

It is said that only chiefs and nobles likely to agree with Government will stand a chance of being nominated ; that their powers will be vague and ill defined, and that there will be no free and public discussion. One paper asks what opinion can Maharajas give as regards important administrative or legislative questions. Now, Sir Arthur Havelock, who has governed colonies all over the world, and was also Governor of Madras, after meeting the present Maharaja of Travancore, said he was reminded by him of nothing so much as of an exceptionally able and well-informed Permanent Under Secretary of State. The Congress would count no princes and nobles except such as had joined their camp, to which, under the completest possible misunderstanding as to the power and influence of the organisation at home, a few of them unfortunately do belong, or to the funds of which at any rate they subscribe.

Time is lost in dealing with objections to the maintenance of an official majority. Our Indian fellow-subjects, who consider that a ruler patient of any criticism whatsoever is weak, would write down as mad any such who expected to be beaten, and to continue to rule, and the party which wishes to reduce the majority see in this expedient the means of representing that, but for the votes of the sycophants, the opposition would have won the day.

The agitators wish to have their own majority in order to reduce the army, repeal the Army Act, and fill all posts by natives of the country, in short, to be rid of the British Government. The use made of the principle of election in appointments to the Legislative Council is such as no sane administration can afford to ignore. No one at present can be elected unless

he is the nominee of the Congress party, though it is notorious that the latter is not representative of the people, but of class and caste interests, and that the Mahomedans, Rajputs, Sikhs, lower caste and class Hindoos are wholly opposed to its policy, and detest the speech-making lawyer and intriguing Babu.

Of course it is the case that under existing conditions, while Indian gentlemen serve as Judges of High Courts and members of Legislative Councils, none occupy executive offices of correspondingly high rank, and consequently few Indians other than those on the Legislative Councils actually take part in the discussion of measures before they become law. It would, however, be a great error to suppose that many such are not consulted, for local administrations are under an obligation to collect opinions from every quarter before they report to the Government of India what is the feeling of the country on any particular legislative project. In fact, no measure becomes law without the most widely extended inquiry, and it is unfortunate that this fact is not better known. The shelves of the Secretariats groan under ponderous files containing innumerable opinions from public bodies and private individuals about every Act which is found in the Statute Books.

It is also true that the proceedings of the Advisory Council will be confidential, but as none of the Congress and Babu-parties are likely to serve upon it for some time to come there will be no occasion for the delivery of long speeches addressed to press reporters. Sir E. Law, no Indian civil servant, or sun-dried bureaucrat, but a man of wide and varied experience, observed that members of Council of the Congress party were prone to adversely criticise pro-

posals of Government in long speeches in order to maintain their reputations as political patriots. Such patriots will probably have no opportunity of thus advertising themselves upon the Advisory Councils.

Nor can it be denied that no powers are granted to these councils, and Sir Edward Law has suggested that they should be called together once or twice a year, and that if they object by a majority of three-fourths to any measure on which they are asked to advise the project of law should be dropped. In regard to the first suggestion, Sir E. Law perhaps hardly realises the enormous expense considerations of custom and dignity entail upon native states, whenever their rulers visit the capitals of India; and as regards the second, it would be quite incompatible with the maintenance in undiminished strength of the executive authority of Government that anybody should, in any circumstances, be empowered to override its decisions, or to frustrate its intentions. It is only in a few of the more democratic countries of Europe, if there, that a government can, under any circumstances, be defeated, or can defer to opponents, and continue to exist.

Then objection is taken to the idea of counterpoise, the aim of the Government being, it is said, to create a countervailing influence against the opinion of the (English) educated classes. *The Indian Patriot*, for instance, writes :

“It is useless to pretend that the large landowners, the backward classes, the artisans and traders form or direct any kind of public opinion in the country. That is done by the educated classes, by officials, lawyers, journalists and others, who, because they have an

opinion, make themselves felt. The counterpoise is intended to neutralise the effect of public opinion. Backward classes, who are at present incapable of forming or influencing opinion, are to be brought into prominence, so that they may, by their silence or by their adherence to Government in all matters, neutralise the effect of the public opinion which makes itself felt at present by means of press and platform."

It is natural that the agitators and lawyers do not like the idea of being put, as far as may be, in their proper places, but they represent no one of the many classes but their own.

Another journal, on the same side, is sufficiently ingenuous to write :

"The big landowners take little interest in affairs, and where they do the credit is due to the educated classes. At all events the leaders of the Congress movement have been doing their best to create an intelligent interest in them about public affairs, and have spared no pains in securing their sympathy."

No doubt the Congress party has done its utmost to capture the agricultural interest, but so far, fortunately, it has failed.

Sir Alfred Lyall, on account of his administrative experience, his scholarship, and his sympathy with the inhabitants, is one of the greatest living authorities upon India. He says "that those who are pressing for a system which would in a short time put the great power of government, of war, of finance, and the highest problems of administration in the hands of elective bodies, are selecting the line of greatest resistance." Of course moderate reformers in India realise that self-government is a distant ideal, and

only desire to take steps now to prepare the way. The recent revolution in Persia is quoted in the vernacular press as a proof that Asiatic nations are not unsuited for representative government, but it is early yet to draw any conclusions from that vexed and distracted land. Sir Alfred was in favour of appointing any native of India, of proved ability, to any office for which he was qualified, and, so far as the writer is concerned, this very much expresses his own view. Nor is it easy to say why the judicial service, even in the grade of district judge, should not be chiefly officered by some of the many admirably qualified Indian lawyers who would be only too glad to accept these offices, though Mr Justice Metra's recent ruling as to the meaning of *svaraj* somewhat shakes an opinion to this effect held with confidence for thirty years. The intellectual gifts of the high-caste Hindoos are, however, not disputed, nor is it for their English rulers to impute to them a want of corresponding morality, or, in a Western sense, civilisation. But if a claim for Western representative institutions be founded, as the Congress seems to hold, on the assimilation of Western civilisation, it is relevant to point out that compulsory widowhood, infant marriage, polygamy, and other practices abhorred of European races, flourish not only unchecked, but with the marked and peculiar approval of the upper castes and classes, who set the fashions others below them follow. Further, these practices are particularly prevalent in Bengal, the province in which agitation and unrest and a demand for a Parliament and Home Rule originated; that in which the licentious Sakti worship chiefly prevails; that in which was manifested the strongest opposition to the

Age of Consent Act of 1891. Some, however, even of the Congress organs in Southern India are "hopeful of good results accruing from the proposed reforms, so far as the Legislative Councils are concerned, as all sections of the community will elect the best men." The Bengalis are more bitter, and no praise can be found in their press.

In one quarter race representation was denounced, and Mr Morley convicted out of his own mouth of inconsistency because he declined, though anxious to appoint Indians, to set up racial standards, when urged to provide in the Indian Councils Bill for the appointment of Indians to his Council. But it can hardly be seriously contended that this position as regards British and Indians in the Council at home has any application to the representation of different Indian races in the Indian continent. In other quarters the justice of special representation for Mahomedans is admitted, even in respect of such as are converts from Hindooism, like the Moplahs of Malabar, and the Labbays of the southern districts of Madras. Indeed in this, as in many other respects, it is to Southern India the inquirer into Indian questions must go for anything approaching moderate and statesmanlike criticism of the very important proposals now under consideration.

