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INDIAN SOCIAL REFORM

IN FOUR PARTS

Being a Collection of Essays, Addresses, Speeches, &c., with an Appendix

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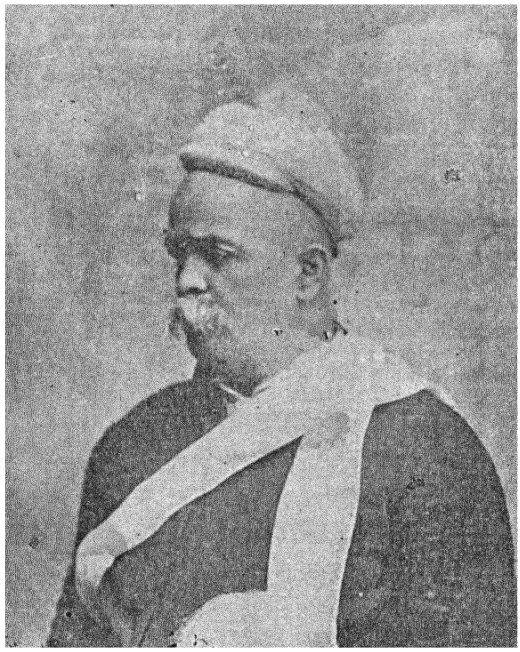
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THE LATE Mr. JUSTICE M. G. RANADE, C.I.E.

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.I.E., 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 paticularly 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.

By Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, M.A., Ph.D., C.I.E.,
Late Professor of Oriental Languages.
Deccan College, Poona.

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 the 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 sacrificial purposes are called *Mantras*. The Brahmanas which contain an explanation of the sacrificial ritual come next; but there was a very long interval between them and the hymns. Then we have the Aranyakas which contain the Upanishads. There are treatises of the latter name which are very modern and form by no means a part of the Vedic literature though sometimes they profess to do so. Later than these are the Srauta or sacrificial Sutras, and contemporaneous with them or somewhat later are the Grihya Sutras. The Dharma Sutras in which the religious and sometimes the civil law is laid down are still more modern. The Samhita and Brahmana of the Black Yajurveda

N.B.—"The Press having got no type with diacritical marks, the paper has been printed without them."—R. G. B.

contain 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 Brahmanic revival; and the Brahmans re-edited some of the books on the religious and the civil law which had been written in the form of prose sentences called Sûtras, and gave a new and more popular shape to them. Thus arose the metrical Smritis or Smritis composed in Anushtup-Slokas which now go by the name of Manu, Yajnavalkya and other sages of antiquity. They of course contained mostly the same matter as the old Dharma Sutras; but they brought the law up to the time. This species of literature having come into existence in this way, other numerous Smritis of the like nature came to be written subsequently. The old Puranas were also recast about the period, and a good many new ones written. The Mahabharata is mentioned by Panini and in Asvalayana's Grihya Sutras; but was consolidated into something like its present shape probably three or four centuries before Christ; but passages were

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

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 amongt 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 Brahmans of eastern Maharashtra pronounce a dental nasal as a cerebral, and the Sindhi and also the Bengali cannot utter *ksha* but must make *kkha* 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 Brahmavidya 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 Yâdava 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 higer 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. Manu 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 Brahmans are spoken of even in sacrificial Sutras as a degraded class. Udicheha (Northern) Brahmans are frequently mentioned in Buddhist Pali works in a manner to show that they constituted an order or even a Jati (caste) of Brahmans. 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 Brahmans 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 germs 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 bunyan 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 Yudhishthira 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 indicates. "*She* is a wife who is diligent in household duties, *she* is a 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 her husband. A wife is one-half of a man, a wife is the best of friends, a wife is at the root of the accomplishment of the three objects of life (rightousness, 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 conversation 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 them 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 unsubstantial and consequently excluded from inheritance. Yaska 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 such an old work as the Aitareya Brahmana, while the wife is called a friend or companion, a daughter is spoken of as [the source of] humiliation. In the Mahabharata "women" it is 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

and woman are so varied that it is quite possible that under certain circumstances a man should speak thus about a woman. But when the legislator Manu is equally hard on women, it must be acknowledged that the estimate of the old Arya, of womanly nature is not flattering to them generally. They are debarred from reading the Vedas; any religious rite in which they alone are concerned is directed to be performed without Vedic Mantras. Even the Bhagavad Gita gives expression to the general belief that it is only a sinful soul that is born as a woman, Vaisya or Sudra. Thus women began to suffer in the estimation of men about the time of Yaska; and the downward movement which then commenced resulted in their being subjected to definite disabilities by the fourth century of the Christian era when the metrical Smriti of Manu was written and the Mahabharata retouched; and it has continued to this day and rendered their condition still more deplorable.

Age of Marriage.

Girls.

When the Mantras addressed by the bridegroom to the bride at the time of marriage, the substance of some of which I have given above, were composed, there can be no question that the bride must have been a girl who had arrived at an age of discretion and could understand what marriage meant. In the time of Asvalayana, Apastamba and others who in their Grihya Sutras give the details of the marriage ceremony and say nothing about the age of the bride, we have to suppose that then too she was a grown up girl, and this is confirmed by their allowing intercourse on the fourth day after marriage. Hiranyakesin and Jaimini prescribe in express terms that the bride should be a mature girl who has been chaste; while Gobhila, Gobhilaputra and the Manava Grihya lay down that a girl not having intercourse previously with a man should be married. This also means that the girl

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 (Samavartana) 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 65? 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 Rigveda, 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 Madri, 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 *Punarbhu* 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 *Paunarbhava* or one born of a Punarbhu 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 réason 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.

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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 inertiæ*, 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-niggardly 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 :—

विधवाकबरीबन्धोभर्तृबन्धाय जायते ।
शिरसोवपनंतस्मात् 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 Shastraic 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 combatting 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 animadvertion 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 interminglingbetween 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 austerest 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 *concurrence* 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 wholely 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 Smrithis, marriage is in the nature of the earliest sacrament (Samscara) 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 अतऊर्ध्वंरजस्वला ॥

Ashtavarsha bhaveth gowree navavarshathu rohinee
Dasavarsha bhaveth kanya athaoorthwam 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:—

गौरींददन्नाकपृष्ठं वैकुण्ठंरोहिणींददन् ।
कन्यांददन्ब्रह्मलोकं रौरवंतुरजस्वलाम् ॥

Gowreem dadannakaprushtam vykunthum 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 Vykuntha; the gift of a Kanya secures the regions of Brahma; while the gift of a Rajaswala entails an abode in hell.

Parasara:—

माताचैवपिताचैव ज्येष्ठभ्रातातथैवच ।
त्रयस्तेनरकंयान्ति दृष्ट्वाकन्यांरजस्वलाम् ॥

Matha chaiva pitha chaiva jyeshthabratha thathaivacha
Thrayasthe narakum yanthi drushtva kanyam rajasvalam.

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 reiterate 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 baneful 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* (Bramins) 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:

यस्तांसमुद्वहेत्कन्यां ब्राह्मणोमदमोहितः ।
असंभाष्योह्यपाङ्क्तेयस्सविप्रोवृषलीपतिः ॥

Yastham samudwahét kanyam brahmano madamohitah
Asumbhashyo hyapanktheyassavipro vrishaleepathih.

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 light 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 Shastraic 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 disuetude and become obsolete. The following verses are in point :—

Parasara :—

त्यजेद्देशं कृतयुगे त्रेतायां ग्राममुत्सृजेत् ।
द्वापरे कुलमेकंतु कर्तारंतु 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 sinner alone in Kali Yuga.

कृते संभाषणादेव त्रेतायां स्पर्शनेन च।
द्वापरेत्वन्नमादाय कलौ पतति कर्मणा ॥

Krithe sambhashanatheva threthayam sparsanenacha
Dwapare thvannumadaya 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 Shastraic 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 Sutras :—

सर्ववर्णानां स्वधर्मानुष्ठाने परमपरिमितं सुखं ततः परिवृत्तौ कर्मफलशेषेण जातिं रूपं वर्णं बलं मेधां प्रज्ञां द्रव्याणि धर्मानुष्ठानमिति प्रतिपद्यते· तच्चक्रवदुभयोर्लोकयोस्सुख एवर्वर्तते ॥

Sarravarnanam swatharmanushtane paramaparimitham sukhum thathah parivirthow karmaphalaseshena jathim roopam varnam balam medham pragnam dravyani dharmanushthanamithi prathipadyathe thachchakrarathubhayor 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 :—

आचाराल्लभ्यतेह्यायु राचारादीप्सिताःप्रजाः ।
आचाराद्धनमक्षय्यं आचारोह्यत्यलक्षणम् ॥

Acharallabhyathe hyayuracharatheepsithah prajah
Acharaddhanamakshayyam Acharohyathyalakshanam.

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

दुराचारोहिपुरुषो लोकेभवतिनिन्दितः ।
दुःखभागीचसततं व्याधितोल्पायुरेवच ॥

Duracharohi purusho loke bhavathi ninditthah
Dukkhabhageecha sathathum vyadhitholpayurevacha.

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

Kanva :—

आसनाच्छयनाद्दानात् सल्लापात्सहभोजनात् ।
संक्रमन्तीहपापानि 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:—

एकशय्यासनंपङ्क्तिभाण्ड पङ्क्तियन्नमिश्रणम् ।
याजनाध्यापनेयोनि स्तथाचसहभोजनम् ॥
नवधासंकरःप्रोक्तो नकर्तव्योधमैस्सह ॥

Yekasayyasanam pnkthybhandam pankthyannamisranam.
Yajanadhyapaneyonisthadhacha saha bhojanam
Navadha sunkarah proktho na karthavyodhamyssaha.

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.

Devala:—

सल्लापस्पर्शनिश्वासात् सहशय्यासनाशनात् ।
याजनाध्यापनाद्योनात् पापंसंक्रमतेनृणाम् ॥

Sallapasparsanisvasath saha sayyasanasanath
Yajanadhyapanadyannath 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

In the Brahmin preceptor Sukra Chariar 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 Drowpadi 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,

* Prabhusammithi. † Mithrasammithi. ‡ Kanthasammithi.

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* शिष्टा[3],† 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 corrollary 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. † Sishtah. ‡ Mithrammithi.

Sisthah शिष्टाः 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 :—

चत्वारोवा त्रयो वापि य ब्रूवेयुदपारगाः ।
सधर्म इतिविज्ञेयो नेतरैस्तु सहस्रशः ॥

Chathwarova thrayo vapi yam brooyurvedaparagah
Sadharma ithivigneyoh 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.

अतऊर्ध्वंतु येविप्राः केवलं नामधारकाः ।
परिषत्वं न तेष्वस्ति सहस्रगुणितेष्वपि ॥

Atha oorthwam thu ye viprah kevalam namadharakah
Parishattwam na theshwasthi sahasraguneetheshwapi.

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

यथाकाष्टमयोहस्ती यथाचर्ममयोमृगः ।
ब्राह्मणस्त्वनधीयानस्त्रयस्ते नामधारकाः ॥

Yatha kashtamayo hasthee yatha charmamayo mrigah,
Brahmanasthwanadheeyanasthrayastha namadharakah.

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

प्रायश्चित्त प्रयच्छन्ति येद्विजाः नामधारकाः ।
तेद्विजाः पापकर्माणस्समेता नरकं ययुः ॥

Prayaschitham prayachanthi ye dwijah namadharakah.
Tha dwijah papakarmanassmetha narakam yayuh.

Meaning: Whenever nominal Brahmnis 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 Parishat, 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 ॥

Vedavedangavidusham dharmasasthram vijanatham
Swadharmarathavipranam swakum papum nivedayeth.

Meaning: A sinner should confess his sin to Brahmins 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 परिषत्वंनविद्यते ॥

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 प्रायश्चित्तंददातियः ।
प्रायश्चित्तीभवेत्पूतः किल्बिषंपरिषद्वूजेत् ॥

Agnathwa dharmasasthrani prayaschitthan dadathyyah
Prayaschithee bhaveth poothah kilbishun 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 versâ*.

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 begotton 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 Namadhraka 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 Apasthambha.

धर्मज्ञसमयः प्रमाणंवेदाश्च ॥

Dharmajnasamayah 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 विरुद्धेषुपरस्परम् ।
पूर्वपूर्वबलीयस्त्यादितिन्यायाविदोविदुः ॥

Sruthismrithi puraneshu viruddheshu parasparam
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 Smrithics 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 :—

अस्वर्ग्यंलोकविद्विष्टं धर्ममप्याचरेन्नतु ॥

Aswargyam lokavidwishtam dharmamapyacherennathu.

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 Mitacshara 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

* Lokavidvishtam.

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 ।
उदकस्पर्शिताया च याचपाणिगृहीतिका ।
अग्निं परिगतायाच पुनर्भूःप्रसवाचया ॥

Saptha paunarbhavah kanyah varjaneeyah kuladhamah
Vachadatta manodatta krithakouthukamangala
Udakasparsitha yacha yacha panigrihee thika
Agnim parigatha yacha punarbhooh prasavachaya.

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.

Bodhayanah Sutra :—

वाग्दत्तामनोदत्ताग्निं परिगता सप्तमं पदं ।
निहिता भुक्ता गृहीतगर्भा प्रसूताचेति सप्तविधा ।
पुनर्भूः तां गृहीत्वा न प्रजां नधर्मं विन्देत् ॥

Vagdattah manodattagnim parigatha saptamampadam
Nihita bhuktah griheethagarbah prasootha chethi saptha vidhah
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 sexully 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 Shastraic 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 crudites. 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 checkmates 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 two 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 :—

यदिकुर्यात्समानंशान् पत्न्येःकार्याःसमांशिकाः ।
नदत्तंस्त्रीधनंयासां भर्त्रावाश्वशुरेणवा ॥

Yadi kuryâth samanamsan patnyeh karyah samamsikah Na dattam streedhanam yasam bharthrava swasurenava

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.

असंस्कृतास्तुसंस्कार्याः भ्रातृभिःपूर्वसंस्कृतैः ।
भगिन्यश्चनिजादंशादत्वांशं तु तुरीयकम् ॥

Asamskruthasthu samskaryah brathribhih poorvasamskrithyh

Bhaginyascha Nijadamsath dathwamsamthu 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 Chandrika, 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 he-itation 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 retu n 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, plebean planes—which makes no provision for taking evidence to guage 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 humourous, 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 hortotory 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 Vaidyanath 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 ब्रह्मवादिन्यस्सद्योवध्वश्च तत्र ब्रह्मवादिनीनामुपनयनं अग्नीन्धनं वेदाध्ययनं स्वगृहे भिक्षचर्यातिसद्योवधूनां तूपस्थिते विवाहे कथंचिदुपनयनं कृत्वा विवाहः कार्यः ॥

Dwividhastriyo brahmavadinyassadyovadhwascha thathra brahmavadineenamupanayanam agneendhanam vedadhyayanam swagrihe bhikshacharyethi sadyovadhoonam thupasthithe vivahe kathanchith upanayanam krithwavivahah karyah.

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

Yamah :—

पुराकल्पेतुनारीणां मौंजीबन्धनमिष्यते ।
अध्यापनंचवेदानां सावित्रीवचनंतथा ॥
पिता पितृव्यो भ्रातावानैनामध्यापयेत्परः ।
स्वगृहेचैव कन्याया भैक्षाचर्यं विधीयते ।
वर्जयेदजिनंचीरं जटाधारणमेवच ॥

Purakalpe thu nareenam mounjeebandhanamishyathe
Adhyapanam cha vedanam savithreevachanam thatha
Pitha pithriryo bhrathava nyanmadhyapayethparah
Swagrihechaiva kanyayah bhykshacharyam vidheeyathe
Varjayethajinam cheeram jatatharanamevacha.

Meaning:—In former kalpa, girls had mounjee put upon them (had Oopanayana 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 Brahmavadins 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 Brahmavadins 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 solider 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 threshhold 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 Crighton 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 compeers 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 Crighton Browne that the specific gravity of the grey-matter in frontal lobest(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 Crighton 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 Crighton 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 Brahmavadins 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 examplars 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 ultima 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 increas-

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 drink 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 licenses 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

placed the following notice of motion upon the order book of the House of Commons :—

"To call attention to the administration of Excise in India, by which many liquor-shops are being opened in various parts of India in direct violation of the expressed protests of the neighbourhood and in contradiction of the declared policy of the Government of India as formulated in their despatch to the Secretary of State, No. 29, February 4th, 1890, and to move a resolution."

In the meantime, however, the Total Abstinence work, carried on by the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association among the people of India, has made splendid progress. I have paid two more visits to India during the last ten years and more recently the General Secretary of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association, Mr. F. Grubb, undertook a similar tour. As a result of these efforts a large number of Temperance societes have been established all over India. In this work we have been ably supported by the Rev. Thomas Evans, and by several influential vernacular lecturers, notably the Mahant Kesho Ram Roy, of Benares. This devoted Hindu was the means of inducing whole communities to prohibit the sale and consumption of strong drink among their members by caste rules. His death, which took place five years ago, was a great loss to the movement. In later years the Temperance cause has been admirably served by eloquent Indian lecturers, chief among whom have been Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal (Bengal) who was a delegate to the recent World's Temperance Congress, in London; Mr. Shyam Kishore Varma (N. W. P., Oudh and Behar); and Mr. Yashwant Javagi Dabir (Bombay). As a result of these labours there are now in India 283 societies affiliated to the Association. There is hardly a town of any importance where some organization for the furtherance of Temperance principles does not exist. The societies are encouraged to hold regular meetings, to translate suitable Temperance tracts and articles from our quarterly journal "Abkari" into the vernaculars, to visit the sur-

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 writhing 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 seized 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 tender-heartedness! Again, woe unto the child-wife who gives birth to a daughter. A gentlemon 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 plummets 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 whereabout 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 reappearence 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 sacrificial

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 ceaselessly 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 ascendency 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 disappearence 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 progess 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 commu-

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 dissever 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 these 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. If 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 pastural 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 medieval 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 Srinivasaraghava 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. Bashyam 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 America, 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 is 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 Batie 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 necessaries 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 quotedby Mr. H. J. S. Cotton.

be easily tempted, 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 physioolgical 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 Rectoral 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 develope these qualities; on the other hand it crushes individual freedom, it degrades woman, it breeds incompetency and selfishness instead of public sprit 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 de[illegible]ard in the fourfold division of Hindu society into Brahmans, Kshattriyas, 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 (Kshattriya) 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 a 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 Visvamitra, 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 Kshattriya, 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 divisions 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 expresssion 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 Rajpoot 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 Rajpoots 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 lands 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 ?ths 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 Brittania and their lands in British India are fast passing into the hands of the monied 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 Agrahraris, Kasaundhans, Kamdus, of N. W. P; Ghandabaniks, Suwarnabaniks, of Bengal ; Aroras and Khattris of the Punjab ; Bhatias of Bombay, and Chettis of Madras. The chief divisions of the Vaisyas are into : (1) the Agrawal, comprising the Vaishnawas and the Jains, the Maheshwaris, the Oswalas, the Khandelwalas, 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 Kshattriya 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 Lingayatas 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 Chitragupta who had 4 sons from each of his two wives. The present Kayasthas are said to have descended from these 8 sons of Chitragupta. Another account assigns them a functional origin and says that

Chitragupta 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 Valmikis. None of these intermarry or interdine. 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 artizans 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 asceties 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 paint 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) those 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 inor-

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 convivum 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.
Hunter's Indian Empire.
Census Report for 1891.
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 Himálayás down to the Indian Ocean and from the Indus to the Brahmaputrá 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 8 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 Hindus

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 the harsh customs which bind him down, when he sees his child 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 223,560 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 caste.

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 Brahmins, 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 Brahmins 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 considered by their countrymen. Their efforts have, therefore, been directed towards such only as can receive these supports. 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 Vaikuntha (the one belonging to Vishnu), of a Kanya to Brahmaloka 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. Baudhâyana 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 Brahmavadinis, Gargi Vâchaknavi, 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 पतौ ।
पंचस्वापत्सु 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 Nârada and Pârâshara. About the comparative authority of the Smriti writers the orthodox rule is कलौपाराशरस्मृतिः (the Smriti of Pârâshara is the guiding authority in the Kaliyuga, *i.e.*, the present age). Kâtyâyana, Vasistha, Shâtâtapa and Prajâpati 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-

corded 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, Mádhva 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 232,276 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 Mudaliar 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-

fined 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

will not wait for them. By their uncompromising opposition to it, it is their position which is being imperilled.

For the extravagance in marriage expenditure no blame attaches to the Shastras, and it is custom and the innate vanity of man which is responsible for it. There being no difficulties about the Shastras to be overcome in this matter, one would have thought that reform here would be easily accomplished. But except in certain places and in certain sections, where the evil had reached extraordinary proportions, little change is noticeable. On the contrary the expensiveness of marriage has increased in almost all grades of the community, particularly in the middle and well-to-do classes during the last thirty years.

Formerly there were intermarriages between the four castes—the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras—with certain restrictions. A Brahmin could marry a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra woman, and a Kshatriya could marry a Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra wife and so on; and the issues by all the marriages were legitimate and the wives all lawfully married. This was Anuloma (अनुलोम) marriage. But if a woman of a higher caste married a man of a lower caste, it was Pratiloma (प्रतिलोम) or a mesalliance. But though reprobated, such marriages were not unlawful. Devayani's marriage with Yayati was never questioned. When and how this old system disappeared it is not easy to say. We have the fact that in he present day, the restrictions on marriage have become absurdly unreasonable and intolerable. Not only has not intermarriage between the original four main castes gone out of fashion, but persons belonging to the different subsections of the same caste cannot intermarry without danger of social ostracism and reprobation. For instance, the three main sections of the Maharashtra Brahmins, Deshastha, Konkanastha, Karhada—do no not intermarry.

Among the Deshasthas again, the Rigvedis, Madhyandinis, Kanvas, Maitrayanis cannot intermarry. The same is the case between the Madhvas, Smartas and Ramanujas in Southern India, the Nagars and the Audich and other Brahmins in Guzerat, the Kashmiris, Saraswats, Kanyakubjas, &c., in Northern India; the Shenavis and the western coast Saraswats in Western India. From the original four castes have sprung the present thousand and one castes ranking below the Brahmins and sub-castes. These numerous castes and their sections observe similar prohibitions in regard to intermarriages with sections of equal rank. The result is, restriction in the field of choice, creation of unnecessary difficulties and increase in marriage expenditure. The change advocated and which is the only one practicable is intermarriage between those different sub-sections of a caste which interdine. How difficult to move Indian society is, is shown by what has happened in regard to this matter. Deshastha's, Konkanasthas and Karhadas were some years ago allowed to intermarry by one of the Shankaracharyas, yet no action has followed this edict. In the last century some progress was sought to be made in this matter by the Maharastra Brahmins. Bajirao I had a Deshastha wife. But it does not appear that any other marriages of that kind took place.

Even dissenters from orthodox Hinduism have not escaped this influence. The Lingayats, who ought according to the theory of their religion to be all on a footing of equality, are as strict in their observance of prohibitions against intermarriage between different sub-sections as the orthodox people. The same thing is to be seen amongst Jains. What is still more wonderful is that even converts to Christianity observe in some places caste distinctions in regard to marriage almost as rigorously as the Hindus.

Prejudice against mesalliances is common both to the East and the West. To expect the total removal of

all restrictions in regard to class in the matter of marriage is to expect an impossibility. It is not only against Indian nature but against human nature. Confining our efforts to the domain of the practicable, our action should be directed to the bringing about of inter-marriage between the sub-sections of the chief castes as now existing.

In this matter it is not the Shastraic ordinances which have to be surmounted but custom. But unreasoning custom is as difficult to change as any practice sanctified by express text of law.

To polygamy and to Kulinism the most serious form in which it exists, a passing reference only can be made. Polygamy though permitted by the Shastras is nowhere except in Bengal a serious evil. The number of men with more than one wife is in the other parts of India very small. But in Bengal among the Kulin Brahmins its extent and magnitude are even now shocking. Twenty, thirty, forty, sixty, eighty and even hundred women married to one man who seldom sees the majority of them for years as they are left to pine at their paternal houses by the husband who exacted the payment of large sums for condescending to marry and whose few and far between visits can only be obtained by the inducement of fresh presents for every such visit, ought to be a matter of great regret and humiliation to any civilized people. In 1866 an attempt was made to obtain its prohibition by law. But after a very careful and sympathetic enquiry it had to be abandoned as impracticable, unless the Government was prepared to make a departure from its settled policy, which it was not.

The Shastras do not permit the supersession of a wife by her husband except under very special circumstances. It is submitted that the reform party ought to take an even higher stand and agitate for the establishment of the principle that no man should marry another wife while one is living or continues united to him in marriage.

Education and the juster appreciation of right and wrong which flows from it are producing their effect, and even the polygamy of the Kulins is decreasing. The Polyandrous tribes who are coming under the operation of these beneficent influences, and the Malabar Marriage Bill testify to the acceptance by the enlightened persons among them of a higher ideal of family life. On the Aryans the descendants of the old Rishis and the valiant warriors who created, spread and developed civilization in this vast land is imposed the sacred duty of restoring and enforcing the lofty views of life and duty enunciated by the great men of their race. The cause of reform is the cause of justice, of righteousness, of humanity. Shall we tolerate unequal laws? Shall we, while claiming every sort of liberty and license for men, impose upon women restrictions and disabilities productive of the utmost misery and degradation in too many cases? On our reply to this and cognate questions, and the attitude we adopt towards them depends the future of our race. If we want to recover our former greatness, we must set high in the sanctuary of our heart the goddess of truth and justice and paying entire devotion to her and vowing undivided homage to her, consecrate ourselves to establish her sway both in our houses and in our country in social matters as in political matters.

VIII. Foreign Travel.

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The question of foreign travel has, of late, come to assume considerable importance in the eyes of thoughtful Indians, because of the serious bearings it is felt to have on some vital and pressing problems of Indian life. It has many aspects each of which deserves a close and careful study. On its moral and mental side the movement of foreign travel—the going out of Indians into strange countries, among strange peoples, possessing strange civilizations—is obviously closely connected with the great problem of our National Education. On its political side, it cannot but seriously modify our conceptions regarding the functions of Government and the rights of citizenship by giving us real and living examples of societies which have fashioned and perfected their political institutions upon models very different from those which have dominated the whole course of Asiatic history. On what may be called its commercial side it must in course of time, by enlarging our knowledge of the world, suggest to our minds new means and appliances for augmenting our material resources and stimulating our industrial activity. So then, if civilization is another name for the net result of mental, moral, political, and industrial activities, the question of foreign travel is intimately connected with the greater question of our national progress. In the following pages an attempt will be made to discuss the question in the light in which I have put it here—to see how the movement of travelling and sojourning of Indians in foreign countries has arisen, what are its tendencies, immediate and ultimate, good and evil, what is the relative significance of each of its various aspects, in what way it affects our pre-

sent national revival, and what should be the attitude of an educated Hindu towards it. I purposely say 'an educated Hindu,' for an educated Mahomedan, whatever else may keep him back from sea-voyage, is happily free from the restraints of 'caste' which is the greatest barrier against foreign travel in the case of every Hindu, whether of the old school or of the new.

There is a sense in which foreign travel is no new thing to us. Ancient India had commercial intercourse with other countries. The Indians traded with Babylon in the seventh century B. C. In the 10th century B. C. the ivory of Solomon's throne, his precious stones and peacocks, and the sandalwood pillars of his temple, have been ascribed by competent authorities to an Indian origin. Early in the 10th century A. D. the products and art-works of India were seen in the court and palaces of the Caliphs of Bagdad. "Four elephants caparisoned in peacock silk stood at the palace gate, 'and on the back of each were eight men of Sind."* During the Mahomedan period foreign travel assumed a new aspect. The Hindus rarely if ever went beyond Afghanistan and Cashmere; but the Mahomedan settlers kept up their connection with their homes in Persia, Central Asia, and Arabia. In these times general insecurity was the order of the day and facilities of communication were unknown. One province of India was foreign to another, and it was more difficult and risky then to travel from Lucknow to Delhi than it is now for Cook's tourist to go round the globe. Caste, too long before the Mahomedans came, had tightened its hold upon the Hindu race, and the traditions of the great days of Asoka and Chandragupta had been forgotten. Still among the Mahomedan population there was a large element of those who either belonged to foreign countries or had visited them. But except in certain superficial

* Hunter's History of British India, Vol. I.

aspects this slight connection of India with the outerworld does not seem to have produced any appreciable effect upon the life of its people. Indeed this connection became less and less and in course of time entirely ceased. How is it then that the Mahomedans though foreigners themselves and unrestrained by any caste rules did not keep up and encourage intercourse with other countries? But we may go much further back and ask how is it that the Hindus, who too were at one time foreigners in India, did not keep up connection wish their home in Central Asia and after a time shut their doors to all foreigners? For both questions in their broad and important features may be answered together.

In order to understand the early conservatism to which the prejudice against foreign intercourse was due, we must for a time put aside some of the axioms of modern times, and try, as far as possible, to realize in our imaginations the circumstances in which the older societies had to carry on their struggle for existence and the conditions under which success was then possible. Somebody has spoken of a 'pre-economic age,' an age when the postulates of political economy were not true and had no existence; when labour and capital were not transferable, because the occupations were hereditary; transferable capital was scanty, and Government was unstable: when free-trade and competitions would have been the ruin of the society which adopted them. There was undoubtedly a 'preliminary age' in the life of mankind where not only the principles of modern political economy but many other principles and axioms had no application—indeed when the very contrary principles seem to have been good for men. In primitive societies when human nature was being formed, when human groups were loose and unorganized, when the struggle for existence was fierce and tribal feuds were carried on without giving or taking quarters, the

first care of nations was to live; and then the question of national defence was considered at least as important as, by a curious recrudescence of past savagery, it has come to be considered by some of the great world-powers of our day. In a fighting age militancy was necessary and inevitable. For military success organization was the one thing needful. To heat the loose and incoherent atoms of a tribe into a compact and coherent whole, isolation of tribe from tribe was necessary, the irresistible power of the tribal chief was necessary, inter-tribal hatred was necessary, the supreme duty of revenge was necessary. No tribe could afford to allow its members to form friendly relations with other tribes, to trade with them, or to go among them, for in those days to go to another tribe was to be lost to one's own. It has been said by a hero* of modern times that "what one nation hates is another nation." In early times international hatred was one of the preservations of natural existence. If a tribe discovered a fertile tract of land, provided itself with some means of existence, invented some implements of war and industry, it was not to its advantage that the neighbouring tribes should know it, for those were not the days of commercial treaties and international alliances, but of force and violence, when the ultimate question between man and man was, as Carlyle has said in his own graphic way, "canst thou kill me, or can I kill thee?" and when therefore a rich tribe for instance, if it allowed its riches to be known to other tribes, would have at once excited their cupidity and been plundered by them without any ceremony. Isolation and exclusiveness were then a necessity, intercourse with foreigners would have brought on national ruin.

In India this stage—this "preliminary period"—had passed long ago, when after a long interval during which it developed a noble civilization the light of which not only

* Napoleon.

blazes in what has been called 'the Vedic Arcadia,' but sends its reflection even to us across the long night of centuries and through the glare of gas and electricity, a relapse took place; civilization became stationary and after a time took a retrogressive and downward course. It was then that a period came which in its marked features resembled the Mahomedan period, and indeed immediately preceded it. The militant type of society revived; the larger Hindu states were split up into smaller kingdoms and principalities, feudal institutions came into existence and tribal jealousies and sectarian hatred became the order of the day. A selfish priesthood imposed its yoke upon the neck of the people; custom fixed and stereotyped the course of national life; caste system elaborated its net in the meshes of which were caught all the elements of progress and advancement. And the worst of it was that it took place at a time when the necessity for isolation, for religious and political autocracy and for the fixed and hereditary divisions and distinctions of classes and occupations was losing its importance, when other nations were entering upon their career of progress. When from this stationary stage they were passing into that in which those ideas and institutions began feebly and faintly to manifest themselves which have through a long course of centuries fashioned and perfected what is now called modern civilization, the Hindus locked themselves up within the four corners of India, cut off all foreign intercourse by interdicting foreign travel, and instead of profiting by what men were doing in other parts of the globe, began to forget, and finally did forget, what they themselves had done in other days. It was at this time that knowledge became the monopoly of a special class, that the political life was sapped by the extending sway of ecclesiastical pretensions, and that the seeds of racial and sectarian animosities were sown, which corroded the society from within and brought down

upon it foreign invasions from without. These were the dark ages of Indian history; and though for a time the meteosnic light of Mahomedan civilization shone through them, yet the religious fervour and the conquering zeal which in its earlier days carried the banner and the culture of Islam into so many lands proved in the end inconstant and evanescent, and the spirit of reaction and retrogression marked the Mahomedan *regime* as it had marked the Hindu *regime*. It is to this long unhappy passage of our national life that the words of Dr. Arnold fitly apply. "Well, indeed, might the policy of the old priest-nobles of Egypt and India endeavour to divert their people from becoming familiar with the sea, and represent the occupation of a seaman as incompatible with the purity of the highest castes. The sea deserved to be hated by the old aristocracies, inasmuch as it has been the mightiest instrument in the civilization of mankind."

So, then, although there is evidence to show that there was commercial intercourse between India and other countries during the last two thousand years, yet it could not have been much; and the testimony of history is on this point verified by our knowledge of the state of Indian society as it then was. The love of travelling—of moving about from land to land, among strange people and novel scenes inborn of the spirit of advention, which itself has for its principal ingredients, intellectual curiosity and political enterprise. In Europe, for example, the Revival of learning in the fifteenth century, gave a most powerful impulse to intellectual curiosity; the discovery of America raised to a white heat the spirit of political enterprise; and the combined effect of both these great events of modern history, may be seen in the commercial activity and the passion for travelling and discovering new lands, which sprang up. In India there was no intellectual curiosity and no political enterprise. Despotism in politics

had crushed the political spirit of the people; despotism in religion had enslaved their intellect. Simple wants easily satisfied, had become sanctified by an ascetic system of morality and caste by tying down everybody to his hereditary *status* had paralysed the energy of undivided effort and destroyed the feeling of the dignity of manhood. Foreign intercourse was not encouraged by the state which was unstable and despotic, nor by the sanity which was priest-ridden and conservative. The passion for travelling was absent because neither intellectual unrest nor political ambition was there to feed its flames.

With the advent of the English in India a new epoch began. Since the movement of 'foreign travel' is to my mind a necessary and inevitable consequence of changes wrought by English or European influences in our life and thought, it will not be out of place to summarise these here. And in order to understand the new *regime* we must have a clear idea as to what the old *regime* was. In politcis the principles of heredity and divine right were dominant. The people had no voice or choice in Government and the ruler was the absolute master of their fate. In religion the priest was the keeper of the national conscience; empty forms and practices had dimmed if not destroyed the purity of the ancient faith, and false and forged traditions formed the staple of popular beliefs. Religious dissent or doubt was a sin of the deepest dye, and the business of 'fire-insurance' by making the sinners pay in silver and gold in order to escape hell was as brisk as in the worst days of the Catholic Church. In morality the ascetic principle reigned supreme; but human nature avenged itself now and then by revealing in the character of the priests and moral preceptors the worst types of humanity. Caste and custom were the regulators of social matters. Domesticlife was governed by the patriarchal authority; women and children had no status but were

treated by the patriarch like his goods and chattels. Men were not wanting in fine traits of personal character in the virtues of tenderness, affection, sympathy, generosity, and truthfulness, but the patriotic sentiment was unknown, because the national sentiment did not exist: men felt allegiance to their caste or sect or tribe or class; but the larger and wider feeling of nationality embracing the whole country they did not possess. The forces of law and order were weak; the insecurity of life and property had nearly killed the motive for the production and accumulation of wealth, and given ascendancy to military pursuits and occupation over every thing else; and consequently industrial activity was at a low ebb, and all impulse for the cultivation of knowledge and arts was from the national mind withdrawn. This is a sufficiently dark picture of the India of the pre-English era; but it had many redeeming features also which I have omitted to mention here because they are not quite relevant to my argument.

