shown in its death-grapple with the British nation with its gigantic resources. In fact, devotion to the State as the embodiment of the collective interests of the nation, is becoming in all civilized countries an article of faith almost as binding as a religious duty. Even more than a citizen's duty to his religious faith is his duty to his country regarded as binding. Mr. Chamberlain places patriotism before politics ; but amongst the obligations of a citizen, patriotism is before his religion even. Supposing England happens to be involved in a war in defence of Protestantism against the machinations of the Pope and his Roman Catholic lieges, we are not sure that the Marquis of Ripon or the late Marquis of Bute will fight against his mother land for the sake of the faith he professes. It is said that in the American War of Liberation, a Southern General by name Stonewall Jackson, was a believer in State rights but was no believer in slavery. He found it impossible to dis sever the two causes and he elected to fight for the good of the State, which he clearly apprehended, against the abstract and transcendental rights of humanity. The paramount duty of the citizen to make every possible sacrifice for the protection and honour and general well-being of the State is recognised by the modern practice of compelling every able-bodied adult male to serve in the army for a limited period of time.

This sacrifice is demanded solely on the ground that in national existence the requirements of the State are paramount over those of the individual, and it is by no means unreasonable to suppose that this obligation will be extended to other spheres of national duty than bearing arms in the defence of the father land. Nor is this devotion to the State and the sacrifice in its interest a mere sentiment such as were the devotion and sacrifice which people used to make for the sovereign in the middle ages ; because, in those days the State undertakes to do many things for the citizen on whom it confers material and moral benefits of the highest value. Besides, the best thoughts and deeds of a country are the most cherished inheritance of its people from generation to generation till the end of history. "The religion of the State," says Mr. Pearson, "is surely worthy of reverence as any creed of the Churches, and ought to grow in intensity from year to year."

It is the desire of all Indians whose minds have been cultured by education and whose sympathies broadened by experience and reflection, that this feeling of patriotism, this devotion to the common cause of the country, in preference to more limited interests, should be fostered and strengthened as much as they are in other modern States. We can easily imagine what would have been the condition of Europe and of America if this feeling had not been woven into the very nature of the people by example and practice, in the long course of centuries ; and our own country will make but little progress as long as our people remain strangers to this noble feeling which has been the cause of the highest achievements of heroism and self-sacrifice in other parts of the world. It is of course absurd to separate the well-being of the individual from the well-being of the community ; each necessarily acts and reacts on the other. But while certain individual interests claim the first consideration, the interests of the State or the community at

large should be the second. Between the individual and the State no third interest should intervene. Though a strong, intelligent and well educated individual is better able to serve his country than a sickly dullard, still in preference to the service of the country no claim on the resources, moral, material or physical, of any citizen can be recognized. The poor and the sick and other disabled members of a community have a claim on the personal service and on the possessions of those who are in more favoured circumstances, but they have this claim not as individuals apart from their relation to society, but as its constituent units whose well-being contributes to the well-being of society as a whole. The so-called family is no exception to this general principle.

The reader who has had the patience to follow me thus far, will now see the bearing of the foregoing remarks on the subject of this essay. We shall now proceed to consider how far the Hindu joint family system is capable of helping the Hindu community in its progress, as it has to progress under the modern conditions of close competition led by the powerful and highly developed nations of the West; how far this peculiar system of the Hindus is calculated to promote individual freedom and the capacity for joint co-operative effort—the two tests which, as we have said, every institution in a healthy state of society should satisfy. If it is incapable of doing one or the other, then it is obviously the duty of every true lover of his country to favour and work for its gradual adaptation to the new environments of society. It would not be wise to prop it up by artificial supports and try to maintain it intact against the disintegrating forces constantly at work to undermine it and bring about its collapse. It is altogether a false sentiment which exaggerates the virtues of an obsolescent institution and retards natural progress. Ordinary persons cannot get over the influence of

their emotional attachment to ancient institutions of which alone they have any knowledge and amidst which they have been brought up. Their emotion warps their judgment and their suspicion that the change is being pressed by Western influence, by the influence of an alien race, of a different religious faith, enhances their attachment to indigenous institutions as well as their aversion to change. The bias of patriotism, the bias of religion and the bias of education—all tend to blind the judgment and make a due appreciation difficult of the change in the general conditions of society which calls for a concurrent adaptation of the institutions on which social stability rests. Their love of ancient institutions is exactly like the love of a fond mother for her children in spite of their defects of which the neighbour complains almost every day.

All social institutions can more or less claim the merit of antiquity; but while in progressive communities they constantly undergo transformation, in a fossilised social state such as ours they remain as they were centuries ago. The Hindu joint family system had continued to remain, until the leavening influence of British rule began to impart a general shake to the whole social system of the Hindus. Most of the progressive nations of the world, especially those which have a common ethnological origin, start with more or less kindred institutions, but while one nation moves quickly and changes its institutions, others remain stationary and its institutions become more or less stereotyped. Between the institution of ancient Brahminic family, and the institution of family in the early societies of a kindred origin, a striking analogy is found. A Hindu "kutumba" or family consisted in ancient times in a large group of persons, living within one enclosure, ordinarily taking their meals together, having a common fund and a common means of support, owning extensive landed pro-

perty, with herds and cattle, and probably slaves, before slavery was abolished by British government;—having probably a common family idol whose worship was carried on out of the common funds, and performing the annual and occasional religious ceremonies in honor of their departed ancestors.* The Hindu joint families were only a reproduction of ancient patriarchal groups of which the chief characteristics were the supremacy of the eldest male, the agnatic kinship and the resulting law of inheritance; and ancestor worship; and the Hindu patriarchal group had the special characteristic of the exclusion of females from inheritance. It is this patriarchal group that gradually developed into the joint family system. “The modern Hindu community” says Mr. Bhattacharya, “is mainly a constitution and expansion of the eight original *gotras* or patriarchal group that came over to India from the regions which lie in the north-west of our country across the mountain chain which separates it therefrom. The *gotras* were absolutely homogeneous, excepting probably the slave element. The members of these *gotras* gradually supplanted the *Dasya* race, and in the course of these struggles, themselves divided into a number of class divisions known as castes. When they had given up their nomadic life, they settled in agricultural communities, characterised by all those attributes, which distinguish such groups in other parts of the world. These assemblages, known as the ‘*pugas*,’ or village communities, gradually disappeared, or lost all their essential traits, by operation partly of an inherent principle of decay, partly also by the disintegrating effect the Brahminic religion had upon them. Throughout the whole career of these social groups so originated in the ancient *gotras*, the principal early traces were never altogether cast off,—the supremacy of the eldest, the

* Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya on the law relating to the Joint Hindu Family.

female exclusion, the ancestor worship, having been either kept in remembrance, or partially followed in practice; while the most characteristic feature of the *gotra* group, the joint possession of all the property, has retained its primitive vitality down to our own days,—the result of this remarkable vitality being the undivided family of the modern Hindu Law.” That the Khatriyas and the Vaisyas are not the lineal descendants of these eight gotras is a notion which Mr. Bhattacharya discards. “The notion was evidently generated by the immensely developed arrogance of the Indian priestly class—instances of this arrogance being met with in almost every page of the writings promulgated by them from the age of Manu. We must suppose that these *gotras*, or cattle tending pastoral groups, at whose head probably stood the renowned eight Rishis, Vasishta and others, included not only the ancestors of modern Brahmins, but also the ancient progenitors of all the genuine Aryan Kshatriyas and Vaisyas.”

Thus the present Hindu joint family system represents a primitive institution which was common to many races and nationalities, and had its origin in the necessities of a remote age when the protection of person and property and reparation for injuries suffered did not form the duty of an organised central authority which was obeyed by all individuals and groups of individuals, but devolved more or less on the individual or individuals interested in the vindication of justice according to the sense of the time. In fact, each family was a state in itself, and the powerful opposition which the first Aryan settlers in India experienced from the aboriginal inhabitants made it necessary that the family should embrace as many persons as could be kept together. This explains the absolute authority vested in the eldest member of the family and the exclusion of women from inheritance. At one time, in many parts of the world, the tribe, the city, the guild claimed

the absolute disposal of the person and life of individuals ; and there was also the military type of society where all functionaries, authorities and powers, whether Civil or Military, were regimented and disposed as in an army, and where the individual was a mere cog in a piece of mechanism, and of but secondary importance. For similar reasons, the unsettled state of society made the family a state within state, of which the head possessed absolute power over the lives and liberties of all the other members. The improvement of the joint property was another cause of the maintenance of large families. Some of our ancient Rishis recommend living in joint families, because "united, they are likely to attain a flourishing state," through mutual assistance in the acquisition of wealth as well as through mutual protection against external danger. The organization of the family had, to fulfil its purpose, to be very compact and subject to extreme discipline. So, the father had the right to dispose of his children in any way he liked. The father could give away, sell away or abandon his son. The family was also liable to make amends for the injury caused by any of its members. It administered justice within its own limits, although the decision of the family was liable to revision by higher tribunals. The state of Europe in ancient times in this respect was certainly worse. Over the children of the family the right of the head had absolutely no limit. Children were freely exposed in the old Greek and Roman world and among the Norseman. In the case of the wife or of children who had been acknowledged, the father had the rights of a Magistrate, that is, though he could not legitimately put to death, except for a grave and sufficient cause, there was no recognised tribunal to which an appeal from his sentence would lie. The father's right over the person and property was also absolute. The husband could lend his wife to a friend, as well as choose a wife for his son or a husband

for his daughter. Neither wife nor children could possess property. The husband could adopt a stranger to share his children's inheritance. So late as the thirteenth century the Church Courts in England ruled that a husband could transfer his wife for another man for a limited period. The right of selling a ward's marriage was among the most profitable incidents of feudal tenure. A girl of seven years could be betrothed in Medieval England, and as down to a later time the marriages of mere children were still common, the parental authority in regard to marriage was practically absolute ; and to marry without the consent of the parents was regarded as an outrage on decency. But in Europe all these have changed. The right of the father over the lives of his children and the right of the husband over the life of his wife are now practically obsolete. In India, though reform has not gone so far as in Europe, still British rule has divested the Hindu joint family system of its grosser barbarities. The father can still hand over his son to another family for adoption, can keep his children ignorant, can choose a husband or wife for them ; he can similarly consign his wife to a subordinate status in society as well as in the family, can ill-treat her, deny her the pleasures and comforts and the education which the male members of the family can claim. The spirit of the West has not touched and transformed the whole, but it may yet accomplish this and bring our family system into harmony with the new conditions introduced by our contact with the West.