While far-reaching reforms have been formulated and are under consideration in India, a useful measure has been passed by Imperial Parliament, the Council of India Act of 1907. This Act contains valuable provisions calculated to keep the members of Council in closer touch with India, and to provide for new blood being more frequently imported. It met with no serious opposition in the House, though an

amendment was proposed by Mr O'Donnell. The number of the Council, which had previously been 12, was raised to 14, and it was an open secret when the Bill was introduced that Mr Morley intended for the first time in our history to appoint two representative Indian gentlemen, no condition as to race being part of the past or present law in this behalf. At the same time the salary of the two extra members was provided by reducing the salary of members from £1200 to £1000 a year, a measure to which no great objection can be taken for reasons given in a previous chapter. The period of absence from India before appointment was reduced from ten to five years, so that men fresh from India might be concerned in its government, and the term of office of future members was reduced from ten to seven years, in order that fresh blood from India might more frequently be introduced. Just as the reforms proposed in the councils in India were unacceptable to the Bengal agitators, because they provide for real representation of different races and classes by members of such races and classes, so the reform accomplished in the Secretary of State's Council, which disposes for ever of the charge that Britain considers any office too great for qualified Indians, proved obnoxious to the Bengali agitation because really representative Indians were appointed by Mr Morley. These were a Hindoo, Mr Krishna Gobinda Gupta, and a Mahomedan, Mr Syed Hussein Bilgrami, C.S.I. The former gentleman served for thirty-four years in the India Civil Service, and reached the high position of member of the Board of Revenue in Bengal. He is a man of the highest character, of great ability, of good family, a native of Eastern

Bengal, and has served on various commissions and in many responsible offices. Mr Syed Hussein is the grandson of the Oriental interpreter to Lord Dalhousie, a man of great ability, learning, and literary power, who has served in Hyderabad, Deccan, under Sir Salar Jung, the friend of his own and of our country, as private secretary to the present Nizam, as Director of Public Instruction in the Hyderabad State, and as an additional member of the Governor General's Council. He was a staunch friend of another friend of his, and of our country, Sir Syed Ahmad, and he possesses the rare distinction of being equally acceptable to Moslems of the old and of the new school. Needless to say, through a long career he has borne a stainless reputation. The Secretary of State was to be congratulated on having obtained such helpers in his difficult task, but their merits were not likely to commend them to the Congress school. *The Bengali* is the organ of Mr Surendra Nath Bannerji, who, like Mr Krishna Gobinda Gupta, began life in the Indian Civil Service—

“But there,
I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair.”

The following is an extract from the pages of this journal :—

“Indians require an altogether different type of men to represent their interests in the Council of the Secretary of State, and we are afraid that our countrymen will look on this last act of Mr Morley's as another blow to the aspirations of the Congress party.”

Again *The Indian Patriot* writes :

“We admit that the appointment of Indians to the

Indian Council is a great step in removing the obnoxious colour bar; but Mr Morley himself spoiled its immediate political effect by nominating two men who are out of touch and sympathy with the people at large, and who are worse than the worst Anglo-Indians in their political opinions."

That is to say, they represent the Hindoos and the Mahomedans, but not the Congress, the Poona Brahmins, and the Bengali Babus.

The Bengali warns the Government that it is playing with fire, that its elections are shams, that the educated classes are ceasing to repose confidence in the Legislative Councils, and will have less faith in them as reconstructed. The constant effort of the disaffected vernacular press is to make believe that the Babus are the representatives of the masses, to whom, however, they are of all classes the most obnoxious. The only interest the Babus and the Brahmins have in the masses is to exploit them, and to keep them ignorant and subservient to themselves. *The Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, the other leading newspaper of Bengal, agrees in condemnation, and objects to any scheme under which the Government majority is assured. *The Hindu* of Madras, so long edited by Mr Subramania Iyer, who has been quoted in Chapter X., holds up the principle of minority representation to ridicule, and obviously, where the majority runs into hundreds of millions, the principle is not likely to be welcomed with enthusiasm.

The *Indian Spectator*, on the other hand, a moderate and impartial organ, thought advisory councils would have a steadying effect upon the pace at which Western ideals were being superimposed on Eastern

civilisation. "Our politics have been too much dominated by partisanship. A truly representative government is not synonymous with government by the advocacy of one class on behalf of another class. It must try to secure direct and personal representation of as many classes as possible, and the proposed reforms will be a distinct step in the realisation of a true representative government."

A Royal Commission was also appointed last year "To inquire into the relations now existing, for financial and administrative purposes, between the Supreme Government and the various Provincial Governments in India, and between the Provincial Governments and the authorities subordinate to them, and to report whether, by measures of decentralisation or otherwise, those relations can be simplified and improved, and the system of government better adapted to meet the requirements and promote the welfare of the different provinces, and without impairing its strength and unity, to bring the Executive Power into closer touch with local conditions."

There is no reference to the relations between the India Office and the Government of India, and the direction in which decentralisation is chiefly contemplated is in the relations between the Central and the Provincial Government—a thorny question, because the actual authority of the Government of India over subordinate administrations is unlimited, while in practice its exercise is greatly restrained by the jealousy of interference manifested by the latter, and the reluctance to override them always felt by the former, authority. There is, however, ample room for decentralisation, both in this behalf and in respect

of the relations between provincial governments and their subordinate authorities, who are far too much hampered by inspections, reports, and other aspects of the red tape demon, who destroys efficient administration. As regards finance, considerable reform, all in the right direction, has recently been introduced, but it would be premature to hold that even that chapter is closed.

In addition to the above suggested reforms and changes in the administration, the Government of India now proposes that the Budget should be discussed under separate heads, to be explained by the member of Government in charge of the department concerned, after which a general debate would follow—more time than at present being allotted. Systematic criticism cannot exist under the present arrangement, and that some change is necessary will be readily understood by anyone who, like the writer, has been a member of the Council, and has been faced by the alternative of either cutting his criticisms unduly short, or of making the proceedings, which have lasted uninterruptedly from morning to night, unduly long.

In the foregoing pages I have described the character of the proposed reforms, and the manner in which they have been received. But so wholly and completely does the Indian recognise strength as the first requisite of Government, the rest being comparatively nowhere, that it is admitted by the Indian newspapers—let *The Indian Patriot* speak, for it is a fair representative of the more moderate Congress organs—that “No minister ever held a stronger position than Mr Morley holds to-day. He is for the moment more powerful than the most

despotic monarch. His methods of administration receive the support alike of Liberal and Conservative members."

So may it always be, and in that event the Congress in India, and its representatives in England, will soon learn to confine their aspirations within reasonable limits, and British rule will be perpetuated to the infinite benefit of the multitudinous masses of the many peoples which inhabit our Indian Empire.

CHAPTER XII

SOCIAL REFORM

Conservatism of Hindoos—Double Life of Reformers—Age of Consent Act—Infant Marriage—Shastras of Antiquarian Interest only—Necessity for Knowledge of Vernaculars—Value of Sportsmanlike Habits—Difficulty of Commensality and Reciprocal Female Inter-course—Domestic Life of Hindoos—Prayer and Praise—Life of Women—Actual Religion of the Hindoos—Caste—Marriage—Drinking—Alcohol and Tea—Death—Character and Position of Men and Women—Evidence of Miss Bhor, Colonel Meadows Taylor, Mr Duff, Abbé Dubois, Mr Crooke, Mr Kipling, Mr Clarke, Miss Noble, and Keshub Chunder—Sir Madava Rao on Hindoo Customs—Hindoo Charity

THE movement in favour of social reform in India has been overwhelmed by political agitation, which alone has of late engaged the energies of the English educated classes. Indeed the agitators have realised the absolute necessity of adopting the conservative attitude which is that of the masses. Ten years ago all those who are now clamouring against British rule in India were eagerly attacking customs which are woven into the very framework of Indian society, and at that time a great deal was heard about the necessity for educating women. Even then, in South India at any rate, where female education is most advanced, the prejudice against sending girls to public schools was somewhat wearing away, partly owing to the parents having become wise enough to see that there is no greater impropriety in girls going to school than boys, and partly because of the substitution, where-

ever practicable, of female for male teaching agency. There is no doubt that among Hindoos generally the impression prevails that education is likely to lead women to wrongdoing, and however much the Government, philanthropic, and missionary bodies, and wealthy and generous individuals, may do, to advance this cause, the real spadework must be accomplished, and the greater part of the cost must be borne, by the people themselves, who have the cause at heart. As the eminent Indian educationalist, Mr Raganatha Mudaliar, said of persons of his own position and education, "We feel it to be a grievous sin to marry our infant daughters, but even if we could summon up sufficient courage to set at naught the shastraic prohibition, we succumb to the weeping entreaties and expostulations of our wives. There is a general consensus of opinion amongst educated men in India that widows should be allowed to remarry but such remarriage on a large scale will be possible only when women learn to assert their rights against perpetual widowhood. We would allow the members of each division of a caste," only that, be it noted, not the members of different castes, "to intermarry, but their is no hope of this reform, small as it is, being carried into effect unless our women rise to something like the intelligent level we have ourselves attained." Such was the feeling in Madras, the province most advanced in respect of social reform, and most backward in accepting the Congress political programme.