Turn we now to the new *regime*. The greatest change has been the change of Government; for the new Government popular in principle, half despotic in practice, carried on by a free people in a country where freedom has been unknown—embodies all those forces of modern civilization which are, in a thousand ways, moulding, modifying, transforming our national life. This intellectual awakening of India began long before Lord Bentinck; but since his day it has been going on with unprecedented vigour and rapidity. In the beginning of this century the influence of European knowledge and arts had begun to make itself felt among the cultured classes in some parts of India, more particularly in Bengal where the beginnings of the great reform movement the Brahmo Samaj were laid by the immortal Raja Ram Mohan Roy. the first Indian who crossed the sea and visited England. He was powerfully influenced by the new civilization which Englishmen

had brought and his example influenced many active and powerful minds among his own countrymen. The Indian Renaissance thus begun, was greatly aided and stimulated by the educational and political measures of Metcalfe and Bentinck; the introduction of higher education in public schools and colleges, the recognition of the principle of freedom in speech and in the press and in religion, created in the literary classes a passion for learning and study such as since the revival of letters has hardly ever been equalled and perhaps never surpassed. "I go to awake the dead" said a scholar of the fifteenth century, and it was in this spirit that men turned to the study of English literature, science and arts; but as in Europe men were more fascinated by the literary beauties and graces of the ancient masters, than by their science and philosophy; so in this country while scientific culture did not at first seem to have much attraction for scholars, literary education came to be prosecuted with remarkable ardour and enthusiasm. The institution of public education distroyed the monopoly of knowledge by any privileged caste or class, and diffused the taste and the desire for mental culture through every grade of society. In the intellectual ferment which followed, the old order began to give away beneath the dissolving agencies of thought and change. The Indian intellect after a long time of captivity was emancipated and brought back to the warm precincts of the cheerful day, and began to assert itself in all those spheres from which it had been kept out by rulers and priests. Intellectual curiosity was born, and so also was the spirit of political ambition born, for English literature and English history gave the Indians new conceptions of citizenship and new ideals of life, they felt for the first time free to follow any occupation they chose, and capable of rising to any position by dint of merit. Those who loved English literature became naturally eager to know the home of

English literature. Those whose minds were fascinated by European arts and inventions and to whom European civilization had opened a new world of interest and delight, could not long resist the seductive influence of European ideas, tastes, habits, and modes of life.

The spell of the past was broken. New vistas of progress were opened. Ardent minds were stirred to their very depth, and then stood clear on high before their bewildered gaze the vision of a new and brighter era yet to come. Of this re-awakened India we may fitly speak in the words of Shelley.

"The world's great age begins anew
The golden years return;
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn
Heaven smiles; and faiths and Empire gleam
Like wrecks of a disclosing dream."

It was this revolt of the Indian intellect against the old —this passionate longing for the new—which was at once the symbol and the precursor of those changes which led to the readjustment of our ideas and institutions to the needs of modern life, and as a weenary consequence called into being those agencies which have tended to serve this end. One of those agencies was the movement of 'foreign travel.' It was inevitable, and it came. It was, as it has been already remarked, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy who by an inspiration of genius anticipated the hopes and ideals of a later age; the small grain of mustard seed sown by him has in the course of half-century grown into a mighty tree. Its importance cannot be properly appreciated unless we realise the new circumstances in which we are placed.

The influence of Western culture is now in the ascendant, and the English are its apostles in this country. It is obvious that our progress and prosperity, in the sense in

which they are understood now, depend to a considerable extent upon our acquiring those arts and sciences, and assimilating that spirit of action and enterprise, by which the English themselves have risen. There is no other road to national welfare except perhaps that pointed out by Theosophy and esoteric Buddhism, which however the nation does not for the present seem disposed to adopt. In these days knowledge is power; and under English dominion the rule of the sword has been partially superseded by that of opinion. And here comes in our difficulty. In the past we could wield the sword quite as well as the ruling class, who possessed no marked intellectual superiority over us and from whom we were not divided by any wide gulf of social differences. Those days are passed. Every thing has become complicated, requiring intense mental strain. "We were in simple addition, we *are* in the differential calculus." Now we are governed by a people who are decidedly superior to us both in the arts of war and peace, who, if they cannot beat us hollow in pure speculation, in religion and morality, do yet possess an amount of verified knowledge, a mass of facts, tested, asserted, kept ready for practical use, and an armoury of mechanical inventions which are simply astounding and bewildering to the Asiatic mind, and which give their possessor an undisputed superiority over us in all the practical concerns of life. These superior people govern us, and their Government is a sort of constitutional Government in which knowledge and intelligence play an important part. In its counsels opinion counts for much, but it must be not only an informed and enlightened opinion, but so markedly so, that our rulers may also admit it to be informed and enlightened. For superior people are apt to despise their inferiors and care little for their opinion—and this is true of the English in their attitude towards our public opinion—unless those opinions are so unmistakably sound and clear that no

honest mind can refuse to consider them. And thus while a premium is placed upon knowledge and intelligence, we are forced to compete in the intellectual sphere, if we want to improve our political *status*, with an intellectually superior race.

We must, if we are eager for place and power in the administration of our country, acquire that culture which alone is now a passport to honor and fame. In raising ourselves to the intellectual level of the rulers we shall be simultaneously raising ourselves to their political level. Political equality will come when intellectual equality has come.

But apart from the general political efforts which we anticipate from the diffusion of Western culture in India as a matter of mere bread-and-butter, its necessity is plain and imperative. Before everything else we must live. Life before liberty—for circumstanced as we are it would be of no little advantage to the country if we occasionally showed a little more eagerness in possessing ourselves of the flesh-pots of worldly comforts and worshipping the golden calf than in singing psalms to Representative Government. When I see the utter neglect with which the awful problem of subsistence is treated in this country and the little or no regard that is paid to industries and the production of wealth and the necessaries of life, I am almost persuaded to think that it would be an advantage to the country if Indians were to forget for sometime their higher ideals and betook themselves to meaner and lovelier occupations—raking in the straw and dust like the old man in *Pilgrim's Progress*, unmindful of the angel who offers him a crown of gold and precious stones. For what is the predicament in which we stand?

In the learned professions, the competition is keen as keen can be. There is a rush of candidates for every office. "Every gate is thronged with suitors; all the markets over-

flow." For the higher branches of the public service we must go to England. For Medicine, Law, Engineering, Agriculture we must go to England. And our young men must compete there with the flower of English youth. Is this not enough to open our eyes ? Have Indians ever had to carry on the struggle for existence against such tremendous odds ? Failure in this competition means extinction. And yet the public service and the learned professions are after all of small significance in adding to the material resources of the country. Now national prosperity depends upon the development of trade and industries. But we have no trade and hardly any industries worth the name. Our old indigenous industries have decayed and are decaying ; they were bound to decay, for how can primitive implements and contrivances stand before modern inventions ? Muscles and sinews are no match for the iron hands of steam giants. In past times over-population redressed its balance by letting out floods of barbarian invasions. In these days it seeks an outlet in colonisation, in stealing into foreign countries in the guise of trade protected by what is called 'sphere of influence' and filling its stomach at the expense of weaker races by means of the policy of 'the open door.' In European countries the competition in trade has grown very keen and the pressure of over-population is beginning to be felt. Consequently the process of colonisation is going on with inward and increasing rapidity, while the mental energies of the nations are becoming more and more absorbed in the improvement of technical and industrial training and in the invention of mechanical tools and appliances. With such a Europe looking with hungry eyes upon the possession of other people, ready to venture forth in search of 'fresh fields and pastimes new' to feed its surplus population, India stands face to face. How to meet this Europe, how to keep its food from being eaten up by foreigners, how to protect its

industries from the snares and allurements of Free Trade; how to feed its own surplus population for whom outside India the British Empire has nothing but degradation and servitude—this is the great problem—the awful sphinx riddle—with which India is confronted and which not to answer is to be destroyed. Anyhow if the severity of the industrial struggle is manifest, it goes without saying that in order to engage in it with any chance of success we must fight with the improved weapons of our adversaries. Technical and mechanical training is therefore the one thing needful.

All this is a plea for higher education and mechanical training, it may be urged. Yes; but it is much more; it is a plea for 'foreign travel' also; for if higher education and mechanical training are good things, the necessity for obtaining the best kinds of them available becomes at once obvious. That there are, compared with India, far more facilities in England and other European countries for receiving the best training, scientific, literary, and technical, which the age can give, is a proposition, the truth of which, I presume, will not be seriously disputed. But I wish to explain and amplify it a little in this place, in order to bring home more vividly to the public mind, the manner in which education received in England—I confine my remarks to England as the one European country with which we are chiefly concerned—besides being of the best quality as a purely mental commodity, produces certain other effects upon the student which are of the greatest moment to him and the absence of which in our educational institutions is responsible in no small measure for the just and unjust charges that are often made against English education.

I take scientific teaching and technical and industrial instruction first. Now in India there is hardly any well-organized system of training in mechanical and industrial

arts. 'Mr. Tata's scheme may—I am sure it will—in course of time be of great service to us in the matter; but at present the industrial training of Indian youths is only 'a far-off adorable dream' of the future. In England this difficulty does not exist. The workshops and other institutions for theoretical and practical instruction in mechanical arts are there; and although they do not quite freely admit Indians, still with the assistance of their English friends they can obtain admission. This is one reason why England is one of the best places for the industrial training of Indians; but there is another reason even stronger than this. To live for a time in an atmosphere of industrialism, to see it in full operation, to mark the stamp of business on the sea of faces as it surges through the streets of London, Manchester and Birmingham from dawn till dusk, to witness the marvels of mechanical inventions and the clash and din of competing, conflicting forces in large centres of industry—this in itself is to my mind a matter of great advantage to an Indian. He knows his society; he must know what the European society is like. He must feel its fascination, he must catch its contagion, he must enter into the spirit and understand the tempers of money-making people; and by contrast learn to realise more vividly than he can otherwise, how dull his own society is, how inactive and dormant, stirred by no ambition, moved by no strong desires, unaffected by the greed of gold, but equally destitute of the good things which gold can buy. No receptive mind can fail to catch the tone of English society by being thrown into it for some time; and the tone of English society is pre-eminently industrial.

These remarks are applicable not to students only; they have a wider application: they apply to Indians actually carrying on trade with foreign countries. These stand in greater need of, and are likely to profit more by, keeping themselves in constant touch with European life by

studying its commercial secrets, by acquiring something of its feverish restlessness, its pushing and practical temperament. The Parsis who took the lead in this matter are now at the head of our trading classes. Even the Mahomedans of the Deccan, though less educated and naturally less practical than the Parsis, have improved their position considerably by establishing commercial relations with Africa and Arabia in the West and China and the Malay Peninsula in the East. The Hindus are behind both the Parsis and the Mahomedans, although they too are beginning to realise the exigencies of modern life and the important part which trade plays in it. These traders by doing business with foreign countries bring to India not only silver and gold, not only articles of material comfort and luxury; they bring something more—they bring fresh experiences of countries new and strange, a spirit of adventure and enterprise, wider sympathies and a more accurate knowledge of the life of varied mankind. India needs them, for while these are among the fruits of trade and travel, they in their turn react upon and stimulate the movement of trade and travel by weakening those prejudices and levelling down those barriers which have hitherto kept India isolated from other countries, and by strengthening those tendencies and creating those desires and ambitions which are calculated to draw it in course of time into the current of general commercial activity.

Important as is this aspect of the question under consideration, I am however for the present more concerned with the mental, moral and political effects of the movement of 'foreign travel,' and therefore shall for a while try to ascertain in what relation it stands to what is called the higher or liberal education of Indian youths.

A little further back we started with two propositions—*first*, that India needs liberal education of the modern type, and *second*, that this education can best be obtained in

England. The first proposition is not disputed, but the second sometimes is. The objection comes somewhat in the following form : If an intelligent youth desires to cultivate his mind, there is sufficient scope for him in our Universities. He can study English literature, sciences, philosophy, arts. He has able teachers to teach him anything he wants to learn. The great books in literature, philosophy and sciences are as easily accessible to him as they are to the English youth at home. Keshab Chunder Sen, Kristo Das Pal, Rajendra Lal Mitter, K. T. Telang, Mr. Justice Ranade, Sir T. Madhava Rao were not educated in England; but where will you find their equals among England-returned men as writers, orators, scholars, statesmen and masters of the English tongue? A man of capacity will make a mark anywhere and everywhere; a dull man will remain dull whether he lives in the enervating climate of Bengal or the bracing atmosphere of England. As for moral training, so far as schools and colleges can impart it, there can hardly be any difference between a college at Cambridge and a college at Calcutta; while in England—this is a positive disadvantage—the Indian youth is freed from the moral restraints of home and society.

There is some truth in this view of the matter, but not the whole truth. It is true that the generality of England-returned students are not very superior to those who have been educated in India, either in culture or in conduct. It is equally true that Indian Universities have produced men of great mental and moral eminence. We may accept these facts and still be able to hold that education received in England must, if not now or in the immediate future, certainly in the long run, produce results on a far grander scale than any that can be expected from our Indian educational system. If England-returned youths do not in many cases come up to the expectations formed of them,

there are definite, intelligible reasons for it to which I will advert later on; here I would submit a few general considerations which would at once disclose some serious defects in our educational system, and leave little doubt as to the necessity for securing to our youths a sound liberal education at an English University.

To an Indian youth of average intelligence the change from a society intellectually dull and inert to a society brimful of ideas, seething with intellectual unrest cannot but affect in a variety of ways. He is bound to catch something of the fever and restlessness pervading the new atmosphere. He must learn to have his wits about him when everybody else whom he meets has his wits about him. He may not read many books, but he cannot help learning something of the wisdom without them and above them which is won by observation. Daily and hourly he is brought into contact with men who are his intellectual superiors. He finds that the home he lives in is not like the home he has left behind—his companions at the fire side and the dinner-table are not uninformed or half-informed men and ignorant women, but men and women of culture, of taste, of information. The new environments must tell upon his mental constitution and modify it—unconsciously and in spite of himself his ways will begin to change—quite as naturally as a man's accent changes by living among a new people—he will begin to find some relish in intellectual exercises as one begins to like English cheese and Irish stem. The friction of strange thoughts may irritate him, but will humble his pride, and when he comes back to India he will not be very tolerant of the self-complacency of his countrymen. We must assume some such result from his sojourn in England, or else there is no way of accounting for the operation of social forces upon the minds and character of men.

But we may take two concrete instances as to how

an Indian student would be affected by his new surroundings. First the moral influence of teachers. Cardinal Newman in his celebrated sermon on 'Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating the Truth' has described how men are influenced more by the example of the teacher—the type of what is deserving of their love and respect presented to their eyes in a concrete and tangible form—than by books or preachings. It is this personal influence of the teacher which our educational institutions lack, and which pervades every English College and is the most important factor in the making of English youths. And in India we cannot, I am afraid, have it for a long time. Able and efficient teachers though a rare commodity up to the present, can yet be had if we pay for them; but teachers capable of exercising any spell of personal influence upon their pupils, by sympathising with their hopes and tendencies, by winning their confidence and reading the secrets of their hearts—teachers who live for their pupils so that their pupils may learn to live for others—who weep over their sorrows and are happy in their joys—such teachers, indispensible factors in the education of a nation's youth, are and must be rare in this country. And the reason is plain. Indian teachers, even when they are trained in their profession, are after all a wheel in the educational machine which itself is part of the bigger administrative machine of the country, and those forces which in other departments of the State keep down the independence and originality of Indian public servants, tell upon the teacher also. He must carry out the rigid regulations of the department; he cannot encourage or in any way countenance in his pupils any disposition or tendency which is not to the taste of his superior officer; his eye is on 'promotion by results.' English teachers are after all part of the ruling class. It will be demanding too much from human nature to expect them

to live as a sort of organised protest against the European society which surrounds them. For they must, if they wish to exercise a teacher's influence over their pupils, regulate their lives very differently to that of the generality of their countrymen. They must identify themselves with the people. They must show forbearance, meekness, sympathy, affection in their treatment of them; they must mix freely with their peoples, let them feel by their 'little acts of kindness and of love' that whatever the Anglo-Indian civilian, or merchant or soldier may think of Indians, they at any rate have a genuine regard for their welfare, and that under their roof no race or class differences shall be allowed to mar the harmony of an open friendly social intercourse. But political feeling is so strong in this country and the exclusiveness of the English community so rigid, that the most amiable of English teachers after a time succumb to class-influences, their temperaments change, their amiableness passes off, 'the dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in,' and so the result is not that he is lost; the result is that the whole host of his pupils is lost. Now those who do not sufficiently realise the importance of educating young men in England should see how great this loss is, and yet it is just from this loss that the Indian youth is saved who is fortunate enough to be brought up in an English college under the personal influence of his teachers and professors. It was said of a teacher that he had breathed the love of knowledge and truth into a whole generation of his countrymen. This high function a good teacher does really discharge and in the English seats of learning there are many such. The Indian youth particularly needs a tonic of a good personal example of his teacher, because his home can offer him none, nor his society; nor would his life without such influence be a very desirable one in a country where so many temptations beset

a young man's course, and where amid the whirl of passions and frivolities, his soft moral constitution is liable to be shaken and shattered.

If this alone were the advantage of placing Indian youths in English colleges, the experiment would be well worth trying. But the English University life is beneficial to them in many other respects. First it places them under a strict moral discipline which is entirely wanting in this country. There the student after his college hours does not feel free to do what he pleases. He has to conform to certain rules, he has to behave himself in a certain manner; the supervision of the teacher does not cease beyond the college compound, and under the subtle moral influence of the corporate life of the University of which he forms a part, a certain sense of responsibility arises in the student of seeing that no stain is cast by any act of his upon the honor of his institution. Secondly, he is enabled to associate on terms of intimacy with the flower of English youth. This influences his mind and character in a variety of ways Some of its effects are well described by Mr. Bagehot. Referring to the advantage of the collegiate system at Oxford and Cambridge, he remarks thus:

"There is nothing for young men like being thrown into close neighbourhood with young men; it is the age of friendship; and every encouragement should be given—every opportunity enlarged for it; school friendships are childish; 'after life' rarely brings many; it is in youth alone that we can engrave deep and wise friendships on our close and stubborn texture. If there be romance in them, it is a romance which few would tear aside. All that 'pastors and masters' can teach young people is as nothing when compared with what young people can't help teaching one another. Man made the school, God made the playground. Horses and marbles, the knot of boys beside the schoolboy fire, the hard blows given,

and the harder ones received—these educate mankind. So too in youth, the real plastic energy is not in tutors or lectures or in books 'got up,' but in Wordsworth and Shelley; in the books that all read because all like—in what all talk of because all are interested in—in the argumentative walk or disputatious lounge—in the impact of young thought upon young thought, of fresh thought on fresh thought—of hot thought on hot thought—in mirth and refutation—in ridicule and laughter—for these are the free play of the natural mind, and these cannot be got without a college." For an Indian youth this is a great advantage—this 'impact of hot thought on hot thought'—as this is an element wholly wanting both in our colleges and our society.

But this is not all. The being brought together in close and intimate association of Indian and English youths, for a certain length of time, is a fact of very great significance. Both come to understand each other, like each other, overlook each other's faults, recognise each other's merits. The Indian youth, as yet his mind unembittered by any experience of Anglo-Indian roughness and harshness, sees nothing but gentleness, politeness, and generous manliness in the English youth. The English youth, as yet without any pride of domination, and knowing only that a gentleman is a gentleman whether white or black, finds many good points in his Indian fellow-student—a tender and sympathetic nature, a calm and sober temperament, a living and grateful heart. Prejudices of race and colur are rubbed off on the cricket field and in the lecture-room, and frendships are formed which are not only a source of joy and comfort to the parties concerned, but which tend indirectly and imperceptibly, to forge new bonds of sympathy and good will between India and England. Those Englishmen with whom we have associated as fellow-students, with whom we have rowed on the *Cam* and

the *Isis*, with whom we have passed some golden hours of youthful mirth and enjoyment—those Englishmen wherever they may go, whatever station in life they may be placed in, can never fail to cherish kindly feelings towards us and ours, and remove many a misunderstanding from the minds of their own countrymen. And for us too is needed an open and free social intercourse with Englishmen in order to make us forget racial degradation and political inferiority, lose that unmanly nervousness which the best of us feel in the presence of Englishmen, and those feelings of suspicion and estrangement with which we regard them. My belief is that few Indians who have not seen the English University life are able to understand and appreciate English character as it really is, and to maintain their self-respect without going to the extreme of self-assertiveness, in the presence of an Englishman. Personal contact removes the superstitious awe of centuries and introduces into our relations with the ruling race an element of fraternal sentiment which is bound to soften and sweeten the course of our political life.

Now, who can deny that these are great benefits worth great sacrifices? Education of a superior order, special training for the learned professions and the public service, a large experience of modern life with all its multifarious activities, the formation of character under the varied influences of English social life, numerous opportunities and facilities for understanding Englishmen and cultivating friendship with them, the renovation and re-invigoration of our minds and characters by breathing an air thick with ideas and by living among an active, energetic, restless race of men —these are the benefits which Indian youths are expected to derive from their sojourn in England—benefits which are real and enduring in their effects upon the course of our future progress. The question is, do they derive them? Even those who are in favour of foreign travel and of

sending young men to England hesitate to give an unqualified answer.

They say 'yes, going to England for education and improvement is a good thing; but our young men don't do anything there; they spend lots of money, become anglicised in their manners and habits, come back as very indifferent lawyers, begin to despise their countrymen and do nothing for their society. So far the experiment has been a failure. Let every parent think thrice before he sends out his son to England.'

There is, I am willing to admit, some justification for this punitive judgment; still it may be reasonably urged that the experiment has not had a fair trial, and even then it has not failed. The dissatisfaction with the actual result is due to our own over-sanguine expectations. Consider for a moment the circumstances under which Indian youths ordinarily go to England. In most cases they are the sons of uneducated or half-educated parents. They go to England equipped with a very indifferent education; their parents cannot regulate their training nor determine for them the choice of their profession. So these young men are expected to do the impossible. Without sufficient University education they are expected to undertake successfully the task of self-education. Without experience and guidance they are expected to choose a profession. And further they are expected to perform these remarkable feats, with plenty of money in their pockets, with numerous temptations surrounding them from all sides, free to form any friendships and choose any companions, removed from the moral influences of their own home and society, and thrown suddenly upon the wide, wide sea of modern life without any rudder or compass to steer their course. And what is the result? The result is that their frail barks are wrecked, the waves wash them down; the wished-for haven is never reached. The

showy and exciting side of European life proves more attractive ; the young man, sure of large remittances from home, does not care to go to Oxford or Cambridge, for he has no thirst for knowledge and there is none to create that in him ; he stays in London, joins one of the Inns of Court, goes to some 'Coach' who by convenient short cuts leads him to the great success at the examination, and thus when at the cost of a few weeks' mechanical labour he becomes a full-fledged barrister, thinks that he has gained the be-all and the end-all of his existence, and returns to India as the joy and pride of his people. What is there for him to do otherwise ? Fancy an English boy of fifteen or sixteen sent to Paris receiving large allowances from his parents, left free to do what he likes with his money and himself, without any friends to assist and advise in regard to his education. What would be his fate ? His young instincts and impulses will get the better of him, the glitter of a gay society will soon begin to create in him unwholesome cravings and the weaknesses of human nature will make him what, uncorrected by salutary influences, they are always apt to make of ordinary men. Why should we in the first instance fondly imagine that sea-voyage and foreign travel in the case of the Indian youth are good irrespective of any conditions, that by the mere act of crossing the sea he

> 'Suffers a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange,'

and when in the end he fails to fulfil our expectations, then turn to blaming him and the civilization which is supposed to have corrupted him ? This is not reasonable. He is a creature of the circumstances in which his parents deliberately placed him ; and they need not feel much disappointed if they find that thorns and thistles have not yielded them figs and grapes.

Still I cannot help remarking here that the experiment

in spite of so many disadvantages and drawbacks has not wholly failed. Wise and educated parents have been able to turn the experiment to good account. They have watched their sons' education here and secured efficient supervision of it in England. They have taken care that their sons received good education, lived in good society, made good friendships, and chose such professions as were suited to their tastes and bent of mind. These young men have come out as Civilians, Doctors, Engineers, Agriculturists, Scientific Specialists. In their various walks of life they have earned distinction and fame, and given us men like Syed Mahomed, Romesh Chunder Dutt, Surendra Nath Banerjee, W. C. Bonnerjee, the late Dr. Bahadurji, and the brilliant wrangler Pranjpye. Even in the ranks of such young men as have not the advantage of wise parental advice and guidance in the matter of their education, and are thrown upon their own resources, there appear from time to time men who rise victorious over the temptations of their situations, in whom the inborn faculty for acquiring knowledge seeks its own satisfactions without any external or adventitious aids, who by dint of natural gifts assimilate the best part of European culture, and in whose life a few years' sojourn in England proves an epoch-making event. It speaks volumes for the vitality of modern culture and of the desire which the Indian mind has come to cherish for it, that in spite of the perils and pitfalls of European life, in spite of all the circumstances which are adverse to the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of character, in spite of money in young hands, wine in young heads, and the first flutter of new passions in young hearts, the experiment has not altogether failed—that scores of Indian youths go every year to England, and some of them do well. It is a great thing that not only many are called, but a few are actually chosen. As things now stand much money is doubtless wasted; fond parents

thoughtlessly send their sons to England without any clear notions as to what they should do there, many young men turn out utterly worthless and break their parents' hearts. But to a certain extent this is inevitable. This is the process of Nature as she works upwards to higher stages of perfection ; "of fifty seeds she often brings but one to bear." How many noble lives are wrecked, how many hopes are blasted, how much misery is caused, what an enormous quantity of human energies and efforts is wasted, before humanity as by some happy accident brings forth some great character—who makes amends for the wasteful process of nature, who stamps the image of his formality upon his age and moulds the creed of millions. The movement of sending young men to England is to my mind a good worth having, even at the heavy price we have to pay for it in the utter wreck of scores of our youths, if even once in a decade it sifts one individual of exceptional ability and moral worth from the whole mass, for this one individual strikes fire in a million hearts and clears away many prejudices which clog the progress of his race. . I feel pained but not discouraged by the sorrows and misfortunes of the present, for I believe that even our blind and wasteful efforts are preparing the way for a happier future.

Still the question whether the painful and wasteful process by which we now endeavour to assimilate western culture will be long or short, is one of no small moment to any one who is interested in the education of Indian youth and their future well-being. We cannot, as rational men, wait upon the chapter of accidents and cast the burden of our responsibility upon the shoulders of Providence. In sending our sons to England, there are certain matters which demand our earnest consideration. In the first place every Indian parent must see if he has got sufficient means to educate his son properly in England. If he has not,

then I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that he should never think of the matter, whatever may be the case with English boys : a foreigner must be prepared to spend a good deal if he wants to profit by his sojourn in England. In the second place the time of the boys' education should be determined here, if the father himself is competent to do it ; if not, he must have it determined by some competent men in England. At all events the boy should be left little freedom to choose his own education, for in nine cases out of ten he will make a wrong choice. In this country we have a very good illustration of it in the fact that when left to themselves—and in most cases they are left to themselves—our young men prefer literary to scientific course for their degree examinations. When this is the case with comparatively advanced students, what can we expect from England-going boys who hardly matriculate before leaving the country ? Thirdly, it is a question of very great importance as to at what age the Indian student should be sent to England. He may be sent either when he is very young, or when he is passing out his boyhood and is in the middle of his education, or when he is a grown-up young man and has completed his college career. Each stage has its advantages and its drawbacks. The most impressionable age is certainly childhood. Whoever is educated in England from that age will undoubtedly come back to India with English sentiments and habits but decidedly denationalised and anglicised. Perhaps to some this may seem desirable, it does not so to me. My idea is that one who has never known his father and mother, who has never learnt to love his brothers and sisters, whose earliest associations are connected with foreign scenes and incidents, who sees the civilization of his own country after his whole mental and moral nature has been transformed by the civilization of another—such a one whatever may be his merits in certain respects, will not

care much for his people and country, will not understand their simple, superstitious idyllic life, will be disqualified by his formed mind and stiffened creed, for the great work which requires to be done during the present transitional epoch—the work in the conflict of old and new forces, of fusion, preparation, adaptation, tentative endeavour. If a boy of fifteen or sixteen goes to England, the great advantage is that he has sufficient time before him to prosecute his studies, his mind is plastic enough to receive new and fresh impressions and yet at the same time capable of retaining the traces of home-influences, there is not much danger of his becoming denationalised. But this is just the age when the dawning youth leads the mind into many wild ways; when character begins to be formed, when it makes all the difference in the world whether the young man keeps a little to the right or a little to the left in order to arrive at the right goal. If the student goes to England after completing his college career here, he certainly goes well-equipped with enough culture to be able to take full advantage of English life and training, to choose his own line of education, to enrich his experience by an intelligent observation of European society. But on the other hand we must remember that mind like ourselves stiffens with age, a young man of over twenty does not possess the same plastic and flexible intellect as a lad of sixteen; he goes to England with the hold of early association strong upon him, with formed habits and rooted convictions; he may learn much, but he can really unlearn little; and although his mind is stored with a fund of new ideas, yet I doubt if he is able to add a cubit to his moral stature. It is not to be understood that his character does not in some material respects change for the better under the influence of his new surroundings; it does change and improve, but in its broad lineaments it remains what his home and society have made it; he gives intellectual assent to many princi-

ples to which his moral nature has not quite adapted itself.

Now while briefly pointing out some of the chief advantages and drawbacks of the ages at which the youth may be, and as a matter of fact, are, sent to England, it is not necessary for me to say which I consider to be the best age, for this must be decided with reference to the particular circumstances of each student—his antecedents, his surroundings, his education, his natural endowments, and the walk of life for which his parents and instructors think him most fitted. Suffice it to say that each age requires special provisions and safeguards, and the younger the age of the student the greater the need for them. As of course the majority of England-visiting students are, and will always be young men between sixteen and twenty years of age with incomplete college training, some of the considerations pointed out above seem to me important, to which one or two more may fitly be added in this place.

It is of the utmost importance that these young men should be placed with English families and their education looked after by English friends. As far as possible they should not be exposed to the risk and inconveniences of lodging-houses and boarding-houses. It is not easy to find good families who would take Indian boarders, but the personal influence of English friends will go far to obviate this difficulty.

The most difficult thing is the supervision of young Indians' education. Some thirteen or fourteen years ago a Committee was formed in London under the auspices of the National Indian Association for the purpose of looking after Indian students and giving them help and advice in matters of education. The Committee I believe still exists. One of the cardinal principles of this Committee has been that it must have the young men's money in its own hands and

regulate and check their expenses, for here or elsewhere the master of the purse is the master of everything. If the student has control of his money, no supervision can avail. He will spend money as he likes and will seldom like what he should. Even during the early days of its existence when I was a member of that Committee, I could find it capable of doing much good, and one of the tests of its good work was that the very first batch of young men who were placed under its charge and were in every way doing well under its supervision, rid themselves of its restraining influences as soon as they could persuade their parents to make them the sole disposers of their money. Indian parents have not sufficiently availed themselves of the help offered by this Committee, but I have no doubt that the utility of the Committee or similar organisations will be felt more and more as the career of England-returned young men produces a larger and larger harvest of disappointments.

Another very important thing is the choice of a profession. We often hear pathetic wails over the legal profession being over-stalked; so it is; but beyond weeping and wailing what do we do? Nothing; on the contrary we send our sons to England and feel very happy when they join the Inns of Court. They manage to pass the necessary examinations and return to India as "gentlemen of the long robe," but with very short arms to wrestle with the difficulties of their profession. Now, I do not say that young men should not study Law in England—some of them are eminently fitted for that branch of knowledge; but they must turn their attention to other professions also. There is great room for good doctors, engineers and other scientific specialists in this country; and surely these are more needed for the production and augmentation of our national wealth than any number of lawyers put together. But we must not expect a boy of sixteen or seventeen to be able to resist the temptation of

swimming with the current and of doing what he sees his other fellow students do.

While these are some of the principal things which parents and guardians would do well to take into their consideration, there are some others, equally important but equally neglected by those whom they concern, upon which it may not be inopportune to address a few words to the young men themselves. They have to bear in mind that the question of foreign travel besides its educational aspect has other aspects as well—and in regard to these they bear certain peculiar responsibilities because their sojourn in England, their education and their new experiences give them a peculiar position in their society. In the concluding pages of this essay I can but very briefly touch upon this side of the question.

I have spoken of foreign travel. More particularly in one of its concrete and most important aspects in connection with the education of Indian youths—as part of the great movement of illumination the rise and spread of which under the flag of new forces is perhaps the most remarkable phenomenon of modern times; and therefore I cannot but think of those who visit Europe either for business or for education, as having a high duty laid upon them of preparing themselves for the great task of social regeneration which awaits them, on their return, in this country. The question of social reform has many sides and involves many intricate issues; but one thing with regard to it appears clear beyond the reach of doubt that for a speedy and successful solution of it, the sympathy and moral support of Englishmen are nearly as needful as the patriotic co-operation and energetic exertions of the Indians themselves. Now it is clear that if the generality of Englishmen are mere indifferent spectators of our social changes and do not care to cultivate a free and friendly intercourse with us, it is because both of us are separated by certain race prejudices, born of

our ignorance of each other's habits and dispositions. In India the exigencies of politics will probably keep these prejudices alive for many a day. But in England it is possible to remove them to a considerable extent if we succeed in making Englishmen see that Indians are not the semi-savages they are so often represented to be, that they have a great civilization of their own, that in intelligence and morals they are not unworthy specimens of humanity. And we must remember that Englishmen will judge the whole race by such of its specimens as may happen to come before them. At present they see Indian merchants, politicians and students. From their character and accomplishments, their tastes and pursuits, they judge the state of our civilization. They are quite justified in supposing that the Indians whom they see in England are mostly of a superior class; and if their superior class do not seem to them to come up to the mark and betray any serious defects and shortcomings, they cannot be expected to think much of the common sense of our countrymen. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the Indians who go to England should, by their intelligence and character, be fitted to make a favourable impression upon the minds of the English people. The credit of a whole nation is in their hands; they may lower it or raise it in the eyes of the civilized world. The vastness of the consequences flowing from their conduct is the measure of their responsibility. Let no Indian think that if in London or Paris, where nobody seems to care who he is, where he feels himself 'lonely in a crowd,' he misbehaves himself, nothing matters. His landlady and maid servant, the waiter that serves him his dinner at the Club, the barber that shaves him—these watch him, scrutinise him in his careless unguarded moments, and according to the impression they come to form of him, they think of his country and people. If three Englishmen come constantly in contact with good and well-

behaved Indians, of refined tastes and gentlemanly habits, they cannot but begin to respect the nation to which they belong—and once they come to look upon us as their worthy associates in the work of life, we may be sure of their sympathy and co-operation in the great work of reform which lies before us. Think of the change in European sentiments towards India wrought by men like Professor Max Muller and others by bringing to light certain race affinities between the East and the West; how much greater would be the benefit to India, and why not to England also if the Englishman finds that his Indian fellow subject, besides being related to him by ties of race and language, is possessed of certain mental and moral excellences which are the host of modern civilization! This view of the matter seems to me important, for the sympathy and good-will of rulers have always been decisive factors in the progress of natives.

While it is important that the Indian who goes to England should make a favourable impression upon the people there, it is equally important that on his return home he should be found deserving of the respect and confidence of his own people, for they will judge European civilization, the advantages of European experience and knowledge from their effect upon his mind and character. His example may be encouraging or disappointing; in either case its bearing upon the people's attitude towards English culture and English civilization is obvious. Every human thing is judged by its fruits. The people at large are very suspicious of new ideas and institutions, have little confidence in new growths, have accepted many new things under the pressure of necessity, and this feeling of distrust of modern aims and ideals of life will continue so long as their goodness and soundness is not proved to them by plain and palpable results. The Indian who returns home anglicised—with English vices and without English vir-

tues—who treats his national institutions with a superior air of contempt, rides roughshod over his people's prejudices, and delights in wounding their tenderest susceptibilities—his example goes far towards strengthening and intensifying those feelings of suspicion and even positive dislike which the Indian people generally cherish towards modern civilization. It is a common complaint against many England-returned Indians that they have become denationalised and have lost touch with their society. The complaint is on the whole just ; and I have no doubt that the reaction which has of late set in in this country against the indiscriminate adoption of European ideas, fashions and manners which characterised young Indians till fifteen or twenty years ago, is partly due to the discouraging example set by anglicised Indians, and partly to that general advancement of knowledge by which the people are beginning to appreciate better than before the worth of their religion and the beauties of their ancient literature. So then, if this reaction against modern civilization, which seems to me in some of its aspects even now premature and injurious, is not to arrest the march of the Indian mind by delaying indefinitely the re-adjustment of the old order to the exigencies of the new time, it is necessary that England-returned men should be typical of all that is good in modern life and culture, so that by the actual worthiness of their lives they may be capable of disarming hostile criticism and correcting popular prejudices, of enabling the people to feel some attraction for European ways of thinking and living and inducing them to exchange old lamps for new. This high mission Providence has laid upon their shoulders. Every young Indian who goes to England is charged not only with the duties of a student but also with those of a reformer. He is an apostle of modern civilization—a bringer of the new lights to his countrymen. If his light too turn out to be mere darkness, then how

great will be the darkness. He should recognise from the very beginning this part of his duty as of very solemn import, the preparation for the proper performance of which is not to be put off for a single day.