The Hindu joint family is different from what is understood by family in other countries. Western countries have discarded all that represented the characteristics of barbarous times—the need of defence against enemies, the obligation of a common family worship, and the pledges for good behaviour exacted by the State. But there still remains the family consisting of the husband, the wife and the

children who are not adults. The European family is established in pursuance of the natural instinct implanted in the human mind for the union of the sexes and the perpetuation of the species. Though the present Hindu joint family has survived its mediæval characteristics, and is no longer organised on a large numerical basis for purposes of self-protection, &c., still it brings together under the roof of a common *pater familias* a number of persons who have no legal or moral claim on his support. It is impossible that a family, consisting of a number of distant relations with absolutely no interest in the happiness of the union between the master and the mistress or in the proper bringing up of the children, can be permeated by the same feeling of affection and reverence and bound by the same ties as a family which is based on the universal instinct of the animal nature, the attraction between the two sexes, and through their union the perpetuation and sustained progress of the species. Working through the great law of heredity the family founded on the love between man and woman tends to bring into existence a series of generations, the succeeding generation being better than the preceding one in physique, in intelligence and in morality. At all events, this ought to be the case in a healthy society. Western sayings like "the nation is made in the cradle," "the moral man can only be formed on the mother's knee," "the position of women in a society is the best test of its civilization"—indicate the serious and noble conception of the family in the West. A keen sense of the honour of the family has often been the incentive to the noblest acts of heroism and self-denial; and besides, other things being equal, the member of a family whose lineal ancestors have been brave men and pure women, starts with a better chance of a blameless life than the child whose best hope is that its family record may not be remembered against it. No democratic prejudice against social distinc-

tions can extinguish the pride of descent. The value of family feeling is however more based upon forethought for the future than on a sensibility to the past. "Whatever else science teaches us," writes Mr. Pearson, * "it teaches that the family with its inherited taints of greed or lust, its quick impulses or cautious movements, its sublimated or impaired brain power, its noble or sordid proclivities, is the one indestructible factor in human society. We may destroy its vantage ground of privilege and consideration, but however debilitated, it will remain. No change affecting it can be other than far reaching. The man who has not shrunk from dishonoring his ancestors has often recoiled from the prospect of bringing infamy upon his children. In proportion as family bonds are weakened, as the tie uniting husband and wife is more and more capricious, as the relations of the children to the parent become more and more temporary, will the religion of the household life gradually disappear." What the future of the family system of Europe will be, it is not our object here to consider. "May it be," says this writer, "that as husband and wife, parent and children, master and servant, family and home lose more and more of their ancient and intense significance, the old imperfect feelings will be transmitted into love for fatherland." May it be or may it not be. The Hindu family system has not reached a stage of its refinement when similar doubts come within the range of practical sociology. But it is certain that it will soon survive its present crude stage and take that constitution and acquire that spirit which will make the family a healthy factor in society instead of the drag and clog that it is at present. Man's part in the social economy is that of the bread-winner, the defender of the living generation, woman's part is that of the preserver and improver of the coming generation. But the drones and idle hangers-on

* National Life and Character.

have no part whatever, their only claim is to be rejected and left to suffer the consequence of their revolt against nature which requires a constant exercise of all faculties in view to progress and life, with the penalty of death for default.

Thus the Hindu family system and that of other nations differ in character and aim. The European family is based on the sovereignty of woman who is the true fountain of all national greatness, whereas the Hindu system still keeps its old distinctive feature, being an organization chiefly for the building up of common property. The family organization has no longer to defend itself against outside aggression, nor is it kept together for common ancestor worship. Its only object at present is to provide for the maintenance of a number of persons connected together by some sort of relationship. It is not only the support of the old parents and brothers that it undertakes, but also that of sisters, cousins and other destitute relations. The object was in a measure easily attained in former times, when all the members could live together under the same roof, deriving their livelihood from the common landed property. Instances were not uncommon until a few years ago when a single family consisted of nearly one hundred persons, men, women, children and servants. But in proportion as the livelihood of the family ceases to be derived from land alone and is derived from other occupations as well, this unwieldy constitution of the family is bound to be shaken. The upper classes of Hindus now largely fill the public service, learned professions, and the occupations of trade and commerce, and it is obvious that such people cannot live together in the same place or that the earnings of different members cannot be thrown together into a common stock for common support. The father is separated from the son, brother from brother, uncle from nephew, and so on, each living in a place to which his avocation calls.

This necessity of modern times is a great blow to the old constitution and spirit of the joint family. Where the different members of the family live together in the same house, the elder male members exercise more influence on the younger ones, and the distinction between the working man and the idler, the clever man and the dullard, the old and the young, is less observed, and the women of the family are consigned to a common position of subordination to all the adult male members. But when the joint family is scattered into different groups in distant places, each group becomes a family in itself, more simple and rational in its constitution and spirit, though the obligations of their joint nature are more or less respected. In the present transition state, the Hindu joint family system is less antagonistic to the dignity of woman, and to the freedom of the individual, and more calculated to keep out the drones.

How the evils of the Hindu joint family system strike a sympathetic outsider disposed to be lenient to our faults and actuated by a most genuine sympathy for the well-being of the Hindu nation, will be seen from the opinions which Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, now Chief Commissioner of Assam, expressed nearly twenty years ago. The climate of India is enervating, while the simple wants of the people can be easily supplied, and there is a tendency, in consequence, among the great mass of the population to lead an idle life, to eke out a livelihood by begging, or to support themselves at the great expense of their charitable relations or neighbours. This system has given rise to a large class of idle population in India, and is producing incalculable evils to progress. "It is this state of things," Mr. H. J. S. Cotton says, "which I condemn as a bad one. It is desirable to encourage among individuals not only a sense of self-reliance, but a desire to be independent, and a feeling of shame in receiving support from the charity or labour of others without the return of any corresponding equivalent."

It is only the sick and infirm, women and children, and, for special reasons, the priesthood,* who are rightly supported by the labour or others.

The able-bodied man must work, and the necessity of work is a principle, which above all others, requires to be implanted in the mind of the oriental, whose home is in a hemisphere where the bounty of nature seems almost to remove every physical stimulus to exertion. The dignity of labour is a faint glimmering light even in Western Europe ; but in India such an idea is not only unknown but repellent, and it is considered disgraceful in a man to work for his livelihood by the labour of his hands. Therefore, I believe that in India any system of social life which indirectly or directly may be said to afford encouragement to sloth is injurious, and that we should do our best to modify or eradicate it."

I am not discussing, in this paper, the subject of our joint family system in regard to the law relating to the rights of its constituent members, but am considering the wider aspect of its effect on the general well-being of society. Still the one not being separable from the other, the discussion which Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar's Bill on "the Hindu Gains of Learning" raised in Southern India, throws a good deal of light on the general evils of the present state of the Hindu family. Though the discussion was confined to the more educated classes among Hindus, still a few of them, true to the conservative instinct of the race, expressed themselves against the proposed legislation. But the majority of those that were consulted on the desirability of legislation to protect the earnings of a member of a joint family from wanton claims urged by the drones were in favour of such protection being granted, and pointed out some of the more flagrant evils of the existing system. I shall quote here the opinions of two Hindu gentle-

* Mr. H. J. S. Cotton is a follower of Comte.

men, who, by virtue of the position they hold, may be said to be misled by no fads or theories, but to take a practical view of the question. Dewan Bahadur Srinivasa-
raghava Iyengar, who has been the chief minister of the Native State of Baroda for over five years, says: "What generally happens in Hindu families is this: So long as the earning member lives there is seldom any trouble; the other members look to him for protection and know that, if they put any pressure upon him, it is open to him to separate himself from the family and thus cut off their supplies. When he separates himself of his own accord he generally makes, out of his self-acquisitions, provision for the other members to the extent of his means, though he does not feel bound to consider his cousins, nephews, and other distant relations as being on the same footing as his own children whose interests have naturally the first claims on him. It is when he dies leaving a widow, more or less helpless, and young children, more especially girls, that the troubles commence, leading to much fraud and waste of property. The proposed legislation will effectually put a stop to these evils and be of great benefit to the country." Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, the veteran minister of Mysore, says: "He (the earning member) would, in most cases, be found most willing and ready to assist his poor relations if the matter were left to his own good sense, natural affection, and desire to win public esteem. On the other hand, to the man who is dead to the dictates of natural affection and the duties enjoined by the opinion of society, there is already, under the existing system, a ready means of escape, as he has only to take the precaution of having a division of family property effected when there appears a prospect of his attaining to wealth. The real sufferer, under the existing system, therefore, is the educated earning man having a respect for the opinion of society and natural affection for his brothers and more distant kindred, who

hesitates to resort to a division of family property, an extreme measure which is distasteful to every Hindu as it involves a severance from the rest of his family and renders him, for all practical purposes, including those of religious ceremonial, an absolute stranger to them." Sir V. Bhashyam Iyengar himself stated that "the personal law of a nation in its bearing on domestic and family relations, should be such as to ensure honesty and fair dealing at home, but if the law, owing to its obscurity and uncertainty or any fault therein, is such that honesty does not begin at home, the sooner it is changed, the better will it be for the development of the character of the nation as citizens." Thus the present system of the Hindu joint family has a most demoralising effect on the individual members of the family; and its effect, more especially, on the most capable and intelligent member—the member who earns his own livelihood and the livelihood of a number of others—is most deleterious, driving him to fraudulent and binami transactions to elude the inroads of idle greed.

The general demoralisation of the members of the family, with a direct or indirect interest in the joint property and earnings, and the taking away of individual freedom from the earning member who, by his intelligence and capacity, is most likely to be of use to society, are among the worst evils of this system. I have already dwelt on the importance of individual freedom as a factor in social progress. In proportion as the individual is allowed full scope for the elevation and expansion of his nature, the society of which he is a member and for whose progressive well-being he is called upon to labour and employ his talents, makes progress along all the lines of civilization. Although the material and social conditions of a nation help the moulding of individual character, still the reverse is also true, and we see almost every day how the knowledge, energy and corporate capacity of individuals

are building up the fortunes and greatness of nations. Even outside the dominion of man, in the wider dominion of nature, the same law of a ceaseless struggle for individual assertion and individual perfection is seen to prevail. All alike, animals and men, are seen struggling for this end—the end of individual mastery. Who is there in this wide world, in the sluggish and indolent countries of the East or in the active and aggressive countries of the West, who is not actuated by the ambition to rise to a higher position than his neighbours have reached, to be less and less dependent on others, to secure the freest and widest range for the display of his talents and capacities? Money, position, and authority are all prized, not so much for themselves as for the means they furnish to satisfy this ambition, this deep seated desire, in the heart of man. Tyrants and priests have throughout the history of man tried to suppress and crush out this desire by their selfish policies and vile deeds. But as the present condition of Europe and American, aye, even of Asia, shows, this implanted nature of man—the nature of the low, crawling slave as well as of the mighty Emperor—will in the long run assert itself, sometimes in open rebellions and violent efforts, but often in insidious plans and secret circumventions. The Peasant War of the 17th century, the French Revolution of the 18th and the socialistic and anarchic movements of the 19th in the European continent, are a few more prominent among the numerous instances of man's instinctive desire for freedom, bursting like volcanic eruptions through obstacles placed by ambitious and self-seeking rulers, who in their own deeds and careers illustrate the law we are here laying stress upon. No system of society or government can endure which makes no provision somewhere for the expansion of the individual; and unless this is done, it must either explode in revolutions or sink into ruin and decay. In the robust West, it ended in revolutions.

while in the apathetic East, the political system collapsed, and society has sunk into hopeless decay. "To what is the stagnant condition of India with its swarming millions, due," asks an English writer,* "but to the system of caste which, leaving no room for individual character and genius to climb, reduces man to the condition of a thing, and of his immortal spirit makes a base and material tool merely? To be free to develop every side of our nature according to the infinite variety and subtlety of genius and aspirations, that's expansion, that is liberty." Caste is the colossal Jagannath under whose ponderous wheels the Hindu nature is squeezed and crushed; but the joint family system is the car of the minor deity which, behind the chief figure in the destructive show, plays its own part with substantial effect.

Many a Hindu has had his whole nature strangled, his talents degraded, his budding ambition blighted, his hopes and aspirations frustrated, because amidst the heavy burdens pressing on him as the most useful member of a large joint family he could not act in obedience to his own impulses and convictions! There would be more public benefactors, more social reformers, and more patriots in India but for this social system and the tyranny of public opinion formed and educated under it and other kindred institutions. How old grand mothers who will not die, brothers who have to be fed and brought up, and do-nothing dependents, have prevented many an educated Hindu from fulfilling his most ardent desire, his most cherished convictions, in the interest of his countrymen and his fellow-creatures. He has left his own wife and children helpless and dependent on public charity, because while he was alive, all his earnings were eaten up by brothers, nephews and cousins, who, in return would most cruelly eject from their doors the destitute widow of their late

* John Batic Crozier on Civilization and Progress.

benefactor. In such cases, gratitude is out of the question, because the help that the drones receive is not considered as a favour, but as an inadequate fulfilment of an obligation. They grumble that more is not done for them, and are jealous that others receive more of the master's good things. The Hindu joint family is seldom the happy home to which the responsible master returns for relief and rest after the day's hard toil ; it is rather a feeding house where every one is fed, not out of charity, but as a matter of right on the part of the dependents ; and for all the sacrifice that the master undergoes, anything but gratitude from the dependents or place in his own mind is the guerdon.