The subject of social reform is necessarily vague, comprehensive, and ill defined. The Indian masses, it has never been denied, are fulfilled with the conviction that the social customs and institutions which have so long stood the test of time possess peculiar

merit, and are superlatively well adapted to their own requirements. The masses in this behalf include all Hindoos who are not, and, off the platform, a great many of those who are, English educated. The people are passionately attached to the simple faith and primitive ways of their forefathers ; they are prepared to take what a Brahmin says as gospel, and the women, who are the most conservative half of the population, exercise the strongest possible influence over the men, though the true position in this respect has been obscured and, unintentionally of course, misrepresented, by interested observers, whose field has necessarily been limited to the lowest and most degraded classes.

If any proofs were wanted that the desire for social reform had only touched the merest superficial fringe of the Indian peoples, it would be found in the double life led by most of the reformers themselves. An ardent radical in his domestic life does the very things that in his public life he denounces. He believes in astrology, marries his children in extreme youth, spends more than he can afford on ceremonies, submits to the exactions of the priests, and in general conforms to Hindoo standards.

He is perfectly well aware that if certain texts can be found in favour of remarriage of widows, at least an equal number can be found to condemn this practice, and that custom, which is the real arbiter, has been against it for centuries.

That experienced statesman, Sir John Strachey, in 1899 wrote: "The people of India are intensely conservative, and wedded, to an extent difficult for Europeans to understand, to every ancient custom, and between their customs and their religion no line of distinction can be drawn.

It is, of course, true that no social conditions render it necessary now that the community should be divided into sections, with impossible barriers between them, for the four principal castes do not confine themselves in these days to their proper avocations. The Brahmin is now as much an official as he was formerly a priest; the Vaisya as much a clerk as a shopkeeper; the Sudra as much a peasant-proprietor as a farm-servant, and the Kshatriya, once a warrior, is now anything you please. Not only can no member of one, intermarry with a member of another, of these castes, but there are innumerable subdivisions of each of the actual castes, in respect of which the same disability obtains. Legislation, of course, is powerless to deal with such a situation; if, indeed, legislative interference were desirable, which I, for one, do not think.

The failure of the Age of Consent Act has proved that it is useless to legislate too far ahead of public opinion. As to the practice of infant marriage, the evils resulting from it have been greatly exaggerated. Perverse as such a practice appears to us to be, its moral and social consequences have not been, by any means, as disastrous as reformers pretend. The majority of women in India are probably as happy as women elsewhere. Custom reconciles to any hardships, but such hardships are the subject of habitual and monumental exaggeration. The ordinary Briton is unable to understand the sacramental and mystical conception of marriage as a binding tie for this life and the life hereafter. One of the ablest Hindoo judges who ever sat on the bench in India, Sir T. Muttuswami Iyer, "deprecated any legislation which would involve an irritating interference with the most important domestic

event of the majority of his Majesty's Hindoo subjects." The Hindoo system provides every woman with a husband, and every man with a wife, and if in Bengal, where all those customs are most prevalent, 21 per cent. of the women are widows, as against about one half that number in England and France, on the other hand, the proportion of unmarried females is more than twice as great in England as in Bengal. It must also be remembered that cohabitation or actual marriage does not take place until the girls reach the age of puberty, the marriage ceremony, in fact, being nothing more than an irrevocable betrothal. Girls must marry early when they mature early, and as the mean age for married women in India is twenty-eight, and in England forty, there is, in fact, no great difference, when climate and length of life are taken into account, the child-bearing ages in Europe being fifteen to forty-five, and fifteen to thirty-five in India.

It is well known that in old times girls were married after they came of age, that remarriage of widows was once permitted, and that there is no authority in the Vedas for the practice of suttee. Nor in very early times did the system of caste prevail, for it was developed towards the end of the Vedic period, and arose immediately from the fact that all class occupations were hereditary. Soon the smallest difference, as regards trade, profession, or practice, became enough to lead to the institution of separate castes, which are now some 4000 in number. But, of course, it must be understood that existing conditions have obtained for many centuries, and that the Shastraic system is of purely antiquarian and academic interest.

It is one thing to fall back upon the Shastras for historical light, and another to base modern reforms upon these ancient texts. They are worthy of all reverence, as they hand down the traditions of a past civilisation, and no social reformer can neglect or ignore them, but it should be manifest that rules and observances which became men of a bygone age cannot suit people who live in the present day, in different circumstances and environments. The Bible, the law, and the prophets can all be expressed, so far as Hindoos are concerned, by the one word custom.

Upon the much-debated subject of social intercourse, volumes have been written. The fact is that complete fusion, and intermarriage to any great extent, are impossible.

Of all the Hindoos I have seen in India none were more Europeanised, or associated more freely with Europeans, than the late Mr Saththianadan, M.A., LL.M., professor of philosophy at the Presidency College, Madras. He and his wife were both Christians, who habitually frequented the society of the English in the presidency capital, and he, as a high-caste man, possessed particular and, among Indian Christians rare, facilities for noting the feelings of Hindoos of all grades. He wrote: "The educated classes claim to be free from the trammels of caste, but there is glaring incongruity between thoughts and deeds, between public professions and private practice. Much is said against caste, but it still reigns supreme in some form or another even in the most enlightened circles. There is still absence of sympathy between the peoples of India. They are separated by impassable barriers, and, seeing that the points of disparity between the different classes that constitute the Indian

population make their cordial sympathy with one another impossible, how can we expect the Indian population, made up as it is of those motley races, to mix cordially with Europeans, a people entirely different from them in creed, colour, customs, and costume. India consists merely of a vast assemblage of races divided into countless unsympathising castes and classes. I admit that English education and Western civilisation have amalgamated to some extent the forces among the Indian population, but greater exertions must be put forth in the castes and classes to bring about a deeper sympathy and more complete union." Then referring to the Briton he quotes Emerson: "Every one of these islanders is an island himself, safe, tranquil, and incommunicable."

But while there can be no fusion and intermarriage, friendly intercourse is by no means difficult, provided always that the Briton can talk the Indian's language.

Of all reasons which prevent free intercourse the chief is ignorance of the languages on the part of the British. It is true that certain tests are exacted from those who enter the public service, but they are of a rather elementary character, and no sooner does the official enter into his kingdom than he finds that everybody about him speaks perfect English, and, though he does not know it, nothing reaches his ears except what has passed through these, generally by no means disinterested, interpreters. The irregular relations which formerly were so frequent between Englishmen and the women of the country led to a complete acquisition of the language in many cases, but the number of Englishwomen in the country has of late so much increased, and any European having relations with native women is so relentlessly persecuted by

them, and so disparaged by his fellow-countrymen generally, that this approach to the people is practically abolished.

The pursuit of sport is indeed the only means of access remaining, except for those choice spirits who strike out lines for themselves regardless of the opinion of the little station in which their service is for the most part passed. The freemasonry of sport obtains just as much in India as anywhere else. In the hunting field at home all classes meet upon an equal footing, and this is very much the case in the jungle. Association of this kind leads to a frank interchange of views, and to mutual self-respect and esteem. Statements are often made that Indians will not bring the gun up to an elephant, for instance, but a sportsman who has shown that he himself is dependable will never have occasion to make this complaint. Upon the whole the wonder is, that men unarmed, or if carrying a second rifle inexpert in its use, can be got so readily to put their lives into imminent danger to please a stranger, and for a paltry wage.

The Indian is no more wanting in courage than he is in truthfulness, but unless he knows his man he is always on the defensive, and is ready with some, probably quite unnecessary, wile.