I do not agree with those who think that a young man should think of nothing except his studies so long as he is a student, that the proper time for cherishing dreams of reform is when he enters the world. Youth, to my mind, is the time for everything which ought to be the object of a good citizen's life. It is the time when the mind is plastic to the touch of circumstances, when confidence in one's self—the great secret of success in every walk of life—is abundant, when sympathies and affections are ardent, and the fount of energy full and fresh; and if this time is not utilised by filling young and passionate hearts with the fervour of social amelioration, we may rest assured that no efforts and experience of after-years will avail much.

Manhood brings its own duties, its own cares and anxieties, and then who thinks of social good? Other impulses are developed, other ambitions arise. Men easily succumb to them. The world is so strong that sometimes even those who in their younger days felt social fervour as soon as they find themselves in the rough and tumble of life and experience,

> "The losses, the crosses
> That active man engage,"

cool down half in despair, half in disgust at a world out of joint, which will not allow itself to be set right as promptly as they would wish. Hence we find men who are good friends, good fathers, good husbands, respectable citizens and honest public servants, and yet who seem to possess no public spirit, to care nothing for others, whom the sufferings of their fellows beyond the limited circle of their friends and relations do not move, and in whom the sense of social duty is very imperfectly developed. These are the men

who in their younger days never learnt to regard social good as the supreme object of their life. Nobody will ever be capable of caring for his society with much ardour in his riper years who does not learn to care for it when young. In the spring-tide of life, when our faculties are active and alert and the blood runs swiftly in our veins, when the light of love and hope gilds our horizon, and the song of birds is sweet in our ears, and the sight of flowers gladdens our hearts—then, then is the time for dreaming dreams and seeing visions of social and political Utopias, for it is these dreams and visions which make the love of humanity the breath of our nostrils, the heart blood of our hearts, and even in the midst of the world's cruelest disappointments enable us to pursue with undiminished zeal our up-hill struggles towards the light and the right, sustained by the 'mighty hopes that make us men.' It is because I have this strong faith in the impulses and enthusiasms of youth that I so much desire that these impulses and enthusiasms of the young men who go to England should be made use of and the supreme importance of their right use in the cause of social good should be impressed upon their minds.

And it is even of immediate and practical importance that young men should have the sense of social responsibility fully awakened in them, for the very first problem which on their return home, they—or at least such of them as are of Hindu persuasion—have to solve is how to get themselves reinstated in their respective communities. For him who is prepared to abjure caste publicly the solution is easy; he gives up his small sect and becomes a citizen of the world. But it is extremely doubtful if in any other respect he improves his position. If he has sons and daughters, if he is a man of sociable nature, he is sure to feel certain practical difficulties which everyone must feel who has given up his society and is not able to enter any other. But we need not trouble ourselves about him, because for

a long time to come, he may be certain his example will not be popular in this country. Then there is the case of those who want to get back into their society, which they know to be caste-bound, but which they want to enter on condition they are allowed to go about as so many chartered libertines submitting to no caste rules and doing whatever they like in open defiance of them. And this brings in the question of *Prashchit*, or penance, upon which I intended to say something, but as I have already exceeded my limits, I shall confine myself to a few general remarks upon the remarkable attitude of these men towards their society.

Hindu society, it would be generally admitted, is not as yet prepared to give up caste; if an England-returned man is, he must be prepared to give up Hindu society. It is no use saying that society tolerates breaches of caste, that there are hundreds and thousands who eat and drink with everybody and society takes no notice of them; that when one does what society already knows and connives at, why shouldn't he be allowed to do it openly? Why, for the simple reason that society is not prepared to tolerate open defiance of caste rules. If any one think it is, he has only to ask it to allow him to remain in it on condition of his observing no caste rules, and he will soon find himself out of it. The changes of a hundred years have brought about a state of things in which the Hindu community has by way of compromise come to put up with breaches of caste observances to a certain extent—but only to a certain extent—beyond which it does not at present seem disposed to extend its tolerance. To an England-returned man it simply says this:—"You may or may not believe in caste; I am only concerned with your public conduct—your conduct on social occasions; if it is consistent with caste ordinances, I don't care what you do in the privacy of your home, and if not you must go." Now, I ask my radical friend, what more latitude do you want for yourself? Where is your

principle compromised if you enter your community on those terms ? There is no hypocrisy, no deception, no double dealing when your conduct is neither intended nor calculated to deceive any body for who is so simple-minded as to believe that you feel any romantic attachment for caste? But at the same time be sure that so long as Hindu society does not undergo considerable changes which will be the work of centuries, so long as millions of Hindus are ignorant, or are bred up in the old school; so long as Hindu women do not come under the influence of the new light—and there are hardly more than a score of such women outside Calcutta and Bombay—caste system, an institution of immemorial antiquity, which has made its impression upon every nerve and fibre of our social organism, will continue to exist and nothing but quiet and gentle compromises extending over a long space of time, will be found efficacious enough to dissolve its bonds. The way to break the strength of Hindu orthodoxy is not, if I may use a phrase which the Boer war has brought into fashion, by making frontal attacks upon its impregnable positions behind caste-entrenchments, but by turning its flanks, by going round and marking those weak points in its organization which cannot be well-defended against the pressure of new forces.

What, are we to wait, it may be urged, till the bulk of the Hindu community is prepared to renounce caste ? Are we to reform only such abuses as everybody is prepared to give up ? Are we to follow Pope's prudent advice,

> " Be not the first by whom the new are tried'
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside ?"

By no means; but consider that before you attempt to bring about any change you must prepare the public mind for it. You must change men's opinion first before you can hope to change their conduct. And what is the Hindu public opinion in regard to caste ? Is it really in

favour of abolishing caste? Is it even ripe enough to allow a free discussion of the question at a mixed gathering? Have we forgotten plague-riots and the *Sanatan Dharam* demonstrations? Well, the fact is that anti-caste opinions are not tolerated by the Hindu community; much less can we expect it to tolerate their realization in practice. Educate public opinion upon this question; you will find even this apparently simple process somewhat long and laborious. Reforms attempted in haste are often repented at leisure. An open crusade against caste can end only in disaster; for I consider it nothing short of disaster that the Hindu community should by the action of an aggressive and reckless radicalism be driven into the arms of the reactionary movements which have of late created so much stir and unrest in the country. Periods of transition have their inconveniences and inconsistencies; but they have to be borne, compromises have to be effected; the old does not die without a struggle, the new is not born without travails. Our rapid reformers would do well to pardon the words of Mr. Herbert Spencer:

"For it cannot be too emphatically asserted that this policy of compromise, alike in institutions, in actions and in beliefs, is a policy essential to a society going through the transitions caused by continued growth and development. The illogicalities and the authorities to be found so abundantly in current opinions and existing arrangements, are those which inevitably arise in the course of perpetual re-adjustments to circumstances perpetually changing. Ideas and institutions proper to a past social state but incongruous with the new social state that has grown out of it, surviving into this new social state they have made possible, and disappearing only as this new social state establishes its own ideas and institutions, are necessarily, during their survival, in conflict with these new ideas and institutions—necessarily furnish elements of contradic-

tion in men's thoughts and deeds. And yet as, for the carrying on of social life, the old must continue so long as the new is ready, this perpetual compromise is an indispensable accompaniment of a normal development. Just as injurious as it would be to an amphibian to cut off its *bronchiæ* before its lungs were well-developed, so injurious must it be to a society to destroy its old institutions before the new have become organised enough to take their places." (Study of Sociology, pp. 396-397).

Some would construe this into a plea for maintaining the *status quo*. They think that because they and their friends are prepared for certain reforms, therefore the whole country is prepared for them. Some of them even go the length of saying that if the Hindu population is not going to submit to them, they will form a separate society of their own. Carlyle says somewhere 'Two or three gentlemen have met in a room and have said. Go to, we will make a religion.' So these gentlemen want to make a society of the elect—without caste, without Hindu principles, without old traditions. In their eyes moderation is the virtue of cowards, and compromise the deceiver of traitors. They will however soon find out their mistake. Our social conservatism is too strong to be pulled down in a day. It is being gradually undermined by the tide of modern civilization, 'a tide that moving seems asleep, too full for sound or foam,' and it is no part of wisdom to check or retard its progress by exciting and grading into fury the passions and prejudices of a thousand years. Even for bringing about slow changes in our customs and beliefs the zeal and courage of heroes and martyrs will be needed and most effective in breaking the neck of Hindu orthodoxy will be those who will remain in their society and not those who go out of it.

IX.—Social Intercourse between Europeans and Indians.

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The question of the feasibility of the promotion of a more intimate social relation between Europeans and Indians cannot be discussed satisfactorily unless one has a knowledge of the vast difference in the habits, thoughts and avocations of the two races. That there is a wide gulf between the two races which even a century of British rule has not succeeded in bridging there is no need to prove. But unfortunately those who have either written or spoken on this delicate subject have done more harm than good by their *ex parte* statements. A few years back an article appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, from the pen of Mr. Wilfred Blunt, professing to trace the history of the "ever-widening gulf of personal dislike," which separates the educated Indian from the "individual Englishmen who rule them"; and I know for certain that if that article had any effect at all, it was to make the gulf wider than it was before Mr. Wilfred Blunt took upon himself the self-imposed task of bridging it. I shall quote a single passage from the article referred to: "I shall no doubt incur anger by saying it, but it is a fact that the English woman in India, during the last thirty years, has been the cause of half the bitter feelings there between race and race. It was her presence at Cawnpore that pointed the sword of revenge after the Mutiny, and it is her constantly increasing influence now that widens the gulf of ill-feeling and makes amalgamation daily more and more impossible. I have over and over again noticed this. The English Collector, the English Doctor, or the English Judge may have the best will in the world to meet their Indian neighbours and offi-

cial subordinates on equal terms. Their wives will hear nothing of the sort, and the result is a meaningless interchange of cold civilities." Such statements as these do more harm than good and have been indulged in frequently. I do not pretend to throw any new light on the subject, but my position as an Indian, and as one who has had the privilege of a long stay in England, enables me to view the problem from a point of view different from that in which it is generally viewed by those of my countrymen who have not had the privilege of an intimate acquaintance with English life.

In the first place let me say that a complete fusion of the two races, under present conditions, is an utter impossibility; and when I speak of free social intercourse, I do not mean a state of things that would lead to such a complete fusion. The intermarriage of the races is a subject which, perhaps, does not come within the scope of this article, but I may be permitted to say that, despite the few instances that have taken place, the time even for the discussion of such a theme has not yet arrived. That such marriages have taken place, and some of them may have turned out happily, may possibly be true; but the very idea of such a thing has, we may say happily, not yet become familiar to the European mind, and it must be long before the many, and, as at present seems, insuperable objections to such marriages becoming common can be overcome. It is strange, but still it is a known fact that, so long as human nature remains what it is, eastern and western nations cannot amalgamate without a loss to both.

Before attempting to answer the question of the possibility of the promotion of a more intimate social relation between Europeans and Natives, it is necessary to take a glance at the present state of Indian Society, to understand clearly of what elements, homogeneous or heterogeneous, it is composed and also discover whether there is any likeli-

hood of these elements being welded into one homogeneous whole. The word "Indian," in its widest acceptation, embraces all people who live in India, including Brahmins, Sudras, Pariahs, even Mahomedans, not to speak of the various sections and sub-sections into which these are divided. Professor Seeley has pointed out in his *Expansion of England* that all the elements of a common nationality are absent in India, *viz.*, (1) community of race or rather the belief in a community of race; (2) the sense of a common interest and the habit of forming a single political whole and (3) a common religion. Whatever may be the changes coming over the country now,—and some powerful influences are being brought to bear upon the races inhabiting India,—it must be admitted that the caste system is still in the ascendant and prevents the amalgamation of the Indian peoples so widely diverging in language, in social customs, and in religion. The educated classes, it is true, claim to be free from the trammels of caste, but the glaring incongruity between thoughts and deeds, between public profession and private practice, is felt by none more keenly than by the educated Hindu himself. Much is said against caste, but caste still reigns supreme in some form or other, even in the most enlightened circles. There is still an absence of perfect sympathy among the peoples of India. Their habits and idiosyncracies, their prejudices and customs, prevent their complete fusion, and to this day they are separated by impassable barriers. Seeing that the points of disparity between the different classes that constitute the Indian population are so great as to make their cordially mingling with one another impossible, how then can we expect the Indian population, made up as it is of these motley races, to mix cordially with Europeans, a people entirely differing from them in creed, colour, and costume? Charity, it is said, should begin at home; and so there should be free social intercourse first between

classes of people which have greater affinities with one another. The European may well say :—" You wonder at there being an icy barrier between Europeans and Natives: what free intercourse is there between peoples who constitute the Indian population ?" I do not mean to insinuate for a moment that there is no sympathy and social intercourse between the Indian races; what I mean is that before we begin to find fault with Europeans for their aloofness we should show that there is more of cordiality and union between the different Indian races, who, though locally intermingled, are still morally separated. There is still distrust between class and class; there is still that narrow exclusiveness and petty-minded jealousy keeping the different castes and classes apart from one another. All efforts of our educated countrymen should, therefore, be directed towards creating a universal feeling of nationality. India consists merely of a vast assemblage of races divided into countless unsympathising castes and classes. A bond of union is needed. I do of course admit that English education and western civilization have amalgamated to some extent the varying forces among the Indian population; but greater exertions must be put forth by the various castes and classes that exist in India to bring about a deeper sympathy and a more complete union. It is very easy to point out the mote in our neighbour's eye and overlook the beam in our own. Let not one caste despise another. Let there be an end of all religious intolerance and bigotry. Let there be a freer intercourse between Mahomedan and Hindu, Hindu and Christian, Christian and Mahomedan. Let all learn to think alike and also to act alike, "yoked in one fellowship of joys and pains," realizing that we are all fellow-citizens of a common mother country; and then we shall have greater reason to complain of the icy barrier that now separates Europeans from Natives.

In trying to trace the cause of that absence of free

intercourse between the rulers and the ruled, we should not fail to take into account one essential characteristic of the English nation. The English are the most reserved of all races. It is the nature of an Englishman to keep himself aloof from a foreigner, whether European or Asiatic, one with a dark or a white skin. A channel only twenty miles broad separates France from England, and yet there is a gulf between the peoples of these two countries nearly as wide as the one that separates the English from the dusky inhabitants of India. Referring to the insular character of the English, Emerson says :—"In short every one of these islanders is an island himself, safe, tranquil, incommunicable. In a company of strangers you would think him deaf; his eyes never wander from his table and newspaper. He is never betrayed into any curiosity or unbecoming emotion. They have all been trained in one severe school of manners, and never put off the harness. He does not give his hand. He does not let you meet his eye. It is almost an affront to look a man in the face, without being introduced. In mixed or in select companies they do not introduce persons; so that a presentation is a circumstance as valid as a contract. Introductions are sacraments. He withholds his name. At the hotel he is hardly willing to whisper it to the clerk at the booking office. If he gave you his private address and card, it is with an avowal of friendship; and his bearing on being introduced is cold, even though he is seeking your acquaintance, and is studying how he shall serve you."

This account of the English character contains much of truth. In the course of a conversation I once had with a German Missionary who had lived in India for upwards of twenty years, he said:—"What strikes us Germans in India most is the utter exclusiveness of the English. They try their best to have as little to do with the Natives as possible. They even shun us, though we are so near of kin

to them. We Germans behave differently in our colonies." Well, this state of things can be accounted for only by the fact of the natural reservedness of the English character.

There is an innate sense of superiority in the Englishman which makes him look upon himself as belonging to a race the first in all the world. To his eyes even his immediate neighbours, the French and the Germans, are his inferiors, and he becomes more alive to this superiority when he leaves his island home to mix with foreigners. But at home he is himself natural and genuine. Hence, to know what the English really are, we must go to their very firesides. It is only there that we find out their real character. It is there, more than anywhere else, you feel their kindness and consideration, their unaffectedness and liberality of feeling. It is worth going to England at any cost and inconvenience to find out what the English really are. Even now, as I look back, I cannot help bringing before my mind those happy days which I had the inestimable privilege of spending with English friends, who were none the less cordial because of my being a foreigner. These friendships I enjoy even now, though many seas lie between India and England. In that strange land many a door was open to me; and the kind treatment and the warm welcome I received in those English homes made my stay in England appear almost a pleasant dream to me. This has been the experience of others of my countrymen who have visited England. Let us not therefore judge hastily of the English in India, by looking at only the official side of their character. To a great extent they move in an artificial atmosphere in this country. Was it not Rudyard Kipling who said that the Ten Commandments cease to be binding on an Englishman on this side of Aden? Whether he meant that this statement of his should be taken seriously or not, we do not need a Kipling to tell us that the conditions of life in India of

an Englishman are entirely different from those in England.

I have referred to the innate sense of superiority of the Englishman and his natural reservedness. These features of his character have their ugly side as well. Too much of self-consciousness often degenerates into swagger; and there is no human infirmity so melancholy as British swagger. We see it manifesting itself in so many ways. To give one single example. There appeared three years ago a remarkable work by Dr. Pearson, entitled *National Life and Character*. This work, which has been highly eulogized by the British Press, tries to work out one single idea, namely, that the dark races are in reality lower than the white races *in the sense of being unfit for progress and civilization*. Now there does not need much logic to point out that such a sweeping generalization, with regard, not to the *present* condition but to the *future* of the dark races, is the outcome of imperial insolence and a narrow conception of human progress; yet the numerous British critics of Dr. Pearson's work, including the London *Times*, accepted his assumption as a matter of course and never thought of questioning the very A. B. C. of his mode of reasoning, which is the outcome of national prejudice. The British as a nation have yet to learn that there is nothing in race which, under a systematic education and training, continued over long generations, could prevent the dark races from ultimately inheriting a higher civilization.

Then let us pray that come it may—
  As come it will for a' that—
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth
  May bear the gree and a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
  It is coming yet for a' that,

That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

I am also afraid that the conditions of life in India of an Englishman are such that they tend to foster and nourish this questionable side of his character, namely, race conceit. An Englishman arrives in India and finds to his utter astonishment that he is made more of than ever he was before; and if he is one who holds any position of official influence and draws a high salary, there will never be wanting a circle of natives who treat him almost as a demi-god. Not only are the lower classes given to cringing and fawning; but even the educated classes have the same weakness. There is a great deal of false hero-worship in India,—worship of mere pelf and power, and this trait in the native character, combined with the innate sense of superiority in the Englishman, is a serious hindrance in the way of bringing the two races together on any footing of equality.

But even admitting these—the peculiar constitution of Hindu Society and the natural reservedness of the English—as barriers to a complete social fusion, I do not see why there should not be a more cordial relationship existing between Europeans and Natives than there is at present. After all, it is not much that the natives require of their English neighbours. They only desire a more friendly intercourse, a more kindly sympathy. What then can be the obstacles to these? Let us see.

Mr. C. T. Buckland, in his *Sketches of Social Life in India*, has an interesting chapter on Native life. He says that the chief cause of the want of social intercourse between Europeans and Natives is the little knowledge which the former have of the inner social life of the natives. An Englishman sees a Native in his office, where they meet together for the purpose of going through some dry work. They exchange a "good morning" or a "good

evening," and they never see anything of each other till they meet the next day to look over some official document or talk about business matters. I know the little knowledge which the English have of the inner social life of the natives is often brought forward as an obstacle to free social intercourse. But I fear that this excuse is a very lame one altogether. It is confounding cause and effect to say that the want of mutual knowledge is an obstacle to free social intercourse. If there is freer intercourse between the two races, the Europeans will certainly have a better knowledge of the inner social life of the Natives. Even Sir Monier Williams, notwithstanding his wide Indian experience, has fallen into the very same mistake. In an address he delivered at a meeting of the National Indian Association, he says—and he repeats it over and over again—that the want of sympathy on the part of the English towards their Indian fellow subjects is simply and solely due to the insufficient knowledge which the former have of India and the people. If Sir Monier Williams, in making such a statement, referred only to the English at home, there would have been no objection taken to it, but if he wishes to make out that the English in India are uncharitable and unsympathetic because they are ignorant, I can only say that the statement is incorrect. The English in India cannot conscientiously plead the want of mutual knowledge as an excuse for their unsympathetic conduct. The ignorance (and there is plenty of it among Englishmen in India) is the effect and not the cause of the unsympathetic nature of the majority of Englishmen who sojourn in our midst. We often come across very amusing instances of ignorance relating to India and Indians among Englishmen at home; such ignorance is pardonable, I saw nothing incongruous in an Englishman at home asking me whether the Zenanas were not a tribe of Afghans. I was not in the least surprised to see once a number of placards in a large town in

England, announcing a Missionary meeting, in which it was said that the Bishop of Travancore, New Zealand, would take part. It did not in the least shock me when the daughter of a Member of Parliament once asked me, with much *naivete*, whether in India houses were built of bricks. But when I am told that there are civilians who will not be able to pass an examination in the Geography of India outside their own presidency; when I remember coming across Eglishmen in India using opprobrious terms such as "devilish" to designate the religious tenets of India; when I read sweeping statements about the character of the native population, as for example, the following: "a nation of liars, perjurers, forgers, devoid of gratitude, trust, good nature, and every other virtue," "people addicted to adulation, dissimulation, dishonesty, falsehood, and perjury;" when one sees all this, one cannot but be astonished at such ignorance and come to the conclusion that such ignorance is only the outcome of national pride Let there be good will and sympathy between the people of England and the people of India, then there will be no more talk about mutual ignorance. Want of sympathy is not rooted in the want of knowledge, it is the want of knowledge that is rooted in the want of sympathy.

Sir Monier Williams, in his deeply interesting work on "Modern India and the Indians," says: "The impenetrable barrier with which the Hindus surround their homes, and their refusal to sit at meals with Europeans, are fatal to mutual friendliness and sociability." The same causes are also assigned by Mr. C. T. Buckland, as coming in the way of a complete social fusion between the rulers and the ruled. "Two of the main elements," writes Mr. Buckland, "of social intercourse, according to English ideas, consist (1) in dining together, (2) in the interchange of ladies' society." As regards the first, it is true dinners play an important part in lubricating business, softening asperities,

and bringing about a good understanding between people; but at the same time it must be admitted that caste prejudices cannot be regarded as in any way constituting an insurmountable difficulty to free social intercourse. Caste prejudices have not prevented a few noble Englishmen and Englishwomen from forming the most agreeable relations with Indians belonging to the highest castes. It is indeed most unreasonable to say that because a man will not eat with me I will have nothing to do with him. If the English expect their Hindu fellow-subjects to give up caste, promising, on that condition, to move more freely with them, it is but just that the Hindus should expect their European neighbours to make some concession at least in return. Sir Monier Williams goes so far as to dissuade his countrymen in India from eating beef, on the authority of St. Paul, who says, "If meat make my brother to offend I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." An English gentleman who did not regard caste prejudices as forming any chief obstacle to a free intercourse between the two races said: "A man who will neither eat with you nor drink with you, it is said, nor admit you to his own wife's society, cannot be really intimate in your house. But I confess I cannot see the force of this argument. In my own case I did not find any difficulty in forming the most agreeable relations with Brahmins, Mahomedans, Parsees, and Native Christians. I found no difference of any insurmountable kind between their ideas and my own, not more, indeed, than would be the case had they been Spaniards or Italians. The fact of their not breaking bread with me I am sure constitutes no kind of obstacle to our kindly relations." I have already admitted that caste prejudices do stand in the way of a greater social fusion between two classes; but I do not regard the breaking of bread as an indispensable condition of social intercourse. Every one will admit that the social relations between educated Hindus and educated Mahomedans are

of an intimate nature, and yet they do not dine with each other.

And then what about the exclusiveness of the Natives of India and their social and religious prejudices? it will be asked. An English lady, for instance, who wishes to know more about the inner life of the Hindus, does she not find a difficulty in being admitted into a Hindu home? It is my humble opinion that a foreigner will find very little difficulty in getting an insight into the inner life of the Hindu, if only he really seeks the acquaintance and friendship of the latter. Religious and social prejudices will never stand in the way of their becoming more intimately acquainted. A Native gentleman thinks it a great honour if only he receives a visit from his European friends. The native heart is naturally kind, but the kindness becomes warmer when the object of it is a member of the dominant class. The respect and attachment which Natives have to one of the ruling race, who does or means to do them good, is almost unbounded; any expression of real sympathy is always repaid by a hundredfold degree of respect and regard.

The degraded condition of Hindu women must, however, be admitted to be a fertile source of discontent. It is perfectly true that one of the main elements of social intercourse, according to English ideas, consists in the interchange of ladies' society. But here again, in trying to lift our women to a higher level, we naturally expect greater sympathy and support from our foreign neighbours, and more especially from English ladies resident in India. We dare not of course say that no attempts have been made by English ladies to help their Indian sisters. All honour to those few philanthropic European ladies who, both in India and in England, most disinterestedly help the cause of female progress in our country. We thank them most sincerely for their invaluable help, but, at the same time, I believe I am right in saying that the number of English

ladies in India who really wish to be of some direct use to their benighted Hindu sisters is very insignificant. How many English ladies, other than those who belong to the small and noble band of Zenana workers, to whom India owes so much, try to learn enough of the vernaculars to speak a few words in them! Perhaps this is expecting too much from them; but there are simpler and easier ways of helping the cause of female progress. English ladies can do much by their sympathy. The very fact, for instance, of an English lady visiting a school will draw scores of young girls to it; and, if the interest taken is lasting, much permanent good will come of it. We are not justified in asking much, knowing as we do the immense gulf that separates the majority of our females from those English ladies who sojourn in our midst. We only want a little more sympathy; we only wish them to take a little more interest in things that concern the welfare of India's women. Her Majesty the Queen-Empress, by studying the Hindustani language, has shown, in an unmistakable manner, her great sympathy with her Indian subjects, and this act of hers has been a source of great encouragement to them. In our own Presidency, Lady Wenlock did a great deal to promote the cause of the women of India, and the noble example set by this exalted lady will not be without its effect on her countrywomen. The good work done by ladies, such as Mrs. Grigg, Miss Gell, Mrs. Arundel, Mrs. Benson, Mrs. Brander, and others, is also bearing fruit in various directions. At the same time, we Indians, too, have our own duties. There is not the slightest use in commending with the lips a certain reform as beneficial to society; every possible step should be taken to carry it out practically. There are hundreds of our countrymen, who fully recognize the importance of female education, and know full well the conspicuous part it plays in the civilization of the country. They are ready to give,

when an opportunity occurs, elaborate lectures on female education and propose still more elaborate plans for carrying out a scheme of education throughout India; but when it comes to teaching their own wives, daughters, or sisters, to read or write, their zeal or eloquence seems to vanish. So much then for their applying in practice what they highly applaud in theory. Let this one thing, therefore, be borne in mind: the spread of education among native ladies cannot but be fraught with good results, and will tend more to assimilate the character and mode of thought of the Hindu with that which is the outcome of Western civilization than perhaps any other that can be devised. I know that there is a belief current among a class of natives that the general education of women will lead to the loosening of social ties, the displacement of customary ways, and the disturbance of the domestic equilibrium. Some even go further, and assert that the little education that Hindu girls have received has stripped them of the graces for which they were remarkable. But those who are interested in the educational progress of the country do make allowance for such opinions; and their complaints do not refer to the section of the native community which is hampered by such fears. All that they protest against is the apathy and indifference of the intelligent and educated natives, who are fully alive to the advantages of female education, but who, in spite of their enlightenment, have done practically nothing to further a cause which, they know full well, is fraught with the deepest issues to their country. It is true India is in a period of transition, and there must be some dislocation before the lessons of emanciption are fully learnt, and stability is reached. But the educated Indian knows this, and is fully aware that, in spite of temporary embarrassment, a time will come when a more perfect womanhood will be produced, and when the daughters of India will compare favourably

in intelligence, in character, and in all the graces of life with her more favourably circumstanced sister in the West. His lack of practical interest is, therefore, all the more to be regretted.

It is often said that the moral gulf between Englishmen and Indians is so wide as to make the promotion of good will and sympathy between the two races an utter impossibility. Well, to this there can be given an easy reply. Granting that the English are morally superior to the Indians, then one of the signs of this moral superiority would necessarily be their mixing freely with their superiors with the object of raising them to a higher level. I can never believe in the moral superiority of a person who thinks that one of the conditions of his exalted position is that he should keep himself aloof from his inferiors. And then again is the moral gulf so wide after all? If the English possess such sterling qualities as sincerity, straightforwardness, a passionate regard for truth, courage, and manliness, must it not be admitted that there is also much that is good, true, and lovely in the Indian character, as for example, patient perseverance, calm endurance under suffering, a love of simplicity, filial obedience, reverence for superiors, tenderness towards animal life, faithfulness in service, and toleration of religious diversities? Will, then, the English, by mixing more freely with their Hindu brethren, be solely the losers? To cultivate friendly relations all that is needed is a little blindness to each other's faults and a generous recognition of each other's virtues.

Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, in his work on "New India," makes out that the sympathies of the two nations are less kindly than they were in the days of a past generation; and this, he says, is chiefly due to the changed circumstances in with the ruling race has found itself. Europeans in India are mere birds of passage. Increased facility of communication has made them look upon their sojourn in

India as more an exile. There is nothing to bind them to this land; and, as also a very large number of Europeans are resident in India, they are able to find companions among their own kinsfolk, and shrink from all avoidable communication from others. A few among them may associate with the natives from a sense of duty, but for their social and moral needs their own countrymen are sufficient, and not one Englishman in a thousand, when the hour comes for leaving India for good, is sensible of a wrench, of a void being created in his life, by the separation from any native whom he has known.

Natives should be more bold and straightforward in their intercourse with Europeans. If there is anything which a European looks upon as an indication of inferiority, it is that cringing and fawning tendency which is so conspicuous is the lower classes of the natives of India. Human nature is always tickled by flattery and nourished by servile obsequiousness. Natives, at the same time, should take care that straightforwardness does not degenerate into arrogance or impudence. They should also try and learn the manners and etiquette of English society. It is with the English more than with any other nation that "manners maketh the man." There is, of course, much that is artificial in English society with which an Oriental finds himself unable to reconcile. Weightier matters of the law are often overlooked, while much stress is laid on the mint and cummin and anise of fashion and convention; but with the English inexorable etiquette is imperative in its demands, and will be satisfied with no less than full and absolute obedience to the letter of its laws. The complete ignorance of the conventional rules and forms of English life places the native in a very awkward predicament. When, for the first time, he finds himself in company with English ladies and gentlemen, he feels as if he were anything but in his right

place; he is deprived of all power whether of speech or action; he is literally paralysed. He sits disconsolate in a corner, afraid to speak or move as if "wisdom gets its gems by gaping." The whole thing often takes the form of a tragic comedy where the hero is truly a tragic picture. His perplexed airs, his rustic manners, and embarrassed gait, when joined with more serious violations of etiquette, succeed only too well in making him an object of pity if not of contempt.

> "Oft it chances in particular men
> That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
> * * * * * * these men
> Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
> Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,
> Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
> As infinite as man may undergo,
> Shall in the general censure take corruption
> From that particular fault."

There is one question connected with this subject which I am tempted to discuss, and that is the political effects of the estrangement of the two communities; but the subject being a difficult one, I leave it to more competent men. A few words, however, with reference to it, I may be excused for saying here. It is absolutely essential for a foreign Government, in order to be successful in the administration of India, that it should understand the feelings, habits and institutions of the people over whom it holds sway. Legislation, taxation and the proper Government of a people require intimate knowledge of the people to be governed. A good Government ought to aim at the maximum of happiness and minimum of discontent in its subjects. This may be the philosophical ideal, but still every possible approximation must be made towards its realization. If much is not done in this direction the people will bear the yoke sullenly and with discontent. To bind natives by

ties of gratitude is much better than overawing them by physical force. In writing thus, however, I am fully sensible of the existence in our midst of those sterling Englishmen and Englishwomen, who leave no stone unturned to keep up the happiest possible relationship between the natives and themselves. These are the salt of the English community. It is their presence that makes us love and respect our foreign rulers, and it is their influence that counteracts the evil effects of the presence of some ruffianly Europeans in our midst. There is one thing for which we Madrasees ought to be very thankful. I think I am right in saying that the relation between the Natives and Europeans in our Presidency is far more cordial than in any other part of India. At all events there is more sympathy between the two races here than in Bengal. We natives of the benighted Presidency had our equilibrium undisturbed even during the discussions of the Ilbert Bill. Even in the heat of that controversy Englishmen and Natives in this Presidency treated each other with the utmost consideration, courtesy and kindness.

In conclusion, let me say a few words about the practical methods that may be adopted with the object of promoting a more intimate social relation between Europeans and Natives. The establishment of Cosmopolitan Clubs is one step that is supposed to have been gained in the bringing about of a better understanding, but I fear very much the experiment that has been tried in Madras has not been a success from this point of view. Social gatherings are coming to be the order of the day. They, no doubt, do great good, as they facilitate the interchange of ideas and conduce to greter familiarity ; but it all depends upon the way in which they are conducted. It often happens that at these gatherings the Europeans congregate together leaving the natives to enjoy intercourse among themselves. An Englishman seems to be keenly

sensitive to the opinions of his fellowmen; and so long as fraternising with natives has not become the fashion in society, he would not go out of his way to mix freely with his native fellow citizens. The fact is, many sacrifices have to be made on both sides before a greater reunion is established between the two races. Natives ought to be admitted socially to the conversational circles of Europeans. They ought not to be regarded as an inferior race, altogether unfitted for polite society. They have, of course, their peculiarities as much as other people; but it is by the constant collision of friendly intercommunication that the angles of difference are broken off and polished down. Although it is said that familiarity breeds contempt, yet there are not wanting instances in which, when it has been once established, people have come to esteem one another, whatever may be their national antipathies. The educated Natives, on the other hand, must try to make themselves acceptable to Europeans by adopting a grateful and gentlemanly bearing, and a polished and courteous mode of address. They ought always to be loyal to Englishmen for what they have done and intend doing for India. Europeans, too, should take a keener interest in all that appertains to their Indian fellow subjects. Their short stay in India ought to be devoted, as much as possible, to the cultivation of friendly interests and social amenities. The late Lord Hobart, addressing an Indian audience on this very subject, once said, "the mere accident of race or faith, can never affect either the motive or the obligation of mutual friendliness and respect, and that whether born in England or India, and whatever may be the creeds and dogmas which have kept them so lamentably asunder, their mutual interest for the present and their hope for the future is, in reality, the same." These are pregnant words of wisdom, and if both Natives and Europeans would give up minor prejudices which must sooner or later melt away

before the sympathy of thought and feeling, thought strong enough to defy time and civilization, incalculable good would result. And let Englishmen in India remember this, that England's work in India does not consist merely in giving good laws, preserving peace, administering justice, preventing foreign aggression, checking famines, educating the people, and developing the trade and the material resources of the country; all these without the existence of a cordial and sympathetic feeling between Indians and Englishmen are useless. Let, therefore, the people of England and India join heart and hand in united efforts for the cultivation of each other's good will; let those in authority assume an attitude of kindness and genuine sympathy towards the natives; let individual Englishmen, laying aside all prejudices, stretch out their right hand of fellowship to their Indian brethren; let English ladies break through their selfish exclusiveness and endeavour to do something more for their benighted Hindu sisters; and let natives, educated natives more especially, be more loyal, be more grateful for all that England has done for India; let them not obstinately and foolishly misrepresent every act of the British Government,—let all this be done, and then there will be no more talk about the "ever widening gulf of personal dislikes" that separates the rulers from the ruled.