It is only among Hindus that this custom of an earning man supporting a large number of relations and dependents prevails. In no other country is this obligation recognised to the same extent. Even among the Mahomedans of India the joint family system does not prevail. I do not lose sight of the natural feeling of attachment between brothers and sisters that were brought up by the same parents and under the same roof. But this attachment can be healthy and beneficial only when it is spontaneous and not forced. In the discussion that was raised on Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar's *Gains of Learning Bill*, a good deal was said of the obligation of the member educated at the joint expense of the family to educate and bring up the other members. I do not see how this obligation arises. The education of children is recognized in all civilized countries as an obligatory duty of the parents ; and such importance is attached to the proper education of every member of the community, that, if the parents are unable to discharge this duty, the State undertakes it. The persons that were responsible for my birth are bound to see that I do not become a burden to myself and to society. If the birth of healthy children, the bringing up of capable citizens and the progressive

perpetuation of the species, is the object and end of the union of the sexes, then this duty should be boldly faced by the parents or should be undertaken by the community which benefits by the consequences of this natural instinct. To throw this duty on the back of an individual who is in no sense answerable for the union of the sexes or for its consequences, is unreasonable and wrong. To contend that anything done to weaken this obligation recognized in the Hindu joint family system will result in the retardation of progress in the general education of the community is to betray ignorance of the social conditions of other countries in the world. In countries where every man and woman can read and write, no such system exists ; and among the non-Hindu sections of the Indian population, Parsees and Native Christians, and Mahomedans, education is not obstructed by the absence of the peculiarities of the Hindu social system. To shelve on other shoulders the responsibility which belongs to the parents must have the effect of making them undervalue its seriousness and show improvidence and wrecklessness in the bringing up of the family. How many Hindu parents are there who feel and act under the conviction that they will rather have a few children and give them good education and respectable breeding, than have a number of them who cannot all be educated, cannot inherit sufficient means to support themselves, or get a decent start in life ? Yet nothing can be more desirable for the material and moral well-being of the community than such a feeling and such a conviction.

One great merit that is claimed for the Hindu joint family system is that it solves the problem of the poor in India. Though there is some force in this, yet I cannot admit that the absorption of a large portion of the pauper and idle population in the family is an unmixed good. As I have already said, the Hindu family does not foster a genuine feeling of charity, for it is not spontaneous or dis-

criminate and is often exercised under circumstances which, instead of blessing both the giver and the receiver, demoralise both, and bring evil to the individual and the community. A system of pauper relief which will make every able-bodied idler to work and earn his own livelihood is an infinitely better solution of the question than our joint family system. Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, to whose opinion I have already alluded, contests this point as follows : " I think you somewhat unnecessarily assume that if the family drones were bereft of family support they would sink into the condition of paupers, and become a burden upon the general community. The argument may be unduly pressed. For there is indeed little or no analogy between the problem of pauperism in Europe and of poverty in India. In ordinary times—famine and other similar calamities apart—the pauper of India is not like the pauper of England, for whom sustenance can only be found at the public cost ; and the reason of this is that the necessities of life in an inclement country like England are so immeasurably greater and more expensive than they are in India. In ordinary times I should have no fear of the pauperisation of India if the Hindu joint family system ceased to exist. There is no pauperisation among Mahomedans with whom no such system prevails. In times of crisis the charity of the joint family dries up unavoidably, the misery and starvation among the idle mouths dependent on it for their support is even greater than it would have been if they had previously been in the habit of endeavouring to support themselves. These drones are paupers already. They should be compelled to work, but the existence of the family system removes the necessity. Only in time of famine it is that they are cast out, a useless number of mouths to feed, who in no inconsiderable degree enhance the difficulty of the problem of famine administration."

Another great objection to the joint family system is that it degrades the position of women. Instead of ruling the family as its queen, commanding obedience and reverence, the Hindu woman is the drudging slave. No culture or elevation of feminine nature is possible in a Hindu home. The first essential of a happy family, a free love between husband and wife, is restricted and smothered by the cross influences of a number of individuals who do not strictly belong to the family. The instinct of love is as deeply implanted in the human mind as are other natural instincts, and it constantly forces a vent for its exercise. But hindrances that cannot be overcome restrain this exercise, giving rise to a good deal of demoralisation of both the parties. A genuine love, a true feeling of affinity, cordial companionship, mental correction and elevation—are said by modern scientists to be essential for healthy offspring. But our constitution of the family makes this impossible. How unnatural is this constitution, is almost daily illustrated in the constant grumbling of the old matron of the house of the dominion of the wife over the husband who, fearing the displeasure of his elderly relations, and at the same time unable to resist the instinct which draws him in a bond of holy and affectionate kinship close to his wife, is a most unhappy victim to his own embarrassment and moral conflict. Many a young wife has suffered the most cruel treatment from her husband and has had her whole life blasted and wrecked under the coercion of the unsympathetic and selfish drones hanging on the family. No happiness, no culture, no ideal is possible to the Hindu wife, her only ideal is to drudge in the kitchen from day's end to day's end. The four walls of the Zenana enclose the universe that she knows. "The moral man grows on the knees of the mother"—but in India, the child—the father of the man—knows nothing like mother's training and experiences very little of the

sacred influence which the tender solicitude of the mother exercises on the child's moral as well as physical growth. The mother herself—though she is only a child when the burden of maternity begins to rest on her—can receive or give herself no education whatever. Liberty of every kind being denied, she has her natural intelligence and her faculties crushed by restraints or degraded by ill-treatment. If we observe the difference between the joint family as it still survives in villages and out of the way places, and the family constituted by the educated Hindu of the modern times, with his young wife far off from his parents and elderly relations, in regard to the relation between husband and wife and general tone of the family, how in the one case the young wife is a dumb driven cattle, an entire stranger to all freedom, to all elevating impulses and influences, and how in the other she with dignity plays the mistress of the household, is a ministering angel to her husband, and the earnest but gentle tender of her children, the unnatural and vicious constitution of the joint family system will be apparent. Away from her mother-in-law and the family she dominates, the young Hindu wife is a blithesome sprightly girl, loving freedom, and indulging in her natural tastes. She learns and exercises responsibility; reads and thinks, is curious about world's affairs, and has her faculties expanded. But in the cramping atmosphere of the joint family she is an overworked, ill-treated, sullen and unhappy creature, the very picture of helplessness and depression. In such a state it is impossible that the Hindu mothers can originate a progeny that can be of service in the advancement of society's well-being.

In Bengal, it is believed, the joint family system has made the seclusion of the women behind the *Purda*, and the pernicious practice of infant marriage, necessary. "A numerous group, like our joint family, between whom the

bonds of natural affection are very unequal cannot, I fear, be allowed the fullest social intercourse, and that within the seclusion of the home, without serious danger to their moral purity ; and the *purda* being thus necessary within the family, it cannot be dispensed with in respect of outsiders. The *Purda* as well as the subordinate organization of the zenana system, requires that the newly married wife should be trained to the habits and ways of the society she enters into. To this end infant marriages are more or less indispensable."* Thus in Bengal this system has developed evils which in Southern India have not overtaken it. Here neither the *purda* system nor the practice of child marriage is an inseparable characteristic of the joint family. Dravidian women, like their sisters of the Dekhan and Western India, are not secluded behind the *purda*, though their movements inside the house as well as outside are subjected to restraints sometimes exceeding the necessary limits of that modesty and reserve which so much add to the grace of feminine nature. Nor is the practice of child marriage prevalent among the non-Brahmin communities who are as much addicted to the joint family system as the Brahmins. There can be no doubt that the *purda* system as well as child marriages were introduced in consequence of Mahomedan rule to protect women from the violence which the example of Mahomedan rulers and the general lawlessness of the times encouraged. But to say that the *purda* is necessary to protect the moral purity of women within the four walls of the home is as absurd in theory as it is a gross libel on Hindu women. In Southern India, I have heard of joint families consisting of fifty persons and more, and not a whisper has been heard against the chastity of their feminine inmates. Hindu women have many defects in their nature : they are ignorant, superstitious, liable to

* A Bengali gentleman's views quoted by Mr. H. J. S. Cotton.

be easily tumbled, wanting in refinement ; in fact they have most of the defects incidental to a crude state of society in which women are held in subjection. But their chastity has never been questioned. If in Bengal greater precautions are deemed necessary to screen the weak feminine nature against the outrage of the other sex, it can only show how wicked the masculine sex of Bengal must be. Still neither in Bengal nor in any part India is the *purda* a necessary part of the Hindu family system, no more than it is of the family system of other countries in the world. In Southern India where the *purda* does not seclude the women of the family from men, the position of the women is degraded enough ; but the *purda* of the Bengal household can only add to this degradation. "It consigns women," says Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, "to a condition of subordination and subjection which experience shows us is inseparable from a life of domestic servitude. It is based on a coarse view of life, which has no other bond of union between the sexes than a mere sensual idea." If the practice of child marriage is rendered necessary by the joint family system, the system is to be condemned all the more. The most narrow minded reactionary among modern Hindus has not found justification for child marriage, the greatest curse, next to caste, that has brought the Hindu race so low. To say that girls should be married when they are yet children in order to prevent immorality only shows how wicked and immoral must be the society where a man cannot come in contact with a woman without being moved by the vilest of thoughts. Child marriage is not the universal practice in India, and yet in families where girls are not married until they are well advanced in years, female chastity is preserved beyond the reach of slander or calumny. To woman as well as man purity is possible under a good domestic discipline ; and if in India women more readily yield to temptations or succumb to the wickedness of man, it is because their moral

as well as physical nature is weak, partly in consequence of inherited physiological conditions and partly of the sentiment ingrained in the nature of the Hindu woman that she should not resist man's intrusion or insult, however wicked his intention may be.

Woman, as I have said, is the preserver of future generations and improver of the race, in the sense that from her human evolution derives its progressive energy. The ancient Hindu sages recognised this sublime truth. Like the Greeks, they saw in the union of two individuals of opposite sexes, the sacred design of reproduction alone, which consecrated this act as necessary and sublime, thus preventing the possibility of unworthy suggestions and trains of thought in a normal and ripened intellect. They had not obscured and perverted this elementary impulse in man as modern civilization has, and therefore were still penetrated with the natural admiration and gratitude for the process which is the source of all life throughout the universe, the process of reproduction. They paid honors to the organs involved in this vital action, placed representations of them as symbols of fruitfulness in the temples, public places and dwellings, invented special deities to personify propagation, and paid them a worship which did not then degenerate into gross and purposeless sensuality until the later periods of the moral decay.* Human love is no doubt principally an impulse for the company of a certain individual with the purpose of reproduction, but in fact it is something more than this impulse. It is an enjoyment of the intellectual qualities of the beloved being. The sentiment survives the impulse for reproduction, and is a living force in the union of two individual throughout life. The intellect of the Hindu wife is not cultivated, and in modern times there is great disparity between the educated Hindu and his un-

* Max Nordau on Conventional Lies.

educated wife in regard to cultured intelligence. But, though the intellect of the Hindu woman is uncultivated, still she is not wanting in natural intelligence which makes her company a source of pleasure and often of edification. But this disparity ought not to exist, and to raise her from her position of mental inferiority which often mars domestic felicity and causes great injury to the offspring, is one of the objects with which an alteration in the foundation of the Hindu family system is advocated.

The degradation of woman is the result of our social system, and by her ignorance and weakness and by her very degraded state, she often falls and sinks into deeper degradation. The old bonds of society are giving way and woman has no longer the same safeguards and asylums that she had in former times. There is consequently a larger number of helpless widows and orphans and deserted women in the country, than there was apparently in times when Hindu society, rested firm on its old moorings. The individual as well as society must pay greater regard for the purity and elevation of woman's nature, by raising her to the dignity of freedom, by encouraging her sense of self-respect, and by arming her with the weapon of education. Above all, she must be placed above anxiety for her daily bread, because it is poverty that brings many a woman to ruin. The Hindu family system instead of recognising these claims of woman, and being constituted on the principle of her sovereignty in the family, consigns her to a condition of subordination and subjection, and thus corrupts and narrows the very fountain from which human evolution derives its energy and health.