He naturally does not feel at home with a man who cannot talk to him, or, if he tries, will in all good faith, very likely use disrespectful language, and say for "you," "you fellow."

Sir Alfred Lyall explains this matter in a couple of lines as well as could be done in a volume :

"There goes my lord the Feringhee, who talks so civil and bland,
Till he raves like a soul in Jahanum if I do not quite understand,
He began by calling me sahib, and ends by calling me fool."

It is indeed true that want of knowledge is rooted in the want of sympathy. I cannot see that there is anything whatever in the plea frequently put forward that there can be no friendly intercourse until the women on both sides frequent the society of the men. Surely there can be no friendly intercourse unless each side accepts the customs of the other, for which, in point of fact, there are always excellent reasons. At anyrate, to make that a condition on the threshold is to prevent any stepping over it. Nor does the absence of commensality constitute any legitimate ground of complaint. So little is this a bar to social intercourse that I am convinced that any attempt to break it down will set back such progress as has been made. Table manners are a stumbling block of the most mountainous character, and it is not too much to say that different races in Europe abhor the customs of their neighbours in this respect, and that the English are convinced that they are the only clean feeders. Natives of India have wholly and absolutely different standards, and it is exceedingly sound policy for our intercourse to stop short at the table. I have myself seen spirited efforts made to break down these barriers, all of which were foredoomed to failure. Attempts on the part of Europeans to give Indian gentlemen refreshment in separate tents and houses, with cooks and attendants of the proper denomination, have resulted in nothing but misunderstandings. At the first meeting of the Congress held in Madras infinite pains were taken by the Governor of Madras and his staff to entertain the delegates, with, I think, very moderate success.

Unfortunately, it is a fact that Europeans who can really carry on a conversation in the vernacular languages are exceedingly rare. It is the most valuable

asset a public servant can have, but it is not recognised in honours and promotions. There is also, unfortunately, some truth in the statement, often repeated, that the influence of Englishwomen in India tends to widen the breach. There are of course many exceptions, but upon the whole there is little love lost between English women and Indian men. Moreover, in spite of speeches, writings, and protestations, extremely little has been done by the natives themselves to bring about what is commonly called social reform, a subject as difficult to define in India as it is in England. Even when some person, greatly daring, marries a widow, he finds that he and his wife are lightly regarded, if not absolutely despised, even by those who have actually urged them to such action. Practically nothing has been done in the thirty years which have elapsed since first the subject was broached, and, instead of adhering to the main lines as laid down by the leaders in this behalf, the reformers of late have occupied themselves with anti-nautch demonstrations and endeavours to prevent dancing girls from taking part in festivals and celebrations. Women of this class are just now strongly denounced, and it is alleged against them "that they have cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by them, that their house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." All this may be true, but immorality, like everything else in India, tends to become hereditary, and the position of the temple female attendants no doubt amounts to a publicly acknowledged profession, though it is subject to limitations, and is not on all fours with that of the ordinary prostitute. Objection is now taken to the presence of these girls at the solemnisation of weddings and

on festal occasions, though their notorious association with students is an occasion for hard winking.

Originally, they were dedicated as virgins to the service of religion, and they are now the handmaidens of the idols, of which the priests and others have long said with Horace: "*Ne sit ancilla tibi amor pudori.*" No doubt this custom and others are open to objection, but those who are busily occupied in preaching social reform are too apt to lose sight of what the domestic life of India really is, and from a perusal of tracts and pamphlets it would be readily imagined that it stood in urgent and exceptional need of drastic reform. No doubt it is capable of improvement, but, at the same time, it is probable that in many respects it is superior to that of other countries, and in few respects falls below normal standards. It would be extremely difficult to draw a picture of the family life of Europe, and it is equally difficult to draw a picture of the family life of India, but as a common Christianity imposes standards possessing some similarity in ideal, if not in practice, upon all the inhabitants of Europe, so the Brahminic or Hindoo system conduces to the maintenance among the many peoples and races of India of something approaching a common standard of life and conversation, and, even where customs repugnant to Hindoo ideals exist, the scheme on the whole will be found to be fashioned on the Hindoo or Brahminic system. It is very difficult, almost impossible, to distinguish between caste and Hindooism. The superintendents of the Indian Census of 1901, who reported for the different provinces, are pretty well agreed, where they have to define Hindooism, in saying that so long as a man observes caste rules he may not only do pretty much as he pleases, but

may actually offer his individual worship to any god or hero, to any stick, stone, or natural feature, which his own inclination, or the animistic traditions of his village, has endowed with supernatural attributes of a constructive or destructive character.

An accomplished Bengali gentleman, Mr Ghose, who published a life of the Maharaja Nabkissen, a faithful friend of the English in the days of Clive, observes that "there is no fear of English rule going wrong if we remember the principles of Queen Victoria's character, and in respect of reforms follow the English method of evolution, not that of revolution." Nevertheless, our Indian legislature has made spirited inroads upon the principle of guaranteeing to the natives of India their own customs and their own religion, though whenever these have been of a revolutionary character they have been still-born. Such, for instance, has been the fate of the Age of Consent Act, as I anticipated in an article published in *The Nineteenth Century* for October 1890. It is necessary, therefore, in describing the domestic life of a Hindoo family, to take an example from a characteristic area, and it is best to go to the Deccan or South India, for there Mahomedan rule and Mahomedan customs never took root. Even in Hyderabad the people are Hindoos, and the Nizam and his Mussulman lords a mere privileged handful, while on the south-west coast there are states which were completely unaffected by the Mahomedan conquest.

To begin at the beginning, the site must be chosen and the house must be built according to caste rules, in auspicious months; hymns are chanted; saffron, turmeric, and sandal are smeared upon the beams;

flowers are offered, and the edifice is apostrophised according to custom in that behalf provided. The house consists of one or more quadrangles with open courtyards, and a blank wall generally offers to the street. The kitchen is the best apartment, and combines in some respects the characteristics of a chapel and a cooking place. The church in England is often a small affair beside the mansion house, and the missionary's chapel a lowly hut beside his bungalow, but in Indian houses no part should be higher than the kitchen, into which no person of a lower caste than the master may look or enter. The other rooms open upon an inner verandah, in which cows and calves are stabled. There is little furniture; indeed, that actually used consists of a few pots and pans, brazen vessels, and elementary bedsteads, these simple articles being generally collected in a small, plain, unpretentious room. The married sons live under the paternal roof, and an extra man makes no difference, as they all sleep upon the floor, and after all, in many parts of Europe, and at least in one capital, men servants do the same, or use the sofas and chairs. In the centre of one of the quadrangles there should be an altar, on which grows a shrub of holy basil. Suppose the owner to be a Brahmin, and already installed, he must rise before the sun, and repeat texts from the puranas. I give one, and have translated it, as I have others quoted, for the benefit of such as require a translation :

“ Rama, thou givest all good things,
Who but thyself deliverance brings?
Thee with one voice we all adore,
Ah! let me praise thee more and more.”

Then comes the rinsing of the mouth, washing of

the feet, cleansing of the teeth with a particular kind of stick never again used, then the bath, prayers, oblations to the sun, and the fixing of the caste marks upon the now purified person ; the salutations north, south, east, and west, and the repetition of the sacred Sanscrit text :

“Hail earth and sky and heaven, hail kindly light,
Illuminator of our purblind sight.”

Before the midday meal there are more prayers, ablutions, and offerings, and then the male members sit on the floor and eat their rice or other grain, with pickles or condiments, off plates of plantain or other leaves. Food is eaten with the hand, and water is poured into the mouth, so that neither the vessel nor the fluid touches the lips. There are prayers again at supper-time, which comes at sundown in the simple healthy life of the Indian villager, but the perpetual prayers and ceremonies are capable of some abbreviation. No one goes to the temple for service as we go to church, but worship is performed daily by the official priest, just as Mass is served in the Catholic Church, and upon holidays and festivals the people collectively adore the gods. As for the females, it will suffice if they worship their husbands, which is their actual duty, and they are pretty well occupied with bearing and rearing children, and with their domestic duties, and are probably not inferior in domestic virtues to any in the world.