X.—Social Purity and the Anti-nautch Movement

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"There is but one temple in the world, and that temple is the body of man."—*Novalis.*

"The crucial index of a man's character is, as a rule, his relation to the opposite sex."—*W. T. Stead.*

"The life of the nation depends on the life of the home, and that of the home depends on the purity of the individual."—*Dr. Moorhouse, Bp. of Manchester.*

"Not to turn human brutal, but to build
Divine on human, pleasure came from Heaven.
Pleasure first succours virtue; in return
Virtue gives pleasure an eternal reign.—*Young.*

"Her (the dancing-girl's) blandishments are India's ruin. Alas! her smile is India's death."—*Babu K. C. Sen.*

I.—The three sanctions.

The growth of a community, as a moral organism, is marked by three distinct stages, according as legislation, public opinion or individual conviction is recognised as the supreme sanction for conduct. In an aboriginal state, these three motives to action may remain undifferentiated. But as a community emerges into view as an organised body with a definite course of existence, it is characterized by that "immobility," as Guizot has it, which naturally results from the government undertaking to control the entire life of the community. The individual is aware of no duties, and moved by no desires apart from those demanded or sanctioned by the clan or caste as a self-governing body. A constant reference is tacitly or expressly made to the wish of the "elders"—the representatives of the conscience and the commands of the community. This is the era of tutelage. It is, however, perceived, sooner or later, by all advancing communities that, long as may be "the arm of law," it cannot reach and adjust the inner work-

ings of society. Man is not merely a subject but also a citizen; and his relations with his neighbours are far too numerous and complex to be regulated by any government. The thousand and one occasions which bring man and man together in the daily transactions of life, must necessarily lie beyond the ken of the most watchful, and elude the grasp of the most vigorous, of political bodies. Thus society supplements government; and able to employ a closer surveillance and a more effective means of influence, it moulds, as no political administration can, the complete round of existence. Nothing is too common-place and nothing too personal for its intervention. This is the era of communion. But if man is not a machine to be always governed, neither is he a sheep to be always led. The inborn inclination to "individuality" will assert itself, despite the most strenuous efforts to keep it down. The threats of political pain or social ruin will be ignored, at least by a select number; at first a few and gradually several more will demand the birth-right—as an American writer suggests of each soul—to have a vote. A community thus enters upon an almost unlimited prospect of progress and happiness, as its members awaken to a sense of individuality—of self-regarding virtues—of self-reliance and self-denial—of self-reverence and self-consecration—of hope and service,—in a word, to the sense that man has to "absolve" himself to himself before he conforms to society or courtesies to Cæsar. Conformity is superseded by individuality; convention yields place to conviction. Alike in the daring heroism of mighty crises and the silent service of routine life, the prime concern is to do what is personally felt to be proper. This is the era of 'single manhood.'

The distinct nature and the relative merit of these three springs of action are clearly perceived when examined with reference to a few concrete instances. Legislation makes the physicial security and the material well-being of the nation its special charge; public opinion

controls the social relations and defines the more patent domestic responsibilities; the sense of individuality seeks to strengthen and refine the secret motive or the innate incitement to spontaneous activity. With such materially different aims, these great agencies to the moral elevation of a society are appropriated to essentially different spheres of influence. To take a few instances from our country: legislation abolishes *sati* and enunciates the legal rights of the widow; crude public opinion, however, cripples all attempts to help the re-marriage of women; and the gloom that darkens the path of countless victims to a cruel and senseless custom can be chased away only by the illumined consciences and the enlightened sentiments of individuals. Again, legislation may fix the age of consent or restore conjugal rights; public opinion alone can discourage the silent oppression by a heartless husband; and only the loyal heart moved by none but chaste desires can make wedded life the stepping-stone to a regenerated humanity. Legislation may raise the cost of drink and minimise the occasions for temptation; nothing save public opinion can visit the sot with the full discredit which he courts by his slavish habit; whereas a keen sense of inborn majesty is a pre-requisite to the indignation which (with Manu) brands debasing inebriety as among of the five "deadly sins." Legislation may punish immodest soliciting of attention in public; but it needs a strong public opinion to vote indecent song and suggestion out of court; while the chastity that would rather pluck out the offending right eye than tarnish its native purity, is bred only in the soul that delights in the law of righteousness. Thus legislation judges by the act, public opinion by the behaviour, personal responsibility by the witness within of motive and desire. Legislation compels the unaided helplessness of man; public opinion works upon his 'gregariousness'; personal responsibility draws out his manliness.

The three stages are not perforce mutually exclusive

—in time or in operation. The essential distinction between them lies not in their *when* but in their *whence* and *whither*, and not in the *acts* they approve but in the *end* they point to. The external aspect and the apparent tendency may seem to agree ; judged by what they appear to be, two lives may look much alike. Yet the laws they obey, the methods they employ and the aims they pursue, may be radically different, according as the main spring is the desire to serve the king, suit the times, or be loyal to the royal wtihin oneself. Hence the product of legislation is the law-abiding man, of public opinion the respectable man, of personal conviction the conscientious man; each good in his own way—the first as he is kept from harm, the second as he is pliant to the prevailing custom, the third as he honours his conscience as his king.

Thus judged, there is a distinct scale of importance—a real difference of moral worth—in the hierarchy of rights and duties, on account of the sanction they appeal to. The activity and authority of legislation necessarily confine themselves, for the most part, to those rights and duties which constitute what Carlyle terms "inferior criminality." Public opinion addresses itself to the one end of postponing personal taste to the general tendency. Individual responsibility, working into the inmost mines of motive, aim and method, seeks to produce what the same sage calls "superior morality." To this sacred class belong those personal virtues and private graces—veracity and honesty, chastity and sobriety—those eternal verities whose possession alone marks out man as the master-piece of creation. They are thus divinely ordained to the place of honour among virtues claiming our homage. Hence the importance and the authority of

II.—The Plea for Social Purity.

Providence reveals its wisdom and manifests its love in the mysterious harmonies pre-arranged between objects seemingly opposed or unrelated. This divine ordering of

things is strikingly illustrated in the surprising "fellow-feeling" created and sustained between the strong and the weak, the vigorous and the tender, the restless and the serene, the longing and the lovely. The depth of those profound relations between friend and friend, parent and child, pupil and preceptor, husband and wife, what plummet of intellectual calculations can sound? They are far-reaching as Infinity, sublime as Heaven. This fact makes it essential to the very existence of a nation that these sacred weldings of soul to soul to should never be suffered to be loosened by lust or tinkered with baseness. Apart from all "local conditions," the intimate inter-dependence of the sexes is recognised always and everywhere. They are meant by an eternal purpose to be each other's "helpmates" in a holy task—faithful co-workers in one "present paradise," joint-trustees of the generations to come. The profound responsibilities of parenthood, the devout sacrifices of wedlock, the simple trusts of childhood, demand that the inviolable sanctities of marriage shall be kept scrupulously pure. "If man is the head of woman, woman is the heart of man;" and out of the heart are the issues of life. That character is the backbone of a nation is almost a truism; but character has been compared to a bucket, and impurity to a leak at its bottom. "My strength," says Sir Galahad, "is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure." It argues a noble soul that cannot wrong a woman. A wag chafed Dryden at the utter spiritlessness of his "Spartan Hero" who could be alone with a beautiful woman and take no pleasure. "Yes," was the prompt and just reply, "you would have done otherwise, but you are no hero!" Gladstone has observed that "conjugal relation includes in itself all other loves;" and the *Mahabharata* defines the wife as "the friend in solitude, the father in duty, the mother in distress and the refuge in wilderness." Manu demands of him that would be a father—a noble image of the great Creator—to be wholly

satisfied with her he has taken unto wife, and guarantees good fortune to the house where the husband is content with the wife and the wife with the husband. The Christian teacher exhorts him that would acquire a soul's companion to give up his all for her sake. This comprehensive nature of the conjugal relation necessitates a corresponding rigidity in excluding everything partial or temporary, carnal or half-hearted, in the holy alliance of two hearts—in what has been happily termed "the harvest of a hundred years." In fine, the delights of the home spring from the purity of the conjugal relation, and the strength of the nation depends on the peacefulness of its homes. He has no country who has no home; and he has no home who does not rejoice in it as the sanctum of chastity and the shrine of love. The plea for social purity is thus

III.—A NATIONAL PROBLEM.

If progressive communities are, according to a high authority, distinguished by their readiness to harmonise legislation with growing public ideals, it is no less true of a healthy society that its declared intentions constantly adjust themselves to what is best—purest and noblest—in individual hope and experience. Laws, to be beneficial, should consult the view of the cultured; public opinion, to be honoured, should echo the voice of the oracles within. In the ultimate resort, the human heart—strong because pure, happy because temperate, sympathetic because self-denying—is the spring of all law or custom approved of man; and the essence of righteousness is in the freedom and the directness of personal conviction. Thus viewed, social purity challenges recognition as one of those prime principles which, throned in the hearts of the "chosen ones," invariably raise the tone of society and elevate the standard of legislation. The position of woman in the home as the feeder of passion or the first preceptress of posterity, as the neglected drudge at the hearth or the unrivalled queen of the heart, either dooms a society to the

death of self-exhausting viceor blesses it with abiding strength and stability. National vigilance, therefore, is nowhere else more imperatively required than in demanding thorough honesty—whole-hearted sincerity—perfect gentlemanliness —in that attachment of soul to soul which, when genuine, makes man an apprentice to Heaven, but, when spurious, earns for him the prerogative of the brute. Social purity thus acquires an honoured place in that constellation of sublime virtues without whose guidance the horoscope of a nation's greatness can never be cast. "Believe me," says an authority on this subject, "the maintenance of purity in the relations of the sexes is vital to national greatness and prosperity. For in the relations of husband to wife, parent to child, through long gradations of mutual tenderness and support, each is bound to each, and all 'with golden chains about the feet of God.' Break once these golden links of loving help and service, and all the strong bonds of civilised society will be weakened and loosed"

Nor is our society without several dark features that compel earnest attention in this direction. The land where popular religion enriches the value of paradise with the unfading charms of celestial nymphs and offers their favours as the reward (be it only as a second choice) to the highest of religious rites; the country where the current faith often formulates itself into a most subtle or seductive order of amorous poetry, which piety does not scruple to sing and modesty does not blush to hear; the empire whose armed defenders are provided in "regimental bazaars" with markets covert for the offer of winsome flesh to lucrative lust, and whose landed aristocracy often own a vulgar herd of nondescript men and women; the society infected with customs that lend the dignity of caste to the basest of professions, or work upon the ignorance of devotion to gratify sacerdotal sensuality; the community that places no legal limits upon a man's marrying capacity, but is not

unwilling to visit with the persecution of law the woman who will not yield her person where her heart is not; the nation that hurries millions through a married life they are not equal to, and thrusts on millions of others a celibacy they dare not honourably set aside—India and the Indian nation cannot, for their very name and existence in the honoured circle of the civilised, afford to omit this question from a comprehensive plan of social reform and progress. In root-principle, it is of the same stock as temperance; in main argument, it is akin to the great problems connected with the position and function of woman in home and society; in its direct aims, it touches closely the vital questions of the right use of religious endowments, the great responsibilities of leaders and the proper training of the young; in its ultimate results, it is not without a bearing upon what foreign travel is meant to achieve or the elevation of the lower classes is expected to realise.

IV.—WHAT IS SOCIAL PURITY?

Man is the crown of creation even from the matchless complexity (with the immense possibilities) of his nature. There is, no doubt, a charm in simplicity, just as there is music in a monochord. But that harmony in which, according to the poet, this universal frame began and to which it has been growing, has its soul in well-ordered complexity. We are told, in the name of evolution, that the human embryo races through a course of diversified growth which in prehuman periods took ages to accomplish; and it needs no great stretch of imagination to see that the body which is the focussed result of a hundred scattered processes of development enshrines a being that contains a myriad avenues to mental and moral progress. This distinguishing feature of man makes sound character a highly complex instrument, capable of producing angelic symphony but easily liable to get out of tune. The sole remedy lies in that serenity which denotes equal growth on all sides—that purity which points the way to perfection—that

cleanliness of heart which is next to godliness of soul. Purity is to character what symmetry is to beauty—not an accident of adornment, but an essential of structure. It denotes that apt assortment of man's desires and appetites, in deference to his special powers and faculties of thought and speech, emotion and arts, will and work, which, by subordinating the physical to the intellectual, postponing the immediate to the final, and surrendering the pleasing for the good, combines in man the sacred functions of the heir of ages past and the architect of centuries to come. It consists in that uniformity of development—that moving forward of the whole man, to which alone is awarded the maximum of good. It is that conservation of vital energy which comes of a wise correlation of vital forces. It is that discipline of the heart under which man's desires and powers are told off to their respective posts and through their conjoint watch and work win the great victories of life. In fine, it is that attuning of the soul to the processes of nature as the chosen purposes of God which ought to make every man what only an occasional sage now is—the interpreter of life in the terms of eternity and the beautifier of earth as the out-house of Heaven. Applied to social life, Purity is complete submission—whole-hearted obeisance—soul-deep homage—to what the sublimest English poet has named "the sun-clad power of chastity." It is a call to the spouse to rejoice in the spouse, and a command to the parent to be pure amidst pleasure. It is a recognition of the stern truth that the righteousness which exalteth a nation has its secret strength in 'a well-governed and wise appetite,' regulated by the 'holy dictate of spare temperance.' It is a caution to the community that 'to hastening ills a prey' is the land where the heat of passion is preferred to the warmth of love, and the 'prompture of blood' is followed as the law of life. It holds (with Manu) that culpable attention to another's consort is the surest course to curtail

one's length of days ; and it condemns (with Shakespeare) as comrades in iniquity the rake and the murderer—"the saucy sweetness that coins heaven's image on stamps that are forbid" and the reckless villainy that "falsely takes away a life true made." It declares that the happiness of marriage shall be earned only by the responsibilities of marriage, and the joys of family life shall be the prize only of those willing to take its irrevocable yoke. It esteems human existence too sacred to be cradled in lust ; it proclaims the marriage bond too strong to be dissolved by freaks of taste, defects of law, or even the transitions of death. It honours holy wedlock as an ordinance of the Most High and, hence, requires the absolute freedom (to adopt F. Harrison's happy language), from even "one passing shadow of suspicion," of "the inviolable institution whereon the happiness of all depends." It finally warns the creature that "hooks its right and wrong to the appetite" to beware and be not deceived that "neither the sensual nor the drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

A very thoughtful and charming writer has pointed out that the benevolent nature of the government of this world is strikingly evinced in the boundless bounty with which gratification is added to relief, pleasure is attached to duty, and enjoyment is infused into necessity. Thus, while light and sound might have sufficed for ordinary life, wisdom and love mellow the one into music and the other into rainbow. Hunger might be met with food, but a relish is placed in the palate ; and touch is endowed with not only the sensitiveness of a thermometer but also the living sympathies of a flower. Life is thus everywhere waited on by pleasure ; but it constitutes all the difference between animal and man how pleasure is used. To pursue pleasure as the purpose of life is the animal ; to subject pleasure to the purpose of life is man. That follows the lead of instinct, this guides the instinct with reason. Thus the animal is the creature of the day ; but man is the pilgrim of eter-

nity. This distinguishing supremacy makes in him pleasure the hand-maid to progress—not an alien to be rejected, but a servant to be controlled; not a disease to be rooted out, but an impulse to be regulated. "Temperance"—wise moderation in the legitimate, cheerful abstinence from the forbidden—is, accordingly, the only law befitting man; and purity is temperance in that supreme relation of the sexes which, as regulating the home, prescribing the ideals of society and linking generation to generation, sways the destinies of our race.* Thus social purity is the regulation of our appetites by our higher nature as a course of life the most favourable to complete growth. "There is," says a vigorous writer on this subject, "a dignity conferred upon us—bringing men near to the high and solemn relationship of the Creator"—in our possession of the power of re-production. With this honor comes the responsibility for every man to be pure and worthy in life and sentiment—in act, speech and thought. Social purity is chastity in body and chastity in mind—stern uncompromising repugnance to whatever is base or vulgar, indecent or immodest in study or pleasure, speech or song, faith or sentiment, thought or life—stout, unrelenting opposition, despite the threat of law or the frown of society, the curse of pretentious piety or the loss of spurious attachment, to every habit or custom, regulation or institution that defeats, or tends to defeat the high purpose of human life by gilding shame with fashion, or condoning carnal longing as venial. It brands as mean and cowardly, notwithstanding mimic nobility and affected bravery, the man who uses the frailty of the weak or the want of the needy for his own purpose, who haunts beauty till it is tarnished or pursues

* "Surely a day is coming when it will be known again what virtue is in purity and continence of life; how high, beneficent, sternly inexorable is the duty laid on every creature in regard to these particulars. Well, if such a day never come, then I perceive much else will never come. Magnanimity and depth of insight will never come; heroic purity of heart and of eye; noble pious valour to amend us and the age of bronze and lacquers, how can they ever come?"—*Carlyle.*

innocence till it is tainted, who repays friendship with infidelity, or puts on piety to pollute all the more securely. It demurs to the law, though backed up by power, that declines to protect the helpless from the ravage of the brutal or to screen the guileless from the craft of the wily. It decries the customs that invite undisguised shame to the hall of honor, or restore convicted impurity to the place of position. It silences the song that deifies the brute and proscribes the picture that commemorates the immodest. It loathes the book that feeds the budding mind with "the sewage of the slum," and rebukes the speech that glorifies "our swine enjoyments." It abhors the taste "that fancy begets on youthful thoughts," and denounces the desires that delight to wallow in "troughs of Zolaism." It stifles the thought that tinctures the soul with the hues of hell, and contemns the creed that caters to the carnal and calls it religion. On the other hand, it honors the life that never deviates into guilty pleasure, and counts him a hero who always keeps the citadel of his senses. It upholds the law that vindicates morality, and espouses the custom that conforms to righteousness. It rejoices in the speech that wells up from a clean heart and cultivates the taste that contemplates the sublime. It welcomes the song that softens the savage in man, and prizes the art that immortalises the pure. It nourishes the thought that aspires after the true, and lives by the faith that adores the All-Holy.* In a word, it consecrates the whole life from its cradle of childhood to its culmination of sagehood to the hastening of that 'far-off divine-event' when man and woman, through their hallowed union, will achieve the fulness of regenerated self—that sovereign power (in Tennyson's ever happy words) which consists in self-controlling strength and self-knowing wisdom, in self-denying happiness and self-reverencing goodness.

* See the specimen Purity Pledges at the end.

This holy end kept in view makes marriage the most hallowed of sacraments, though all the same the freest of choices—that devout covenant of soul with soul, that sacred exchange of heart for heart which to force is the lowest slavery, and which to avoid is the basest selfishness. To enquire how marriage originated is outside the province of this paper. It suffices for the present purpose to point out that true national progress has everywhere run parallel to an increasing sense of the sacredness of the family tie. So far as it can be traced, the ascent of mankind along the heights of civilisation has been in the direction of constitutional monarchy as the strongest bulwark of the state, and of "legalised monogamy" as the surest foundation of the home. But monogamy, like monotheism, largely fails in its results when inherited as tradition or assumed as external conformity. Thus monogamy may degenerate into what has heartlessly been travestied as "one to one being cursedly confined," as monotheism may point only to a cold eternal something or an abstract reign of law. But elevated to supreme rule over the whole sphere of life, this "maiden passion for a maid" is the bountiful dispenser of "all that makes a man." In this "single love," as Ruskin has it, "is the sanctification of all man's strength, and the continuance of all his purposes." The true test of monogamy is the monocracy of the whole heart by the one all-endearing, as the true mark of monotheism is the monolatry, with the whole soul, of the One All-sufficient. The essence of both is the complete devotion of one to the one; in both, it is alone with the alone.

> "O! there is something in marriage, like the veil of the temple of old,
> That screened the Holy of holies with blue and purple and gold!
> Something that makes a chamber, where only the one may come,
> A sacredness, too, and a silence, where joy that is deepest is dumb."

And social purity seeks to guard the sacredness of this 'chamber' with a vigilance and a devotion too wakeful for the sliest insinuation and too firm for the hardest temptation, and to adorn and enrich it with the most glowing emotions of the heart, and the most sublime offerings of the soul.

V.—SOME SPECIAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL PURITY

may next be glanced at, with particular reference to our social conditions. A word of caution and of request may here be necessary that, as one descends from fine principles to unpleasant particulars, one runs the risk of offending "ears polite." But the duty of speaking an unwelcome truth, according to occasion, being granted, the kind reader's judgment may decide whether the occasion does not exist. The first, then, of these special aspects is

(a) Religion and Social Purity.

The intensest devotional attitude towards God is that sweet ecstacy—that enchanting *mâdhuryam*—in which He is "the spouse Divine of human soul." It is a conception at once homely, precise and inspiring—not distant awe, vague familiarity or helpless trust, but voluntary and cheerful self-dedication. This master-passion of the soul naturally shadows itself forth in a thousand suggestive figures or allusions. But there are two distinct stages in a complete religious career—the weaning of the soul from matter and the infusion of the soul into matter; the exodus into the wilderness to fast, the return into the world to preside over the feast; the rigid abstinence from the world's revelries, the free participation in the world's charities. In the first, morality is the martial law regulating religion; in the second, religion is the vision on the mountain-top receiving a divine decalogue for the crowd below. The former is the age of discipleship, the latter the age of kinship, to God. But when this order is violated, as it often must be in a country where "faith" is in so many cases divorced from

"light," the liberties of the later are anticipated as the licenses of the earlier stage, the counters of mature wisdom pass as the coin of green ignorance, and the ecstacies of the soul are perverted into the indulgences of the sense. Thus it comes of a huge unsettling of matters spiritual that many a custom or institution has risen in our midst, whose sole justification is that it is associated with the great name of religion and shall not be questioned. But who can prevent the little leaven from doing its work? The so-called faith of the majority has not only been stereotyped into a "zodiac of feasts and fasts" but also degenerated in not a few instances into pomp and performances far from elevating, if not positively offensive. Occasions there be when unbridled enthusiasm, not content with bathing and feeding, bedding and wedding "the Lord of the Universe," plans for him a nocturnal adventure from which he is supposed to return *incognito* before dawn; or when blind eagerness, toiling to scale the heights of Indra's blissful abode, not only marks its progress with holocausts of dumb victims but culminates in a deed of sanctimonious sin that no system of morality dare justify. Celibacy, that self-forgetfulness in the service of the Lord, dwindles into a social fiction, till a vestal *deva dasi* is represented by a shame-proof *demimonde*,* and priestly vows betray their hollowness now in nude photos, then in criminal prodigality, anon in the incarceration of a holy priest for gallantry, and again in the unfolding in a court of law of the life-history of a "born-lord" of countless devotees under circumstances revolting enough for a foreigner to characterise

* "Our temples cannot improve unless the dancing girl be first kicked out," was the remark made by the Hon'ble Mr. P. Ananda Charlu, when the present writer happened once to travel with him. As an interesting experiment, it may be mentioned that a friend of the writer's, who is the manager of an important temple in the Northern Circars, "disallowed dancing girls about four years ago" and he states that "no want was felt at any time in the real worship and temple service on account of their absence," that it "does not show any change for the worse," and that "a great majority of the devotees feel it a change for the better, although there are a few vulgarly people that complain of it."

him as a creature not fit to be touched 'with a pair of hot tongs.' Devotion, that rejoicing of the soul in the graces of the Lord, degenerates into vagaries that embody themselves in images and pictures of ruthless realism with dissolute details, and express themselves in song or verse that bigoted partisans alone can misname piety. Esotericism, that panacea for all the spiritual ailments of India, would fain galvanise these dead bones into life; but while the subtle apologist points to a mystic inside—a light behind Parrhasius's curtain, the simple world accepts the pleading to justify the palpable outside, and vulgar orgies and voluptuous *leelas*, amorous ditties and "unholy *holis*" (as some one termed them) stand out among the main features of the faith of the majority. Nor does the evil stop here. This culpable indifference to the essentials of morality in the most absorbing concerns of life robs religion, oftentimes, of even ordinary solemnity and reverence; and not a few of the localities credited with the odour of sanctity need only a closer examination to smell with impurity. Deplorable as these things are, they are not beyond human help. The remedy lies with the community; which, outside the callousness of custom, is uncommonly sensitive in such matters. Let only men of light and leading look facts square in the face, let them enforce "morals" before they sanction "symbols" and insist on sterling character as the first proof of pious conviction; and this Augean stable will soon be cleansed. In our national ideals and traditions there is enough of chaste piety and inspiring purity to justify the hope that if only this outer "abasement" could be swept out and the native grandeur revealed to the people's heart, our nation, too, may realise and appreciate the sublime truth that piety without purity is baser than gross superstition—it is sanctified sin. But it is one thing to hold out indiscriminately on our past greatness; it is another to emulate it judiciously. The next topic that may engage attention is

(*b*) *Public Recognition of Social Impurity*

in any form and with any excuse. Ruskin has taught us that the acme of goodness is not merely to *do* the right thing but also to *love* it and *enjoy* it. The reverse is equally true that virtue fails of its essence if its abstinence from vice does not amount to a total refusal to lend countenance to it to any degree and under any circumstances. To pity and pass by the weakness that hides itself in the shade may be charity; to note impurity as an unfortunate element in some lives and bind it down with restraints and penalties calculated to confine it to its natural place as the grossest of indulgences—the last and the lowest of "deadly sins," may be statesmanship; to devise means and employ agencies to warn the unsuspecting or to reclaim the erring, may be philanthropy; but to trim immorality with fashion, to furnish it with facility, to bolster it up with an apology, to charter it with a passport, or to sanction it with a custom, is to set a premium on vice and to condemn the state or the society as "organised selfishness." A state or a society is not bound to procure for the carnal cravings of the sensual any more than to provide for the gambling tendencies or the thieving propensities of the avaricious. On the other hand, nations or communities are no less amenable than individuals to the ethical law that *not* to rebuke or protest against open vice is to half sanction it. The government that undertakes to protect base gratification for its natural sting or merited humiliation, incurs the heavy responsibility of furthering vice by making impurity venial. As Mrs. Josephine Butler has pointed out, state regulation of vice is but state sanction of vice; it is only 'drilling, barracking and licensing vice'—supplying 'state-accredited instruments' for the most debasing use. Likewise, the society that assigns in its fold a recognised place and position to professional lewdness—aye, confers on it the dignity of a caste and tricks it out with a catching name, condemns itself as

"procuress to hell." The future of a nation depends wholly upon its estimate of man—its hope of human possibilities; and the community that counts social impurity, not a temporary weakness to be strenuously overcome, but a lasting disability to be reduced to a custom, looks down upon man as an "appetite incarnate." Says an eminent medical authority, "as soon prescribe theft or lying or anything else that God has forbidden as prescribe inchastity";* and what is public recognition of social impurity by state or by society but this culpable prescription of inchastity? Closely related to this is the rather exciting question of

(c) *Social Purity and Public life.*

If, as Carlyle holds, "society everywhere is some representation of a graduated worship of heroes," the life of a leader is a model to his contemporaries and a heritage to posterity. It illustrates the moral ideal to be imitated by a thousand admirers; it maps out the moral path to be trodden by a thousand followers. When one of England's wisest politicians required that he who would be a statesman must first prove himself a gentleman, the demand really meant that the aspiration to be honoured with public confidence implied the covenant to be clean and pure beyond all imputation, above every suspicion. If, as Lecky states, "pure domestic life" is amongst the 'strongest' of those forces that bear a nation onward to improvement, the private life of one that would mould the thoughts, guide the energies and thus shape the destinies of a nation is a public concern. Let it be once conceded that there is good ground for the many restrictions which a wise government imposes on its public servants; and it will be idle to

* The opinions of two other eminent medical men may be cited here. According to one of them, "there are no organs so much under control as those of generation. Their qualities peculiarly adapt them to subserviency to man's moral nature." The other observes, "No man ever yet was in the slightest degree or way worse for perfect continence, or the better for incontinence."

contend that those who would sketch the career of a race need not rise to the standard of those who manage its passing interests, or that the integrity enforced about "barbaric pearl and gold" may be safely relaxed concerning what is the most precious jewel of woman and the dearest possession of man. Both may be private as single incidents; but both are public as examples or precedents. In both, the weakness of the few becomes the excuse of the many. In both, the purpose of life is vitiated and the ideal of life is lowered. As Milton very truly points out, it implies a certain lack of manly greatness—a weak mind that "aims not beyond higher design" than mere enjoyment—to succumb to amorous charms. Inchastity, as Mohammad warns us, is not merely an evil course but a foul thing. Does it not, further, sound as mere mockery that the call to fairness and equity should come from one who does not scruple to despoil a woman of her birth-right or a home of its happiness, or who does not hesitate to snatch a selfish pleasure which, in one respect, is blacker than the vilest murder as invariably damaging the peace or the hope of an accomplice. Concupiscence, no less than cupidity, is incompatible with greatness—with real integrity and wide catholicity; and to ignore this fact is to drop half our kind out of account. Quite unavailing is the defence which compares the disinterested leader of a nation's hopes and activities to an agent that knows no better motive than money—a lawyer, a doctor or an engineer. It is a sign of diseased enthusiasm, if not a mark of the rather low notion prevailing about apparently high objects of life, that one who surrenders comfort and position and accepts loss and reproach for a humble or neglected cause, is placed by his professed supporters under the same vinculum with the skilled labourer ever available to the party that "pays." Unless discipleship deteriorate into what Carlyle stigmatises as 'spanielship,' it cannot be true

that he who may be the sorriest or the most indifferent of mortals and he who fears the Lord and walks in the light of His wisdom are alike fitted to marshal the energies and forecast the future of a nation. The former is "a soldier of fortune" whose cleverness any one may buy; the latter, "a guide, philosopher and friend" entitled to our profoundest respect and, on that very account, bound to satisfy our highest expectations in social virtues. He is a 'Representative Man' whom wisdom and gratitude alike would decline to measure with the mercenary standard of a paid pilot; and to expect this personal purity in one thus exalted is but a fresh instance of the ancient truth that he who will control shall begin with self-control, that he who will rule without shall not himself be subject to anarchy within.—Not a few of the supporters of this cause may advantageously

(*d*) *Work among the children and the youth* of the land. Apart from the nature of public education now in vogue in India, much too little—notoriously little—is being done to build up character—to form noble virtues and create high aspirations—in the generations-to-be. It is, indeed, surprising that where such scanty attention is given to the healthy rearing-up of children, the tone of general morality is, nevertheless, so satisfactory. That betokens the innate goodness of human nature and the intrinsic worth of some of the principles, now hardened into customs, which were the original moulds of our national life. But the painful experience of every one that has endeavoured to be of any public service almost invariably reports that, for a large and civilised nation, most disappointingly few are the instances in which our countrymen dare rise above what may be called "neighbourly goodness." A chivalric spirit (if that term be expressive enough) is woefully wanting among us. It is not mere altruism: it is, so to speak, social transcendentalism. This

national drawback early suggests itself in our youth. Our boys may be rightly credited with being more docile and better-behaved than their western brethren; but are they not also more 'insinuating' in their ways—more wanting in 'directness'?* Does not a tendency to "look about" when they ought to "look in the face" early sprout up in them? One chief reason for this defect is the position of women in India—not, as is generally said, low or hard, but uninspiring—wanting in the capacity to evolve in man that refined gentleness which, without weakening the vigour, strains out the coarseness. Brought up under such "home influences," our youth betray either precocious vulgarity in the lower classes, or "studied" bashfulness (young Marlow like) in the higher classes, of society. Either way there is an absence of 'naturalness;' which is partly the result and partly the cause of the characteristic, almost national, of so many of our homes; which, again, are not impure or unhappy, but uninvigorating. All work among our boys and youth, not expressly educational, has, therefore, to be directed towards evoking this *verve*—this instinctive fairness and natural fineness—in them. Not that efforts bearing directly on our question are quite superfluous. If the experience of teachers, watchful and themselves good, counts for aught, and if the painful tale often told by doctors of all denominations be even partially true, there are quite too many instances, often leading to grave consequences and at times ending even fatally, of the early tasting of the forbidden fruit;† and it cannot be better in a country where so few feel the duty of placing a

* A careful and sympathetic European observer of our nation has remarked that India produces neither so many rogues nor so many heroes as a country in the West does.

† Alarming particularly are the accounts given by several medical men of "that hideous sin, engendered by vice and practised in solitude" by a large number of students and other young men.—It is to be hoped that the type of hotels and "eating houses" from which nefarious stories come out occasionally, like blasts from hell, is fast becoming obsolete.

check upon their tongues or their tastes for their dear ones' sake, and where painted Jezebels are permitted to jaunt in the most respectable localities, at times in the very neighbourhood of educational institutions. But the main effort has to be devoted to preventative rather than to remedial work—to fore-arm the youth against coming dangers rather than to snatch them from present evils. What our community needs is the formation of associations—on the lines of 'the guilds of honour' in the west—with membership large enough for fraternity but quite within bounds for discipline, manned in a fostering spirit by persons that have a sacred sense of the promise and the possibility of childhood or youth, and inculcating, on broad principles and in devout reverence, along with spotless purity the kindred virtues of unflinching honesty and large-hearted magnanimity. This will necessarily be slow work but, in the fulness of God's time, sure. It is true that there are already many institutions in the land, professing to promote this very end; but the question has to be boldly asked and honestly answered whether their strong point is ethics or athletics—be the latter lingual or physical. A fair beginning must be made; and if anywhere, it is in this work that men are superior to methods. Every life lived under the Great Task-Master's eye is available here.—As the last of these special aspects of the question may be considered the movement in which so much of the interest and attention of the friends of this reform has, for obvious reasons, been centering—

(*e*) *the Anti-nautch Movement.*

It was, perhaps, unfortunate, though evidently unavoidable as a beginning, that the purity movement was started in the concrete form of the anti-nautch agitation. Friends ready to further the cause failed in many instances to realise the basal principle; while persons startled by its

novelty put upon it most fantastic constructions. One party traced it to a lurking hatred for the dancing-girl; another discovered in it a crusade against music; to some it appeared to be a graceless exposure of a small national weakness; to some others it was no better than a Quixotic attempt to cure the irremediable. Even among friends but few realised that to discourage *nautch* was to demand purity in other respects, and to decline to employ the dancing-girl's entertainment was to disapprove open impurity wherever found. When, therefore, a seemingly superfluous memorial to a distant government disclosed a personal promise "to do likewise," enthusiasm cooled down and eloquence was hushed in not a few cases. When, next, it gradually came out that to condemn the *nautch* was to covenant for an earnest endeavour after purity in thought, speech and act, many more shrank from so heavy a demand. When, at a later stage, the principle that would proscribe polluted pleasure was sought to be applied to public life, some of even those that had been the most forward to attack were also among the foremost to sound the retreat. But the anti-nautch movement would be a huge cry for a trifle—almost a 'much ado about nothing'—unless it presented itself as an inalienable part of a great problem, a particular aspect of an important principle, a concrete instance of a lofty, though seemingly newborn ideal. Its basis is not in fine manners, but in good morals; its aim is not mere elegant breeding, but pure living. If every one espousing this movement has not realised this expectation, it is not the fault of the principle. Many are called, but few are chosen.