To sum up the foregoing arguments. As Lord Rosebury said at Glasgow, * the twentieth century would be a period of keen and almost fierce competition among nations ; and into this competition India would be drawn more

* In his Rectorial address on the 10th of November 1900.

directly than ever by virtue of her dependence on England. The result of India being thus turned in the vortex of international struggles for the wealth of the world, would be the approximation of her social and political institutions to the models of the West. The secret of success that Western nations are winning is the perfect freedom of the individual and his readiness to sacrifice his own private interest for the well-being of society ; and in proportion as social and political institutions of a country satisfy these two tests, they will be either praised or condemned. The Hindu joint family system is the least designed to develop these qualities ; on the other hand it crushes individual freedom, it degrades woman, it breeds incompetency and selfishness instead of public spirit among the citizens ; and is altogether incompatible with the spirit of the new civilization which is spreading over India in consequence of British rule and of a quicker intercourse between the East and the West. From these causes, we should pronounce the Hindu Joint Family System to be a doomed institution, and say, in the words of Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, that it only remains for the leaders of the Hindu community, by gentle and judicious guidance, to control the period of transition, so that it may be passed over with the least possible disturbance, and after rejecting the environments which prejudice and disfigure the present system, to reorganize the more suitable materials which are available for their purpose on a healthy and progressive basis.

VI.—Fusion of Sub-Castes in India.

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The Editor of the *Indian Herald* has asked me to contribute a paper to his forthcoming work on Indian Social Reform. The subject he has entrusted me with, is however, a very difficult and complicated subject, and I wish he had given it to one possessing greater knowledge and greater opportunities for observation. I shall however try to show as briefly as I can how the system of castes and sub-castes grew up in India, how far it forwards or retards its progress in the scale of nations and how it can best be modified to suit modern requirements. My views on the subject are already contained in my work on Hinduism : Ancient and Modern, and this paper can only be a reiteration of those views.

THE PURE CASTES OF ANCIENT INDIA.

The history of Caste in India shows how a society once healthy and progressive, goes lower in the scale of civilization by submitting itself blindly to priestly influence and shutting itself completely off from all healthy contact with other nations on the one hand and bringing within its sphere nations outside it, by descending to their level and adapting itself to their customs and institutions on the other. The ethnical basis of caste as declared in the four-fold division of Hindu society into Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras is to-day the same as it was when the Rishis of the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Vedas (Book X, Hymn 90) sang of "the Brahman being the mouth, the Rajanya (Kshatriya) the arms, the Vaisya the thighs, and the Sudra the feet of the Purusha." But the superstructure is now regulated by quite a different system based

upon geographical division as well as upon functional distribution. While therefore it shall be impossible to blot the caste system out of India any more than out of any other country in the world where natural divisions of society into teachers, rulers, producers of wealth and servants and labourers are found and ought to be found, such reforms ought to be made in its superstructure, such portions of it as have become old and are crumbling into decay and are unfit for use, renewed and remodelled as shall bring the edifice into greater harmony with both modern requirements as well as with the design of its founders in the past. How this can be done without doing violence to the traditions of the people, how the reformer can work on the lines of least resistance in the face of inertia on the one hand and modern revivalistic tendencies on the other, is a question worthy of serious consideration. All success in social reform greatly depends upon how far you are able to broaden the basis of society. By this method alone you can do away with many of the evils which are rampant in it and your task is the easier when you have the sympathies of the civilized world and the sanction of religion with you. How this can be done in the matter of reform in the caste system we hope to show in this paper.

The Vedas and the Epics carry us back to the good old days of India when there were no castes and "the whole world consisted of Brahmans only. Created equally by Brahma men have in consequence of their acts become distributed into different orders. Those who became fond of indulging their desires and were addicted to pleasure and were of a severe and wrathful disposition, endowed with courage and unmindful of piety and worship.....those Brahmans possessing the attributes of *Rajas* (passion) became *Kshattriyas*. Those Brahmans again, who, without attending to the duties laid down for them became possessed of the attributes of goodness (*Satwa*) and passion and took to the

practice of rearing of cattle and agriculture became Vaisyas. Those Brahmans again who were addicted to untruth and injuring others and engaged in impure acts and had fallen from purity of behaviour on account of possessing the attribute of darkness (Tamas) became Sudras. Separated by occupation Brahmans became members of the other three orders." (Mahabharata, Moksha Dharma, chap. 188). "Neither birth nor study nor learning constitutes Brahmanhood, character alone constitutes it." (Mahabharata, Vana Parva, chap. 313, verse 108).

Manu also tells us that "a Sudra can become a Brahman and a Brahman a Sudra," and we read in the Mahabharata that "a person not trained in the Vedas is a Sudra, and that whoever conforms to the rules of pure and virtuous conduct is a Brahmana" (Mahabharata, Vana Parva, chap. 180, verse 32). Judged by this standard many of those who now claim to be and are recognized as Brahmans and many who are now treated as Sudras will soon cease to be so regarded. It is, however, impossible to bring modern Hindu society to recognize character as alone determining one's caste. Claims of birth cannot be ignored in the face of the deep-rooted and the universal belief of the Hindus in birth alone determining the class of society to which a person belongs. For can the work of centuries of priestly influence on the one hand and ignorance and superstition of the laity on the other be at once removed? What can possibly be done in this respect will however be shown in these pages hereafter.

THE MIXED CASTES OF ANCIENT INDIA.

Says Manu, "The Brahman, the Kshattriya, and the Vaisya are the three twice-born classes. The fourth the Sudra is once-born. There is no fifth caste." (Manu, chap. X, verse 4). Intermarriages among the various Aryan castes seem, however, to be common in those days, and these gave rise to a number of mixed castes in Ancient

India. For instance a person born of a Brahman father and a Kshattriya mother was considered to be a Brahman like his father, but tainted with the inferiority of his mother's caste. If he was born of a Brahman father and Vaisya mother he was an Ambashta, and if of a Sudra mother a Parsava. A Kshattriya's son from a Brahman mother was called a Suta, a Vaisya's son from a Kshattriya mother a Ma'gadha and from a Brahman mother a Vaideha. The son of a Sudra from a Brahman, a Kshattriya, and a Vaisya mother was respectively an Ayogava, a Kshatta, and a Cha'ndala. A member of the three twice-born classes who was not initiated into the Yajnopavita and the Gayatri was a Vratya. All these were, however, off-springs of lawful unions. The intermixture of these with the purer twice-born classes on the one hand and the mixed castes on the other gave rise to another large number of mixed castes, while foreign nations like the Paundrakas, the Andhras, the Dravidas, the Kambojas, the Yavanas, the Sa'ka's, the Pardas, the Palhavas, the Chuias, the Kiratas, the Dardas, and the Khasas, who were apparently outside the pale of Aryan society, were also declared to be Kshattriyas who had ceased to wear the sacred thread, or study the scriptures, or follow the advice of Brahmans in the matter of expiatory ceremonies. Such persons whether they spoke the Aryan or any other dialect were all declared to be Chauras. "The duties assigned to these mixed castes were those which the pure Aryan would not follow. The Sutas trained and yoked horses though as in the case of Sanjaya of the Mahabharata they were also companions and ministers of kings and met the Rishis on their own ground in matters of learning and culture. The Ambashtas acted as physicians, the Vaidehas as guardians of royal households, the Ma'gadha's as traders on land, the Kshattas, the Ugras and the Pukkas caught and killed animals, the Dhigvanas sold hides and the Vainas played on instru-

ments of music made of bell metal. They lived on the outskirts of villages under trees and in burning grounds. The Chandalas and the Swapactas who also lived outside villages owned asses and dogs, ate unclean food and took clothes covering corpses.

The arts of life flourished greatly in the Epic period. Arms and accoutrements were made in great perfection, carriages drawn by horses and oxen, elephants adorned with gold and silver, and garments embroidered with gold were common. Ayodhya, Dasaratha's capital was furnished with "rows of well arranged shops. It contained theatres for females. It was gleaming with gold burnished ornaments and its people wore ear-rings and tiaras and garlands" (Valmiki Ramayana, Balkand, chaps. V and VI). The artizans were however apparently not members of the pure, but of the mixed castes, for which the pursuits of the former were indicated in detail while those of the latter were not.

Progress from a lower to a higher caste was however recognized in those times and a Parsava who was the offspring of a Brahman father and a Sudra mother could, according to Manu, become a Brahman in the seventh generation. Such a person, if he performed a Paka Yajnya according to the Smritis, became an Arya (Brahman), (Manu, chap. X, verses 64 and 67). Vidura of the Mahabharata who was the son of a Brahman from a Sudra woman was looked upon as the very embodiment of Dharma (righteousness), while a fowler who sold meat instructed a Brahman in the deepest mysteries of the Sastras.

In the matter of food also we do not find the same restrictions in those times as prevail now-a-days. A Brahman was prohibited from taking food from a Sudra except in times of extreme distress. In such times a Rishi like Vamdeo though cognizant of Dharma (righteousness) took prohibited food and yet was not sullied. The Rishi Bhâradwâja accepted in a lonely place a gift of cows from

a Taksha (carpenter), while Viswamitra had no scruple in subsisting upon food of the uncleanest description taken from the house of a Chandala pleading that "a person does not incur a grave sin by eating unclean food when he is dying of hunger." At other times we are told in the Mahabharata that "a Brahman may take his food from another Brahman, or from a Kshattriya or a Vaisya but not from a Sudra. A Kshattriya may take his food from a Brahman, a Kshattriya or Vaisya but not from a Sudra. Brahmans were however prohibited from taking food from a person who professed the healing art, or who was the warder of a house, or who lived by learning alone or from a mechanic or a woman who was unchaste, or an adulterer, or a drunkard, or a eunuch, or a person who had misappropriated another's money, in short from one addicted to evil ways, or who took all manner of food without scruple ;" (Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva, chap. 135).

CASTES AND SUB-CASTES OF MODERN INDIA.

We have thus seen how the system of pure and mixed castes prevailed in ancient India and how the latter were the result of intermarriage among the various purer castes, what their status was and how far people of a lower caste could, like Viswamitra, rise to a higher one. Caste in those days was not the rigid institution it now is, otherwise the Hindus would never have attained to the pitch of civilization they did, nor with the highly developed intellects and the culture of not only the Kshattriyas and the Vaisyas, but of some of the Sudras also, could birth alone have given to the people that status in society which it does now. How vastly different it is now-a-days. Not only is caste the express badge of Hinduism, its stronghold and the perpetuator of status and function both by inheritance and endogamy, but at the root of that loss of catholic sympathy and originality in action which are now so painfully noticeable in Hindu society. No Hindu of to-day would

be satisfied by calling himself a Brahman, a Kshatriya, a Vaisya or a Sudra. He must say to what tribe of each of these castes he belongs before his social status is determined. How this arose is now the question for consideration. The social and religious division of the Indian people are now based upon an "exclusive devotion to heredity and custom manifested in the inclination to exalt the small over the great, to exaggerate the importance of minor considerations and thus obscure that of the more vital. Liturgy and ceremonial observances usurp the place of moral and spiritual ideas, with the result that the sanction of religion is applied to all the regulations of social intercourse. Rank and occupation are thus crystallized into hereditary attributes, a process which ends in the formation of a practically unlimited number of self-centred and mutually repellant groups, cramping to the sympathies and the capacity for thought and actions. Within these groups, it is hardly possible to speak too highly of the charity and devotion of the members of the community to each other, but beyond them, the barriers on all sides preclude co-operation and real compassion and stifle originality in action" (General Census Report, 1891, page 121).