It may be fairly said of a Hindoo woman, “that the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, that she rises while it is yet night, and gives meat to her household, that she stretcheth out her hand to the poor, and reacheth out her hand to the needy,

that she looks well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness, that her children rise up and call her blessed, and her husband praiseth her."

She is hard at work all day, and in the cultivating classes, helps in the field. At night, when the lamps are lit, she makes obeisance to the god of fire, saying, if the translation be accepted :

"This flame proceeds from God above,
This lamp is lit by heavenly love,
So praise we when each night begins
The flame which burns away our sins."

Much the same ceremonial may be seen any day in a Russian village, where the peasant bows himself before the eikon and the lamp in the angle of the wall, and, like the Hindoo, he too knows that he is, and that no one else is, orthodox.

There appears to be some doubt as to whether the good deeds of the husband and wife are transferable, but it seems certain that, after her husband's death, she can hasten his final absorption into beatitude by her prayers and penance, which is very much like the doctrine of the elder branch of the Christian Church.

In the lower castes, of course, where the worship is rather demonolatry or animism, the daily ritual amounts to little more than an obeisance to the sun in the morning and to the lamp at night.

There is no consciousness during one life of a former existence, and the average Hindoo troubles himself little about religion, but very much about caste.

Hindoos are divided amongst themselves into non-dualists, who believe nothing has any real separate existence from the one God ; dualists, who hold that

the human soul and the material world have a distinct existence, and the non-dualists, who nevertheless ascribe to the deity a twofold aspect: the supreme spirit the cause, and the material universe the effect. All this is to us as real as the difference between the *ὅμο* and the *ὁμοιόουσια*, and among the Hindoos common folk are content to worship Siva or Vishnu, whose outward and visible signs are respectively the horizontal line and the trident on the forehead.

Now had Christian missionaries been content that converts should retain these marks, the top knot, and other signs and observances of caste, Christianity might have made more way in India. The Catholics once had a fair hope of the wholesale conversion of the extreme south, where they actually brought over high-caste natives, until the controversy known as that of the Malabar rites was decided against, what was held to be, trifling with idolatry. It is too late now, even if another policy were adopted, for Christianity and low caste have become once and for ever inextricably associated.

All Indian questions are caste questions. No Englishman who had turned Hindoo would be accepted as an authority, even by Hindoos, regarding the religious and social characteristics of the people he had forsaken, but here in England the authorities accepted by the public and the press are almost invariably those who, having been, have ceased to be, Hindoos, or, having a special mission to convert Hindoos, are naturally not impressed with such evidence as tends to show that Hindoos stand in no need of conversion. Yet an ancient civilisation and a faith professed by hundreds of millions are entitled to respectful treatment, and the law-abiding—for with

the exception of one class the Hindoos deserve the epithet—to an unprejudiced judgment. Yet I have seldom heard other than misrepresentation on the platform in this country of the domestic life and the character of the people.

It has already been recorded in regard to Hindoo marriages, the evils of which have been so enormously exaggerated, that the actual marriage ceremony is no more than a binding betrothal, and it may amuse the reader to quote from the venerable institutes of Manu the following advice:—

“Let a man not marry a girl with reddish hair or deformed limbs, nor one troubled with sickness, nor troubled with too much, or too little, hair, nor one immoderately talkative.” Polyandry is not much practised in India, and it may be worth mentioning, that the Nairs of the Malabar coast are not polyandrous, for though their system allows a woman to change her husband, she is not permitted to have more than one at a time. The instincts of the Hindoo are monogamous, and he rarely takes a second wife, unless the first has no male issue, when the paramount religious necessity for having a son to perform his funeral sacrifices renders obligatory either a second wife or an adoption.

The marriage ceremonies are long, complex, and costly, and eating, drinking, and presents are not wanting. The question is asked and answered, but the garments are tied together in the place of the presentation of a ring, the exact counterpart of which is a gold ornament fixed around the neck. Rice is thrown over the newly wedded, just as it is with us; hymns, feasting, and processions follow, and the bride, who in the case of respectable families is never of a

marriageable age, returns to her parents' house to await the arrival of womanhood. Though in many respects these marriages resemble our own, there is no wine, of course, and the feasting is vegetarian in character, for the upper classes never drink wine nor eat meat unless they have received an English education. The lower classes may enjoy flesh and liquor, but they must, and do, approximate to the standards of their betters if they wish to obtain the respect of the public. Pariahs, who are, of course, a caste, though a low one, eat flesh, and that which they do eat is generally carrion, since the cow is sacred, goats are wanted for their milk, and animals generally are too expensive to be slaughtered. Those who have lived in Indian villages will readily understand the feelings with which the upper classes regard the flesh-eaters, who are, it must be admitted, in all respects infinitely their inferiors.

It must not be supposed because they are not eaten, that animals are always kindly treated. True, the Jains, who are a handful, maintain hospitals for sick and wounded creatures, but bullocks and horses exist in conditions which would give the S.P.C.A. a little work, though the interference of such societies is to be strongly deprecated, as an agency foreign to the ideas of the people, and practising that interference with their domestic life which they strongly, and very naturally, resent at the hands of strangers. Yet the Hindoos give their cattle a rest and a feast at the New Year festival, and on other proper occasions, and make offerings to the King of the Snakes, whose worship, in one form or another, and to a greater or less extent, prevails all over India.

Though no wine is drunk except by those who have learnt English habits, it is not the case that the

British introduced alcohol into India, where intoxicating drinks have always been known and used, such use, however, except among the English educated, being confined to the lower classes, and regarded as disgraceful and degrading. Temperance is as distinctly a characteristic of the Hindoos as tolerance, and in both respects they are an example to the nations of Europe. Notwithstanding the evidence of M. Meredith Townsend to the contrary effect, Hindoos, besides dinner and supper, have a light early breakfast of cold rice or cakes. Tea-planters hope that at some future time tea drinking will become universal in India—a consummation to be most devoutly desired, because the drinking of tea involves the boiling of water, and would in India, as it does in China, preserve the people from malarial fever, which, and not cholera or plague, is the real scourge of the continent. The Government should spare no pains to push tea drinking, and it is to the credit of Lord Curzon that he did help the planters, too little encouraged in the past, to sell their salubrious leaf in the country of its origin.

Travellers are allowed a good deal of licence as regards caste rules, which really are the most reasonable in the world, elastic where they cannot be kept, and rigid where they can. Everywhere, however, wayfarers are helped, and to assist the son of the road, as Sadi calls him, is a religious duty.

To quote again from my translation, in the institutes of Manu it is written :

“Who sends the stranger hungry from his door
That stranger’s sins are added to his score ;
Who entertains a stranger, though his sins
Are red as scarlet, he salvation wins.”

Many ceremonies attend the dead as well as the living, and the sick man in his last moments is carried from his bed to lie upon the earth or beside the river. Thus the house avoids pollution, and nothing can pollute the sacred stream or holy mother earth. The chief mourner, whose claim is decided for the same reasons as obtain among ourselves, performs the sacrifices before the body is borne to the funeral pyre, made up perhaps, in the case of the poor, by contributions of a few sticks from neighbouring houses. He walks three times round the blazing fire carrying a pot of water, which finally he dashes on the ground : " Thus the pitcher is broken, and the dust returns to earth as it was." Some castes, of course, bury their dead, and all do in certain exceptional cases. Ceremonies are less elaborate with the lower castes, and the same distinction applies to the periodical rites for deceased ancestors. As a result of these prayers and ceremonies, the spirits of the departed are provided with a temporary body, while without such they would wander about as malignant ghosts,

“ ψυχὴ καὶ εἰδωλον ἀτὰρ φρένες οὐκ’ ἐνὶ πάντων.”

Next the temporary body is changed for the ethereal envelope and passes into the ancestral heaven, there to remain until absorbed, or, as is more widely held, receives judgment according to its works in this world, being reborn after a longer or shorter period spent in the purgatorial heaven or hell, to again accomplish a mortal life in another guise, until at length it qualifies for nirvana, or absorption into the Divine essence, for the Hindoos also believe that each soul is *divinæ particula auræ*. They acknowledge likewise a Supreme Being, the immortality of the

soul, and the necessity for, and existence of, another life in which sin and virtue meet with their reward.