Among all the countries with which India would wish to compete in morals and in civilisation there is not one that accords to open, flagrant impurity such recognition as this country gives to the *nautch*-girl. Secret vice and veneered inchastity are to be found all the world over; but

immorality as a hereditary and acknowledged profession, living in peace and amity with and amidst other avocations, fortified against the attacks of time and change, and endowed with the privileges of social sanction, is peculiar to this land. By no other civilised people is the thin veil of music, as a profession, suffered so fully to cover (and for all social purposes so completely to atone for) the iniquity of a woman openly living a "fast life." In the temple she has not only the free and ready admission of any other lay person, but, in innumerable cases, a position next only to that of the priest or the manager. No part of a town is too respectable for her residence; no circle of society, too high for her invitation. No festive occasion, however auspicious, is complete without her presence: to receive a guest or to felicitate a friend, to honour a superior or to celebrate a jubilee, to solemnize a wedding or to initiate a child into learning—aye, at times, to welcome a spiritual head or to parade a religious reviver, her song is the *Te Deum* of thankful joy, her dance the exhilaration of enthusiasm. The benediction on many a solemn occasion is of her chanting; the longevity of connubial life for many a hopeful bride is secured through the talismanic "black beads" of her stringing. In religious processions hers is the lead, while the graceless priest with his unheeded jargon is exiled to a safe distance.* Famine-stricken parents, albeit of high caste, may surrender to her care and profession the child that a foreigner, however pure and respectable, may not apply for. In times of "legal" difficulties she may count upon the support of even some of the titled leaders of society privately to plead with the crude, stickling judge to do a little wrong in order to do a great right. But how this has come to be so, and why this is thus endured in a country otherwise jealous of female chastity, it is not very

* May it be reasonably hoped that the days are wholly gone when the carriages of the *elite* were her 'free conveyance,' and the wives of the fashionable were her "honorary maids"?

difficult to see. Of all the harmful consequences of the caste system none would seem to be so injurious as its tendency to place merit and demerit on a level. Both made customary, virtue is not necessarily honoured with social credit and vice is not perforce branded with social discredit. Not what is good but what is usual, is commendable; likewise, not what is bad but what is unusual, is condemnable. The national conscience is, in many important matters, hide-bound with custom. Hence the ruthless, sometimes savage, punishment of chance instances of secret vice, alongside of this disgusting indifference—nay, this culpable encouragement given socially through the *nautch*, and religiously through temple-service—to innumerable cases* of open shamelessness.

That these women have not always been thus patronised, is evident from ancient literature. They seem to have begun as virgins dedicated to the service of religion—vestals that forgot the world in the thoughts of Heaven. They were consecrated to the Lord; and to that age belongs the terrible warning that to approach one of the class criminally was more sinful than thus to approach even one's mother. It is of that by-gone period those well-meaning friends of India really think who defend the modern nautch-girl by unfairly comparing her with the medieval nun! But nothing is so frequently, though in most cases so imperfectly, imitated as religion; and the spontaneous self-forgetfulness of the first generations became the forced asceticism of those who came after them. The institution would appear to have been in a transitional stage—not perhaps a caste, but not without a deep touch of the world—at the time of Buddha; who had an enthusiastic admirer

* The exact number of these unfortunate women in India cannot be ascertained. According to the Census of 1891, those following "indefinite and disreputable occupations" were returned as 1,562,981; and actors, singers, dancers and their accompanists numbered 270,956. Probably, several appeared under the respectable heading of temple-servants.

in Ambapali, who could vie with great lords in position and opulence. With that mighty emphasis laid upon pure life which distinguished Buddhism, the women of light song and dance necessarily went down in *status*. In the day "of* the Chinese pilgrims the singer and the courtezan were compelled to reside outside the village-walls, along with the fisherman and the scavenger." History, however, "seems* to indicate that she was not kept out long;" and as that wave of moral force which is associated with the name of Buddha ebbed away, she could, by the age of the dramas, regain through her charms and accomplishments the social position no longer merited by her character. As in course of centuries custom favoured by convenience fossilised every profession into a caste, that encyclopædic organisation—the Hindu Society, with its round-robin of castes—could accommodate professional lewdness with a plea and a place, just as it furnished the professional thief with a guide-book and a presiding-genius. What comes by birth-right need not be earned by accomplishments; and "the general notion," as the Census Commissioner observes, "of the employment (at present) is that expressed in one of the schedules from a town in the north as *singing and enjoining sensual pleasures!*" Such have been the high origin and the low fall of a most unfortunate section of mother India's daughters; who (in the words of Prof. Sir W. Mon.-Williams) were once "patterns of piety and propriety," but are now "slaves to the licentious passions of the profligate." Is not society bound to help them up to a pure course of life? "How is it," asks that eminent temperance-preacher and great friend of India, the Revd. T. Evans, "that the temple Priests and sacred Brahmins do not step to the front to reform such a degrading abuse as this?" But the question

* Census of India, 1891—General Report, p. 110.

is really an appeal to the heart and the conscience of all educated India.

Custom, however hoary or wide-spread, though it may at times have a tempering effect, cannot make evil quite harmless; and far from light is the penalty that India has, silently and almost unconsciously, been paying for suffering this dark iniquity to live and thrive in her very bosom. Public recognition, by hiding the ugliness of a vice, makes it fashionable and thus costly. It sets up a competition where repugnance should be the only attitude. How prodigal in wealth and life this injurious indulgence has been, scores of impoverished families and hundreds of frustrated hopes—countless instances of disappointed careers, wasted opportunities, neglected affections and squandered fortunes—can amply testify.—Further, the desire for repentance is generally proportionate to the social odium attaching to a sin. "That would be a reproach to your mother; you only name me," was the proud retort of a smart dancing-girl to a filthy epithet used by the voluptuous Sirajuddoula. What is labeled as a necessary profession by society, is rarely felt to be a degrading avocation; and the consoling thought that one need not be better than is expected of one, easily satisfies the random compunction. That "want-begotten rest" which the poet rates lower than the worst slavery, is the doom of the unfortunate nursling of sin who is never led to feel that her tainted life marks her off as a moral leper. Thus the gate of repentance, open in Heaven's grace to the vilest sinner, is virtually closed by a custom-ridden community that thereby makes itself an abettor of impenitent guilt. How many a *Kánchanamáli* that would repent and seek the ways of the Lord, is being thus lulled into suicidal security by a society that thoughtlessly cries "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace!—Again, nothing can justify the pleasure purchased with another's degradation. Be the

fictitious theory what it may, in real practice no woman is —no woman can by custom be—a musician in calling unless she also be a 'public woman' by profession. It is her fallen condition that makes her eligible for that occupation. Those who hastily compare her with the music-hall singer of the west, besides implying that two blacks make a white, decide the question on the ground of mere decency, forgetting that a 'fast life' is there an unacknowledged and incidental weakness, but here an avowed and necessary pre-requisite. If Manu is justified in charging with destruction of life him who cooks the meat or him who eats it no less than him who kills the sheep, does not the guilt or the shame of the dancing-girl's life fall to the account of those who accept her fallen condition as the pass-port to her profession as a singer or dancer?—Moreover, music, that divine art which "stoopeth so low as to soften brute beasts, yet mounteth as high as angels"—that "inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the infinite and lets us for a moment gaze into that"—that food of love and incense of the soul, has been largely neglected and completely disreputed by its unholy association with open immorality. Times were when sages did not decline to teach it and princesses did not disdain to learn it. Numerous instances could be cited of ladies of virtue and position acquiring and using this noble accomplishment. They felt no indignity, the public imputed no flaw, on that account.* But when society was unhinged by political disturbance and social deterioration, modesty retired, while impudence held the field undisputed. With return of peace and enlightenment, music should have been everywhere restored to its ancient prestige of an honourable accomplishment. But force of association has

* Mrs. Besant is reported to have observed recently: "Music has been excluded (from the education of girls) because of its shameful associations with the *nautch* girls. Your sons, if they want music, have to mix with the most shameful of characters."

fastened a tarnished name to it; and so long as it is condemned to be the prerogative of the Circes and the Syrens of our society—and it must be so till we decline to be charmed by the murky music of a maudlin—it must be content to be the bondmaid of iniquity—the stalking-horse for impurity to prey all the more securely.—Lastly, sullying, degrading, debasing must be the effect upon all—home and neighbourhood, wife and children, guests and friends—of an entertainment in which, pretending to no secrecy and reserving no modesty, she who, of all female kind, is the only one to take a hire for her 'person'—she who has forfeited the sweet name of sister—she who is nor maid, nor wife nor widow—she whose "heart is snares and nets" and whose "house is the way to hell," simulates a virtue she daily violates, or pleads for a pleasure she daily pollutes. To touch pitch and not be tarred, is to try to repeal an eternal ethical law. The weighty words of the learned and venerable Dr. Bhandarkar will suffice: "I have always been of the opinion that he who patronises dancing-girls does not sufficiently hate the immoral life which they professedly lead, or value as highly as he ought to do female purity, which is the soil on which the noble qualities of women grow. The institution of *nautch* cannot but have a debasing effect on the morality of men and women. I shall not, without strong proof, believe in a man's being a faithful husband, if he takes delight in giving *nautch*-parties and attending them. To have a *nautch* at one's own house is to give an object-lesson in immorality to the boys and the girls in the family, especially to the former. As long as *nautch* is fashionable among us and is freely indulged in, it is impossible that the morality of men should greatly improve, and our respect for women should increase." Wise words these that state the matter in a nutshell. With them, not inappropriately, may go Bishop Welldon's thoughtful suggestion that "the cause of morality in India would seem to make a definite

advance, if at the beginning of the new century the officials of government and the leaders of society were to make known their desire that *nautches* should not form part of any entertainment to which they.....are invited."

Not many words can profitably be given to the question, 'what next?' when *nautches* are universally discouraged. It is not easy or safe to foretell the direction likely to be taken by the energies of a society passing through a great transition. To the strictly pure the simple consideration, "morals before art or pleasure" would be quite enough; but it is, perhaps, too much to expect the majority to be fully content with this. There must be a sense of want for a time, as the old order changeth into the new. Promiscuous musical entertainments, barren of result in other countries, will grow obsolete. What with natural unsuitability to India and what with social discouragement, dance will lapse as a relic of the past. Weaned from its present low associations, music must become a commoner and more respectable acquirement—a profession with some and an accomplishment with many; and all the genuine pleasure to be derived from that noble art may, after a generation or two, be fully regained. Indian music, rich in devotional and unfortunately pretty full in the amorous element, will have to be considerably improved on the purely social side. Social gatherings—not the current picture galleries, but cordial, convivial assemblies—will become frequenter and more useful and attractive, with the spread of education and of liberal ideas on "castes" and the "position of women." Clubs—not the present 'aftermaths' of professional work, but resorts of learned ease and friendly communion—will be more popular as interest and information about "general subjects" will grow. A dozen other methods of employing leisure in useful and innocent ways will gradually suggest themselves, when only there is a firm resolution "not to drink poison, if

nectar be not within easy reach."—As to the particular community concerned; when deprived of the prestige of music, its hope will be chiefly in two healthy changes:—(1) the allotment of temple-service (of course, wholly for sacred purposes) as the reward only of chastity—married life being no disqualification, and (2) the education and improvement of the male members of the community—now, mostly drones or parasites. No doubt, with many an unhappy woman the change will for a time be a "vision of Mirza" bridge, through which she will drop into the current below. But if the present wealth and influence of the community be wisely utilised, the meed of immorality may be happily changed into the price of salvation. A caste, chartered to a vicious life, will cease to be; and though some poor sheep may deplorably go astray, not a few of the daughters now deliberately prodigal will be restored to the longing bosom of the Divine Mother.

VI—Conclusion.

That 'born prince' among the educated sons of India—that noble soul, the news of whose translation to "holier heights" has just been received in such 'divine despair' by the whole nation—observed at the last Madras Social Conference that the best test of the principles of social reform is to picture them to the mind as "writ large" on the society and to realise what happy changes are thus made, and what abiding good is thus wrought. Judged according to this wise canon, purity in personal, domestic and social life justifies itself as the very key-stone of moral health and national greatness. "Trample on woman," says a distinguished friend of this cause, "and you trample on your own moral nature. Respect woman, care for her, work for her, give her knightly shelter and protection, and you shall find the loftier emotions gaining sway in your heart, and touching your life to finer issues." "Whether you be young or old, think, I pray you, of the holy names of

sister, (daughter) wife and mother ; think of all. the holy influences which stream forth upon an evil world from the relations which those sacred names represent, and resolve, one and all, that under no sky from which the sun shines down shall these names have a holier, tenderer meaning than in this fair land."

Nor need this stirring appeal come amiss to those with rich traditions and noble examples of purity in the past. The crowning feature of our national hero was that he never sent but one arrow and never loved but one woman—the *Kohinoor* of her kind. Our national type of truthfulness preferred gifting away an empire to plucking the rose from a maiden brow. Our national model of devotion made purity the basis of piety by finding a "mother" in every "stranger woman." The greatest of our epics tells man "to look upon his neighbour's wife as on her that gave him life." The oldest of our bridal hymns requires the couple being wedded to pray jointly "may all the gods that live above blend our hearts in love!" The highest ideal of chivalry in India made the 'knight' the *rakhiband-bhai*—the bracelet-wearing brother—of the 'lady.' An ancient Indian conception of the Deity is that of 'half-man and half-woman,' the harmoniser of the sexes. A hoary precept of purity in our literature exhorts every person to honour the body and to keep it pure, for it is the abode of the spirit. May the sanctity of that Indian sage abide in us, who, when a celestial nymph visited his hermitage, employed her wiles to disturb his penances, and immodestly laid bare some 'mysterious charms,' exclaimed in childlike innocence, "would that one could have a *mother* of this beauty!" The grace of the All-Holy be with us all!

APPENDIX.

[SPECIMEN PLEDGES.]

A. For Adults.

With the help of God, I pledge myself to keep the following covenant:—

1. I will not attend any gatherings where nautches are present, or invite them myself, or do anything else that tends to encourage them.

2. I will not use impure language, or tell coarse jests, or sing indecent songs, or indulge in listening to such language, songs or jests.

3. I will not indulge in witnessing indecent pictures, paintings, or scenes.

4. I will not converse or read, for the sake of impure pleasure, about subjects that are calculated to suggest impure thoughts, and will try my best not to entertain any such thoughts.

5. I will be chaste in body and will endeavour my best to be chaste in mind, as well as to promote the cause of purity in general.

B. For boys.

In order to preserve my own personal purity and to encourage it in others, as being one important feature of a sound character, I promise, with trust in God's help and guidance, to try my very best—

(1) To cultivate such habits as will help purity in thought, speech and action;

(2) To abstain, while showing obedience to the wishes of my father (or guardian), from such engagements as are likely to be harmful to personal purity; and

(3) To persuade my friends and school-mates to do likewise.

XI.—Widow Re-marriage.

BY RAO BAHADUR WAMANRAO MADHAV KOLHATKAR,

District and Sessions Judge, Sangor.

A study of the earlier part of the Greek and Roman histories leads one to the conclusion that like India other Aryan peoples too were once ruled by priests. India differs from Greece and Rome in the fact that here theocracy has maintained its ground to the present times, while there it was followed by the rule of heroes, aristocracy and democracy. The continuance of theocracy in India must be admitted on all hands to be the source of its strength as well as of its weakness, as will be apparent from the fact that the Hindus have to this day preserved their distinct nationality, while their brother nations survive only in history. The same turn of mind that has perpetuated evil customs in all their nudity has also protected the Hindu simplicity of manners in all its loveliness from the ruthless hand of time.

The grip of religion on popular mind is naturally very tight as compared with the hold that mundane institutions generally have. Religion, with its complicated apparatus of heaven, hell, purgatory, blessings, curses, holds out promises of eternal happiness as a reward for obedience to its laws and threatens perpetual condemnation for their violation. Any description of pleasure that may follow from a violation of its commands is limited in intensity as well as duration, while the penalty entailed is infinitely harder and more enduring.

In India, religion, not content with unlimited control over spiritual concerns, gradually wormed itself into the details of daily life, however trifling and however removed from the generally accepted idea of religion. In extending its dominion it insensibly increased in power. A departure, never so slight, from the rules of every day life as observed

by the Hindus came to be looked upon as a sacrilege and as a consequence, to entail the penalty of excommunication. None can lay any claim to the name of a Hindu unless he endorses every practice sanctioned by the priestly class. Either a person must be a Hindu all over, or he cannot be a Hindu at all.

The Vedas troubled themselves only about particular religious performances like sacrifices. The Smritis extended their conquests and brought purely temporal things like apprenticeship, marriage, succession, adoption and the criminal law within the pale of religion; and its example was imitated by the Purans in the work of extending the dominion of religion to regions which were not its legitimate objects. How far this extending process would have carried its operations had it been allowed to go its own way, it is idle to speculate. But it is amusing to note the fetters with which religion thought fit to bind the apparently trifling routine of life. The obsequious ceremonies that have to be performed before the dead are allowed to be burnt are an instance in point. A son must, after the death of his father, part with his mustachios, and the shaving business has to keep time with incantations uttered by a priest. The adjustment of the pile of wood that is to consume the dead is accompanied by appropriate incantations. Even acts to which no ingenuity can attach the semblance of religious siginficance have their own religious appurtenances. On cremation grounds as near marriage altars, on deathbeds as on hymenal beds, in dinner parties as on fast days there is only one idea present to the mind of a Hindu, one idea alone runs through acts performed by him; and that all-engrossing idea is one of religion.

Fiction actively aids religion in its conquests. Comparatively recent works in order to claim the respect generally yielded to antiquity, are palmed off on the credulous reader as of as ancient dates as the

Vedas themselves. Even the Vedas are referred back to a fabulously old period. Mr. B. G. Tilak has, in a scholarly treatise on the antiquity of the Vedas, clearly shown that the greater part of the Vedas was written only about 4,000 years ago. The Smritis, which on the very face of them appear to be much more recent are devoutly believed by all orthodox Hindus to be reminiscences of the Vedas. Works on mathematics which were evidently composed after the Greek invasion are credited with being emanations from Brahma. Even works of a couple of decades back are said to have been fathered on the famous Vyas with something like indecent haste. How far Vyas and others to whom these later works are imputed will like the several acts of filiation and what welcome the impostors will meet at their hands it is difficult to imagine. But it is beyond reasonable doubt that though in an age in which the mist of ages of superstition is being dispelled by the searching light of historical investigation they are not likely to find any credence, still they have done incalculable mischief by tightening the *fetters* with which superstitious India was *manacled*. The fact that great rulers like Shivaji who were in their time only great heroes have within the short period of a couple of centuries risen to the dignity of demigods illustrates the same credulous tendency. The result has been that antiquity which, in other countries, would be at best but extremely suspicious evidence, is in India conclusive proof of the desirability of a custom.

This process of extending the domain of religion, once understood, easily explains the subordinate position which has been assigned to Indian women. They were prevented by the physical irregularity of their lives from taking part in sacrificial performances which, in some not rare cases, extended over inconveniently long periods, and thus gradually lost the importance which they once enjoyed in

the times of Gargi and Atreyi, much as the warrior and merchant classes lost their occupations being inconsistent with an unimpeded participation in religious ceremonies. That these latter too once shared high privileges with the priestly class is borne out by the history of Viswamitra and by traces being found in the Vedas of a time when warriors could give lessons in religious matters to priests without scandalising them.

That a widow had the right of remarrying is placed beyond the shadow of a doubt by several Smritis which have been already explained with remarkable lucidity by Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Vishnu Shastri Pandit and Mr. Justice Ranade. The most important of them are the works of Manu, Narada and Parasara. Whatever legal force we may attach to the several texts, we cannot escape the conclusion to which they point—that the custom of widow marriage was once in vogue in India. The ancient Indian law on the subject was, if anything, more liberal in its provisions than the modern English law. Of course in the progress of time, as the extension of the range of religion began to contract on the liberty enjoyed by women, the above texts began to be tortured out of their natural significance by ingenious interpreters to fit in with a state of society that had of late come into being. This method being deemed of doubtful utility in cases of serious controversies, was later on given up in favour of the creation of new texts to be fathered on some ancient sage or other. This point in the history of the movement is represented by the Puranic period when the leaders of the Brahmanic community began to marshal their forces against the advocates of Buddha's religion which, from an insignificant sect, had been growing to gigantic proportions and which threatened at no distant date to swallow it up unless active steps were taken to represent the Brahmanic religion in tempting colours. To this period

the great Indian epics belong. Even in the Purans, however, traces of the custom of remarriage are found.

"The first on the list is the remarriage of Ulupi, the widowed daughter of a patriarch of the Naga tribe, who on the death of her first husband was given in marriage by her father to the famous Arjun, the hero of the Mahabharat story. Ulupi in so many distinct words, is described to have become one of Arjun's many wives, the son she bore to him is emphatically described to be his legitimate-born son, and not one of the inferior sorts of sons. The entire narrative in the Mahabharat, and still more emphatically Jaimini's continuation corroborates this assertion.

"The second illustration is from the story of Nala and Damayanti. The latter princess, after having been abandoned by her husband in the forest, found her way after much suffering to her father's house. While there, she bided in hope for some time, but could get no news of her absent lord. Thereupon, with the consent of her mother she contrived a plan for finding out her long-lost Nala. She secured the services of a learned Brahman to advertise to all the neighbouring princes that she was going to have a second Swayamvara and make a second choice of a husband for herself in consequence of the disappearance and probable death of Nala, her first husband. This Brahman carried his message to the Court of the King of Ayodhya, with whom Nala had sought shelter in the disguise of an obscure charioteer. The king of Ayodhya, on hearing this news prepared to go to the Swayamvara and Nala drove the chariot for him with extraordinary speed, the secret of which was known to him only. This display of skill and certain other circumstances led to his subsequent recognition, whereupon all idea of the second marriage was given up. This story has its importance, for it shows the received opinion among the people of the day, to whom such an invitation did not appear in any heinous light, did not appear

more extraordinary than the invitation to the first marriage. That a woman like Damayanti, so renowned for her devotion to her husband, should with the consent of her parents, try to discover the whereabouts of her lost husband by this stratagem, at once shows that remarriage did not strike people in those times as an abomination, but as an ordinary commonplace thing.

"The third illustration is from Padma Purana, the story of the unfortunate daughter of the King of Benares who was married no less than twenty times, it being her peculiar misfortune that as soon as the marriage rites were all performed, the husband so married died, but though this happened over and over again, the father, with the consent of the sage Brahmans of his Court, solemnly gave her in marriage as often as she became a widow. The emphatic words used in the text preclude the supposition contended for by some disputants, that the several husbands were removed by death before, and not after the binding marriage rites had been celebrated."*

Soon after this followed the celebrated expulsion of the Buddhists from India. One of the impressions that the Buddha's religion left back was the further curtailments of the liberty of women. To this period is relegated the birth of the odious custom of disfigurement of widows in imitation of a similar custom of the Buddhistic ascetics. Once it obtained a vogue, marriage of widows was rendered practically impossible.

Along with the introduction of enforced widowhood there was springing up a hateful custom, *i.e.*, that of infant marriage, which was in the end to prove its worst enemy. The two customs thus brought together by a mere accident were diametrically opposed to each other. An infant widow is a pitiful result of their combined action, and in her turn, is wreaking a just vengeance

* Quoted from Mr. Ranade's Essay.

on them by representing the evil consequences of each in their exaggerated form. A widowed infant has been the first to attract the sympathies of an advocate of late marriages as she has been the first to enlist the sympathies of all pioneers of widow marriage. This young and at the same time widowed creature is a favorite both with the reformers and the anti-reformers, and paradoxical though it may appear, nothing would please both the parties so much as a complete annihilation of her.

The reasons why, after being established as a sacred custom enjoying the privileges attending the idea of its sacerdotal birth, enforced widowhood continued in full swing for a period of nearly two thousand years are not far to seek. Religious institutions are, as a rule, not so fragile of frame as other institutions. Systems based on temporal grounds can be discontinued at pleasure when no justification remains for their continuance. Obedience to Government legislation can be enforced only so long as obvious blessings flow from it. It is true, as observed by an acute thinker, that a change in law never anticipates a change in popular sentiment. But it is equally true that it is never long in following it. The code of Manu, on the other hand, has been the law of the Hindus for a period of nearly two thousand years, and a construction of its texts inconsistent with their obvious meaning is to this day scarcely admitted except by a side wind. The rigidity of Hindu sacred law thus made a disturbance in the Hindu social structure every corner of which breathed of nothing but religion, possible only by revolution. The minister and judges of Hindu kings were themselves priests, men of high principles and rigid morality and well versed in ancient lore if you please but incompetent for that very reason to the task of introducing a beneficial reform, where necessary, and incapabe of understanding that widows in the full bloom of their youth could be in any need of a second marriage. A revolution

in the religious ideas of the nation was a condition precedent to the introduction of salutary reforms. But such a revolution was by no means desirable or possible. It was impossible because, during the process of development from the rude material of universal pantheism to the highly subtle doctrine of absolute idealism, the Hindu religion had gathered on its way doctrines of a miscellaneous sort and restrained them with a firm grasp. It was not possible for any foreign religion, in competition with the indigenous product of India to present an exterior subtle enough to mystify, tempting enough to win, imposing enough to awe or gross enough to strike. The Hindu religion was itself calculated to humble the king in his palace, solace the peasant in his hovel, and satisfy the philosopher in his study.

The tendency of the Maya doctrine which came into fashion after the expulsion of the Buddhists was to confirm leaders of the Hindu community in their indifference towards women, especially towards widows, by making the world, widows included, an unreal one. This philosophical school maintained a stoic indifference of feeling to its disciples and cut the Gordion knot of the origin of evil by imputing unreality to worldly pleasures as well as worldly pains. The doctrine of fatalism too, which had obtained a vogue among the Hindus tended to benumb their feelings and introduce among them a reckless indifference by teaching that all misery was inevitable. Though the subject of free will and necessity is doomed to remain a vexed question to the end of time, it is as plain as daylight that the prevalence of the doctrine of fatalism has introduced an unhealthy tone of thinking among those who hold it.

Foreign travel which always creates a respect for foreign customs through a sympathetic observation of them and thus acts as a check on the tendency of the customs of a country to stagnate, was not open to Hindus. The

priests were wise enough to anticipate the innovations that would follow in the train of foreign travel, and accordingly forbade it on pain of doing penance.

Mahomedan conquest, instead of familiarising the natives with foreign customs, only contributed materially to prejudice them against their conquerors. After it, the natives were solely occupied by the thought of their political regeneration and indefinitely postponed their social progress. Even had the conquerors been more sympathetic in their treatment, it is more than doubtful if they would have impressed the conquered with a favourable opinion of their customs, as the latter were greatly their superiors in social matters. Indeed, it is suspected by some writer that many evil customs among the Hindus like the system of *Parda* and early marriage owe their origin to Mahomedans. It was reserved for English conquerors alone to present a set of manners at once foreign and civilized.

The pit of ignorance into which women fell after their degradation is also one of the potent reasons why their male partners who strove to rise superior to the existing state of society were often held in check in their upward march. This was as it should be. This is the fate of every nation in which one class, after obtaining the mastery over another equally numerous class, tries to crush it to the dust. The grim reality of this proposition has been alas! too often proved in the history of widow marriage. The famous Rajput prince, Jayasinha II of Jaipur attempted to introduce widow marriage in his kingdom, and his efforts would have been crowned with success but for his own widowed mother who mockingly insisted on her own marriage taking place before that of any of her widowed subjects. Strange phenomenon! A widow actively interfering with the liberation of her own class! The story of the celebrated Maratha chief, Parashuram Bhau's daughter illustrates the same truth. "He had a young daughter

and Durgabai, we believe, was her name. She was given in marriage at a very tender age, varying in different accounts from five to nine years old, to a section of the Joshi family. The young bridegroom died of small-pox fever, while yet the marriage festivities were not over. The brave old father was so moved by this calamitous termination of his fond hopes to see his daughter blessed, that he wrote to the Peishwa at Poona, tendering his resignation of his command of the army, and expressing a determination to retire from the world. The Peishwa's durbar, who knew the value of the man, and felt with him in his sufferings, assured him that he need not despair, for they would try to find a remedy for his irremediable sorrow. The Shankaracharya of the time was then referred to, and his kind offices were prayed for by the men in power. The old man had some grudge against the Bhau, and he answered that he would have nothing to advise in the way of giving comfort to a man who was worse than a *yavan*. The Peishwa's durbar, therefore, wrote to the Benares Pandits, the Pandits of the Poona Court having shown a perverse disposition. These Benares Pandits sent a letter of assent signed by many hundred persons, in which, moved by the extreme infancy of the bride, and also by the consideration that the cause of Brahman supremacy would be greatly checked by the withdrawal of Bhau from public affairs, they found out that the Shastras favoured the remarriage of girls like Durgabai, widowed in infancy. On receipt of this letter of the Benares Pandits, the Shankaracharya of the day thought it wise to yield, and the Poona Pandits were about to follow suit, for none dared to hint a threat against the lion of the Deccan, as he was called. The astute Pandits, however, waited on Parshuram Pant Bhau's wife, and through her they gained their object. The mother expressed her readiness to bear with her daughter's bereavement, rather than see a new innovation introduced. Parsharam

Pant Bhau was much surprised at this resolution and yielded the point to the Pandits, declaring that he insisted upon it solely with a view to console his wife, and if she wished for no consolation, he had nothing more to say." *

In Bengal the widow marriage movement was inaugurated by the late venerable Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who may be termed the great apostle of the cause.

In an able work on remarriage which he wrote in 1854, not content with proving its desirability on grounds of justice and convenience, he maintained that it was not prohibited by the Vidas, but that on the contrary it was positively countenanced by them. He went on to show that those texts in the Smiritis which militated against the Vedic texts must yield the preference to them as being more recent in date. This book was written in Bengali, and therefore was intelligible to all. His principal opponent, the then best grammarian in Bengal wrote his rejoinders in Sanskrit in accordance with the tradition of Sanskrit scholars, which were therefore quite Greek and Latin to the masses. Later on Pandit Ishwar Chandra translated his work into English with a view to create interest in the subject in his English readers.

Once mooted, this question soon attracted public attention and rapidly grew in importance. Several meetings were held to discuss the subject in all its bearings. Many scholars from Bengal expressed views contrary to those held by the Pandit. Government consulted the Pandits of Benares on this point and they returned a verdict in favour of remarriage. The agitation led at last to the passing of Act XV of 1856 which legitimatised the issue of remarried widows.

After removing the legal bar to the legitimacy of the offspring of remarried couples, the Pandit next turned his attention to giving the subject a practical turn.

* Quoted from Mr. Ranade's Essay.

"The first widow marriage celebrated by him took place in Calcutta on the 7th December 1865. This created a great sensation in the Hindu community. He was excommunicated himself, and the same penalty was threatened upon all who joined him. Although he was deserted by his friends and countrymen, he firmly adhered to his plans. He succeeded in causing a number of widow marriages to be solemnized. He became heavily involved in debt on account of the expenses connected with them, but refused to accept any pecuniary assistance from others. He chose a widow as the bride of his son." *

Tracing back the time when the attention of the Mahratta Brahmans was first directed to this subject after the British conquest, we come to a pamphlet on remarriage written in 1837. It was the fruit of the joint authorship of a Telugu Brahman and a resident of Ratnagiri. It was published in Bombay and many favourable and adverse criticisms appeared in the *Mumbai Darpan*, a weekly paper of that time. On this another book was written, but it was not printed, though copies of it were privately circulated among Shastris. The language of the book leads one to conclude that it was written by an old Sashtri. The name of the author is not given. It appears to have been sent by the author to a wealthy and influential friend who, in his turn, published it. This book refers, among other things, to the stories of Parshuram Bhau's widowed daughter, and thus confirms the facts which Mr. Ranade gathered from an independent source. The Rev. Baba Padmanji also wrote two works on remarriage—"the Kutumba Sudharana," and "the Yamunaparyatana."

Thus in the Deccan books on the subject appeared even prior to Pandit Ishwar Chandra's work. But this reform was far from being instantly carried into practice. The remarriages that were celebrated after this wordy war-

* Quoted from "Noted Indians."

fare and before the movement was taken up by Vishnu Sashtri were few and far between. Raghunath Janardan, a Gaud Brahmin by caste and a clerk in the municipal office at Ahmedabad married a widow, Chimabai by name, at Poona about the year 1853. The bridegroom had his first wife living at the time of the remarriage, and consequently his remarriage was not hailed by the reformers with anything like enthusiasm. The second remarriage took place thirteen years after the first. The bride was a Gujrathi lady named Diwali Bai. The very next year, Narayen Jagannath Bhide, a Mahratta Brahman and an ancient pleader at Poona, married his wife's widowed sister at Bandra near Bombay. All these remarriages were celebrated privately and were not fruitful as in Bengal of any practical consequences. This may be accounted for partly by the fact that education of the masses in the Deccan had commenced later than in Bengal.

The Widow Marriage Association was started at Bombay in the year 1866. Many educated natives enlisted themselves as its members. It had for its Chairman H. H. the Chief of Jamkhind and for its Vice-Chairman H. H. Raghunath Rao of Vinchur. Vishnu Shastri Pandit acted as Secretary, Bal Mangesh Wagle, K. T. Telang, M. G. Ranade, Janardan Sakharam Gadgil, Gopal Rao Hari Deshmukh, Balaji Pandurang, Shantaram Narayana, N. M. Parmanand, B. H. Bhagvat, A. V. Kathavate were some of its members. In antagonism to this association the orthodox party set up an association, the Hindu Dharma Vyavasthapaka Mandali, with the active co-operation of Vithoba Anna Daftardar and Nilkanth Rao Joshi. It held its meetings at Thakor Dwar. The wordy strife of these associations lasted for three years.

The widow marriage movement had need of a champion like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who should combine in his person sound scholarship, an intellect capable of under-

standing and harmonising the several discordant texts in the Smritis, an eloquence powerful enough to move the masses and an honesty of purpose which never shrank from consequences, in short, one who should possess both the head to plan and the hand to execute. This champion the reform party found at last in the celebrated Vishnu Sashtri Pandit. As for many days the cause of widow marriage was all but identified with his name, it would not be amiss to give a brief account of his life and doings. Curiously enough, the broad facts of his life coincide with those of Pandit Ishwar Chandra. After being educated according to the old system, he learnt English in the Government School at Poona. When he left school, he entered Government service, but was soon obliged to throw it up. He then became the Editor of the *Indu Prakash*, an Indian paper. He had an intimate knowledge of Sanskrit, English and Marathi. The widow marriage movement appears to have early attracted his notice. He translated Pandit Ishwar Chandra's work on the subject into Marathi, and tried to sow the seed of reform broadcast by writing able essays in his paper. This did not fail to elicit adverse criticism from his opponents, who were old Shastris well-versed in Sanskrit lore. To carry the discussion to successful termination Vishnu Shastri had need of all his resources. He was equal to the occasion. He had to read a variety of Sanskrit works in order to face his opponents. Questions about the *Gotra* of the re-married widow, the person who was to give her away in marriage, and about inheritance were readily put to him by his opponents or by interested lookers-on and were as readily answered by him in his eloquent and convincing manner. Moreover he was not sparing in using his elocutionary powers for the cause. He was justly reputed to be one of the best, if not the best orator of his time. The subject lent an additional charm to his

eloquence. He lost no opportunity of delivering lectures and thus making the subject popular in provincial towns, though a variety of business detained him in Bombay oftener than he wished. He made several speeches at Nasik which was then, as it still is, a city of scholars and priests. Lectures were followed by disputes. Placards signed by Vishnu Shastri and inviting discussion were to be seen in all the principal streets of large towns. The defiant challenge was accepted by the celebrated Vithoba Anna Daftardar who was at once a great scholar and great poet. He came to Poona in 1868 and expressed his desire that the controversy should take place in that city. Vishnu Shastri assented to the proposal, and came to Poona with his friends. But the controversy, did not come off as expected. While the terms on which the controversy was to take place were being settled to the satisfaction of both parties, Vithoba Anna commenced a series of lectures against remarriage in the Pachhapurkar's wada, Budhwar. Vishnu Shastri was not invited to the meetings that were held there. Seeing the opposite party busy with arousing popular opinion in their favour, he commenced a similar series of lectures at Sonia Bapu Mande's house in the Narayen Peth. He refuted in his lectures those very arguments which had been advanced by the Daftardar in his lectures, and summaries of which were being published as soon as they were delivered. The novelty of the subject and his claims on popular sympathy raised public excitement to the highest pitch. A little incident may serve as well as another to show what absorbing interest the subject had created. On the first day of Vishnu Shastri's series of lectures, the audience was not large owing to no previous intimation having been given to the public. But on the very next day the crowd literally crammed the place of meeting. The meeting was accordingly adjourned (?) from the principal hall to the courtyard. The yard was not in

proper order, and the servants were bid to sweep it clean and to spread carpets. An eminent friend of Vishnu Shastri who had accompanied him from Bombay, impatient of delay, commenced the sweeping operation himself. Bandu Nana Ranade, who was himself no mean scholar and who was present on the occasion, expressed his satisfaction with the masterly way in which Vishnu Shastri handled his subject, with his erudition and with the lucidity with which he made his meaning plain.