The present subdivision of castes is due to geographical divisions, trade distinctions and differences in form of worship. To commence with the Brahmans, they are now divided into the Panch Guaras and the Panch Dravidas. The former comprise (1) the Saraswatas, so called from the country watered by the river Saraswati. They are largely found in the Punjab, and their usages and manners conform in many respects to those of the Khattris of that province, with whom they often eat and mix freely. (2) The Kanyakubjas so called from the Kanyakubja or the Kanouj country. These are now a very exclusive and isolated class not only as regards other Brahmans but among themselves also, and the proverb is current that for

nine Kanyakubjas you will have ten cooking places, each refusing to dine with the other, often with his nearest relations. So very exclusive is this class of people in the matter of marriages, that the smallness of its various clans causes the greatest difficulty in obtaining husbands for girls except on payment of extortionate sums of money. (3) The Guras, who are so called from Gaur or the country of the lower Ganges, are a very influential class of priests among the Vaisyas of the North-West Provinces and the lower portion of the Punjab, and enjoy the monopoly of their vast and enormous charity. They do not interdine with the Vaisyas as the Saraswatas of the Punjab do with the Khattris, but do not scruple to partake of food cooked by the Vaisyas and the Kshattriyas with milk, sweets and ghee. (4) The Utkalas of the province of Utkala or Orissa, and (5) the Maithalas from Mithila or Behar, complete the list of the Panch Gauras.

The Brahmans of Bengal who originally went from the North-West Provinces now form a separate class, with its many subdivisions which have given rise to the custom of Kulinism in that province. This five-fold division of the Brahmans is not the only one met with in Upper India. The Saraswatas of the Punjab are divided into as many as four hundred and sixty-nine classes and Sherring enumerates some 1,886 tribes of Brahmans.

The Brahmans of the South of the Vindhya range are called the Panch Dravidas. They are (1) the Maharashtras of the country of the Mahrattas. These were once the rulers of the country and still exercise much influence both for good as well as for evil among some of the Mahratta states of Central India, the Gujerat and the Deccan. They possess a genius for intrigue, and show much political ability and are ahead of most of the races of India in some respects. Orthodox Hinduism still retains its hold among many of them and the study of Sanscrit is more common

among their laity than among the corresponding class of the Brahmans of Upper India. (2) The Tailangas of the Telugu country, (3) the Dravidas of the Dravidian country, (4) the Karnatas of the Karnatic, and (5) the Gurjars of the Gujerat, complete the list of the Panch Dravidas. The Gurjar Brahmans are remarkable for their fine and well defined features and they are now the rivals of the Mahrattas in political power and literary ability. Southern India is even a greater stronghold of Brahmanism than Northern India. In spite of all progress in education, the people of the South are even more caste-ridden than the people of the North.

The Kashmiri Brahmans from Kashmere though few in number, are also not without their sub-divisions. They are largely met with both in the highest and lowest rank of Government service and the bar, and though ahead of most of the other Brahmans of Upper India in point of acuteness of intellect, they are not so in rising above petty caste distinctions. No list of Brahmans of Upper India can be complete without reference to the Chanbas (the Chaturvedi Brahmans) of Mathura and other parts of the North-West Provinces. In Mathura one section of this community is called the Mitha (sweet) Chanbas, to distinguish them from the Karwas (bitter) Chanbas! The former with few exceptions furnish the strongest possible contradiction to the name they bear, stout, burly, innocent of letters and exclusively devoted to athletics and eating; the Chanba generally fattens at the expense of the pilgrims to Mathura and justifies the saying of the Sanscrit poet, that it is the absolutely devoid of intellect and the absolutely wise that are truly happy, all others are miserable. They have the curious custom of Badla or exchange which means that a Chanba in order to get a wife must be prepared to give in return a girl from his own family for wife in the family in which he marries.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether modern Brahmans are of pure Arya blood ; and from their finer features and fairer complexions than those of the rest of the community, it is thought that they are the descendants of the Aryas of old. But the majority of Brahmans of these parts (in Bengal and Southern India it is often worse) have not finer features and fairer complexions than other Indian races. Some of them are in fact darker in complexion and heavier in feature than some of the lowest races of modern times. Physiology can therefore be no guide in this respect. On the other hand instances of Rajas manufacturing Brahmans out of low caste men in Upper India are not rare. The Kunda Brahmans of Partabgarh in Oudh, the Tirgunaits and the Swalikhs of Gorakhpore and Basti, who call themselves Dubas (Dwivais), Upadhyas, Tivaris (Trivedis), etc., were the result of this process.

Then again how vast is the difference between the occupations of the Brahmans of the present day from those followed by their ancestors. There are at present about one and a half crores of Brahmans in India, but how many of these follow the injunctions of the Sastras in earning their livelihood by reading and teaching, accepting and making gifts, and performing and officiating at sacrifices ? In the North-West Provinces some ten or fifteen per cent. can only be said to live by the exclusive performance of religious functions, and about 20 or 25 per cent. by adding secular callings to such functions. The rest perform no priestly office whatever but are land-holders, cultivators, soldiers, milk-men, cooks, cattle-grazers, water-carriers, singers, dancers, wrestlers, etc., etc. In fact there is no trade in which a Brahman will not now engage and the statistics of crime of the seaports show that there is no crime which he will not commit. What a fall for those who profess to act as mediators between man and God !

The Kshattriyas fare no better. They were formerly

divided into only two races, the Lunar and the Solar. Now they exhibit as many as 590 different tribes. Todd in his *Rajasthan* enumerates "Chathis Rajkula or the 36 Royal races, which are further sub-divided into 157 branches or sakhas, the principal ones like the Ghilote having 24, the Tuar 17, the Rehtor 13, the Parmara 35, the Chamhan 26, the Challook 16, and the Purapara 12. Each race (Sakha) has its Gotracharya of genealogical creed describing the essential peculiarities, the religious tenets and the pristine locale of the clan. It is a touch-stone of affinities and guardian of the laws of intermarriage." (Todd's *Rajasthan*, Volume I, page 77). The present Rajput's knowledge of these is however of the meagrest description. Some of the Sakhas are now extinct, others are still found in Upper India. Many of the chiefs of Rajputana and Central India trace their origin to one or the other of these Sakhas. The Jats who now form a very important agricultural class in the Punjab also trace their origin to the Yadava clan of the Kshattriyas, to which Krishna belonged. But the latter do not now recognize them as such. Some European writers assign the Jats a Scythian origin. The modern Rajput, even though greatly deteriorated, has however some independence of character and refinement of manners which at once mark him off from the Jat, the Gujar or any other class which claims affinity with him. He has still preserved many a relic of old both in his court as well as in his household. "Traditional history," has still a large influence over his mind. "The Rajput mother," says Todd, "claims her full share in the glory of her son, who imbibes at the maternal fount his first rudiments of chivalry; and the importance of this parental instruction cannot be better illustrated than in the ever-recurring simile, "make thy mother's milk resplendant"; the full force of which we have in the powerful, though over-strained expression of the Boondi queen's joy on the

announcement of the heroic death of her son. "the long dried fountain at which he fed, jetted forth as she listened to the tale of his death, and the marble pavement on which it fell rent asunder." Equally futile would it be to reason on the intensity of sentiment thus implanted in the infant Rajput of whom we may say without metaphor, the shield is his cradle, and daggers his playthings; and with whom the first commandment is "avenge thy father's feud," on which they can heap text upon text, from the days of the great Pandu moralist Vyasa, to the not less influential bard of their nation the Tricala Chand. "(Todd's Rajasthan, Vol. I, page 596-97.)"

The Rajput's marriage customs still retain their military character but only in name; and though reforms in the expenditure incurred in his marriage and other ceremonies have lately been attempted in Rajputana and elsewhere, yet so far as the vast bulk of the Rajput population of Upper and Central India is concerned, their habits are not very frugal and to live beyond means is their normal condition. In one section of the community, the Khattri Rajputs of the Bareilly division, we are told they have still the curious custom of hanging the bridegroom head downwards at the door of his father-in-law till the latter consents to pay what the bridegroom's father demands!

They have hitherto been the most backward in profiting by modern education and efforts at reform have barely touched the surface of the community. And yet one often meets with many a Thakur possessing great acuteness of intellect and in some instances a poetic imagination also. Some of them are and have been Hindu writers of repute, while others show great aptitude for Hindu philosophy and it is not uncommon to see a Rajput chief once a great figure in politics, leaving off every thing for a life of contemplation and study.

The decline of the Kshattriya race is due to its general disregard of its duties in life, its habits of indolence, and indulgence in intoxicants and strong drink as well as to the introduction of inferior blood, till it is now doubted if the modern Rajputs are representatives of the Kshattriyas of old. Many of the names of the present clans of the Rajput tribes of Upper India suggest that they originally belonged to the pastoral or the hunting castes, who, at various times, seized lards and kept them and formed themselves into distinct and separate castes. And a writer in the N. W. P. Gazetteer (Vol. VIII, page 73) speaking of the Rajputs of the Mathura District says "that 7ths of them are of impure blood and are not admitted by the higher clans to an equality with themselves."

Their original occupation of ruling and protecting the people is now either a thing of the past or is exercised only in name on account of Pax Britannia and their lands in British India are fast passing into the hands of the moneyed classes. Now-a-days they chiefly concern themselves with agriculture or engage in petty quarrels, or pass their time in indolence or debauchery or take to menial occupations. Such is the present condition of the majority of one crore of Rajputs now living in India and professing to represent the Kshattriyas of old, the pride of their country.

The third great class is the Vaisya. At the last census out of about 1 crore 21 lacs of persons belonging to the trader caste, 31,86,666 returned themselves as Banias or Mahajans, 89,226 as Vaisyas, 3,54,177 as Agarwalas, 1,57,716 as Oswalas, 20,899 as Shirnalis, the rest comprised among others Agrahararis, Kasaundhans, Kamdus, of N. W. P.; Ghandabaniks, Suwarnabaniks, of Bengal; Aroras and Khatris of the Punjab; Bhatias of Bombay, and Chettis of Madras. The chief divisions of the Vaisyas are into: (1) the Agrawal, comprising the Vaishnavas and the Jains, the Maheshwaris, the Oswalas, the Khandelwals, the

Shrionalis, the Rajabansis, the Rustogis, the Barasenis, the Mathurs, and the Ilahawaras. Todd enumerates 84 mercantile tribes, but the statistics of the Vaisya Conference for the last 7 years show the above to be the principal sections of the Vaisyas. They all interdine but do not intermarry. A spirited controversy once arose as to whether the Agrawalas were Vaisyas or Kshattriyas. Tradiation says that in the Lunar race of kings was one Raja Mahidhar whose son was Raja Ugrasena, after whom the caste was named Agrawala. He married two wives Dhaupala and Sundar, from each of whom he had 9 sons who married the 18 daughters of Raja Vasuki of the Naga race. These were the progenitors of the present 18 Agrawala gotras. Another legend traces the Agrawalas to Agroha a town on the borders of Hariana in the Punjab, and tradition goes that so strong was the spirit of fraternity and so flourishing were the Vaisyas of that town, that whenever an Agrawala became poor each of his caste people contributed a rupee for his support and gave him a brick to build a house from and thus at once brought him to their own level. The Vaisyas are, as a rule, a rising and wealthy and prosperous community, but mostly prone to indulge in extravagance in marriages. They comprise among them traders of all grades from the merchant prince to the village hawker of articles of food. Being an aristocratic and monied class with no political power, they have been able to preserve their purity of descent more than the Brahmans or the Kshattriyas, and the assertion of some Sanskrit writers that in the Kali Yuga only the first and the last classes, the Brahmans and the Sudras, exist and that all others are extinct, has been refuted in their case, not only on grounds of continuity of occupation which is now the same as it was in the time of Manu but of physiology also. The modern Vaisya shows a greater dash of Aryan blood than the modern Brahman or the Kshattriya.

His features are as refined, his complexion as fair, as that of the best races of India, and the fact that he is rapidly making his way in callings requiring the exercise of the highest intelligence shows that if any race has not received mixture of foreign blood, it is this.