In the Sama Veda, the typical man of sin is described. His head is Brahmin murder, his eyes liquor drinking, his face theft, tutor slaying his ears, woman killing his nose, cow destroying his shoulders, adultery his chest, oppression his stomach, while smaller sins are otherwise distributed about his person. He is black, which of course the upper classes of the Hindoos are not, as indeed Hindoos of any class seldom are, and he is bright-eyed and malevolent. In the institutes of Manu the body is otherwise described, and if I may again translate, in this wise—

“Bones are its rafters and its beams,
Tendons and nerves its scores and seams,
Blood is its mortar, and the skin,
Frail covering, roofs the mansion in.
Its occupants are age and woe,
Death and decay, as sure as slow ;
Right gladly should the vital spark,
The soul, *renounce* a home so dark.
Birds at their pleasure quit the tree,
Who leaves the world alone is free.”

This is a melancholy picture, but is the Hindoo home melancholy? By no means, nor are Hindoo women miserable. Their lives are made up of light and shade, like those of other races, nor have they less of light. Miss Bhor, a talented Mahratta lady, wrote of Bombay: “In those parts of Western India, where the Mahomedan invasion very slightly affected the old Hindoo customs, the Brahmins and other high castes neither veil themselves nor live in seclusion, and have as merry a time as the men.” This of course is equally true of South India, and of all parts

of the continent wherein the Mahomedans did not settle in strength. In all such regions, and they are far the greater part, though they do not include the great cities visited by travellers, women wear no veils, and suffer no seclusion, but freely live and move and have their being. Of child marriages the same writer says: "The Hindoo system is bad, but it is worked out on the whole in a kindly and sensible fashion. Marriages turn out happily much oftener than might be thought possible under such circumstances, and as regards child widows, in the working out of this iron caste system there is much real heart and tenderness, which soften its cruel decrees."

Colonel Meadows Taylor, one who knew the Hindoos if ever anyone did, said: "They are as courteous and intelligent a people as any in the world, kind to their children, respectful to their parents, charitable, honest, and industrious, and with such vices as are common to human nature." He denied that they were untruthful, and saw in caste the means of enforcing the, at least outwardly, moral conduct of its members.

In like manner Mr R. C. Dutt, when he leaves the company of the English educated agitators, testifies to the "dislike and distrust the people of India have of the rapid introduction of modern Western methods. Their dislike to the alienation of their chiefs and rajahs, who cease to live and move among, and become strangers to, their own people. There is not, on the whole earth a more frugal and more contented peasantry."

Some day, Mr Dutt, who wields the pen of a ready writer, will explain how such a people can be ground down by the misgovernment of aliens, and how the association of their chiefs and rajahs in the govern-

ment, which is now proposed by Mr Morley and Lord Minto, can be other than grateful to the people, whose characteristics he, on this occasion at least, so faithfully describes.

Abbé Dubois, than whom no European ever knew India better, but who takes, I think, an unduly unfavourable view of the character of the people of Mysore, writes : "Animated in this behalf by the purest and noblest sentiments, Hindoos consider a man happy in proportion to the number of his children, which are the blessings of his house."

Sir Thomas Munro, Sir Joseph Fayrer, Sir James Malcolm, Sir William Sleaman, and a host of witnesses, have testified to the many and exceeding great merits of the Hindoo character, and with all they say I would, as one who spent a quarter of a century in learning their languages and living amongst them, most heartily associate myself, while compelled, in justice to a people I respect and admire, to repudiate altogether the descriptions of them given by those who, for personal or political reasons, persistently and perpetually misrepresent them. The Dewan, or chief minister of Travancore, which the Census shows to be absolutely the most educated, as it is the most beautiful and most prosperous, region in India, writes : "The Hindoo home is founded on religious principles, the father is guardian, preceptor and patriarch, the woman is protected by her male relations, nor, looking at other countries where celibacy is practised by women, can I consider universal marriage altogether a curse." This is true enough, and I remember what a Hindoo judge of one of the Indian High Courts said, speaking of the difference in the law as regards adultery, which in

India is a criminal offence. He thought "the exigencies of modern European society" hardly allowed of a similarly severe view being taken in Europe of what the Hindoos regarded as a serious crime.

The same Dewan of Travancore wrote, and heaven knows how truly: "There is great misapprehension amongst European nations regarding the purdah, in which there is no slavery or tyranny, but as families rise in the world their females ask for the privileges of the zenana system."

Then Mr Crooke, who takes a very high place amongst those few who are qualified not by platform orations or political agitation, but by personal knowledge of Hindoo life, particularly in Northern India, writes: "The Northern Indian peasant's life is one of ceaseless toil, but it enforces industry and temperance, and is compatible with a ready cheeriness which can find amusement in the veriest trifles. It would be a great mistake to suppose the wife of the peasant to be nothing more than a drudge. Nothing in the house is done without her knowledge and advice, and she is not perhaps worse off than her sister in a similar grade in other parts of the world."

It is curious to find Abbé Dubois, at the beginning, and Mr Crooke at the end, of last century, during the course of which no two men probably knew India better, saying in almost identical words that to imagine that the State can permanently improve the condition of the depressed classes is the dream of an enthusiast. Even a reduction in expenditure and a respite from perpetual increases of administrative charges for the furtherance of progress in Western civilisation, whether needed or not, whether acceptable or not, whether suitable or not, would hardly

affect the lowest classes to any great extent. For they do not now groan under an excessive salt-tax and a grinding land-assessment. As has been shown in previous chapters, these are immemorial imposts which the British Government has progressively and enormously reduced. Had they done less in the way of reduction and rigidly abstained from ever levying a new tax their popularity would have been greater, and there would have been less occasion for the enemy to blaspheme. At present, although the total collected is less, it is impossible to deny that there are new cesses and taxes, the inventions of the foreigner.

It is necessary to realise what the domestic life of the Hindoos actually is, before considering what steps should be taken to reform it, though such hesitation would not be tolerated by ardent and professional reformers, who would first of all abolish, and then study any customs which came within their restless and disturbing orbit. Nothing for instance is further from the fact than the assumption, universal in this country, that ladies behind the purdah—who are ignorantly presumed to be the majority of the women of India—are universally ill treated.

How many a missionary or another has stood up in England and said: "I returned and considered all the oppressions which are done under the sun, and beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, and on the side of their oppressors there was power, and they had no comforter." But hear on the other side Mr Kipling: "Even purdah women have always been in touch with a thousand outside interests," or Mr Crooke: "Women exert a wide influence and control, whether within or without zenanas, and little that

goes on outside escapes their ears." Nor are they neglected by the Government, for they have in many cases special legal guardians in the Court of Wards. Mr Dutt, too, writes: "Purdahs prevail chiefly in the towns of Northern India, where the rule of the Moslems remained for centuries."

Mr S. E. J. Clarke, a man intimately acquainted with Hindoo life, writes of Bengal: "Women of the labouring and agricultural classes move freely about. Girls are by precept, instruction, example and discipline taught a high ideal of womanhood. Even purdah women go on pilgrimage, entertain and visit their friends, and see a great deal of the outer world. I deny that Hindoo women necessarily have a miserable life, and must bear testimony to the happy side." Mr Crooke writes: "There is an utter lack of seclusion except for women of the higher classes," who as has been said, insist on it as an honour due to their rank.

Everything tends to obscure the facts on this subject. For instance, the success of Lady Dufferin's Fund which has been great, and to which I endeavoured in humble fashion to contribute, has not been chiefly amongst purdah women. *The Amrita Bazaar Patrika* wrote: "There is no objection, whatever, on the part of Hindoo or Mahomedan ladies to be treated by male doctors"—and this is, of course, a fact. A Hindoo lately wrote a book called "Kamala's Letters," in which one of the female characters says: "Purdah does not exist in Hindoo society except when wealth holds despotic sway. Where elsewhere it is found, it is due to the new products of English education, who, rising in rank and position under false notions have taken to it."