So far everything went on very well. But the really arduous task still remained to be accomplished—that of breaking through the barriers of custom. The reform party had had more than enough of disputes and were tired of them. A hero was required who would break the ice by marrying a widow and face the opprobrium that always attaches to innovation, in a word, who would transfer the question from speculation to reality. There were not many persons among the foremost reformers who were unfortunately for themselves widowers (adult bachelors were out of question) and fortunately for the cause brave souls. In India bravery in social matters means more than it does in more liberal countries. Religion being the basis of all Hindu customs, and it being naturally conservative in its tendency, every innovation, however trifling, comes to be looked upon as something opposed to religion, and therefore to be discouraged by every means. Poverty of reformers in particular cases lends a peculiar bitterness to the hardship of social ostracism which more resembles Robinson Crusoe's solitary life in the desert island than the isolation of reformers like Wilberforce and Bradlaugh, who differing in a single point, retained in their personality sufficiently numerous points of resemblance to those among whom they moved, to be but little affected by a difference of opinion. The absorption of individual life in religion makes it indispensable to yield a wholesale allegiance to it

or to eschew it altogether. An Englishman in a similar predicament would seek to forget his misery in the excitement of foreign travel. But an excessive love of country and lack of adventure have made foreign travel a forbidden fruit to the Hindus. What are the pangs of the black hole compared to these? Let not, therefore, those of us who are more conservative gloat over the weakness of those reformers who failed in the necessary amount of courage to carry out their principles into practice and thus to run the gauntlet of popular disfavour and of whose weakness such merciless gloating would be the best justification, if any were wanted. Moral weakness is the heritage common to all Hindus, and nobody has the right to laugh at another's weakness unless he himself has shown signal courage in identical circumstances. We must make allowance for weakness which is constitutional with us all.

The much needed man of courage was not long in making his appearance. Two brothers, Waman Rao and Narayan Rao Paranjpe, who belonged to the reform party had a young widowed sister, Venu Bai whom they wished to see remarried, and were in search ef a suitable match. They had the full sympathy and co-operation of their sister. They made their intentions known to the remarriage association who advertised in the *Indu Prakash* paper for a man willing to marry a widow. The advertisement elicited a response from one Pandurang Vinayek Karmarkar, a teacher in the Vernacular school at Saoda in the Khandesh District who signified his willingness to risk a marriage with the widowed girl. The association had him examined as to his *bona fides* and fitness and then gave its sanction to the remarriage. The bridegroom took a few days' leave and went to Bombay. The celebration was to be public, and measures were taken accordingly. The day and place of the marriage were, fixed and invitation cards were sent over the signatures of the following gentlemen:—

1. Vishnu Parsharam Pandit.
2. Gopal Hari Deshmukh.
3. M. G. Ranade.
4. Vishnu Moreshwar Bhide.
5. Vishnu Parsharam Ranade.
6. Shri Krishna Shastri Talekar.
7. Janardan Sakharam Gadgil.

The marriage was to take place at the house of Rao Bahadoor Moroba Kantoba near the Gowalia tank. The host, a Pathare Prabhu, was a staunch adherent of the reform party and followed up this proof of his devotion to the cause by soon afterwards himself marryiug a widow of his own caste. He had his house specially decorated for the occasion. The anti-reform party was naturally vexed to see the efforts of their opponents on the verge of being crowned with success. They left no stone unturned to prevent the remarriage. Anonymous letters were sent to Vishnu Shastri, and open threats of setting the *Indu Prakash* Press building on fire uttered in his presence. Plans were laid to waylay and attack the bridegroom on his way to the marriage-hall. But Vishnu Shastri was not a person to mind such threats. Steps were taken to have recognisances for keeping public peace executed by those using the threats. Vishnu Shastri received succour at this juncture from an unexpected quarter. The master of a gymnastic school who took great interest in the progress of reform, hearing of the threats directed against Vishnu Shastri, sent a defiant warning to the leaders of the lawless of the adverse party that they would do well to desist from their efforts to prevent the remarriage taking place. Finding all their attempts at prevention baffled, the leaders of the anti-reform party proposed, a couple of days before the day fixed for the marriage, that a controversy should first take place, and only in the event of a majority voting in favour of its legality and not otherwise, should the re-

marriage be solemnised. The orthodox party evidently hoped by this means to gain time. The reformers were not deceived by this appearance of anxiety on the part of their opponents to refer the matter to arbitration. They kept to their original resolution of celebrating the remarriage on the day fixed and took additional measures in anticipation of a riot taking place. Thus the first public celebration of a remarriage took place on the evening of 15th June 1869, without anything happening to mar the joy of the occasion. Many European and native gentlemen of distinction were present. Vishnu Shastri himself, assisted by some priests conducted the marriage ceremonies. The marriage presents amounted to Rs. 3,000 which was deposited in the Bank of Bombay in the name of the bride. The marriage feast too was attended by a number of Hindus from different places.

Seeing all their intentions frustrated one by one, the infuriated opponents had recourse to excommunication. But at the very outset, a dilemma presented itself. A wholesale excommunication of persons who had attended the marriage ceremonies or the marriage feast without distinction would be too vague and would lose its strength by reason of the number of those included in it, while one confined in its operation to the leading offenders would be too limited for the rage of the orthodox party which knew no bounds. At length after due deliberation, the latter course was adopted ; and accordingly the seven signatories, the bridegroom, the bride and her brothers were excommunicated. The meeting held at Thakor Dwar by which the resolution of excommunication was adopted was a disorderly are—a fact which before long occasioned a dispute as to what was the precise wording of the resolution passed by the meeting. Before the question was satisfactorily decided circular letters were sent by the leaders of the orthodox party to different towns notifying the fact of

excommunication. On this, four gentlemen, Bhaskar Shastri Tambankar, Sakharam Shastri Kale, Mahadeo Chemnaji Apte and Anna Moreshwer Kunte, issued a circular letter stating that no resolution had been unanimously come to by the meeting at Thakor Dwar. These four gentlemen were forthwith summarily excommunicated.

Some partisans of the reform party who had attended the meeting at Thakor Dwar took for perusal a list from a partisan of the anti-reform party. This resulted in a dispute, and the dispute in a prosecution of Vishnu Parshram Ranade, Bal Mangesh Wagle, and N. M. Parmanand which was, however, dismissed for want of sufficient evidence.

Soon after this, letters appeared in several papers with recommendations that the public should not respect the decree of excommunication, seeing that remarriage had not been proved to be invalid according to Hindu law by the orthodox party. These were signed by young educated gentlemen mostly from Poona. Their number at length went up to one hundred and seventy-two. The rapid increase in the number began to cause uneasiness to the anti-reform party and to force on them the necessity of a final settlement of the question by arbitration. They accordingly applied to the Shankaracharya of Karver and Sankeshwar. The Shankaracharya acceded to the request and went to Poona in the March of 1870. The Shankaracharya is said to have secretly signified to the reformers his readiness to give his sanction to the remarriage of infant widows provided that they, in their turn, withdrew the claims of adult widows to the same indulgence. The reformers took stock of the strength of their position and declined to come to the compromise proposed, especially as they thought that permission to remain was more in request with adult than with infant widows. On this a formal challenge was sent to the reform party and accepted by them. The news of the coming controversy spread like

wild fire throughout the length and breadth of the Mahratta country, and old Shastris flocked to Poona from different places, some on invitation from the Shankaracharya to assist in the debate, others from pure curiosity to witness the momentous controversy. At the very outset, the questions what should be the terms of the debate and with whom the final word should rest, stared in the face. The Shankaracharya, admittedly opposed as he was to the remarriage movement, was a sorry judge of the justice of the cause. The reformers proposed on their side that both the parties should publish their several cases and people should be left to judge of them of their own free will. But the proposal was rejected by the Shankaracharya who sought to substitute his own in lieu of the popular decision. The reformers had at last to close with the proposal of the Shankaracharya. Then followed the nomination of arbitrators and the umpire. Five arbitrators appeared on each side and an umpire was appointed who was to act only in the event of there being an equality of votes. The Shankaracharya gave his word that none who should register his vote on the reformers' side should incur his displeasure, and, in a letter, assured the adverse party of his intention to act disinterestedly in the matter, and to do nothing beyond announcing what would clearly appear to be the decision of the majority. The famous debate took place in Dixit's house at Poona. Vishnu Shastri Pandit, assisted by M. G. Ranade led the reformer's side of the controversy; while Narayanacharya Gajendragadkar, assisted by Vithoba Anna Daftardar led the other side. The names of the arbitrators and the umpire are given below.

On the side which maintained the legality of widow marriage.	On the other side.
1. Krishna Shastri Chiplonkar.	1. Bhiku Shastri Godbole.
2. Raoji Shastri Agashe.	2. Dinkar Shastri Khambete.

3. Raghunath Shastri Shende.	3. Appa Shastri Khaldikar.
4. Kesheo Shastri Gadgil.	4. Bhikacharya Ainapure.
5. Vyankat Shastri Mate.	5. Ganesh Shastri Kohatkar.

Umpire—Gopalacharya Karhadkar.

To avoid uncertainty and confusion, questions and answers were written, signed respectively by querists and respondents. In the course of the debate, Dinkar Shastri Khambete, one of the arbitrators nominated by the orthodox party, openly declared that victory over the reform party was his sole aim, and not the investigation of truth. Vishnu Shastri drew the attention of the Shankaracharya to this flagrant proof of partiality, but he was allowed to remain.

The debate commenced its sittings on the 28th March 1870, and lasted for nine days. The reformers intended to bring forward more proofs in favour of the legality of re-marriage. But the Shankaracharya, declaring himself to be satisfied with the number of arguments on either side, arrested the further progress of the debate, and bade the several arbitrators submit their votes. The reformers offered no objection to this informal procedure. The arbitrators gave their votes as desired. Those on the negative side together with one of those on the affirmative side declared against the validity of remarriage. So the affirmative side was defeated by a majority of two.

The reformers were fairly puzzled at the result, and with all the greater reason as the arbitrators on their side, Vyankat Shastri, who had at the last moment left them in the lurch and proved a traitor to their cause, was the very person who had supplied them with an argument in favour of remarriage, *viz.*, that "the central period of Kali age, which is the Yuga proper and to which alone the prohibitions against remarriage and other institutions can apply, has not yet commenced and in fact will commence only after some 31,000 years from this date." His conduct pointed

to some secret influence clandestinely brought to bear upon him. So far from refuting his own argument in the opinion he had submitted, he had not so much as referred to it. Vishnu Shastri determined to get the matter cleared before accepting the Shankaracharya's verdict as final; and so he sent word to Vyankat Shastri with his friend Siddheshwar Shastri that he desired to see him personally. Next morning Vyankat Shastri called on Vishnu Shastri as desired. There were present also Vishnu Parashram Ranade, Keshco Pandurang Godbole and Narayan Bapuji Gore. On being asked to explain his conduct, Vyankat Shastri stated that he still clung to his first opinion, but that the Shastris of the adverse party and the Shankaracharya himself had brought their pressure to bear upon him saying that a lie in the service of religion is excusable and citing the case of Dharma, and that he, poor soul! had no alternative but to submit and take an oath that he would vote against remarriage. This confession astounded the persons assembled there: and one of them, Narayen Bapuji Gore published the account over his signature in the *Dnyan Prakash*, (number of 14th April 1870.) The orthodox party hastened to throw discredit on the account by an expedient as ingenious and as little to their credit as the one they had already employed. Directly the account appeared, they took the simple Vyankat Shastri before the Shankaracharya and induced him to sign a document purporting to deny the fact of his having seen and spoken to Vishnu Shastri as alleged by Gore. This took place on the 15th of April 1870. The very next day, the contents of the document were published in a proclamation in which the Editor of the *Dnyan Prakash* paper was openly charged with dishonesty. Soon after, in a meeting held on the 7th April to announce the decision arrived at, Ganesh Bapuji Malvankar, who was an eloquent speaker and who had been charged with the duty of making the announce-

ment, seized the opportunity to read the paper signed by Vyankat Shastri and the proclamation issued and to give vent to his pent up rage against the editors of the *Dnyan Prakash* and the *Indu Prakash* and Narayen Bapuji Gore in a declamation in which he denied the last named gentleman whom he accused of black deeds any title to his own surname which, in Marathi means "white." Mr. Gore, keenly conscious of the injustice of the defamatory epithets hurled at his head, lodged a complaint against Mr. Malvankar in the Court of Mr. Fraser, Railway Magistrate. Those who had been present on the occasion of Vyankat Shastri's confession and others who had attended the meeting in which the defamatory language was used were examined as witnesses for the prosecution. Evidence of *alibi* was adduced for defence, but it could not stand the test of cross-examination and was disbelieved by the Court. Mr. Malvankar was convicted of defamation and sentenced to simple imprisonment for a term of thirty-two days. Dr. Fraser's judgment appeared in the supplement to the *Indu Prakash* number of the 16th May. On appeal, the District Magistrate maintained the conviction but reduced the sentence to one of a fine of Rs. 100. The order of the District Magistrate was confirmed on appeal by the High Court.

After the conclusion of the trial, fresh trials were instituted of those who had given false evidence in the preceding trial, and, among others, of Malvankar, who was, after a preliminary inquiry, committed to the Court of Session, and was sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment. He was also prosecuted by the editors of the *Dnyan Prakash* and the *Indu Prakash* for defamation, both of whom withdrew their complaints, the former on the tender of apology by the accused, and the latter on the conviction of the accused in the perjury case. In the course of the defamation trials, Vyankat Shastri deposed on oath that he himself had communicated to Vishnu Shastri the line of

argument relating to Kaliyuga and that he had discovered nothing to change his opinion.

The Remarriage Association passed a resolution that the validity of remarriage was as good as recognized by the majority of the arbitrators seeing that Dinkar Shastri's opinion was not worthy of being taken into account as he was retained on the board of arbitrators under protest and that Vyankat Shastri's real opinion was in favour of remarriage. This resolution is in accordance with the rules of judicial practice that obtain in Indian Courts, and for the matter of that, in the courts of all civilized countries.

Martyrdom always triumphs over success, though it is displayed in a bad cause. Sympathy follows in the wake of misfortune, though it be the result of a mistake on the part of the persecuted. The prosecutions instituted by the reformers against their adversaries turned the tide of public opinion against them for a time, and blinded the masses to the unfair means employed against them. Popular prejudice gathered strength from the fact of Gopal Hari Deshmukh, one of the excommunicated seven gentlemen going through the प्रायश्चित्त (Prayaschit) ceremony at Ahmedabad on the 22nd May 1870 for the sake of his daughter whose mother-in-law threatened to get her son remarried in case her father remained excommunicated. A mistaken idea began to spread among the masses that Mr. Deshmukh had done penance through a change in his opinion. In a letter, Mr. Deshmukh communicated the real cause of his doing penance to Vishnu Sashtri who thereupon published part of it in the *Indu Prakash* (number of the 20th May). In it Mr. Deshmukh had promised active and entire sympathy with the doings of the reformers. This act of penance without repentance perfectly satisfied his daughter's mother-in law.

The uneasiness, however, arising from such persecution was more than counterbalanced by the sympathy of friends. Those whom the arguments of the reformers and

the dishonesty of their adversaries had won over to their side, were not slow to proclaim their conversion. A letter of sympathy appeared in the *Indu Prakash* (number of the 27th June) over fifty-one signatures which soon went up to over two hundred and fifty. Scarcely had the late warmth of the hot contest had time to cool when another remarriage took place on the 6th of June in the hall of the Gokul Das Tejpal Sanskrit Institute. This event, taking place as it did so soon after the late tragedy, stilled all fears that were lingering on the score of want of following. A couple of years after, Vishnu Shastri himself, though on the shady side of forty-five, proved the honesty of his convictions by espousing a widow.

The Gujrathis, who were so far silent spectators of the tragedy being enacted at Poona, began active agitation soon after the Poona agitation had gone beyond its incipient stage. A Remarriage Association was started at Ahmedabad for the purpose of helping remarriages. Shet Madhavdas Raghunathdas, of the Kapol Bania caste, married a young widow of a rich and high family of his own caste, and has been since doing good to the cause. He has christened his new building in Girgaum the Widow Marriage Hall and has placed it at the service of the cause of widow marriage. It has justified its name by the number of happy remarriages it has silently witnessed for more than ten years.

Three or four years ago, Mr. D. B. Jaywant, an educated and courageous youth of the Kayastha Prabhu class set an example to his fellow-castemen by marrying a widow of the same caste. He and his elder brother who went though the ordeal with great courage and equanimity, deserve every praise. More remarriages have since taken place in the same caste.

In 1884 the subject of remarriage acquirred a fresh importance through the writings of Mr. Malabari, one of those

Parsi gentlemen who have been doing yeomen's service to the country of their adoption in social, political and industrial matters, and who have thus been more than discharging the debt of gratitude they owe to it. Being a non-Hindu, and consequently not in a position to speak with authority and to be heard with unbiassed minds, in constant danger of having his disinterestedness construed into meddlesomeness, his laudable efforts were far less successful than those of a Hindu of equal courage, sincerity, ability and knowledge would have been. After years of untiring labour he handed over his self-imposed and thankless task to Dewan Bahadoor R. Raghunath Rao as likely to prosper in orthodox hands. That his confidence was not misplaced has been amply proved by his worthy successor. Madras was rather late in the field, but it has more than made amends for its early indifference by its sustained enthusiasm for the cause of remarriage, thanks mainly to the indefatigable and zealous labours of Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam Pantulu, than whom a more ardent worker in the cause of Social Reform does not breathe in the whole country and who is justly known as the Pandit Vidyasagar of Southern India. The Punjab is still in a backward condition, and no wonder. Education has been there neglected to a degree which renders freedom of thought well nigh impossible.

We must not ignore the influence of literature on widow marriage. The *Sudharak*, a paper started by the late lamented G. G. Agarkar and the *Indian Social Reformer* have been the leading organs of the reformers in the Deccan and Madras respectively and been doing immense service to the cause of widow marriage. The widow homes of Shashipada Banerji and D. K. Karve have also had their share in the furtherance of the movement. Of late several pamphlets and plays have been written in favour of widow marriage and have been growing in popularity.

A statistical study of remarriages celebrated hitherto in the Maratha country leads to some curious conclusions. The largest number of bridegrooms is from the Kokanastha Brahman class, and the largest number of brides from the Deshasthas. The ratio of Kokanastha bridegrooms to Kokanastha brides may be said very nearly to vary inversely as that of Deshastha bridegrooms to Deshastha brides. The number of remarriages among the Karhadas and the Deorakhes is too small to draw any conclusion. Out of 21 marriages, in 8 the bridegrooms earned not more than Rs. 25 per month, in 2 they earned more than 25 but not more than 50; in 4 they earned more than 50 but not more than 75, and in 2 more than 75 and not more than 100. This falsifies the assertion often confidently made that most bridegrooms in remarriages are highly paid Government officials. Among the Mahrattas, Brahmans appear to have taken the most prominent part, while among the Gujrathis the Banias have been the principal actors, and the Brahmans have been thrown in the background. The ages of the majority of Mahratta brides vary from 15 to 20, and those of the majority of Gujrathi brides from 20 to 25; while the age of an average Mahratta bridegroom varies from 30 to 35, and that of his Gujrathi brother from 25 to 30. The inequality arises from the fact that even in ordinary marriages among the Gujrathis the ages of the bride and the bridegroom are allowed to gravitate more towards each other than in ordinary Mahratta marriages.

The annual increase in remarriages is greater in Berar and the Central Provinces than in the Deccan proper. The reasons are obvious. Those who have migrated to those provinces observe a great difference between their own manners and those of the inhabitants of the provinces, and being thus impressed with the immateriality of differences in social customs find it easier to advance than those whom they have left behind.

Moreover, neither their old bonds nor their new connections are so strong as to materially affect their conduct in social matters. The annually growing number of remarriages in these provinces is also no unsure index to the sentiments of the Deccanites proper which are every year being more and more alienated from the old religion, and, though held in check by their surroundings for a time, wait only a transplantation to express themselves in action. Even in Poona, the seat of orthodoxy, old people who have witnessed the ravages of the terrible plague on thousands of Brahman families are heard openly to deplore the absence of the custom of remarriages. God grant that we learn to reform ourselves without the aid of misfortunes.

It has been observed by an acute Maratha thinker that the cause of reform was not a little compromised by the social reformers themselves posing as religious reformers. Perhaps this was. But one who is conscious of the part religion has played in the fossilising of old customs need not be reminded of the necessity of religious reform being undertaken side by side with social regeneration. The educated people in India have outgrown their customs. To whatever reform they direct their energies they are met at every turn by the all-absorbing and tyrannical Hindu religion holding every custom tight with the iron grip of desperation. Naturally they feel an aversion from it, and the odium is gradually transferred from its vulnerable parts to those that are lovely. The same religion that once trespassed upon the provinces of society and law is now, in its turn, exposed to the danger of having its merits confounded with its defects. Its blind mistakes recoil upon its head with a terrible fury; and after having taken undue liberty with its sister institutions it is now fast losing the respect that is its due.

The Bengali as well as the Maratha reformers thought fit to substitute in the place of the old religion a new one

which was in reality nothing more or less than the self-same old religion shorn of its accidents and excrescences, the old religion in all its pure splendour. The religious movement in Bengal was far more successful than that in the Bombay Presidency. The result has been that in Bengal religious reform has kept pace with social reform, while in the Bombay Presidency it has given place to scepticism and atheism. On the other hand, in Bengal social reform has been in a degree impeded by the tacit requirement of conformity with the principles of Brahmoism which is the religion of the reformers, while in Bombay the reformers, apparently continuing as they do in the religion of their ancestors, are not estranged from popular sympathy to the degree they have done in Bengal. In Bengal, social reform has assumed the shape of a caste question, while in Bombay the refusal of the reformers to claim a separate caste for themselves has set the whole society in a ferment. Reform is bound to live an isolated life in Bengal, and to be general in Bombay. Whichever state of the two one is inclined to prefer to the other, one fact remains undisputed that neither social aristocracy nor religious anarchy is a thing to be congratulated upon. It is time the Shankaracharya reviewed his decision in the Poona controversy in a spirit of compromise and effected a reconciliation between the innovations that are knocking for admission and the old religion that is indignantly refusing them entrance.

The number of remarriages is bound to be small as compared to that of first marriages. Bearing this fact in mind, we find that the number of remarriages is steadily growing every year. Occasional inequalities can be accounted for by the recent terrible visitations that have relegated everything save the safety of life to a subordinate rank. A sudden increase is expected after society is restored to its equilibrium, which, it is fervently hoped, is at no distant date.

XII. The Condition of Low Castes

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The position assigned to low castes in the Hindu social organization is one of its least satisfactory features. When in the early nineties, an agitation was started by some Missionaries in the south, for the purpose of calling the attention of the Madras Government to their miserable condition, I expressed my views in writing and placed them before the late Maharajah of Vijayanagaram, whose generous sympathy with the low, the miserable, and the fallen was known to all that knew him intimately, in the hope that his support if secured, would be a powerful aid to those who were trying to elevate them. Though the Maharajah assured me of his sympathy with them, nothing came out of it.

Who are the people that come under the category of low castes? They go by different names in different parts of the country; they are called Malas and Madigas in the Circars, Pariahs in the Tamil country, Holiyas in Canara, Poliyas in Malabar, and Dhedas in Maharashtra. They are known as Chandalas to the writers of Smritis. According to Manu, a Chandala is one who has a Sudra father and a Brahmin mother. Though this definition of Chandala has been accepted by all the later smriti writers, I think that the real Chandalas were probably those aboriginal tribes whom the Aryans cut off from Society, perhaps on account of their vicious lives. With a view to discourage as far as possible intercourse between Brahmin women and Sudra men, the Brahmin law-givers degraged the offsprings of such unions to the level of those who, having been thrown out of the pale of the Aryan community, were in certain respects regarded as worse than beasts. Their complexion

and features, their mode of worship, their marriage and other ceremonies, all point to a non-Aryan origin. Long before the time of Manu, the Chandalas, whatever their origin, must have been reduced to the condition similar to that in which we still find their descendants; for, we find that his description of their social condition is, in certain respects, not inapplicable to the low castes of the present day, making allowance for the changes which it has undergone in the altered state of the Hindu society under the British rule.

Abbe Dubois says "the Pariahs were most probably composed in the first instance of all the disreputable individuals of different classes of society, who on account of their various offences had forfeited their right to associate with respectable men. They formed a class apart and having nothing to fear and less to lose, they gave themselves up without restraint to their natural tendencies towards vice and excess in which they continue to live at the present day."*

Some are of opinion that the Pariahs were originally hill people and that they were driven away from the plains by their Aryan conquerors. There does not seem to be any ethnological connection between them and the various classes of hill people in Southern India, such as the Khonds, the Savaras, the Gadabas, the Lumbadis. Their marriage, funeral and other rites have little in common; as regards their physical features, there is hardly any resemblance between them and any of the existing hill tribes that I know of in Southern India.

The following is what Manu says about them:—

(*a*) "Chandalas and Svapachas (those who eat dog's flesh) shall live outside the village; they shall have no utensils for their use; their property shall consist in dogs and asses."

(*b*) "They shall put on clothing taken off dead bodies, and eat

* *Vide* page 53, Beauchamp's translation of Abbe Dubois' Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies.

their food in broken pots. Their ornaments shall be made of iron and they shall always wander about."

(*c*) "While engaged in the performance of religious duties, no twice-born man shall have anything to do with them. They shall have dealings amongst themselves and contract marriages with their equals."

(*d*) "They shall not receive food directly (from a man of twice-born class) but shall receive the same in a broken pot through another (a Sudra). They shall not move about in towns and villages at night."

(*e*) "They may go on business during the day, wearing a badge (to be distinguished from other classes) under orders of the King; they shall remove from the village the dead body of one who had no relations left; so says the law."

(*f*) "Under orders of the king and in accordance with the law, they shall hang those who are condemned to death. They shall take the clothing and ornaments of those who are condemned to death."*

From what is stated above, it is plain that the Chandalas were thrown out of the Hindu community and that their cup of misery was full before the time of Manu. I shall quote below a few extracts from Parasara who came long after Manu, which refer to certain expiatory ceremonies to be performed by members of twice-born classes for sins arising from contact (direct or indirect) with Chandalas.

(*a*) "If a Brahmin happens to talk to a Chandala, he shall (in order to be purified from the pollution arising therefrom) talk to other Brahmins and repeat Savitri."

(*b*) "A Brahmin who has slept with a Chandala shall fast for three days. A Brahmin who has walked on a road with a Chandala is purified by the repetition of Gayatri."

(*c*) "A Brahmin touching a Chandala shall forthwith look at the sun, and also perform his ablutions with his clothing on."

(*d*) "A Brahmin drinking water from a well, being unaware that it was sunk by a Chandala, is purified by taking only a single meal daily, for three consecutive days."

(*e*) "If a Brahmin drinks water from a well touched by the pot of a Chandala, he is purified after eating *yavas* (barley) cooked in cow's urine, for three days."

* Manu, Chapter 10, (*a*) 51, (*b*) 52, (*c*) 53, (*d*) 54, (*e*) 55, (*f*) 56.

(*f*) "A Brahmin who drinks water from the pot of a Chandala is purified by performing the Prajapatya ceremony, provided that he has spit it out forthwith."

(*g*) "If such water is digested, the Brahmin shall perform Santapana, but not Prajapatya."

(*h*) "If a Brahmin eats once the food of a Chandala, being unaware that it is such, he is purified by eating *yavas* (barley) cooked in cow's urine, for three consecutive days."

(*i*) "If a Brahmin allows a Chandala to live in his house, without knowing that he is such, he is purified if he performs a number of expiatory ceremonies, besides setting fire to his house."*

A reference to the later Sanscrit writers shows that there was no improvement in the position of Chandalas as a class in Epic or Puranic times, a Chandala being always spoken of as the most degraded of human beings, an embodiment of all that is impure, immoral and wicked, a being with whom the higher castes should have no sort of intercourse whatsoever. Whatever changes Hindu society may have undergone in the course of ages, whatever effect the growth of new ideas may have had upon different sects by way of splitting them into sub-sects, the socio-religious relations of the different castes do not seem to have very much changed and the position of the low castes has consequently remained unaltered. The establishment of the Mahomedan rule in India does not appear to have improved the position of the Chandalas, although the Mussalmans recognise no caste and freely employ them in their domestic service. It is a curious fact that some of the Mahomedan rulers who bore no good will to the Brahmins and persecuted them in various ways, should never have thought of elevating the Chandalas, as a measure calculated to degrade the Brahmins and reduce their influence. So, whether the country was ruled by the Hindu or Mussalman kings, their lot remained the same, throughout many centuries. The picture given by Abbe Dubois of their

* Parasara, Chapter 6, (*a*) 22, (*b*) 23, (*c*) 24, (*d*) 25, (*e*) 26, (*f*) 27, (*g*) 28, (*h*) 32, (*i*) 34 and 40.

condition about the end of the eighteenth century clearly bears out the truth of the above statement.

(*a*) "The contempt and aversion with which the other castes and particularly the Brahmins regard these unfortunate people are carried to such an excess that in many places their presence or even their foot-prints are considered sufficient to defile the whole neighbourhood. They are forbidden to cross a street in which Brahmins are living. Should they be so ill-advised as to do so, the later would have the right not to strike them themselves because they could not do so without defilement or even touch them with the end of a long stick, but to order them to be severely beaten by other people, &c., &c., &c.*

(*b*) "Any one who has been touched whether inadvertently or purposely by a Pariah is defiled by that single act, and may hold no communication with any person whatsoever until he has been purified by bathing or by other ceremonies, more or less important according to the status and customs of his caste. It would be contamination to eat with any member of this class, to touch food prepared by them or even to drink water which they have drawn; to use an earthen vessel which they have held in their hands; to set foot inside one of their houses or to allow them to enter houses other than their own. Each of these acts would contaminate the person affected by it and before being readmitted to his own caste, such a person would have to go through many exacting and expensive formalities."†

(*c*) "Throughout the whole of India, the Pariahs are looked upon as slaves by other castes and are treated with great harshness. Hardly anywhere are they allowed to cultivate for their own benefit, but are obliged to hire themselves out to the other castes who in return for a minimum wage exact the hardest task from them."‡

(*d*) "However, notwithstanding the miserable condition of these wretched Pariahs, they are never heard to murmur or to complain of their lowest state. Still less do they ever dream of trying to improve their lot by combining together and forcing the other classes," &c., &c., &c.

(*e*) "Nothing will ever persuade him (a Pariah) that men are all made of the same clay or that he has a right to insist on better treatment than that which is meted out to him."

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* (*a*) *Vide* page 52, Chapter 5, part I. Beauchamp's translation of Abbe Dubois' Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies.

† (*b*) Same as (*a*).

‡ (*c*) *Vide* page 50, part and Chapter same as (*a*) and (*b*).

(*f*) "They live in hopeless poverty and the greater number lack sufficient means to procure even the coarsest clothing. They go about almost naked or at best clothed in the most hideous rags."

(*g*) "They live from hand to mouth the whole year round, and rarely know one day how they will procure food for the next; when they happen to have any money, they invariably spend it at once on the drink, and make a point of doing no work, as long as they have anything left to live on."*

(*h*) "Among the forests on the Malabar Coast there lives a tribe which, incredible as it may seem, surpasses the two (Pariahs and Palvers, the latter a class of Pariahs found in Madura) of which I have just spoken, in degradation and squalid misery. They are called Puliahs and are looked upon as below the level of beasts which share this wild country with them. They are not even allowed to build themselves huts to protect themselves from the inclemencies of the weather. A sort of lean-to supported by four bamboo-poles and open at the sides serves as a shelter for some of them and keeps off the rain, though it does not screen them from the wind. Most of them however make for themselves what may be called nests in the branches of the thickest-foliaged trees where they perch like birds of prey for the greater part of the twenty-four hours. They are not even allowed to walk peaceably along the high road. If they see any one coming towards them, they are bound to utter a certain cry and to go a long way round to avoid passing him. A hundred paces is the very nearest they may approach any one of a different caste," &c., &c., &c.

(*i*) "The Puliahs live an absolutely savage life and have no communication whatever with the rest of the world."†

From the description given by Dubois of the condition of the low castes of his time, the reader will see that through all the vicissitudes through which India passed, there was no change in their position in relation to the other castes, and that if there had been any, it was for the worse; but the consolidation of the British power in India has had a beneficial effect upon it; the abolition of slavery in India has secured perfect personal freedom for the low castes, of which in certain parts of the country such

*(*d*), (*e*), (*f*), (*g*). *Vide* page 51, Chapter and Pt. same as (*a*), (*b*), (*c*).
†(*h*) and (*i*). *Vide* pages 61, 92, Chapter and Pt. same as (*a*), (*b*), &c.

as Malabar, they had not dreamt for many centuries. The law recognises no distinction of caste, and those who injure the person or property of their fellow beings under the alleged sanction of custom are punished. A qualified man of low caste is equally eligible for appointment under the Government with a qualified man of high caste. Theoretically, these are no small gains to a fallen class, whose very existence except for duties was not recognised till the establishment of the British power; I say theoretically for, as circumstances stand, the only real boon for which they are as a class indebted to the British Government is that of personal freedom. As I am going to speak of their education later on, I need not here discuss the question whether and how far the Government deserve to be praised for the facilities they have afforded to low castes in that direction.

In the following paragraphs I propose to describe the present condition of the low castes so that the reader may form an idea of the disabilities to which they are still subject under the best of rulers which this country has ever had. Though I have had no opportunities of observing personally the condition of the Pariahs outside the Circars, from what I have read and heard about them, I believe that my remarks may be applied to the class as a whole, in whatever part of the country they may be found.

The low castes live as a rule outside towns and villages and always at some distance from them. They live in huts. The roof of a Pariah hut is made of palmyra leaves or thatch, whichever is available in the locality, and supported on low mud walls of not more than four or five feet in height; it has one entrance which is often so low that only children of not more than ten or twelve years of age can conveniently enter. It is not provided with windows or other contrivances to let in light or air. Inside the hut, all that one finds is only a pile of earthen pots and sometimes a rickety make-shift of a cot and a dirty stinking mat

made of palm or date leaves. Generally, the hut has no backyard attached to it, and when it has one, it is full of filth and looks like a rubbish depot. Tiled houses are exceedingly rare. As the surface of the ground on which the parchery stands is not generally much above the surrounding fields, their huts are damp, except during the hot weather; consequently those that live in them often suffer from fever and dysentery. Their surroundings are generally in a most insanitary condition, as portions of carcases of cattle and other animals upon which they feed are thrown near their huts and allowed to rot and stink. If the problem of village sanitation has defied the attempts of the Government up to date, the solution of that of parchery sanitation must be regarded as an impossibility for the present.

The dress of Panchamas, especially of those living in villages, is of the most scanty description, consisting of a rag tied round the waist in the case of males. It is doubtful whether in villages, they change their rags more than twice or thrice a year. Their women are somewhat better clad, although their clothing is made of the coarsest stuff. Those that are decently dressed are found only in towns being employed as syces, &c.

If we except a few who are in the service of the Government or Europeans, as well as those who are substantial farmers or traders, whose number must be exceedingly small, they may be said to live on the coarsest kind of food acceptable to any class of the people living in the plains. They are generally so poor that it is doubtful if the majority of them have more than a single scanty meal a day for many months in the year, in addition to gruel which they cannot do without in the morning. What is left of food partaken by the higher classes on such occasions as marriage, &c., is about the most delicious an ordinary Panchama can hope to get. They are fond of liquor and drink

toddy generally and arrack if they get a chance. They are so fond of drink that they often spend the whole of their miserably small daily wages for it.

A large number of Panchamas earn their livelihood as servants of farmers and are mostly paid in kind for their services. Many of them are also day labourers, their wages ranging in this part of the country from nine pies to two annas a day. They are employed as syces. A few are petty farmers. Some are employed as village watchmen; in addition to the duties of village watchmen they carry messages in the day time, the proprietor or the headman of the village having a right to employ them for private or public purpose as the case may be. Panchamas are also found in the Police or the Military department and some are in the domestic service of Europeans and Mussalmans. Shoe-making and leather dressing are chiefly in their hands. In towns, a particular class of them are employed as sweepers and scavengers. We do not find many beggars among them, at least not so many as one may reasonably expect to see amongst such poor people; this is perhaps due to the fact that a Panchama cannot maintain himself by begging, as he is regarded as unworthy of being helped by the other classes of the community.