Among the other great trading classes of India are the Khattris, the Aroras, the Bhatias, and the Marwaris. The Khattris who numbered 6,86,511 and the Aroras who numbered 6,73, 695, at the last census, are largely found in the Punjab and parts of Upper India. They claim to be of Kshatriya origin and are divided into castes and sub-castes mostly local, such as the Pachaniyans (Westerners), Purabiyas (Easterners), Punjabis, Dilwalis (from Delhi), etc. None of these intermarries or interdines.

The Bhatias (56,792) are largely found in Cutch and Sindh. They are a very enterprising community, having a large portion of foreign trade in their hands. They are great followers of the Gosains of the Vallabha sect and make the fortunes of the latter even though some of them prove themselves unworthy of their gifts. The Gandhabaniks (1,23,765) and the Subarbaniks (97,540) of Bengal are also called Vaisyas, but there is no connection between them and the Vaisyas of the other parts of India. The Marwaris from Marwar are included in the Agrawala, the Oswala, the Khawdelwala and the Shrimali Vaisyas mentioned above. The Chettis 7,02,141 and the Lingayatats 1,01,687 are the trading castes of Southern India, but none of them has any connection with the trading castes of Upper India or Bengal.

The Kayasthas (22,39,810) are the great writer caste. In Upper India they number 5,21,812 and trace their origin to king Chitrugupta who had 4 sons from each of his two wives. The present Kayasthas are said to have descended from these 8 sons of Chitrugupta. Another account assigns them a functional origin and says that

Chitrageeta is the mythical writer at the court of Yama the king of the dead and that the Kayasthas trace their origin to him on account of their profession being that of writers. They are divided into (1) the Mathuras, (2) the Saksenas, (3) the Srivastavas, (4) the Bhatnagaras, (5) the Asthanas, (6) the Nigams, (7) the Ambashtas, (8) the Gours, (9) the Surajdwhajas, (10) the Karanas, (11) the Sreshtas and (12) the Valmiki. None of these intermarry or inter-dine. They are, as a rule, a very acute and intelligent community and have always furnished the government of the day with a large staff of secretaries and writers and the public with village accountants. They show great aptitude to adapt themselves to the institutions of the times and seem to have been in as great request under ancient as under modern *regimes*. In Bengal they number about 1½ millions, in Bombay under the name of Parbhu about 30,000, but none of these has anything to do with the Kayasthas of Upper India in the matter of intermarriage or interdining.

The above are the only classes of Hindus which are or claim or can be said to be of Aryan origin. Below these is quite a bewildering number of castes and sub-castes which trace their origin to function but are now regulated by claims of birth. Among the cultivating castes the Kunbis (10 millions), the Malis, the Lodhas, the Kachis, each numbering between 1½ and 1¾ millions, the cattle breeding caste (the Ahir) about 8 millions and the cow-herds (Goalas) about 2 millions, were all originally function classes, but are now divided into separate castes and sub-castes. The menial classes who number about 14 millions are also as minutely divided as the others. A Chamar who makes shoes belongs to a different caste from a Mochi who makes harness. A Bhangi who is a sweeper claims to be a member of a different order from a sweeper whose patron saint is Lal-Beg. The artisans who number about 29

millions fare no better. Blacksmiths, silversmiths, and goldsmiths, all constitute different castes, so do Kaseras who manufacture and sell brass vessels and Thatheras who beat brass plates. Carpenters in some parts of the country wear the sacred thread but are not allowed to associate with any of the three twice-born castes, properly so called. The weaver, the tailor, the fringe-maker, the dyer and the calicoprinter are all different castes. In some portions of the country the Halwais (the confectioners) constitutes a separate caste, in others they are either Brahmans, Vaisyas, or Khattris. The Kahars who form a large class of domestic servants are now a different caste from the Kewats and the Dhimars (the fishing castes) though they were originally one and the same. In the religious orders which profess to be above caste distinctions, such distinctions are also as rampant as among other Hindus. We have among us about 27 lacs of devotees and ascetics who are divided into Gosains, Bairagis, Vaishnavas, Dandis, etc. The followers of Shiva have 12 sects, the followers of Vishnu 6, and the followers of either but according to a particular guru. The Gosains are both a caste and an order, the former because they do not observe celibacy and the latter because they receive accessions to their ranks from the other castes. They numbered 2,31,612 at the last census. The Vishnavas count about 4½ lacs, and the Bairagis about 3 lacs. The jealousy of these orders reaches its culminating point at the (Kumbha) the great bathing festival in Hardwar which takes place every 12 years and in former times pitched battles used to be common between them. The Bairagis have also taken to married life and are proving false to their name; while some of the Dandi Sanyasins who show themselves to be caste-ridden are falsifying the very first principles of their order.

RESULTS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF CASTES AND SUB-CASTES.

I have thus attempted to show, though necessarily very briefly and imperfectly, how rampant caste is in modern India. Such a condition of the community can scarcely foster any sentiment of nationality or favour progress or check its more degraded portions from slipping out of its yoke and embracing foreign creeds in the hope of bettering their social position. All non-conformistic movements in India from Buddhism downwards, and all success of foreign proselytising missions whether undertaken by the sword or by persuasion are mostly traceable to the rigidity of the fetters with which caste binds the Hindus. And yet the present system has not so much of a religious as a functional origin. In its earlier stages it constituted a bond of union and formed people into distinct units. It did not limit the right of membership to those who were born within its ranks from both parents and did not therefore cause the harm it is doing now. As it now stands, you can defy caste by eating, drinking, worshipping or occupying yourself in any manner you choose, so long as you outwardly observe your caste rules. A Brahmana, a Kshatriya or a Vaisya may take the most prohibited food or associate with women outside his caste without being outcasted, if he only outwardly observes his caste rules. But let him eat the most lawful food with a foreigner or cross the sea for a most lawful object or marry outside his caste in the most lawful manner, and he is at once thrown out, unless his caste connives at these practices. Caste therefore as now prevailing in Hindu society cannot but undermine the race physically, intellectually and morally—physically by narrowing the circle of selection in marriages, intellectually by cramping the energies, and morally by destroying mutual confidence and habits of co-operation. And it speaks well of the marvellous inherent vitality of the race that it has been able to retain and achieve so much in

the face of so many and such powerful drawbacks. An instrument of petty tyranny, caste makes the highest and the best of the community submit to those who are their inferiors morally and intellectually but who form a powerful factor for evil. The tyranny of a small section of society becomes most unreasonable when the latter issues wrong mandates or interferes in matters in which it ought not to interfere and this is what caste now does among the Hindus. It had its uses in the earlier stages of society when inroads of foreigners necessitated its forming itself into compact and well organized groups and when the condition of the arts of life required that trade secrets should be kept confined to a limited circle. But the circumstances are not now the same nor do the times require India to be divided into a number of small and mutually repellant communities. If we see ourselves as others see us, we shall find that they attribute our backwardness in civilization to our present system of caste. Says Mr. Kidd: "In eastern countries where the institution of caste still prevails, we have indeed only an example of a condition of society in which (in the absence of that developmental force which we shall have to observe at work amongst ourselves) these groups and classes have become fixed and rigid and in which consequently progress has been thwarted and impeded at every turn by innumerable barriers which have for ages prevented that free conflict of forces within the community which has made so powerfully for progress among the western peoples." (*Social Evolution*, p. 154). I have already quoted the opinion of the late Census Commissioner on the caste system, and I shall now refer to what another writer has to say on the subject. "Society" says Mr. Nesfield in his *Review of the Caste System prevailing in the North Western Provinces and Oudh* (Pages, 103-104), "instead of being constituted as one organized whole, is divided against itself by in-

ganic sections like geological strata. The sense of insecurity thus engendered could not but lead to a loss of independence and courage in the characters of individuals. For a man soon ceases to rely on himself if he thinks that no reliance is to be placed on the good will and fair dealing of those around him and that everything which he may say or do, is liable to be suspected or misconstrued. Thus the two great defects in the Indian character—a want of reliance on one's self and a want of confidence in others—have sprung from a common source, the terror-striking influence of caste. The caste arrogance of the Brahman which first sent these evil spirits abroad has corrupted the whole nation and descended to the very lowest strata of the population Not only has caste demoralized society at large, but it is a constant source of oppression within its own particular ranks. Caste is therefore an instrument both of widespread disunion abroad and of the meanest tyranny at home, and the latter of these evils has intensified the want of courage and self-reliance to which we have lately alluded as being one of the greatest defects in the Indian character." "Had the Brahman never come into existence and had his arrogance proved to be less omnipotent than it did, the various industrial classes would never have become stereotyped into castes and the nation would have been spared a degree of social disunion to which no parallel can be found in human history" (p. 116).

REFORM IN THE CASTE SYSTEM.

Reform in the present system of caste and sub-castes is therefore absolutely required by the altered conditions of Indian society. Caste, as I have already said, cannot be banished from India any more than from any other soil. But it may be so reformed as to foster good instead of evil. The task of the reformer in this respect is, however, full of difficulties, but if he keeps steadily in

view the ideal of expansion rather than contraction of nationality as has hitherto been done, he shall be successful in the end. His greatest difficulty will be inducing the highest and the lowest castes both of which are extremely arrogant in caste matters, to accept his programme of reform. The caste arrogance of the Brahman finds its parallel in the caste arrogance of the lowest sections of society who despise their neighbours on most frivolous distinctions. In the other castes it is not so bad. If therefore the reformer works on the lines already laid down by the various caste conferences in the country, viz., to make those sub-sections of a caste which interdine also intermarry, he shall gradually bring about such a fusion of castes as shall broaden the basis of society and pave the way for further reform. It will be necessary to start with the most minute sub-divisions and work upwards to the comparatively larger ones. It will not be possible nor desirable to have the right of connubium follow the right of convivium within the same gotra of a sub-caste. The rule of not marrying in one's gotra is one to which no exception can be admitted. But there is no reason why the right of connubium should not follow the right of convivium outside a gotra. India has been ruined from want of an organized Indian nation. It was not so in the past. Let it therefore be the care of modern Indian reformers to restore it to its former standard of perfection where each section of society felt itself to be dependent upon and worked for the good of the other. The Aryans of old did not relinquish "duty from love of money nor from fear of death nor from dread of society." Let modern Aryans if they wish to be a nation do the same.

BAIJNATH.

WORKS CONSULTED.

The Rig Veda.

The Institutes of Manu.

The Ramayana of Valmiki.

The Maha Bharata.

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Nesfield's Brief Review of the Tribes and Castes of
the North-West Provinces and Oudh.

Kidd's Social Evolution.

Todd's Rajasthan.

VII.—Marriage Reform among the Hindus.

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There is no doubt some basis for the trite observation that India is not a country but a continent, and contains not a nation but a congeries of nations: and when a stranger reads or hears of the vast extent of the country and of something like the three hundred millions who inhabit it, of the numerous religions and faiths which they profess and follow, Mahomedanism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism—with the almost countless sects which are included in it,—he is apt to be impressed with the absolute correctness of the remark. But to one who belongs to the country or has a knowledge of the actual condition of Indian society, the facts appear otherwise; and undoubtedly so, as far as the Hindu community are concerned. From the Hinálayás down to the Indian Ocean and from the Indus to the Brahmaputrâ the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra classes have institutions, manners, customs, observances, ceremonies which in essential features are the same. The members of the Jain sects, differ though they do in religious beliefs, dogmas and rituals from the orthodox sections of the Hindu community, are in the other matters which constitute their every day life, so similar that it is impossible to say from outward appearances whether a person is a Jain or an orthodox Hindu. We may go one step further and say that, so far as the bulk of the Mahomedan community is concerned, excluding religious observances, their domestic life is in several respects similar to that of the Hindus, which by the way cannot be a matter for surprise; for, they consist of the descendants of converts to Mahomedanism and come from the same stock as the Hindus. Hindus

and Mahomedans can well, in spite of difference of religion, be called one nation. But leaving Mahomedans out of consideration, the Hindus, who form the majority of the population, possess socially as well as politically all the characteristics of a nation, and every question affecting their well-being is a question of national importance. Out of the total population of 287 millions returned by the Census of 1891, over 222 millions are Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. Social Reform in India, therefore, possesses a significance far greater than in other countries; and it is to be expected that every attempt to effect any alteration in the existing practices should in these days of free thought and free discussion excite the watchful jealousy and keen criticism of a highly intellectual people and often produce warm controversies.