The same writer adds :

“Though it is the policy of our rulers not to interfere in our social and religious matters, it seems to me they do so when they choose. Much in our system which may appear unreasonable and intolerable cannot be altered without interfering with the very character of our social fabric. There is no commoner fad of the hybrid products of English education than their twaddle about the cruelty of caste.”

The writer is believed to be a Brahmin of great attainments and high position in the South of India.

Amongst the Mahomedans, the case as regards seclusion is, of course, different, but even with them the whole question is, and always has been, and no doubt always will be, the subject of monumental misrepresentation.

The extent to which Christian teaching has affected Hindoo domestic life can hardly be regarded as great. Keshub Chunder Sen protested against “the denationalisation so general amongst native converts, who abandon the manners and customs of their country, forgetting that Christ was an Asiatic.”

Miss Noble, who has become a Hindoo, and has written interesting and valuable books concerning her new co-religionists, is as good an authority upon Hindoo social life as Indian writers who have become Christians, and she says : “From my own experience, I can refute the charges of oppression of Indian women often levelled against the Hindoos. • Such a crime is less common and less brutal in India than in younger countries. Indian national customs need no apology.” That, I confess, is my own view, but,

as has been pointed out, thirty years ago all the English educated were, by profession, at any rate, reformers, though during the last seventeen years a strong Hindoo revival has set in, the force of which is not yet spent. It is not for us to take any exception to this change of front, though it is due to the fact that the reformers soon realised the hopelessness of attempting to obtain the sympathy of the masses on any other terms, and we may well say, as the *Novoe Vremya* wrote of the Russians in China: "We are strong in these regions in proportion as we do not interfere with the religious convictions of the native population."

It is a curious fact, which Dr Bhandarkar, amongst others, has noticed, that the caste and race spirit seems to increase with the spread of education, which, indeed, the agitators, with accustomed exaggeration, say has produced a solid Hindoo nationality, spreading from the Himalayas to Cape Coranum, and from Kurachi to Chittagong.

The doctor says: "In my early days all classes joined in a public movement. Now Hindoos, Mahomedans, and Parsees act independently, as do even separate castes. There is greater estrangement than existed before social reform was thought of." Significant proof of strength of Hindoo feeling was afforded when the lawyer and Babu classes of Southern India tried in vain to rush through the Legislative Council the Gains of Learning Bill, which would have proved a powerful solvent of the caste system and of the Hindoo home with its joint earnings.

Abbé Dubois believed caste "to be the best part of Hindoo legislation, solely owing to which India did not lapse into a state of barbarism, and owing to which

she preserved and perfected arts and sciences, while other nations remained in the same condition." Eighty years later, Sir John Strachey urged that between castes, customs, and religions no line can be drawn.

Novels regarding Indian life are now not infrequently written, and generally a purpose lurks within the narrative, in which fact and theory often fight a hard battle. For instance, Mr Dutt in his "Lake of Palms," an admirable and most interesting picture of Bengali life, makes one of his Hindoo characters say "that the remarriage of a widow is a sin and a scandal, a madness beyond thought," while he represents a pious family as sanctioning such a marriage by the advice of a holy man, who finds no objection in the Vedas! Similarly "social boycott has lost its horrors in India," in spite of which it seems "women of good birth and family dare not ask the married widow to their feasts and ceremonies."

The average respectable Hindoo would regard with contempt and disgust such an advertisement as the following, which is a fair specimen of many which appear in newspapers favoured by the agitators and reformers: "Wanted a young virgin widow to be married to a bachelor of twenty-four, of high prospects, fair and good-looking, object being reformation. Full particulars and personal interview, after approval of photo. Proper party only need apply." Enforced widowhood, as Sir Richard Temple long ago pointed out, "is not nearly so general as is made out by those who would deduce a moral from Indian manners for the glorification of the habits of the Christian." In Hindustan proper, perhaps 25 per cent. of the population prohibit, and 75 per cent. permit, remarriage.

Sir Madava Rao, the famous Indian statesman,

testified to the same effect. He was an advanced thinker and reformer, though he died before reform became associated with agitation and disaffection. He considered the life of a Hindoo girl "as happy as that of a bird or a bee," and wrote: "Many writers on Hindoo social reform have not clearly understood the existing system, which is the product of long development, nor accurately compared it with other systems, before underrating the advantages, and exaggerating the disadvantages, of the Indian system. The great majority of the people who retain their religious beliefs and social usages would prefer non-representation to misrepresentation, by those who have given up those beliefs and usages."

These are words of profound wisdom, and the old statesman might have added that his own people are the most charitable in the round world.

Not only do Hindoos support all their poor relations, but they very generally help pauper scholars. Whether it is to the public advantage that such should be enabled to pursue their studies is indeed doubtful, but the Hindoos think so and say:

"Heaven's gate is near the sinner
Who gives the humble scholar dinner."

Nor in England, at any rate in Wales, is a similar belief unknown.

"Charity our household divinity" runs the family motto of the Maharajas of Travancore, and it may be said in varying degree of all his Highness's fellow-countrymen. Such charity is universal, and all embracing, so that it is only when crops have failed over a large area for several successive seasons that the Indian Famine Prevention Code is brought into operation to afford that outdoor and indoor relief

which in Europe is necessary even in normal seasons. Perhaps no trait in the character of the Hindoos, who possess so many admirable qualities, is more attractive than their charity, but it must be admitted that what is all embracing must necessarily be, and indeed is, indiscriminate, and possibly demoralising. The able-bodied beggar is relieved as readily as one incapacitated from earning his own living, and of course, feeding a Brahmin possesses special merits, no matter how well able he may be to feed himself. It is true of hundreds of thousands in India that they could work, but to beg are not ashamed.

Such being the Hindoo home, and such being its occupants, few thinking men will agree with those who maintain that India needs a complete upheaval, so that out of social chaos a new and happier dispensation may arise. On the contrary, the cure for such ills as exist must necessarily be exceedingly slow. Education must spread so far and so wide that the cry for reform must come from the fields and the workshops of the artisans, and not only from the lawyer's office and the educationalist's study. Not till then will the time arrive for sweeping changes. Reforms which will probably sooner or later come to pass are these: Intermarriage between subdivisions of castes, the widening of the circle from which husbands and wives may be taken, voluntary renunciation of the habit of marrying infants and of children unable to earn the means of subsistence, reduction of expenses in the celebration of ceremonies and the introduction of some discrimination into the dispensation of charity. But without any of the reforms the Hindoo system is one of which there is little cause to be ashamed.

CHAPTER XIII

ECONOMIC POLICY

Hunter misquoted—Lord Salisbury misquoted—Development of Cotton, Tea, and other Industries—Writings of Mr Naoroji and Mr W. Digby—Their easily exposed Contentions—Average Income of Indian Peasant—Mr Dutt's Charges—Their Refutation—His Experience acquired in Bengal—Mr Hyndman's Position—Labour Questions and Problems—Indians in America and Africa—True *Swadeshi*—Indian Industries—Legislative Interference therewith—Factories Commission—Gold Mines—Wages—Indian not comparable with English System—Different Conditions—Mr Theodore Morison's Views—Comparative Wealth of Indian and other Labourers—Need for British Capital—Congress Agitation keeps such away—Preferential Tariffs—Prosperity increasing—Efforts of Government—Effects of its own *Swadeshi* Policy—Necessity for revising Railway Rates—For using Coal as Fuel—Development of Cottage Industries necessary, and Abstention of Government from Interference with Labour

ONE cause of the unrest is the belief strongly held by three-fourths of the educated classes that the economic policy of the Indian Government is radically unsound and grossly unfair to India. They read and quote Bradlaugh, Digby, and Naoroji, and maintain that the so-called "drain" to England, and other results of our economic policy are the real causes of the poverty of the people, of famine, and indirectly of plague. Here again it is eminently desirable that some authoritative pronouncement of the economic policy of the Government of India should be available, a memorandum showing what it is and what are its results, but none such exists, and even those who desire light know not in what direction

to seek it. Sir William Hunter, as usual, is pressed into the service of the detractors of British government in India. Mr O'Donnell circulated in the House of Commons on the occasion of the last Budget debate a memorandum called "Rack Taxing in Rural India," in which he gave a sensational quotation from Hunter to the effect that the "Government assessment does not leave enough food to the cultivator to support himself and his family throughout the year." If Hunter had said this it would not have much mattered, for probably there has never been an Indian civil servant who spent so much time in England, and in headquarter offices, and so little in rural India, as he did, but as a fact he said nothing of the kind. He was writing of a Bill relating to four districts only of one presidency and of these he said: "The fundamental difficulty of bringing relief to the Deccan peasantry, *as stated by the special judge entrusted with this task*, is therefore," and then follow the words Mr O'Donnell attributes to him, and he goes on to say: "If the Government assessment reduces the cultivator to this condition," and so on. Such is quotation for the purpose of discrediting the British Government.