To speak of the property of Panchamas, if we except those who are in the employ of the Government or of Europeans and a few others who are either farmers or traders, it is doubtful if they can be said to have any property at all, except the miserable huts in which they live. In most cases even these huts are not their own; and they are allowed to live in them only so long as it suits the convenience of their masters. That the bulk of the people in India are very poor, is a fact which every man who knows anything really about their material condition must admit. If the majority of the lower classes who are higher in social scale are hopelessly poor, what must be the lot of the Panchamas

who, occupying the lowest position in society, depend upon them for their livelihood? I would that somebody took the trouble to collect statistics regarding the material condition of these low castes, and place the information before the public so that they may see how miserably poor they are.

As for the treatment of the Panchamas by the higher castes, in certain respects the history of the world can show no parallel to it. It is true that a low caste man is legally free; but socially, is he not worse than a slave ever was in the worst days of slavery? The slaves in ancient Greece and Rome had no personal freedom and were bought and sold freely. They were given the hardest and meanest kinds of work to do, and if they complained, they were flogged or punished in any other manner their lords thought it fit to punish them; they were not allowed to own any property or to enjoy the fruits of their labour; they were severely punished for disobedience and might under certain circumstances even be put to death by their owners; and if the owners did so, they were accountable to nobody for it. In fact, they were absolutely at the mercy of their masters. If the master happened to be a cruel man, there was no end to the misery of his slaves. With all these disabilities, the slaves were in a certain sense the companions of their lords; they were in personal attendance on them; and if they were intelligent and faithful, they became their confidential advisers. Sometimes they got their freedom when they did signal services to their masters, and were then as good as any freeborn men. The idea of cutting off a whole class from society and keeping them at a distance as a mark of their degradation, declaring them to be unfit for any kind of intercourse, never seems to have struck the Greeks or the Romans.* However unsympathetic may

* Dr. Schmitz speaking of the Helots of Sparta says, "the members of the ruling class were held to be profaned by the touch of the unfortunate outcaste; the latter are said to have sometimes been forced to make themselves drunk that in this state they might be exposed to the derision and insults of their young lords as a practical lesson of sobriety." But he thinks that this and similar stories may be exaggerated.

have been the attitude of the general community towards the slaves in middle ages, we find that the priestly class stood by them and that the church was the protector of the oppressed slave. In England, the abolition of serfdom and villainage was greatly due to the exertions of the clergy who used their influence with the powerful and the wealthy to get their slaves manumitted.*

In this respect the attitude of the priestly caste in India towards low castes has always been the reverse of that of the Christian clergy towards the slaves in Europe. The untold misery of millions of the Panchamas in this country throughout numberless generations has been the result of the aversion of the priestly class towards them. How is a Panchama treated by the higher classes? Is he not regarded as the worst of human beings, nay, worse than the most unclean of animals? Is he not treated worse than a dog, an ass or even a pig? If a Brahmin has scruples to touch a pig, he has none to approach him. Can a Panchama ever dare to come near a Brahmin without being reviled for his insolence? A Panchama is regarded

* "Slavery was gradually disappearing before the efforts of the Church. Theodore had denied Christian burial to the kidnapper, and prohibited the sale of children by their parents, after the age of seven. Ecgberht of York punished any sale of child or kinsfolk with excommunication. The murder of a slave by lord or mistress, though no crime in the eye of the State became a sin for which penance was due to the Church. The slave was exempted from toil on Sundays and holy days; here and there he became attached to the soil and could only be sold with it; sometimes he acquired a plot of ground, and was suffered to purchase his own release. Æthelstan gave the slave-class a new rank in the realm by extending to it the same principles of mutual responsbility for crime which were the basis of order among the free. The Church was far from contenting herself with this gradual elevation; Wilfrid led the way in the work of emancipation by freeing two hundred and fifty serfs whom he found attached to his estate at Selsey. Manumission became frequent in wills, as the clergy taught that such a gift was a boon to the soul of the dead: At the Synod of Chelsea the bishops bound themselves to free at their decease all serfs on their estates who had been reduced to serfdom by want or crime. Usually the slave was set free before the altar or in the Church-porch, and the Gospel-book bore written on its margins the record of his emancipation." *Vide* pages 58 and 59, Chap. I, A Short History of the English People, Green.

such an impure creature that a Brahmin believes that he is polluted by his near approach and does not become pure unless he performs certain expiatory ceremonies. The aversion to the Panchama is so strong up to date that in villages remotely situated from towns and mostly inhabited by Brahmins, he dare not show himself in the Brahmin quarter; and if he crosses the threshold of a Brahmin's house, he is sure to be addressed in a language which no member of another caste would ever tolerate. What if the law recognises no distinction between the high and low castes? Hindu society says that the low castes are beyond its pale. Tyranny political or social is a curse; but of the two the social is a greater curse than the political. The following remarks of John Stuart Mill, though made in connection with a different subject may be applied to the case of the low castes in India:—

"Like other tyrannies, the tyranny of the majority was at first, and is still vulgarly, held in dread, chiefly as operating through the acts of the public authorities. But reflecting persons perceive that when society is itself the tyrant—society collectively, over the separate individuals who compose it—its means of tyrannising are not restricted to the acts which it may do by the hands of its political functionaries. Society can and does execute its own mandates, and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right, or any mandates at all in things with which it ought not to meddle, it practises social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life and enslaving the soul itself."* When a great community has so far allowed its higher instincts to be warped that it comes to treat a large portion of itself, numbering some millions, as worse than beasts, and totally

* *Vide* page 3, Chap. I., Liberty, by John Stuart Mill (People's Edition).

refuses to recognise those ties which bind humanity together, sad must be the lot of that unfortunate portion which for no fault of its own is degraded to a position the worst imaginable for any community to occupy. The existence of the present order of things for centuries has worked such a change in the minds of the higher and lower castes alike that both of them have come to regard their present relations as perfectly natural. The Panchama who lives a miserable and degraded life, who is allowed no sort of social intercourse with the other sections of the community, who is not even allowed to go near the higher classes, being denied a concession made to the dirtiest of animals, takes this treatment as perfectly natural and is hardly aware of his own degradation. Does he ever think that his position is capable of improvement, and that as a human being he has certain indefeasible rights which no custom to the contrary can take away? Every man who is born into this world has a natural right to walk over high ways and in public places in his own country. Every man who is born into this world has a right to take water from such sources as are available for the general use of the community. Yet some of these primary rights of man are denied to the Panchama; he is not allowed to walk in certain streets of villages owned by Brahmins even though they are public property; if he happens to see a Brahmin coming in the opposite direction, after the latter has performed his ablutions in the village tank, he would have to go off the way lest the Brahmin should be polluted. He is not allowed to take water from wells used by the other classes in consequence whereof he is put to serious inconveniences in places where the people depend upon a few wells for their drinking water, especially during the hot weather. Is not this tantamount to a denial of primary human rights to the Panchama? Commission of crimes may entail loss of primary as well as secondary rights; but in such a

case it is only the individual criminal, the actual perpetrator of the crimes that is punished. We have no idea of the crimes committed by the forefathers of the existing low castes for which they lost their status as human beings; but it is certainly unjust to enforce in the case of the descendants the penalties originally inflicted on their forefathers, except by applying to them the calvinistic doctrine of original sin which the humanity of the nineteenth century rejects as one of the exploded beliefs of mediæval Christianity. If the Panchamas do not deserve this treatment on the ground of being the descendants of their forefathers, do they deserve it on account of their personal actions or character? Are the Panchamas as a class worse than any other of the lower classes of the Hindu community, allowance being made for the circumstances under which they have been placed for centuries? If a general enquiry were made regarding their character, I have no doubt it would result in bringing to light some facts which would show them in a favourable light when compared to some classes who are above them in the social scale. There is evidence to show that in early times there were Panchamas distinguished for their genius, learning and piety, and their names are venerated by the Hindus up to the present day. If tradition may be believed, Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, which is considered to be the first and certainly one of the finest epic poems in Sanskrit, is said to have been a Panchama. This tradition is supported by the Padmapurana and Jnana Vasishtha, both of which are regarded as works of authority by learned Brahmins. The immortal author of Kural, known as Tiruvalluvar, and Tiruppaniyalwar, one of the twelve saints worshipped by the Vaishnava community, are both supposed to have been men of Panchama origin. Marner Numbiyar, a disciple of Yamunacharyar, one of the greatest Vaishnava scholar-saints of antiquity, though a Panchama by birth, received

all the high funeral honors of a Brahman saint on his death. I have heard of some Panchamas of modern times who were held in respect by their contemporaries for their learning and piety. If the Panchama community, which produced such men, does not deserve to be treated with contempt and aversion, and if under favourable circumstances members thereof have every chance of rising and distinguishing themselves, the problem of elevating low castes is surely worthy of the serious attention of the social reformer. There are about five million Panchamas in Southern India, excluding those in the Native States of Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. There is a large Panchama population in the Western Presidency, and their number is not inconsiderable in Bengal and Northern India. Probably the total Panchama population in India is about seven millions. Surely the question of the emancipation of so many millions of human beings cannot be unimportant. To the best of my knowledge, so far as the Indian social reformer is concerned, the Panchama problem has not yet advanced beyond the stage of discussion. A reference to the reports of the Indian Social Conference for the last few years shows that although the reformers have not lost sight of the question, they have not been able to formulate any definite proposal regarding its solution. The question of social reform in India is a peculiarly difficult one. We all know how attempts made by some of our best men to introduce small but salutary changes into customs are met with an opposition calculated to break the spirit of any but the most resolute, changes too about the desirability of which there is little difference of opinion, not only among the few who by their education and experience are competent to form an opinion, but also among the many whose minds have not been petrified under the dead weight of custom. If the reformers are unable to change recent practices which are admitted to be pernicious, for which there is no

sanction in the Shastras and which most people condemn but few are bold enough to set aside, can they hope to induce their countrymen to treat the Panchamas as their fellow-beings fit to associate with and to rise above the prejudice they have inherited from their forefathers? Recognising this prejudice as a barrier to the elevation of the low castes, a barrier which can only be slowly removed, let us see if anything can be done for the present to improve their lot. In the first place, it must be stated that their present condition, miserable as it is, is an improvement upon their past one. Not to speak of the personal emancipation secured to the Panchamas by the statute law, their admission into the Military, Police and other departments of the public service has raised their status, at least that of those who have been thus admitted. About twenty-one per cent of the Panchama population in the Madras Presidency are stated to have been cultivators some years back; probably their number now is a little larger.* The establishment of special primary schools for the Panchamas is a measure of some importance, although the result thereof is not perceptible at present. According to the report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1898-99, there were about sixty thousand Panchama boys receiving instruction in the Madras Presidency in that year. † Out of these, twenty-one were in Upper Secondary schools and one was in a College. The above facts appear so far encouraging. But I have reasons to think that a good many of those shown in the returns as Panchamas are Christians by faith, and that if their number is deducted from the total, that of Panchamas proper will be very much smaller than it now appears to be.

Foremost among the benefactors of Panchamas come

* *Vide* page 232, Vol. 2, Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency.

† *Vide* page 98, Report on the Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency for 1898-99.

Christian Missionaries. When these low castes, kept down in a state of extreme degradation and wretchedness, were left to themselves, cared for neither by their own countrymen nor their rulers, the missionaries came forward to rescue and elevate them, by educating and qualifying them for higher walks of life of which they could not have dreamt till recently. It was an agitation started by some missionaries in the South in favour of the Panchamas that opened the eyes of the local Government to their extremely wretched condition, and made them start special schools for their benefit. The missionaries have proved to be sincere friends of the low and the fallen in India as elsewhere and have done and are still doing their best to raise their status. If missionaries come first as benefactors of the Panchamas, the local Government come next, for opening schools for their exclusive benefit; but if they wish to elevate them they will have to do a great deal more, as will be shown presently; still, since they have taken the first step in the right direction, they deserve the thanks of the community. Supposing that education will considerably raise the status of the Panchamas, it may be asked how they are to be educated. In the largest majority of cases, their education cannot go beyond the primary stage, as they are too poor to continue their studies further. If primary education is all that they can hope for under the existing circumstances, of what use can it be to them? A large number of Panchamas has been receiving education for some years; but I do not know if there are any amongst them (who are not Christians) holding decent appointments in the public service. Even if primary education could do them some good, how could it reach those who are living in rural parts who form the majority? As primary education in India has but touched the mere fringe of the population, for a long time to come Panchama boys living in villages will

have to go without any education. The establishment of Primary schools for the Panchamas in towns will do but little good for the little that they may learn in them they will forget shortly after leaving them, as they will have no occasion to make use of it in the walks of life they have perforce to enter. If they have to be pushed up, special educational facilities will have to be provided for them; so that intelligent Panchama lads may proceed to the University. In the present state of that community, perhaps technical education will be of greater use to them than literary. In my humble opinion, the scholarships now sanctioned by the local Government for the encouragement of the backward classes are practically useless to the Panchamas, inasmuch as they cannot continue their studies further with them without extraneous help, which in their case is impossible, their parents being too poor to give them any pecuniary assistance; so these scholarships will have to be increased, if the low castes are to derive any benefit from them. Besides, one or two scholarships will have to be instituted for the Panchamas of each District, so that any thing which the Government may be willing to do for this class may benefit it as a whole.

Even if all that is recommended in the above paragraph is done, it is doubtful if education alone will remove the disabilities to which the Panchamas have been subject for these many centuries and raise them socially so as to render them quite free from the infamy which now attaches to their very name. Even if educated Panchamas get good appointments in the public service, it is doubtful whether members of the higher castes will associate with them or treat them as their equals. This is not likely to happen for a long time to come. Some are of opinion that since their present condition is an improvement upon their past one, they are sure to make further progress in future if only they are educated. They say that with

the spread of English education, caste restrictions will slacken and that the existing prejudices against the low castes will tend to disappear. There is some truth in this. But the levelling up of a fallen class by education is a slow process. Those that are sanguine about it will do well to bear in mind that their optimism is based upon what they see in a few large towns. If the Panchamas living in towns appear to be treated better than those who live in villages, it is due to a variety of causes, of which the growing sympathy of the more enlightened members of the community with low castes is not one. The fact is that the conditions of life in towns do not allow full scope for prejudices of the higher castes against the low castes; this is quite different from sympathy. In towns those whose minds have been truly liberalised under the influence of English education form a microscopic minority. Even the hall-mark of the University is not always a guarantee that the mind of the recipient of the honour is purged of superstitions and prejudices common to the community to which he belongs. The remarkable growth of the present Revivalistic movement in the country, supported mainly by educated men, some of whom have received the highest University honours, strangely trying to justify on plausible grounds all that is Indian, good, bad or indifferent, bears out to some extent the statement of the critics of the existing educational system that the products of higher education in India are not all that they are supposed to be. The Hindus move slowly when they are compelled to move at all. If progress in certain directions is visible in towns, it scarcely extends beyond their limits. While a few advanced men are found in large towns, men who have kept pace with the progress of thought in Europe, the majority of their countrymen, especially those who are living in villages have not got beyond the stage of culture reached by their forefathers about two thousand years

ago. Though it is true in a general way that the few in towns must always lead the many in the country, the largest majority of the rural population in India do not appear to be influenced in the slightest degree by the opinions of advanced thinkers in the towns. If higher education is the only solvent of prejudices, how are the rural population to be brought under its influence? Those who read the times have to admit that if higher education is to spread in the country, it will not be through the direct agency of the State. If the Government keep back, the chance of the bulk of the people coming under the sway of western ideas must be remote. It is not pleasant to play the role of a pessimistic philosopher, but there is no use in indulging in visionary hopes, especially when such indulgence leads to the continuance of a highly unsatisfactory state of things affecting the position of a large section of a community. The principle of *Laissez-faire is* all very well, when the people are enlightened and self-reliant; but in a backward community it is seldom productive of good. It must also be borne in mind that whatever difference of opinion there may be regarding the non-interference policy of the Government in certain questions of social or religious character, there can be but one opinion concerning this, that in the matter of readjustment of relations between the higher and lower castes, they can do nothing except in the way already suggested, however much they may sympathise.

It is suggested that Government should encourage the emigration of low castes to foreign countries, such as Mauritius, Zanzibar and certain other parts of Africa, with a view to their final settlement in those countries. Those who suggest this think that, if they return at all to their mother country after a long time, they will have lived down the disabilities of their birth, if they take care to settle in a different part of the country from which they originally

emigrated. They advocate this measure as one which is important not only from a social, but also from an economical point of view. Though this suggestion is not unworthy of the consideration of the Government, it must be added that the carrying out of it will be attended with immense practical difficulties.

If the low castes are to be raised socially, it can only be done by the higher castes; since in the present state of enlightenment of the people, it is not possible that large portions of the higher classes would move in the matter of their own accord, it is the duty of the leaders who ought to see its importance to educate public opinion as a measure preparatory to any steps they may propose to take for the elevation of the Panchamas. With a few honourable exceptions, the leaders of the community, even those good men who at considerable self-sacrifice are actively striving to promote the interests of the country, have scarcely turned their attention to this important subject. Admitting the immense difficulties of the question, I am still of opinion that it deserves more serious attention than has been till now bestowed upon it. The leaders of the Hindu community have laid themselves open to the attack of their critics that what they are seeking is not the advancement of the many but that of the few, by their indifference to the miserable and degraded condition of the low castes. If their critics were to say "You want higher political privileges; you ask for equal treatment with British-born subjects of His Majesty; you denounce the conduct of the European colonists in South Africa towards the Indian settlers in their colonies. Yet you keep so many millions of your countrymen in a state of degradation unparalleled in the annals of any country; you scarcely recognise them as human beings and treat them as worse than beasts, though they are in no way worse than many whom you treat as your equals. Are

you consistent? Can you complain of injustice if in the present state of things your requests are not granted?" One would like to know the replies our men of light and leading would give to such questions as these.

If it is said that the Hindu religion stands in the way of elevation of the low castes and that no change can be made in this direction without violating its principles, it may be replied that in the first place though Hindu society may be slow to move, it is still moving, and that a good many changes have already been made in customs and practices which were at one time considered to be an essential part of the religion of the people. In the second place it must be remembered that the Hindu sacred books say explicitly that a man is a Chandala not by his birth, but by his actions. Instances have been already given to show that in ancient times men who were born Chandalas rose to eminence by their learning and character and were held in the highest estimation by their contemporaries, and their memory is venerated down to the present day. Vaishnavism in its essence is a protest against caste, and the life of Ramanujachariar, the great Vaishnava Reformer is in itself an illustration of one of the fundamental principles of the Hindu religious philosophy that a man should be respected, not for his birth or social position, but for his knowledge and character. Therefore the plea of religion as justifying the continuance of the present degraded condition of the lower castes can be accepted neither on the ground of justice and equity nor on that of sanction of the sacred writings of the Hindus, as interpreted in the light of the practice of Indian sages and philosophers in ancient times. Since the majority of the people in every country act according to custom, though it may be irrational or even prejudicial to their real interests, radical changes cannot be introduced into the existing practice so as to elevate low castes all at once; but the way must be prepared for the necessary changes. Though the pro-

blem is peculiarly difficult, yet it will have to be grappled with if the leading men of the Hindu community do not wish to be condemned for countenancing a form of slavery which is in certain respects worse than that which ever existed in Europe. Besides, it is a sheer loss of power to the country that so many millions of men and women who are remarkable for their powers of physical endurance and who are not less intelligent than any of the lower classes should be practically cut off from society and compelled to let their faculties rust for want of opportunities to exercise them. It will not do for our leading men to say that they need not trouble themselves about the elevation of low castes on the ground that what is necessary in their case is being done by the Government and the missionaries. I have already said that what the Government can do directly is little. As for the missionaries, it must be remembered that the good they have done to the low castes has been in almost every case preceded by their conversion to Christianity. Therefore the leaders of the Hindu community will have to ask themselves the question whether they will rise superior to the prejudices of their unenlightened countrymen in the treatment of the Panchamas and boldly come forward to raise them from their present degraded condition, or leave them to the missionaries to be proselytised and regenerated. This is an important question. The present condition of the low castes is a disgrace to the community and ought not to be allowed to remain long as it is. If high caste men cannot give up their prejudice against low castes and are unwilling to raise their social status, they cannot reasonably complain if these low castes give up their connection with the Hindu community, of which they have no cause to be proud, and embrace a faith which will not only alter their relations with the other sections of Indian society, but will also enable them to live a better and happier life.

XIII—The Position of Woman in Ancient and Modern India

By Mrs. Kamala Satthianadhan, M. A.

Perhaps nothing is so decisive a test of the degree of civilisation and ethical culture to which a nation has attained as the position assigned to women among the people of that nation. In this respect we have no reason to be ashamed of our early Aryan ancestors, as ancient India had, from this point of view, reached a degree of refinement higher even than that attained by either Greece or Rome in their palmiest days, and much higher, incredible as it may seem, than that of modern India. In Greece, the allegiance of the citizen to his state was looked upon as his paramount duty; and, lest family ties should in any way impair this, the women were deprived of all higher offices. Kept in strict seclusion, with no education worthy of the name, they were almost reduced to the condition of slaves. Nor was the position of the ancient Roman matron better. No doubt she is often held up as the ideal of a noble and lofty character, but even she had no personal rights and was subject to her husband as absolutely as if she had been his slave. In ancient India, on the other hand, the position of woman was far different.

The direct evidence we get in this matter from the Vedas, which are the earliest records from which such information may be gathered, is scant; but it is sufficient to show that the position held by the Aryan women in the Vedic period was a most honourable, nay exalted, one. Without any unhealthy restrictions on their actions, they were allowed a freedom in society, which now in India would be wondered at and perhaps considered unbecoming. There was no attempt made to keep them uneducated and they seem to have been on a footing of perfect equality with their husbands, subject to no one, not even their

mothers-in-law. And what is more, the Hindu wife was considered as the intellectual companion of her husband and as his friend and helper in life ; she was honoured and respected by him and her supremacy in his home was absolute as wife and mother. Such was the position of women in ancient India ; but what a terrible falling off from this high standard is presented by their condition as modified by later Brahmanism and Hinduism. That their present position is deplorable and is one of the chief hindrances to the further advance of Indian civilisation, no one, not even the most enthusiastic patriot of India's glory, can deny. It is better far to admit it, to be ashamed of it, and then try to do something to remedy their condition and make them better fitted for the important duties which, as women, they are called upon to fulfil.

As has already been shown, in early Vedic times, we have a very pleasing picture of women, who moved on a footing of perfect equality with their husbands. In numerous places, we even find mention of wives joining their husbands in the performance of sacrifices. They offer the oblations together and thus hope to go to Heaven together. Then there is the picture of cultured ladies, some of whom themselves were Rishis and composed hymns like the men. They often distinguished themselves in science and in the learning of the times ; and, what is more astonishing, they even had a certain amount of influence on politics and administration. They attended great assemblies ; they openly frequented public thoroughfares ; and in fact, altogether they have never mixed so freely in the society of men as women do in modern Europe, yet absolute seclusion and retirement are or at least were, not Hindu customs. Innumerable passages can be quoted from Vedic literature showing the high esteem in which women were held ; but it will be enough if we give one example which is often brought forward. There is an account given in the early

Brahmanas of a conversation, which is reported as having taken place between Yajnavalkya, a great saint and his cultured wife, Maitreyi, on the eve of his retirement into the ascetic state. Yajnavalkya is said to have proposed to divide his wealth between Maitreyi and her co-wife. But the former refused the money and asked in return that she might be taught the knowledge of immortality; and it is recorded that that knowledge was granted to her. This example goes at once to prove what we have been trying to set down here. The very fact of Maitreyi asking for the knowledge of immortality shows that women then must have been in the habit of asking for such things and that it was not thought improper to keep them well-informed on religious and other matters of general interest. In ancient times, not only were child-marriages unknown; but on the contrary, we have numerous allusions to the marriages of girls at a proper age. There was also no religious obligation that every girl must be married; and we even find mention of unmarried women who remained in their fathers' homes and obtained a share of the paternal property.

It would seem that girls in ancient India had a voice in the selection of their husbands. It was customary, no doubt, to make the official demand through third persons; but it is more than probable that the girl's consent was made sure of first and therefore that she was a willing bride. Indeed, a little later on the fine old custom of the Swayamvara, in which the girl was given the privilege of choosing her husband out of many suitors, was originated, and was not abolished till a long time afterwards.

The sacredness of the marriage tie and the marriage rite is emphasised in Vedic literature by the description of a marriage in heaven, which forms the introduction to the grand wedding hymn there given. This is the marriage of Suryah, the sun-maiden or Dawn, with Soma or the

Moon. The interpretation of the myth presents no difficulty and there is no doubt that it was intended as the type of all earthly marriages, the harmonious co-operation of the two rulers of the Universe, signifying the love and union which ought to exist between a husband and his wife.

In ancient times, widow marriage was not prohibited; on the other hand, we find a distinct sanction of it in the rites which are prescribed for the widow's performance before she enters into the married state again.

Such is the position of women in Vedic times. Coming down to a later period of Indian history,—the times of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana,—we find that there is not much difference in their condition. They hold the same honoured position as they did before. Indeed, in exhibiting pictures of domestic life and manners, the Sanskrit epics are particularly life-like, and even more so than the Greek and Roman. In the delineation of women, the Hindu poet throws aside all exaggerated colouring; he draws from nature and from life; and the many heroines that we meet with engage our affections and interest far more than any of the heroines in Greek or Roman classical literature.

There is a remarkable definition of a wife given in the Mahabharata, which it will be worth our while to notice:

> "A wife is half the man, his truest friend—
> A loving wife is a perpetual spring
> Of virtue, pleasure, wealth; a faithful wife
> Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;
> A sweetly-speaking wife is a companion
> In solitude; a father in advice;
> A mother in all seasons of distress,
> A rest in passing through Life's wilderness."

Thus we see that the great freedom, which was then granted to women, did not,—as it is sometimes thought now

it might do, if ever it is granted in the same way,—prevent them from leading lives of perfect conjugal fidelity. From time immemorial, the Hindu women have been justly celebrated for the possession of domestic virtues, such as devotion to husbands, affection for children, careful attention to household duties, modesty, gentleness, hospitality. The many pictures we have of *Pativrata*, or "devoted wife" are truly touching and at the same time interesting, because they throw so much light on the purity and simplicity of Hindu domestic manners in early times. No doubt the devotion of the Hindu wife implies an inferiority, which is incompatible with modern European ideas of independence; but it is at the same time none the less touching; nor do we fail to see from the many legends and stories that we find in the epics that submission and independence go hand in hand. Wives are loyal and devoted to their husbands, yet show much independence of character and do not hesitate to express their own opinions; husbands are tenderly affectionate towards their wives and treat them with respect and courtesy; daughters are submissive and obedient to their parents, yet, when occasion requires, are spirited and courageous; in fact love and harmony reign throughout the family circle. Nothing can be more beautiful and touching than the pictures of domestic and social happiness that the Ramayana and the Mahabharata abound with; and many are the high-souled heroines that we meet with, showing clearly that in those days there was much dignity and elevation about female character. There is, for exemple, the chaste Sita, the heroine of the Ramayana, the memory of whose noble purity and unflinching devotion to her husband, every Hindu woman holds dear even to the present day. Though young and bred in the palaces of kings, this delicate maiden pleads to follow her husband into the dreariness of a forest life, when he is condemned by the selfishness and ingratitude of a step-

mother to an exile of fourteen years; and there, in spite of the horrors and temptations with which a demon-king surrounds her, and in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, she remains true to her lord, till in the end she is reunited to him. Some of her pleadings for permission to accompany her husband into exile are so touching that we cannot help quoting them:

"A wife must share her husband's fate. My duty is to follow thee
Where'er thou goest. Apart from thee, I should not dwell in heaven itself.
Thou art my king, my guide, my only refuge, my divinity.
It is my fixed resolve to follow thee. If thou must wander forth
Through thorny trackless forest, I will go before thee treading down
The prickly brambles to make smooth thy path. Walking before thee, I
Shall feel no weariness; the forest thorn will seem like silken robes:
Roaming with thee in desert wastes, a thousand years will be a day;
Dwelling with thee, e'en hell itself would be to me a heaven of bliss."

The story of Savitri, the heroine of a pathetic legend, is the story of "the wonderful temple of exalted chastity." Savitri, the daughter of a great king, has chosen a hermit son for her husband, but there is a curse on him that he should die within a year. But in spite of all the terrors of a premature widowhood that are held out before her, she remains true to her plighted faith and marries the youth of her choice. Then she watches over him so unceasingly and, when the dread hour of the fulfilment of the curse arrives, she pleads for his life with such courage and tenderness, that the great King of Death himself is touched by her devotion, and gives back her husband again to her.

There are many such stories like these in the Hindu literature, and they all deserve to be read over and over again, both for their own sakes and also because they are such touching mementos of the early days of our brave, old ancestors.

Coming down to a later period,—the age of the Sutras and the laws of Manu,—we find that, though the women still enjoyed considerable liberty, there was a distinct decline in their position. The ancient law-giver, Manu, speaks of women as having no will of their own and unfit for independence, but he was probably describing a state of society, which it was the aim of the priesthood to establish, rather than that which really existed then. Women were regarded as dependent upon their male relations; but nevertheles, as distinctly appears from the tone of all Sanskrit literature, they were honoured in their families and held in esteem by the society in which they lived. "The teacher" says Manu, "is ten times more venerable than a sub-teacher, the father a hundred times more than the teacher, and the mother a thousand times more than the father." Thus we see that women were held in great respect; but still the feeling that they had no independent aim or existence was fast growing with the degeneracy of the times.

The marriage of girls at an early age was, as we have seen, probably unknown in the Vedic and even the Epic, period. It gradually however came into vogue with the Rationalistic and the Buddhist periods; but even then it was not obligatory. But it is insisted upon by the writers of the Puranic period, or the last period of Hindu rule in India; and now it has become so firmly rooted a custom that no Hindu, unless he be a very brave man, would ever dream of transgressing it.

The marriage of widows, which was a prevalent custom in the Vedic and Epic periods, became gradually restricted in the Rationalistic period, and except in the case of child-widows, was not looked upon with favour. Manu especially is very indignant against it, though in one place he says that widow marriage still prevailed in his time, although it was not approved by the orthodox and nowhere

prescribed for virtuous women. The feeling against it, however, grew very strong; and though even to the close of the Puranic period it was not altogether prohibited, still in the end it culminated in the complete abolition of the despised custom and even in the introduction of the terrible custom of *Sati*, or the burning of widows. But the latter was never a Hindu custom. It was introduced into India by the Scythian invaders, who poured into the country during the Buddhist age. It seemed to exercise a great fascination however for the Hindus: and the inhuman practice was often practised till the merciful intervention of the British Government led to its abolition.

Thus gradually the position of women in India declined till about 1000 A. D., when woman's subordination to man became complete. The pride of Brahmanism and the influence of the priests, whose authority became more and more firmly established and who denied to the women with those of the lower castes all the learning of the times, no doubt with the object of perpetuating their sway, seem to be the chief causes of this sad change. But it was the Mahomedan conquest of India, which finally completed the degradation in the position of Hindu women, the result of which was a seclusion, which led to a complete cramping of their intellectual faculties, owing to the absence of even that education, which contact with and observation, of the inside world imparts. At the present day no Hindu woman has in theory at least any independence, for, as we have shewn already, one of the principal precepts taught in the Hindu books is that women should be kept in a state of subjection all their lives and never on any account to be allowed to become their own mistresses. She belongs to her father first and then to her husband to whom she is given away for ever; and even after his death she is not free, for her own sons have the right to order her about. Many are the evil effects of such a system; but before pro-

ceeding to notice these, let us consider for a moment what the duties and responsibilities of women are.

From the hour that the first man and woman were created, God has not put one human being into the world without something to do there, some visible tangible work to be left behind when death comes; and women as well as men are responsible for their lives, for the talents and gifts given them, which they are on no account to waste. But then comes the momentous question which every Indian woman may ask with no hope of a satisfactory answer, at least at the present time, "What am I to do with my life?" A definite answer to such a question is always impossible, owing to a diversity of characters, tastes, capabilities, and circumstances of each individual, and much more so is it in this case where even where the taste and the capability for work exist, no opportunity is given for their exercise. But what are women to do? A diversity of opinion exists on the point. It is the dictum of many that home is woman's sphere and that beyond home she has no work to do. Some say that she has duties outside home as well; but there are two parties among those who hold the latter opinion. On the one hand there are many who agree with Mr. Ruskin that it is foolish to speak of the superiority of one sex to the other, because each has what the other has not, because the woman is the complement of the man. On the other hand the opinion is—and it is slowly gaining ground—that women are the equals of men in all things, that they are joint-partners with man in making the world better and that sex has nothing to do with the arrangement. But all are agreed that the first duties of woman are at home, and these are the duties of maiden, wife and mother. Innumerable are the ways in which a maiden can be useful to those around her, as daughter, as sister, as friend, as a helper of the poor, as a sweet sympathiser, as a true woman. What can be nobler

than noble maidenhood, distinguished by all the attributes a good woman ought to possess—by courtesy, in the widest sense of the word, the courtesy which regards with indulgence the views, wishes and even the whims of others, which respects their prejudices while not yielding to them, which volunteers no harsh judgments; by industry, by constancy, by endurance, by modesty, by grace and dignity —all indications of that higher sympathy and purer feeling which woman is said to possess as her distinguishing characteristic. As wife, a woman's first duty is to her husband. To her with her gentle nature, with the sterner and bolder outlines of man's character changed in her into softer and more delicate outlines, is granted the privilege of standing by the side of her stronger companion and helping him on in life. Mr. Ruskin says there are five classes of duties which are included in woman's work, and these are (1) to please people, (2) to feed them in dainty ways, (3) to clothe them, (4) to keep them orderly, (5) to teach them. But, says some one these are old-fashioned duties and women have talents for better things than these. Certainly they have, but because that is the case there is no need to undervalue woman's work at home, of which the duties above enumerated form part. A wife should be her husband's nearest and dearest friend and therefore his equal in the qualities of heart and mind, as capable of advising as of consoling him. Perfect happiness can exist only where there is perfect equality, for in the close intercourse of domestic life, the wife and the husband must necessarily act and react upon each other. But to be a man's equal, a woman must be educated and truly enlightened. In what does a man want in his wife? Only sufficient power and tact to serve her husband aright? No; he requires also intellectual tastes and sensibilities to make her companionship a source of life and light to him, such high thoughts and aspirations as will enter into his highest ideals and such love for him as, remaining nobly

blind to his faults, will help to lift him above the gross atmosphere of this work-a-day world. When there is such an entire compatibility of temper, there will never arise any question of superiority, each will know when to yield to the other, and when in after-life the husband is filled with care and trouble, what a help the woman is to him then. She smooths away his sorrows, she props up his flagging spirits, she puts new hope into his soul, and he goes forth with new strength and new zeal to wrestle with life and its responsibilities. It is impossible to exaggerate the influence for good that women may have upon men. Mr. Ruskin says, "The soul's armour is never set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it; and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honour of manhood fails." "Oftentimes" says Oliver Wendell Holmes in his "Professor at the Breakfast Table," "I have seen a tall ship glide by against the tide as if drawn by some invisible tow-line, with a hundred strong arms pulling it; her sails being unfilled, her streamers were drooping, she had neither side-wheel, nor stem-wheel; still she moved on stately in her serene triumph as if with her own life. But I knew that on the other side of the ship, hidden beneath the great hull that swam so majestically, there was a little toiling steam-tug dragging it bravely on, and I knew that if the steam-tug unturned her arms and left the tall ship, it would drift hither and thither and go off with the refluent tide, no man knows whither. And so I have known more than one genius that, but for the brave toiling arms and warm-beating heart of the faithful little wife that nestled close in his shadow and dragged him on against all the tide of circumstances, would soon have gone down the stream and been heard of no more." In the same way a mother influences the life of her child, as one good mother is worth a hundred school-masters, directing far more than does the father the action and con-

duct of the child. And it is true of mothers as of wives also, that the most cultivated women make the best of mothers, for not only does maternal love make many a woman heroic, but it also stimulates the intellect, calling forth in many an unsuspected reserve of mental power. Mr. Ruskin says about the first education of a child. "Do you suppose it makes no difference to it that the order of the house is perfect and quiet, the faces of its father and mother full of peace, their soft voices familiar to its ear; or that it is tossed from arm to arm, among hard, or reckless, or vain-minded persons?" The mother it is who supplies the grace, the beauty, the atmosphere of purity, of the home, who maintains its harmony and order. A mother's love,—what will it not bear? A mother gives up her heart to her child and becomes absorbed in his existence. A true mother's love is a love which years cannot wither, which is always ready to answer any demands made upon it, which gilds the darkest clouds with shine. Her love it is which provides childhood and manhood with happy memories, so illuminating home that to the day of death, home serves as a beacon-light attracting the weary wanderer back to its peaceful light. What would Shakespeare, Bacon, Goethe, the great geniuses of the world, have been without their mothers? Thus we may say, not that we may trumpet forth our own glory, but that we may encourage ourselves and others only to do our duty, "that posterity lies in the person of the child in the mother's lap." The memory of a good woman will live after her, both in the work she has done and in the lives of those she has brought up and influenced.