There is no subject in regard to which there is greater difference of opinion productive of hot discussion than Marriage Reform. That phrase apparently giving expression to one idea denotes really speaking several subjects; many of them concern the very basis of social life. For an adequate treatment of them even a good sized volume will not suffice.

In this paper the question of Marriage Reform is considered in some only of its most important aspects. It is proposed to deal chiefly with infant or early marriage, compulsory marriage and enforced widowhood; and even in regard to these it is hardly possible to give within the limits at my command anything more than a statement of the conclusions which the discussions that have taken place on the subjects suggest to me. Solicitous for the regeneration and progress of the great community to which I have the proud privilege to belong, and believing firmly that its material and moral regeneration cannot be effected without a considerable readjustment of its marriage customs, I am not unmindful that there are amongst

my countrymen several with knowledge, experience and abilities superior to what I may be allowed to possess, who with equal fervour believe that many of the views herein set forth are wrong and that Hindu society would suffer if the attempt to give effect to them succeeds. The number of such, however, is small among those who, having received the benefit of education in modern literature and science, are accustomed to subject every question to the test of reason.

According to the prevailing practice every girl must be married, and the religious ceremonies which create the binding tie and irrevocably unite the wife to the husband must be performed before the girl attains puberty. As will be shown further on, there are a few sections of Hindus amongst whom girls are permitted to be kept unmarried sometimes for years after they reach womanhood. But the general practice insists upon marriage before that event. For the marriage of men no age is prescribed, but the general custom is to get them married at the age of 15 or 16, indeed very often at the age of 10 or 11 even. Thus throughout the whole society the spectacle is presented of boys of 17 and 18 and girls of 13 and 14 entering upon married life and subjected to all its responsibilities. Little children of 14 becoming mothers is a very common sight. It is now conceded by most thinking people that this is a very deplorable state of things; and it is unquestionable that serious evils have resulted from these early marriages. The general deterioration in physique universally noticeable is justly attributed to this baneful custom, the greatest sufferers being the poor girls who enter upon maternity before their bodies are properly developed. The progeny of such parents cannot be otherwise than weak and sickly.

Equally harmful, both to the individuals concerned and to the country generally, are the interference with education and the crushing out of all spirit of enterprise.

and adventure which result from these early marriages. Thousands of promising young men have been forced to give up their studies and seek employment because the means of their parents or guardians were exhausted in getting them married, and the maintenance of the members of the family became itself a difficult question. In these days when so much thought is bestowed on the question of the poverty of the country and schemes for the restoration of the industrial eminence which India once enjoyed, are discussed, it should not be forgotten that some of the causes which have brought about pecuniary embarrassments and consequent ruin of many families can be removed by ourselves, if we only sufficiently exert ourselves and persevere in our efforts.

If the education of boys is interfered with and its progress hampered, that of girls in most cases completely ceases with her marriage, *i.e.*, from the age of 9 or 10. As it is, female education is in a most backward condition in this country and what of the so-called instruction is received is only till the age of 10 and after that there is complete cessation of it.

The want of enterprise and absence of love of adventure is phenomenal. Boy husbands burdened with family cares, with their education cut short, can hardly think of striking into new paths and going in quest of adventures either for fame or for money. The very restricted and low view taken of women's right and position can hardly be attributed to the notions about early or compulsory marriages, for they exist in communities which were or are free from these trammels. But there is no doubt that the elevation of woman to her proper position and her moral equipment for that position is ~~greatly retarded by the existing marriage customs.~~

The information disclosed by the old Sanskrit literature in regard to the institutions of the ancient Hi-

shows that, during the best period of Aryan history, neither compulsory nor early marriage was enjoined for women, and it is during this period we find a high view taken of the dignity and rights of women and the wife was regarded as the half of her husband, not only figuratively, but participated in the glories and privations of war and peace, and was his companion in the study of science and philosophy.

Closely connected with early and compulsory marriage is its expensiveness. The presents to the bridegroom and his relations in cash and in kind, the feasts and parties, the vain displays and processions which a man who gets his daughter married to the son of a person of his social position has to provide, not merely strain his resources, but in many cases absolutely bring about his bankruptcy. This absurd costliness it is which is mainly responsible for the disparagement and low estimate in which female children are regarded and for the dislike which the majority feel for them.

In some castes and sections the evil has gone so far as to pervert human nature and brought about female infanticide, turning loving parents into worse than human monsters. To check these atrocities Government had to interfere and special methods had to be devised in the shape of the provisions of the Infanticide Act.

In the contemplation of human misery there is no more pathetic and heart-rending spectacle than the child widow of 8 or 10, hopelessly condemned to life-long misery and degeneration. And this exists only because there is compulsory child marriage. Even the staunchest and most orthodox upholders of the current Hindu beliefs admit that the lot of the child widow is most pitiable. A Hindu father, howsoever devout he might be, curses his fate and a harsh customs which bind him down, when he sees his son reduced to such a condition. A few figures will show

the extent of the evils and the harms they produce. In 1891 there were amongst Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists 89,051 boys below the age of 4 who were married and 228,560 married girls of the same age. The number of widows below the age of 4 was 10,641. The number of married boys between 5 and 9 years of age is nearly 6 lakhs and two thousand and that of girls over 18½ lakhs. The total number of married males below the age of 14 is 2,725,124 and that of girls is 6,871,999. The number of widows between 5 and 9 years of age is 52,759 and of those between 10 and 14 years of age is 143,100. Of these 2 lakhs and more of widows below the age of 14 all but some 4 thousand are Hindus proper.

These evils are recognized by almost all educated and thinking persons, whether they belong to the old or to the new school. But while the Progressive party urge that active steps should be taken for removing them by altering the existing customs, the orthodox party resist their demands as untenable on the ground that they are opposed to religion.

The reform advocated is mainly on the following lines :—

- (1) Option of marriage to be allowed to women in the same way as to men.
- (2) No girl to be married before 18 or at the earliest 16.
- (3) No man to be married till he is at least 20, and in no case till he is able to maintain himself and his family.
- (4) Abolition of customs which bring about unnecessary expenditure on occasions of marriage.
- (5) Removal of the religious and social prohibition against the re-marriage of a widow and the recognition of her claim to be socially treated in the same way as any other married woman of her cast.

As things stand, the greatest difficulty is about the general acceptance of the changes set forth in points 1, 2, 3 and 5.

One of the features common to all the innumerable castes and sub-castes into which the Hindus are divided, is the firm acceptance of the doctrine that marriage is absolutely necessary in the case of a female. Amongst the higher castes, *i. e.*, those who are comprised under the three original main castes of Brahmmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas there is another common feature and that is the prohibition of the remarriage of a widow. The feeling against widow remarriage amongst the members of these castes is so great that even amongst seceders and dissenters from orthodox Hinduism like the Jains (who are classed amongst Vaishyas) there is the same horror of women's contracting a second marriage as amongst Brahmmins and Kshatriyas. Nay, in the Shudras amongst whom widow remarriage is recognized and considered lawful, the general sense of the community, whatever the law might lay down, accords a much lower status to a remarried widow than to a woman who was married when she was a virgin.

The Progressive party, while anxious for the removal of evils, are conscious that no change which is not supported by authority or precedent has any chance of being carried by their countrymen. Their efforts have, therefore, been directed towards such only as can receive these

In spite, however, of this attitude of theirs, they have not yet succeeded in securing the acceptance of their proposals by the majority of the Hindus. They believe, however, that reason and justice are on their side, and they expect to win their battle by the weapons drawn from the ancient scriptures and ancient history.

In regard to compulsory and early marriage the position of the orthodox party is this. There are certain

sacraments ordained as necessary for every person male or female. In the case of males of the three regenerate classes, this necessary sacrament is the Upanayana or Thread Ceremony. For females and Shudras the place of this necessary sacrament is supplied by marriage. Relying on a text contended to be that of Ashwalâyana, one of the highest authorities on ceremonial law, it is advanced that certain ceremonies constituting the consummation of marriage must be performed immediately after a young woman attains puberty. Great reliance is also placed on various texts and dicta of writers of eminence laying down that the father of a girl who attains puberty before marriage goes to hell. The chief recognized text is from Pârâshara which says "a girl in her eighth year is a Gauri, in her ninth year a Rohini, in her tenth year a Kanya and above that a Rajaswalâ. The giving in marriage of a Gauri will lead to Nâk (the celestial region belonging to Indra), of a Rohini to Vârkuntha (the one belonging to Vishnu), of a Kanya to Brahmâloka and a Rajaswalâ to hell." The prevailing and accepted belief is that no Hindu can, without imperilling the future of his soul, keep his daughter unmarried after puberty. The social penalty for the disregard of this injunction is excommunication, perhaps the severest punishment which a community can inflict.

On the other hand, the advocates of reform urge that there is no Vedic text or anything in the works of any of the Smriti writers except the one attributed to Ashwalâyana, which some question as spurious, which lays down that every girl ought to be married and the marriage consummated at the very first appearance of womanhood. Passages from Manu and other authorities of equal position are pointed out by them as distinctly opposed to the alleged heinousness of keeping a girl unmarried at puberty. One passage of Manu states that a girl is to wait for

three years after attainment of puberty to see if her father gets her married. If he does not, then at the end of that period, she may look out for a suitable husband for herself and select and marry one. Baudháyana states similarly. This, it is urged with great force, evidently means that a girl does not lose her caste or social position by being kept unmarried after puberty. The great medical authority Sushruta says : " A woman is considered to be a child till the sixteenth year of her age and afterwards to be in her youth till the thirty-second year. If a man of less than 25 years begets a child on a woman of less than 16 years, it remains in the womb. If it is born it does not live long, and if it lives at all, it is weak."

It deserves to be noted that in ancient times not only was it not considered necessary to marry women before puberty, but at times they even remained unmarried their whole life. The names and memory of the Brahmadévinis, Gargi Váchaknavi, Sulabhâ Maitreyi, Vadavâ Pratitheyi, who never married at all, and passed their whole life in celibacy are still regarded with veneration by the most orthodox Hindus. Judging from the instances of Draupadi, Shakuntalâ, Damayanti and several others, it would seem that it was quite an ordinary thing for girls to remain unmarried till considerably after they attained the years of discretion. The orthodox party urge that the instances are all those of women of the Kshatriya caste. To this the other side reply that the laws of marriage are the same for all the three regenerate classes.

The facts stand thus : Formerly it was as much in the option of women as of men to marry or not to marry and the tie itself was contracted generally after the attainment of the years of discretion. The sentiment of the community, however, became changed in course of time and not only did the old practice of women remaining unmarried or marrying considerably after they came of age fall into

disuetude, but it came to be regarded that it was unallowable for women to pass an unmarried life and further that they ought to be married before they reach puberty. This accounts for the apparently conflicting texts and dicta to be found in works on ceremonial law.

There can be no question that the prohibition of the remarriage of widows is of comparatively recent origin. Manu says :—

नष्टे मृते प्रव्रजिते क्लीबेचपतिते पतो ।

पंचस्त्राप्तसु नारीणां पतिरन्यो विधीयते ॥

“ If the husband has disappeared and cannot be found, if he is dead, if he is banished or is neuter or becomes an outcaste ; in the case of the occurrence of these five misfortunes a second husband is ordained for women.”

The same or similar permission is accorded in the Smritis of Nārada and Pārāshara. About the comparative authority of the Smriti writers the orthodox rule is कलौपाराशरस्मृतिः (the Smriti of Pārāshara is the guiding authority in the Kaliyuga, i.e., the present age). Kātyāyana, Vasistha, Shātātapa and Prajāpati accord this permission to women whose marriage was not consummated. All the same there is the recognition of the right of a woman who has lost her husband to contract a second marriage. And yet there is no matter which the orthodox regard with greater horror than the remarriage of widows. Neither the weight of authorities, nor the accordance of the demand with the principles of natural justice, nor compassion for the hard fate of the child widow, seems to diminish that horror.