The use made of what Sir W. Hunter wrote recalls another, and far more serious, misrepresentation of an able and humane minute penned by Lord Salisbury when Secretary of State for India. Who has not read in the works of the anti-British writers, "India must be bled," the odious admission, as it is called, of one of Britain's greatest statesmen. Now Lord Salisbury in 1875 was very anxious to relieve the Indian cultivator as far as he could, and in a minute on the land-tax wrote: "So far as it is possible to change the Indian fiscal system, it is desirable that the cultivator

should pay a smaller proportion of the whole national charge. It is not a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from rural districts, where capital is scarce, sparing the towns, where it is often redundant. As India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where the blood is congested or sufficient, not to those which are already feeble from want of it."

Of these humane, sensible, and statesmanlike words Mr Dadabhai Naoroji makes use of four, "India must be bled." This is an instance of what I called elsewhere the "damned Barebones" method of controversy, and it is very popular with the bleeding India school of writers. Then considering for a moment Mr Naoroji's writings, which are regarded as a kind of gospel by young Bengal, his "Poverty of India" is a fearsome work of nearly 700 pages, written, as the Indians say without *bundobast*. True, he prefaces most of his indictments by a profession of faith in the British, but this expression can only be looked upon like the Frenchman's "*Que messieurs les assassins commencent,*" for he does not scruple to say "that British rule has reduced the bulk of the population to extreme poverty, destitution, and degradation, that it is a new despotism of civilisation, resembling the murder effected by a clever and unscrupulous surgeon, who draws all his victim's blood and leaves no scar," and he does not hesitate to describe the English as "the most disastrous and destructive of the foreign invaders of India." In denouncing the home charges, which, no doubt, should be reduced, as I have said elsewhere, to the lowest possible figure, he leaves out of account the fact that without the home charges there could be no British Government in India. He

says nothing of remittances for interest on loans raised for the development of the country towards which the Indians will not subscribe themselves, and of allowances for Englishmen who have spent their lives and health in India. When he calculates the loss she suffers by the excess of her exports over her imports he says nothing of some of the most flourishing countries in the world, which in this behalf are in the same position, or of the approaching ruin of England, as some folk predict, because her imports exceed her exports. It is not serious treatment of a difficult problem to add up the imports for a series of years, subtract them from the exports, and call the balance the life blood drained from India. The greater part of these charges represent interest on capital invested in our Eastern Empire in reproductive works, to the great advantage of that empire, and of its working classes, and most of all of those weaned thereby from petty agriculture, to which alone the masses of the people can ordinarily look for a livelihood. It is difficult to seriously criticise a writer who says: "Foreign trade adds nothing to the wealth of the world, and not a single atom of money is added to the existing wealth of India by internal trade." And what does this profound economist recommend to right a world in which apparently everything is wrong? The further employment of natives in the public service! So he has got no further than the failed B.A., in the study of economics, and it is not wonderful that he should be regarded by that individual as his guide in the sphere of politics and economics. Apparently also, when Indians are employed in offices now held by European civil servants, he would, regardless of the cost, give them

pay and pensions at the rate drawn by the alien administrators. Of course Mr Dadabhai Naoroji writes from very little knowledge of the Indian people, he being himself a Parsee whose life has been spent in England. Still, it is extraordinary that a man should be accepted as an economic authority who does not see that the best hope for India lies in developing her resources ; in encouraging her tea industry which pays higher wages than obtained before, and so tends to raise wages all round ; in encouraging the cotton and jute mills, gold and coal mines, and in fact in developing that internal and external trade which he thinks adds nothing to the wealth of the nation, but to which alone others, no less anxious than he is to see India prosperous, look for the further improvement of her patient and estimable population.

The case of the bleeding India school teems with contradictions, and while Mr Naoroji argues in his classical works that India has become poorer because the prices of Indian staples have not risen and bases an immense fabric or fabrication upon this assumption, the Congress journals cry out because the wages of agricultural and other labour have not advanced *pari passu* with the rise in prices, and their premise that prices have risen is of course correct, though they suppress the fact, easily proven by reference to old records, that there has been a more than proportionate rise in the rate of wages.

Next amongst the prophets comes (the late) Mr William Digby, who revels in statistics regarding the bleeding of India, and calculates the amount extracted by the economic drain in the nineteenth century, with the greatest precision, at £4,187,922,732. Like Mr Naoroji, he holds that the influx of imports is of little

or no value, while the loss of exports is a fatal wound, and he describes our rule as "naked and unashamed exploitation, outrageous plunder, a mockery and a curse to hundreds of millions of British subjects." To prove this rather comprehensive conclusion he makes elaborate comparisons of the condition of the natives of India with that of the inhabitants of European states. Had Japan, China, Arabia, or some other Eastern nation been taken as a standard, something of some value might have been evolved, but Mr Digby proves too much in showing that all Indians, for instance the powerful Punjaubi, a far finer man than the average Englishman, is habitually starved. He makes much use of the Russian peasant, but I have lived with Russian peasants, I am a Russian interpreter myself, and showed in an article published in *The Nineteenth Century* for October 1902, that if the Russian has ten times the income of the Indian, his board and lodging costs him several times ten times as much, and that the Indians get more comfort from their smaller resources. Space will not allow me here to show as I did in that article how ways and means East and West actually compare when considered with elementary understanding, or to deal with Indian conditions and Indian critics at length as I did in *The Fortnightly Review* for August 1902. So much that is absolutely contrary to fact is taken for granted, such frequent reiteration calls for such emphatic refutation, that considerable space is required for overthrowing the structure, albeit it is founded on sand.

It is, however, unnecessary to repeat what has been said in previous chapters to refute the argument that the British invented famine, which on the contrary they have almost abolished. Mutually destructive

propositions are as common as over-confident and unsupported assertions, and the numbers habitually in want of food are calculated to have increased from 40,000,000, itself the mere conjecture, of one individual of no special authority, to 100,000,000, while elsewhere it is urged that owing to British maladministration the population has not sufficiently increased. Sir Salar Jung, who raised the land revenue in Hyderabad by 260 per cent., is praised, while the English, who in the same period effected an increase of 25 per cent., as Mr Digby says, are condemned. The profits of the industries are said to go to English capitalists, but does Indian labour take no toll on these profits? The superior merits of the administration of Indian states are extolled, but their complete failure to feed their people in famine days is suppressed.

When family after family is shown to earn too little to support life, it is evident to anyone with any knowledge of the country that the cost of living has been pitched too high, and supplementary sources of income have been ignored. Then official results are repudiated because based upon official figures, but it is an irrefragable merit of Digby's own conclusions that they are based upon such figures!

Then in regard to Bengal, the permanent settlement of which Mr Digby, like Mr Dutt and Mr Naoroji, is bound to praise, for are not the landlords of Bengal the supporters of the Congress, he finds that in that province the average income falls most below the official estimate. This is very likely the case, though it would take a great deal to prove, but if true it entirely shatters the creed that permanently settled Bengal is exceptionally prosperous.