Amongst the three regenerate classes, or rather amongst Hindus who do not belong to the Shudra caste, both the widow who contracts a remarriage, as also the man who marries her, are considered as degraded, polluted and as having lost caste. It is not permissible to eat food

prepared or touched by them; nay, it is not allowed, what in English would be called, to dine with them at the same table. Those who dine with them are excommunicated. At one time even those who attended a remarriage were subjected to the same penalty. The very sight of a remarried woman is regarded with aversion. The orthodox will condone a widow however scandalously she misbehaves herself if she makes penance; but a remarried woman as also her husband are beyond the pale of the most extreme penance. Shunned in life they are execrated after death. Still more wonderful, these sentiments are more strongly held by women than by men. One of the main reasons which is at the bottom of this is, the extreme reverence in which the husband is held by the wife, whose highest conception of womanly dignity and felicity is to be united with her husband not only in her life time but after her death also.

Whatever the origin, the sentiment is there. A mother who is grieving over the widowhood of her child, if asked whether she would agree to her remarriage, would, in the majority of cases, unhesitatingly say that she would rather wish the child were dead than remarried.

Though there is a mass of authorities and historical instances in support of widow remarriage, the obstacles in the path of its recognition by the community generally are far greater than in that of late marriages. Even amongst Shudras in certain sub-sections widow remarriage is considered prohibited. The ordinary Kunbis also amongst whom it is permitted look upon a *Pât* wife (a woman married after she became a widow) as lower in status and dignity than other married women who were married virgins. Though our Courts have accorded to the son by a *Pât* wife the same rights as to the son by the *Lagna* wife, it is well known that amongst the higher sections of the Shudras at any rate, the son by the *Lagna* wife is ac-

ceded precedence in all social and religious matters over the sons by the *Pât* wife. Some even go to the length of questioning the right of the *Pât* wife's sons to inheritance when there are sons from a *Lagna* wife.

It cannot be determined with any degree of exactness from what time compulsory marriage before puberty and enforced widowhood came into vogue. Nor is it known whether any efforts were made to remove these evils, or any protest raised against them till the last century. In the last quarter of that century, however, the injustice of enforced widowhood roused the attention of the Maratha Brahmins, then the most prominent section of the nation not only in literary and speculative matters but in politics and military achievements also. The daughter of Parashuram Pant Bhau Patwardhan, the General of the Peshwa having become a widow when she was a mere girl and had not reached womanhood, the father moved by her misery resolved to make a bold attempt to shake off, if possible, the trammels which pitiless custom had imposed, and with that object placed the question of the validity of the remarriage of child-widows before the Pandits of Benares, which was then as now and for thousands of years past the chief seat of Hindu learning. The Pandits who were asked to examine the authorities gave their opinion in favour of the validity of such marriages. It is not known exactly why Parashram Pant Bhau did not, in spite of this favourable reply of the Pandits, translate his desire into action. They say his political allies and superiors pointed out to him that though the Shastras might be on his side, popular sentiment and prejudices were so strong in this matter that it would not be safe to the State, considering the circumstances under which it was placed, embarking on the experiment he was trying. And thus, we are told ended the matter. Nothing is heard further of the woes of the unfortunate widows till the time of Rajah Ram

Mohan Roy. But he even was not able to accomplish anything; and it is not till nearly half the nineteenth century is passed that we find anything worth mentioning accomplished towards the amelioration of the condition of widows. In 1853 was passed the measure which would stand as a landmark in the history of Social Reform in India—the Act to validate the remarriage of widows. It is beyond question that that Act gave great offence to the orthodox community of Bengal and of such of the important places in the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras where education had made any progress. But it is more than doubtful, whether its scope and object, or its very existence even, was known elsewhere for years and years. Persons anxious to minimize the responsibility which attaches to the high-handed policy of Lord Dalhousie in political matters, attribute to this and one or two more acts of his administration indicative of his sympathy with the progressive party, some share in the general opposition to the British administration which expressed itself in the catastrophe of 1857. But this position can well be controverted, and shown to be incorrect.

With the legalisation of widow remarriage the greatest difficulty in the path of the Reform party was removed. But it was some years before the first Brahmin widow remarriage could be brought about. The validity of remarriage among the three higher castes according to the Shastras was discussed in a conclave of learned persons presided over by the Shankaracharya. Both sides claimed victory. All the same the opposition of the people as a whole was most pronounced. The widow remarriage party were subjected to every possible form of persecution. The cause however did not die, but thrived and made progress slow though it was. It is true that the number of these marriages is small, and a remarried widow is not still admitted fully in society, and she and her husband are subjected

to numerous annoyances and put to great inconvenience. But when the present attitude of the orthodox party is compared with the active warfare carried on against them with the weapons of persecution and vilification only thirty years ago, the tone of optimism which pervades the writings and speeches of some of the leaders of the Reform movement appears perfectly justifiable.

The organized efforts made to raise the marriageable age of girls, if later than the remarriage movement, have, on the other hand, roused less violent opposition and have received a greater measure of success. Thirty years ago the age at which most girls were married amongst the Brahmins south of the Narmadâ was 7 or 8. It has now gone up to 10 and 12. Even the latter limit has in numerous cases been exceeded by a year or so by orthodox people without any reproach from their community. In Mysore the movement against infant marriages can show results hardly to be expected in British India. Being supported by an enlightened ruler and a sympathetic minister, it was able without much difficulty to obtain recognition from the Acharyas (the spiritual heads of the different sections of the community) and encountered less formidable opposition than it would have done otherwise. Proceeding cautiously, the Mysore Government first ascertained whether the general sense of the people was in favour of progress or against it, and when it was satisfied from the proceedings which took place in the Representative Assembly in 1892 that there was a fairly large volume of public opinion behind it, it introduced and in 1894 passed a Bill regulating the age of marriage, which prohibits under pain of criminal prosecution the marriage of girls below the age of 8, and of men above the age of 55 to girls below the age of 14. In the regulation as passed there is no minimum limit for boys. Some ardent reformers may not regard the results achieved as remarkable or even satisfactory. But when it is borne

in mind that the heads of all the three great divisions of Brahmins, the Smárta, Mádхва and Ramanuja sects have laid down that 10 is the proper age and marriages below 8 are sinful, that is a matter of no small moment where there are 132,276 girls below the age of 4 who are married or are widows and 1,904,915 between the ages of 5 and 9. Equally valuable is the measure as a precedent to be followed by the other Indian States if not by the British Government.

A few years later two Bills were prepared, one by the Hon'ble Mr. Jambulingam Mudahar and the other by the Hon'ble Mr. Ratnasabhapaty Pillai of the Madras Legislative Council, for obtaining a similar enactment for the Hindus of the Madras Presidency generally. But there is no likelihood of proposals for the introduction of measures of this kind being entertained by the British Government, unless the demand comes from the majority of the people. The extent to which the British Government would interfere in matters connected with the religious observances and social customs of the people of this country, has been over and over again authoritatively laid down, and was restated only the other day by the present Viceroy. The regulation of the age of marriage is a matter which is clearly outside that sphere, unless the bulk of the people desire legislative sanction for what they have come to agree amongst themselves. The right and duty of the Government to take suitable action in a matter like that covered by the Age of Consent Bill stands on a different footing. Besides, the social controversies of the last sixteen years have satisfied many members of the party of progress who were first disposed to welcome outside help, particularly that of Government, that any proffer of such help or any demand for it, far from furthering the cause of progress, distinctly retards it by injuring the susceptibilities of the people and rousing their suspicions.

The administrations of the Native States occupy a more advantageous position in this respect, and an enlightened policy, calculated to educate public opinion and give effect to reforms proceeding on the lines of least resistance, if adopted by them is far less likely to encounter active hostility than any similar measure of the Government of India. The Baroda Government in 1893 formulated certain proposals of a purely permissive character in regard to marriage reform, but these were abandoned later on. It is trusted that this does not betoken an intention on the part of that State to leave social reform severely alone.

But whether in British India or in Native States, the great factor, the one on which chief reliance has to be placed, for bringing about the desired transformation, is the education of public opinion. According to the strict letter of the text of Parashara every Hindu father who gives his daughter in marriage after the tenth year goes to hell. Numerous fathers, who claim to be orthodox and are treated as such, commit this heinous sin of marrying their daughters after the age of 10, and yet they are not excommunicated or subjected to any social inconvenience. Of the Hindu female population between the ages of 10 and 14 over 38½ lakhs are unmarried. Taking the higher castes among whom this rule prevails to be only 8 per cent. of the total Hindu population, there would be 3 lakhs unmarried girls between the ages of 10 and 14 belonging to these classes. The plain inference to be deduced from this is that the injunction about marrying a girl before she completed her tenth year is not in practice at least regarded as mandatory. If all the reformers 'hot and cold' instead of carping at each other, were to combine, would they not be able to obtain a similar relaxation in regard to the injunction about the marriage of girls before puberty? Amongst the Nambudri Brahmins of Malabar, who are most staunch in their orthodoxy, it is permissible

to defer marriages of girls till after the attainment of womanhood. Amongst the Kulin Brahmins of Bengal the same thing exists. Among the Patane Prabhus of Bombay, and among the Mudaliar and other castes of the Madras Presidency claiming to hold an intermediate position between Kshatriyas and Shudras, the general practice is to marry girls after the age of 12. The position of the advocates of change is that it is beyond question that our forefathers exercised the right, which every community has, of altering their customs and institutions according to change of circumstances to bring them into conformity with their notions of what was proper or improper. If in doing so they could not be considered transgressors of religion and law, it would hardly be just to regard as irreligious the proposals of those who after all are merely asking for a return to the earlier and better traditions of their race.

The change can be effected by the community alone. No compulsion from outside is feasible or desirable. It would be unprofitable to go into the controversies which were raised by the Age of Consent Bill or Mr. Malabari's proposals. At present there is certainly no proposal which calls for the legislative or executive action of Government. The appeal is to the community. As in all matters so in this, neither the formation of correct opinions nor their articulate expression, nor the devising of methods for putting them into practice, can be expected from the masses. It is on the leaders that this task devolves. It is the duty of men of light and leading, of thought and reason, of culture and refinement.

The question naturally arises who are these men of light and leading and what is the recognition to be extended to the numerous spiritual heads (Gurus, Swamis, Maharajas or whatever else they be called) of the different sections and sub-sections of the community. It is not claimed for a moment that thought, reason or culture is con-

finer to the recipients of western education merely. But it is submitted that no one, whatever stores of bookish lore he may have laid by, can justly claim to possess these, who blindly and without examination accepts a thing on the principle of *scriptum est*, who declines to consider the justice or injustice, propriety or impropriety of existing institutions and customs, forbidding his reason to sit in judgment on them to determine whether they are harmful or serve any useful purpose, whose imagination is not fired and whose sympathies are not moved by the spectacle of the misery he sees around him, misery which is self-inflicted and is preventible. It is devoutly to be wished that all angry recriminations about hot reformers and cold reformers will cease, and that all reference about past controversies, about Government interference be avoided and that both those who advocate action from within and those who demand help from without will combine and devote their energies to obtain the recognition and acceptance of the principles which they hold in common.

The attitude of the Acharyas except in one or two matters has not been such as to encourage the Progressive party in expecting help from them in the solution of the great problem of social reform. It is, therefore, natural that there should be among them if not a disposition to ignore these dignitaries, at any rate an indifference to secure their co-operation. It is not the reform party alone who do not attach great value to the authority of the Acharyas. The orthodox party are as prompt in questioning it whenever any of these spiritual heads show any disposition to make a concession to the demand for reform. Their position is, it is true, rather anomalous. But it is sincerely hoped that they and all people of the orthodox party will study the signs of the times and show a more liberal and sympathetic spirit to remedy admitted grievances than they have done till now. The cause of progress