"The rights of women, what are they?
The right to labour and to pray,
The right to comfort in distress
The right when others blame, to bless."

* * * * * *

"There's not a place in earth or heaven
There's not a task to mankind given,
There's not a blessing or a woe,
There's not a whispered yes or no,
There's not a life, or death, or birth
That has a feather's weight of worth
Without a woman in it."

All women cannot be so; but all women can aspire to the high ideal. Consciously or unconsciously a woman, if she be true and tender, loving, patient, will organise and put in operation a set of influences that mould the destiny of a nation. The idea that woman is the complement of the man is brought out in Tennyson's Princess. Tennyson does not advocate that marriage and home alone are woman's sphere, though he comes back to such a position sometimes. Woman has to be a true woman at home and form true men and women for the State and for humanity. But he takes a larger view also. He appears to ridicule the scheme of the Princess; but there is no malice in his treatment of the case. He dwells with admiration on the fine character of the Princess and the essential nobility of her cause. Knowledge, he says, is as necessary for women as for men, but with a difference, not in the matter of the principles of nature, but allowing her to assert herself, allowing womankind to have free play and then supplementing it with knowledge as the means by which to rise upwards. "Everywhere," he says,

"Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropped for one to sound the abyss
Of science and the secrets of the mind."

Combining what Mr. August Comte says with the view of Mr. Ruskin, we have the whole case before us. "In practical energy and in the mental capacity connected with it,

man is undoubtedly superior to woman. Woman's strength on the other land lies in feeling. She excels man in love, as man excels her in all bonds of force," says the former, while Ruskin's theory is: "A man's work for his home is to secure its maintenance, progress and defence; the woman's to secure its order, comfort and loveliness." But both have public duties also, "for the man's duty is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defence of the State. The woman's duty is in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the State."

Finally we come to that large-hearted view of womanhood, which, as we said before, is slowly gaining ground—that women are equals of men in every way, and that therefore to women as to men, is to be given every opportunity for the full development and exercise of their faculties and gifts. "There is no sex among souls," says a writer, "and hence there is none in success."

> "Women have risen to high excellence
> In every art whereto they give their care," says Ariosto.

That women are capable of every improvement which will better their judgments and understanding, is beyond all doubt. Only, they must set to it in earnest and lay a sound basis of wisdom and knowledge, in order that they may be better enabled to serve God and help their neighbours. The survey of the progress of women in the world of letters is very instructive; and proves that she is not intellectually inferior to man, inasmuch as her progress has been in exact correspondence with the increasing educational advantages placed at her disposal. The convolutions of the ordinary female brain are said indeed to be less complex than those of the ordinary male brain; but it does not appear as a fact that ordinary women are duller of comprehension than ordinary men. Each has to cultivate mind and heart and soul, each has to make the best possible use of time as a preparation for eternity. A writer says

"woman, like man, has a being to develop, physically with more of grace and loveliness, though with less of strength; intellectually with more of taste and fineness of perception and discrimination, though with less of logical power and continuous application; morally, with more of meekness and kindness, of patience and endurance, though with less of determination, energy and activity; but still the great object, in both cases, is the development of the qualities of that being with which God has endowed us." Woman as the enthusiast and reformer may be as great as man, for courage is not only a manly, but also a womanly, virtue. Woman is capable of the highest courage, the courage which endures the sharpest arrows of pain without a murmur, which sacrifices itself for another's sake, which gives up everything willingly for a cherished cause, which can bear unjust censure with a tranquil spirit and not despair. A male writer himself says, "The courage of men is based upon custom, discipline, ordinary habit; that of women is inspired by some elevated motive or strong passion. Hence women always rise to the occasion; men frequently fall below it." But it was only lately that such a view has been gaining ground. Until a few years ago, men planned and worked as if there were immense difference between themselves and women. It was claimed that women should avoid higher education because they had less ability than men. But all such errors are gradually being exploded and we trust will never be held again. But there is a basis of truth on which they rest, and that is that women in the present time are not as capable for work as men, because very few of them have cultivated business habits. Women complain that it is more difficult for them to get work than men. Are they as much to be relied upon? They must be prepared for hard work, for persevering work, and not suppose that because they are women the race will be made easier for them. They must have exactness

punctuality, endurance, thoroughness, for superficial knowledge will not do, and whatever work is undertaken must be gone through to the end. Especially must women be on guard against the emotional elements of their nature and strive to acquire that power of application which is the chief element of victory. Happily the old notion that it makes a woman unwomanly to be well educated is being lost sight of. But, while claiming higher education, we must guard against that very danger. Why is it we have sometimes such ridiculous pictures of educated women? It is because they go to the other extreme. Educated women sometimes think they are above the simple duties of woman-life. They are filled with pride at their own greatness. But education does not consist in such pride, but in identifying herself with every good and noble work. As a clergyman once said in a sermon, "None of you, girls, I hope, will ever think yourselves too fine or too cultivated to attend to your domestic duties; for even in such humble services as these, you may be pleasing, serving the end as devoutly as in any act of public benefit." We will sometimes find work lying very near at hand. Nothing on earth is too mean for us, if we only look at it in the spirit God intended us to look on his creations, every object of which is "a wondrous thing which we may look into infinitude itself."

Such being the possibilities of womankind, why is it that Indian women do not realise them? Because they are handicapped in every way by evil and degrading customs. The Hindu girls rarely or never have a voice in the selection of their husbands, and indeed they could not be given any choice, for the custom is that they should be married very early and marriage at that age puts before them more of the immense responsibilities it is charged with. The girl is allowed no time when she can prepare herself for the duties of marriage—the time of maidenhood which English

girls make so much of, the season of culture, when the judgment has to be formed, the intellect disciplined and feelings and passions brought under strict control, the time when the heart is most susceptible of external influences and therefore the time to be most carefully watched over. Neither can the girl have education worthy of the name, for, in spite of Zenana work, in spite of the fact that there are schools for married young women, education after marriage is nothing like the education which an unmarried girl can receive, when most of her time is at her disposal and her fresh intelligence and healthy curiosity are in no way impaired by the dignity of married matronhood. The husbands also are required to be grown-up men, for while an unmarried student is free to devote all his time to his books, one who is married must also attend to his wife and children and is constantly troubled by household matters. And then, when they grow older and their characters refine, it often happens that the boy and the girl prove a very ill-assorted couple with natures as different as the two poles, and unhappiness and misery is threatened to both. Thus, except in a very few cases there is none of that elevated wifely companionship we have been considering, nor that noble motherhood without which so few children become noble men and women. Picture such women drifting into middle age—helpless, burdensome or quarrelsome wives; lazy, feeble mothers; incapable of acting upon their good intentions; either sinking into a hopeless indifference or wearying themselves out with weak complainings, which never result in any amendment. For another evil from which a Hindu girl suffers, is the want of independence at home. Very often her spirit is broken down and crushed by the treatment which falls to the lot of a daughter-in-law from her husband's family. She lives in constant dread of her mother-in-law, who in her turn is afraid of her daughter-

n-law gaining too much ascendancy over her son, and who accordingly seizes every opportunity to breed discord between the two. The poor girl's character is pictured in the worst colour before her husband, and the etiquette of Hindu society is such that she is forbidden to seek any opportunity for defending herself, and perhaps if she were brave enough to do this, no one would pay so much attention to her. Naturally, her spirit is soured and embittered, and she rapidly descends to the level of her companions, perhaps in her turn to tyrannise over her daughter-in-law when she gets one. A wife, however young or foolish she may be, must be mistress in her own house, and she must have a voice in the bringing-up of her children, which rights mothers-in-law are very fond of infringing. But the mother-in-law herself must have privileges, and dare we say a few words in her defence? Young wives do not sufficiently consider how very hard it must be for a fond mother to lose her office as primary agent in her son's welfare and even his happiness. This is the case in England and much more so is it in India where the influence of the mother-in-law is supreme and that of the wife nothing. A young wife, if she has any right feeling, will listen patiently to the advice of her elders and feel grateful for any advice given. Surely "the primal elder curse" must be upon the woman who voluntarily or thoughtlessly tries to sow division between her husband and his own flesh and blood. There arrives a season when the most uncharitable mother-in-law becomes harmless. Then and after her death, blessed are those sons and daughters who during her life time so acted towards her that her death lays upon them no burden of bitter remembrance.

Then there is the custom of seclusion which, though it is slowly giving away now, was in former times very stringent. There are some arguments urged by the defenders of this custom, such as the want of education, but they are

causes which can be easily removed. And what are the evils of such a seclusion ? The woman does not mix with society and therefore does not get that wider knowledge of life which acquaintance with the world imparts. Owing to the narrowness and blankness of her daily life, she is glad to catch at any straw of interest. Gossip is her only recreation and her life is made up of contemptible nothings. Then again she is careless about her friendships, not knowing that a true friendship is to be entered upon thoughtfully, earnestly, as upon an engagement made for life, and that a true friend, faithfully tender and tried, is an inestimable, but not easily acquired treasure.

Another impediment to the advancement of Hindu women, an evil more or less resulting from the degrading customs above mentioned, is their want of education,—a want which is the chief cause of the defects to be noticed among the women of India—little influence over their husbands inability to bring up children properly, superstitious beliefs, absorption with trifles and passion for jewels. Does any man seriously think that an uncultured woman can make a better wife than a refined, educated woman ? Does he desire a woman whose soul will never soar above the kitchen or nursery interests ? Does a good man ever love a woman the more for reverencing her the less ? Certainly not, should be the answer, and knowing this a woman should not in the least be afraid of cultivating her own mind fearing that she may lose her husband's love. And a man should never hesitate to allow his wife to be educated owing to his fear of her becoming unwomanly, for true educaiton raises rather than degrades or effaces womanliness. But merely book education is of no use, unless it is supplemented by that wider knowledge which a free communion with society gives. Hindu women should be allowed to mix freely with society, in order that they may learn as much as possible from observation of others.

There should be free intercourse between husband and wife, between parents and children, and between relatives and friends. We must not lose heart, neither for ourselves nor for those we love. To struggle, and always to struggle, is life. Above all, the woman must have courage to do what is right, regardless of the opinion of the world or of society, courage to endure pain for a good cause, courage to vindicate purity and truth everywhere, courage to vindicate the honour and dignity of her sex, always eager to develop the faculties God has given her, in order that she may lead a higher life than she has hitherto been leading, a life of the soul in the service of God and her fellow-beings. "How to live? That," says Herbert Spencer, "is the essential question for us. Not how to live in the mere material sense only, but in the widest sense. To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge." The education that we want therefore should be as wide and varied as are the interests and duties of life, an education which shall discipline and invigorate soul, mind and body.

Last but not least among the handicaps of Hindu women is the custom that widows should not be remarried. It often happens that girls are married to persons who are old enough to be their fathers and the chances are ten to one that they are left widows even sometimes before they are old enough to understand the sad change that has taken place in their lives. For indeed a sad change it is. The poor young widow's life is made a burden to her. She is openly reviled and ridiculed; every misfortune that happens in her family is ascribed to her evil influence. Her lot is a miserable one, but not even a gleam of hope to brighten her dark existence. The domestic services rendered by widows are often very valuable, but in most cases do not help to lighten her misery. Here is a bitter appeal from a widow: "Oh! Lord! hear

our prayer. No one has turned an eye on the oppression which we suffer, though with weeping and crying and desire we have turned to all sides hoping that some one would save us. We have searched above and below but Thou art the only one who will hear our complaint. For ages, dark ignorance has brooded over our mind and spirits. We have no strength to go out. We are bruised and beaten. Oh! Father! When shall we be set free from this jail?" Is it not time something were done to assuage the sad lot of widows? And something is indeed being done and our hope is that before long their lives will be made worth living not alone by allowing them to marry again, for marriage should not be the sole hope of womanhood; but, chiefly by bettering their condition in their own homes, showing them love and sympathy from their fellow-creatures, and providing them with some lofty object in life for which they could live.

Our social reformers should try their best to reduce the influence of the custom of early marriage. But where that is not possible, let the husband educate his wife, or allow private zenana education to her. And indeed, to do justice to the zeal of those engaged in the work of reforming India, much is being done in this way. But yet, though the subject of female education is a theme of constant exhortation with those intersted in the progress of the country, one cannot help noticing that but little is being done in the way of action. The fault lies with the men, for though many talk, yet few set an example; but it lies with the women also. We leave it to the men to do everything, showing a sad lack of rightful and perfectly justifiable ambition on our part. It is obviously our duty to bestir ourselves and show the men that they owe it to us as our right to place us on the same level with themselves.

But it is easier to speak than to act, says some one

and with justice. The Hindu women have grown so accustomed to the position they have been made to occupy for centuries that they are loath to change it, however alluring the prospect may be that is held out to them. It is sad to say it, but it is nevertheless a fact, that many of them do not desire education. What ought to be done therefore? They require stimulus and encouragement to take advantage of the opportunities held out to them. And in this they require helps from the men themselves; and of course the men cannot help them unless they are brought to change for a better one their low opinion of their weaker companions. If the men will only trust the women and have confidence in them, there is no knowing what great things may be done. The women must be shown by various means, by advice, by reading, by associations, by meetings, by mixing freely in society, that they *can* be educated, and in this what can be better than encouragement by husbands as opposed to the constant censures by mothers-in-law? Then again it must be shown them that it is worth while to be educated, and here again what can be better than the influence of the husbands? The Hindu wife thinks her husband a God; she will reverence all his wishes. Consequently if he plainly shows her that it is his desire that she should be educated, if he teaches her the value of literature by constantly reading or explaining to her passages from the best authors, she will do wonders to try to please him. And here, let us say a word about English education. Now-a-days we hear a great deal about the revival of vernacular studies. These studies have certainly their great value and there is a need of creating a better literature for women in the vernaculars than now exists. But, so long as the English are our rulers,—and by this I do not mean to say that their rule is unwholesome,—so long as the present day literature, which is prevalent in our midst, is

more in English than in the vernaculars, so long again as the University examinations are conducted in English and the common language of Government and other departments is English, so long as conversation with the English and even among our own people is conducted in English, so long then it is obvious that it is the English language we must cultivate, though the vernaculars are by no means to be neglected. Western education and Western culture have done a great deal for us, and if we wish to derive any more advantages from them, we must put ourselves in a position in which they can easily reach us.

By learning English, we women can do a great deal. As has been said, the young men of India are all pursuing their studies in English, and if their mothers, wives and sisters also knew English, how much true sympathy there would be between them all! There would be real companionship in work—companionship which will lighten the most difficult task; there will be mutual exchange of ideas, leading to mutual advantages and mutual improvement. We women ourselves will have our ideas enlarged and our character strengthened and we shall come to see that the petty occupations and amusements with which we are now satisfied do not make up all the world; and thus, inspired in every way for a noble life, we shall stretch forth our hands and embrace the means and opportunities that are before us for the pursuit of such a life.

An English education will enable the Hindu mothers to be more in touch with their children, both young and grown-up, for then they can help them in their studies both before and after they go to school.

English education will accomplish another great result; it will promote that social intercourse between European and Hindu ladies, which is so necessary now, and from which the latter can learn so much. At present, in spite of the eagerness of both parties for such an inter-

course, the want of a common language is greatly felt and is the chief hindrance in the way of such a desirable result. Then again, there will be less monotony in the lives of the Hindu women if their education is once begun. English literature is a never-ending literature and the Hindu ladies are sure to find in it plenty that will interest them and occupy their spare time. There will also be a better management of home affairs, a more intelligent observation of the rules of health, more thought for others, more self-denial and less fault-finding with our neighbours.

Last, but not least, the education of us, Indian women, will be a powerful instrument for the social reform of India. Once the men are brought to respect us,—and that they will surely do, if only we show ourselves worthy of it,—they will gradually be brought to give us those social rights, which are the privileges of women in other countries. When the social reformers find that those very women, who hitherto had been their chief opposers, not only desire, but will also aid them, to dispel the social darkness in which India is shrouded, then they will work with renewed vigour and hope; and the many social evils of India, such as caste prejudices, the bonds of superstition and ancient custom, infant marriages and enforced widowhood, will soon be done away with, and India will become a renovated country.

We must guard against the supposition that the women of the present day have altogether fallen from their ancient character. Domestic virtues and faithfulness and devotion to their husbands, modesty and kindness have always been their characteristics, and some remarkable instances may still be found of moral and even intellectual excellence. There are many exceptions, where the women are well treated and allowed a certain amount of freedom, and in many cases they are treated by their husbands ten-

derly and respectfully and the little consideration they enjoy in private life is in some respects compensated by the respect which is paid to them in public. A Hindu woman is almost always safe, even in the most crowded places, from the risk of insult and the impertinent looks of idle loungers.

But, apart from these exceptional considerations, a steady progress in the social reform for women has for some years been apparent and is gradually making itself felt. There was great prejudice against the education of women in India some years ago. It was feared that any knowledge imparted to women and the consequent freedom implied therein would turn their heads and cause them to lose their balance. But such fears have been proved to be ill-founded. The example of the Europeans, the benign influence of Christianity, and the exertions of the Christian missionaries in the cause of female education in India, have all combined in working a slow but sure change in the sentiments which have hitherto been felt regarding the education of Hindu women. Its importance is now, one can safely say, valued not only by men, but also by women. Many girls' schools have been established, and the Hindu mothers take great delight sometimes in seeing their girls attend these schools and acquire knowledge, elementary it may be. And even after their marriage, the husbands of these girls, seeing the example of the Europeans, are trying to continue their education, in the hope of enabling them to be real companions to themselves. More freedom also is allowed to them, and they are allowed to go out more freely into society. Clubs are being formed in different parts of India by ladies alone of all communities for mutual improvement; widow-remarriage is being advocated by social reformers all over India and even, in some cases, attempted; and altogether such a change for the better is coming over the position of women in India, that we shall

be justified in saying that the time cannot be far distant when the women in India will be raised to the same high position that their sisters occupy in European countries. There is no doubt that inveterate prejudice will eventually give way and that both Hindus and Mussulmans will be brought to honour the weaker sex, as the help-mates for them and as their friends and counsellors. The Indian women restored to their ancient liberty and raised to a still higher position by the nobler influences of the present day, will one day take their true place in society, softening, strengthening and ennobling the character of the people among whom they live.

One would gather from all this that Hindu women have no influence on the men. But that is not so. The chief reason why cultivated men of the present day are so little able to put into practice their civilized notions of reform is the backward influence of the women, who do nothing in their power to prevent them from going against ancient Hindu customs. They heap reproaches on the man who is bold enough to do so, and try to make his life as hard as possible, till in the end he is cowed back into the old routine; for any bold reform in the Hindu families means their excommunication, and excommunication to the women means the loss of the little amusement they have—the company of their friends. Thus, the Hindu wife, instead of being a helpmate to her husband, is a drag on him. In her present position, she is in no way fitted to do the two distinct duties that lie before her,—the duty of being a true companion to her husband and the duty of being a true mother to her children. But she will be, if something were done to refine her position, something that would raise her above her surroundings and draw out all that is pure and ennobling in her. All women have more or less the same womanly nature in them; and there is no doubt that the Hindu women, if only they are intellectually

trained, will be able to do just as much for their countrymen, as the European and American women are doing for Europe and America respectively.

It is time therefore that something definite were being attempted to raise the position of the Hindu women, in order at least to remove the blot that is so prominent in the advancing civilisation of India. The first duty of the Hindu men towards their women is their education. It is only fair that the same education should be allowed to women as is given to men. An English home is proverbial for its comfort and happiness, because in an English home the woman's influence is the strongest; she it is who reigns supreme and inspires the men, and thus it is that an Englishman may wander over the world and yet his mind will ever turn to his home with fond memories and pleasant hopes as his beacon of light, as his haven of refuge in the midst of the sorrows of life. But we may take comfort by the thought that even in England the female advancement was not gained without long and painful effort. And so in India when the time of trial and work is past and our cause is won, our Indian sisters will compare favourably with our more favourably situated sisters in the West. With Tennyson, let us say:

> "Yet in the long years liker must they grow
> The man be more of woman, she of man;
> Till at the last she set herself to man,
> Like perfect music unto noble words;
> And so these twain upon the skirts of time,
> Let side by side, full-summed in all their powers,
> Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,
> Self-reverent each, and reverencing each.
> Then comes the statelier Eden back to men;
> Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm
> Then springs the growing race of mankind.
> May these things be."

(XIV) Relations between the Hindus and Mahomedans.

By M. A. N. Hydari, Esq., B. A.,

Deputy Accountant-General, Madras.

In my College days the question whether Social Reform should precede Political Reform was an absorbing topic of discussion in the press and on the platform; and I well remember a paper read on the subject by the late lamented Mr. Justice Telang before the Students' Literary and Scientific Society in Bombay, which was distinguished by those powers of close reasoning, balanced judgment and graceful expression, the premature disappearance of which from our public life we have not yet ceased to feel. No ~~choice~~ of reasoning, however, can more powerfully demonstrate the superior, if not the dominant claims of Social over Political Reform than the mention of that item in our programme which forms the subject of this paper. For as I have taken more than once the liberty of asserting, "the hands of Government must necessarily be tied so long as there is jealousy and suspicion between the two great masses it has to rule; and in the antagonism of the two races—antagonism that has of late degenerated so often into outbursts of physical violence that its prevention has come to be one of the chief problems to which we have to address ourselves—in this antagonism lies the greatest stumbling block to the advancement and prosperity of the country that is our common motherland." ..... "Unless we feel the common bond of union that unites us (Mussalmans) with the Hindus so as to work out together our joint salvation, all our efforts for political reforms must prove vain and fruitless."

The very essence of Reform demands that the many shall be one; its goal is Union and Harmony—the integration of the divided heterogeneous units into a homogeneous consolidated whole, in entire harmony with its environment, an environment that begins with, but is not limited to the hearth, and gradually expanding through the limits of race and creed and country covers and enfolds all humankind and the universe and makes the sphere of work of the Social Reformer ultimately coterminous with that of the Prophet, who seeks to bring about "Peace on earth and Good Will to all men." From this stand-point, all the various items in the programme of "Indian Social Reformers," all the various concessions claimed by "political agitators" (I mean no disrespect), all the different outbursts of Theosophic activity (taking Theosophy in its widest sense without reference to any particular organisation),—all these have their value and justification only as so many steps—often very halting and usually unconscious—towards bringing us nearer to that goal —albeit very distant—when we shall be self-respecting men and women and our country shall become fitted to be invited to take its place side by side with the other self-governing members of the Federated States of Britain.

Unless this be the ultimate consummation, the transfer of the sovereignty of India to the nation most fitted by its character, its history and traditions to be the educator and regenerator of the Indian people loses all its place and meaning in the logic of events—the more so when it is remembered that this transfer was effected so unconsciously, so much, to all seeming, in the very teeth of circumstance and inclination that its story affords to theologists one of the most impressive illustrations of the guiding finger of Providence in History. For it is through this British supremacy that the most potent forces towards the unification and harmony I am referring to have been

brought into place, nay the very idea of them engendered in us and the possibility of their realisation is beginning to be entertained—profound peace, common institutions, uniform administration, equal laws, impartial justice, space-killing railroads, time-annihilating telegraphs, above all, an ennobling and inspiriting literature giving communion with the deeds and words and thoughts of the great souls of the world.

And yet paradoxical as it may sound, the same British supremacy would seem to have introduced some new elements of separation between the two great communities of India—elements which unfortunately have exercised an effect out of all proportion to their real importance. On the one hand the imposition of the educational test as the principal, if not the sole, avenue to the public service has given the Hindus a vantage ground in the pursuit of power and influence not enjoyed by them previously except in Western India, and a study of the popular and prejudiced accounts which pass for the history of the Mahomedan domination of India seems to have inspired the ardent spirits among the new generation of Hindus with the desire of using this advantage for paying off the scores—to put it rather bluntly—that they consider are awaiting settlement from the days of Muhammad of Ghazni down to those of Aurungazeb and Tippu Sultan. On the other hand the Mahomedans, who see their influence and position disappearing before their very eyes, have transferred the odium they formerly lavished on their English successors to their Hindu fellow-subjects, who have outstripped them in the race. That it is the bitter remembrance of the worst features of Moslem rule and consequent aggressive vindictiveness on the part of the Hindu, whilst it is the steady ousting from Government service (brought about no doubt largely by his own want of adaptation) and consequent jealousy on the part of the Mussalman that are at the root

of this estrangement, is in my opinion confirmed by the fact that the relations of these two communities are the most cordial in those parts where Moslem influence has been the least lasting or where commerce which takes off the keenness of competition for government service is the most active. If it be alleged that in these cases the Moslem communities are essentially Hindu in character, race and institutions, the fact that the progress of English education among them too has so far tended to bring about their alienation from their Hindu brethren goes but to strengthen the view expressed above.

How can we most effectually counteract the effects of these centrifugal forces? I have tried to indicate below some agencies that suggest themselves to me and if herein I have appealed more often to the Hindus, it is not because I consider them more responsible for the past but because I consider their responsibility for the future to be greater by virtue of their predominant position as an educated and advanced majority that can better make the most effective advances towards the establishment of cordial relations between the two communities.

1. The first agency is the Native Press. It should have a living realisation of the paramount necessity of a cordial union between the Hindus and Mussulmans. At present there is too great a tendency to criticise each other's claims with irritating candour. This is especially the cases with the treatment of Mahomedan claims by the Hindu Press, due no doubt largely to the fact that these are in many instances unreasonable and extravagant and are sometimes made in an offensive spirit. But it appears to me that even here a forbearance and a sympathy that, while gently correcting such extravagance and insolence, point out the lines along which more rational claims can be less aggressively formulated are greatly needed. When for instance the Mussalmans want a larger representation

in the higher ranks of the public service, it is ungenerous and unfair to seize upon the declarations of a stray Mahomedan association here and there as representative of a general demand by them for a lowering of the qualifying test in their case, ignoring entirely the request of more responsible bodies that a direct regular recruitment be made of a specific number of qualified Mahomedan graduates only, whose qualifications have been certified to by the universities or the heads of colleges in which they have been educated and by the heads of offices in which they have been subsequently trained. In short the Press must have that catholicity of spirit that regards the promotion of the interests of one community, if backward, as the necessary stepping stone and complement to the interests of all.

2. This same principle must be present to the mind of every employer of labour official or unofficial. Jealously watching the interests of all who have been placed under him and allowing no influences of whatever kind to interfere in the just disposal of his patronage, he must remember that it is within his power to make his office a fruitful centre of influence for the consolidation or destruction of that union of hearts for which I am pleading. One unjust supersession will undo more and a helping hand to one deserving postulant will advance further the good cause, than many speeches or essays.

3. The recent acrimonious controversy in the North on the Urdu-Hindi question leads me to suggest another way in which in place of estrangement, genuine affection may be engendered. It is not for me to pronounce on the merits of that question from its linguistic side or from the amount of advantage its settlement in its present form has conferred on the people it will affect. though there is something in the view that if the present had been allowed to continue it would have led to the much desired result

(from the change ?) of a benefit of language. But is not the ill-feeling that has been raised out of all proportion to any direct benefits that are expected to accrue from the change ? The inconveniences which the existing state of affairs caused to the Hindu community were presumably not greater now than they were seven years ago when the question was not to my knowledge even so much as formulated. But the breach that has been made between the two communities who were to all appearances being gradually brought together by the disappearance of some unfavourable influences and still more by the chastening effect of the common suffering on account of famine and pestilence, is one which may take years to close. Where the sentiment of one community is deeply aroused, would not in such cases the leaders of the other community be consulting the interests of all and making for the larger good if they themselves came forward and asked for the postponement of the reform especially when the reform is in the direction of the disturbance of a long established position of affairs ? Would not such an attitude on but one question lead to the amicable settlement of several, giving as it would by its spirit of self-sacrifice an earnest of the genuineness of the desire of at least one of the two communities to be friends with the other ? A resolution was formally passed at the instance of Mr. Justice Tyabji in the Madras Congress of 1887 not to discuss any question that might by the vote of any one community be decided to be against its interests. It appears to me that some such resolution should be tacitly taken by all our leaders and rigidly acted upon.

4. Another point to which I would invite attention is the tendency that has developed of late to have sectarian institutions, especially schools and colleges for particular sections of the community. Mrs. Besant's Hindu College at Benares is the latest exemplification of this tendency,

and while not for a moment blind to the necessity of providing for the special wants of any particular community, I deprecate the establishment of separate institutions from which members of other communities are excluded. The Aligarh College insists upon no such exclusion of the Hindus, and it would have been well if the Benares College had followed the like liberal policy. It is the republicanism of the school and college that is the greatest leveller of sectarian differences and distinctions, a leveller whose influence is carried later on into the wider arena of public life; and it is the friendships cemented in school and college that are best calculated to bring about an intimate understanding among the educated of all classes and creeds. Even movements like the Social Reform Conference would gain in usefulness if after providing for the discussion of the particular wants of each community in sectional committees, it had a common meeting ground of the representatives of both Hindus and Mussalmans for the discussion of common evils and general principles.

5 Another step would be the formal and conscious recognition of the necessity for the consideration in a practical manner of each other's religious feelings by the two communities. There is for instance no reason whatsoever why the Mahomedan leaders should not actively discourage the slaughter of kine for all purposes as much as possible. I believe the accession of sympathy to the Mahomedan cause would be invaluable whilst the sacrifice made to join it would be small if any at all. On the other hand why should not the leaders of the Hindus try to meet their Mussalman brethren in the matter of observing due respect towards their places of worship?

6. The last and one of the most fruitful agencies is that of Literature. At present in most Hindu publications, almost every desecration, every corruption, every evil is laid at the door of the Mussalmans. No work would be more

valuable than the elaboration of those lines of investigation which have been sketched out in such a masterly manner in his last annual (Lucknow) address by the one thinker in our midst, whose intellect has taken in its wide sweep the entire problem of the regeneration of India and whose annual utterances so sympathetically, so helpfully and so inspiringly attack one after the other its successive points. One result of such work would be the compilation of suitable text books on Indian History that would deal with the Moslem rule in India in a sympathetic spirit and bring out the contribution made by the Mussalmans to the civilization of India, thereby serving directly to remove one of the most active of the most hostile influences named at the outset as being at work in producing the estrangement of the two communities.

The above are but some of the remedies for neutralising the influences that serve to divide us. Doubtless many more will suggest themselves to any one who bestows on the subject the attention its paramount importance demands, for as I have said I can conceive no nobler work to which an Indian can consecrate himself than that of cementing the hearts of the diverse races and nationalities of our vast continent into a solid and united whole bound by a union that is not merely a superficial one, or that merely enables the Hindu and the Mussalman, the Parsi and the Christian to regard each other on sufferance or even with a species of benevolent mentrality, but a living and active union whereby they come to look upon each other as brothers working for the cultivation and progress of their common heritage.

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SECOND PART.

Mr. Justice Ranade's Speeches.

The Second Social Conference—Allahabad—1888.

Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade said:—With the permission of the President, I have taken upon myself the duty of giving to the gentlemen assembled in this Conference, a general idea of what it is proposed to do at this meeting. In the first place, I am glad to see that so many friends from all parts of the country have come together to take part in the work of the Conference. You are all aware that we meet here to-day, in accordance with the resolution adopted at Madras last year, when we held our first Social Conference there. Though the President, Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao, and the General Secretary, Dewan Bahadur R. Ragunatha Rao have been prevented by illness from coming to Allahabad, it is very satisfactory to see that we have on the platform here to-day so many men of light and leading from Bengal, the N.-W. Provinces, the Punjab, Madras, and Bombay. What is more satisfactory still is the fact that everybody seems to be in earnest, and recognizes the necessity of seriously considering the many questions of social reform which press for solution at our hands. When I watch the growth of public feeling on this subject, as it has manifested itself in our successive meetings during the last four years at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and now here at Allahabad, I feel that a great and welcome change has taken place in the attitude of the public mind in its relation towards the work of this Conference.

This change of feeling was clearly seen at the preliminary meeting of delegates and visitors interested in social reform, which was held in the drawing room on Friday last. Though we had no time to advertise the meeting properly, about 200 gentlemen assembled on that occasion, and many friends from different parts of the country gave us an account of what was being done in the way of social reform in the various provinces of India. I was glad to see that Mr. Kashi Prashad gave a very interesting account of the work of the influential Hindu Association of which he is the Secretary, and Munshi Hargovind Dayal from Lucknow gave us an account of the great Kayastha Conference held here about two months ago. The members of the Jain Reform Association of Guzarat have sent their delegates to the Conference, and similar delegates have been sent by the Madras meeting which was held there a few weeks ago for this express purpose. It was settled at that preliminary meeting that we should meet here to-day, and give our serious consideration to the subjects which have agitated the minds of the Hindu community all over India.

Before proceeding to lay before you the programme of subjects which we have to deliberate upon to-day, it will be as well, if I make a few remarks as to the exact scope and position of the Conference. I need hardly tell you that the Conference is not intended to be a new association aiming at superseding or controlling the local societies which are doing, each in its sphere, good and, as I believe, honest work. The conditions of Hindu society and of the various castes and divisions of which it is composed preclude the idea of our meeting together in a common association, in the same way as we meet together in the political Congress. In the Congress, we meet as citizens of one empire, subjects of one sovereign—obeying the same laws, liable to pay the same taxes, claiming the same privileges, and complaining of the same grievances. This common character makes the deliberations of the Congress a matter of common anxiety to all, Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis, Christians, Europeans, without distinction of colour or creed. There are, no doubt, even in political matters,

subjects which interest the several provinces locally; and these we have to relegate to the provincial meetings.

In social matters this difference of interest makes itself still more manifest; and apart from distinctions of creed and race, among the Hindu community itself, the customs of one province do not obtain in another, and the caste organization is based on different principles in different provinces. Polygamy prevails in one province, while it is almost unknown in others. The widow's unhappy disabilities affect different castes in different ways. Infant marriages are unknown in many castes and communities, while they represent a great evil in other classes. The prohibitions against foreign travel are operative in one place, while they are practically not of much moment elsewhere. These circumstances have to be borne in mind, and they naturally prevent a common effort by a single association being made for the achievement of a common purpose. The Conference, however, has a very important function of its own. While not superseding the local associations, it is intended to strengthen their local efforts, by focussing together the information of what is being done in these matters in the several communities and provinces and castes, and thus stimulating mutual co-operation by extending sympathy and help. Each local body must grapple with its own evils; but in this struggle it is very necessary that it should know what are the common principles on which the struggle is to be maintained, what are the methods to be followed, and the conditions and limitations to be observed. It is in respect of these principles and methods and limitations, that the work of the local associations presents common features, and it is in respect of this common element that our deliberations in this Social Conference are likely to be very helpful to us all. The difficulties, referred to above, make it impossible, to some extent, for us all to adopt, as in the political Congress, definite resolutions on particular subjects. Meeting as we do here to-day, as members subject to different caste jurisdictions in social matters, it will be hopeless to expect that our resolutions will carry the weight which the resolutions of the Congress are in a position to secure for themselves. It is on this account, that we have to

confine ourselves to recommendations from the general body to local and caste associations, which these latter are to take into their consideration and give effect to, within their own sphere, in such directions as they deem convenient or necessary.

I hope that I have clearly distinguished the particular work of the Conference. The Conference is intended to strengthen the hands of the local associations, and to furnish information to each association, province or caste as to what is being done by others similarly situated in the same province or other provinces or castes, and to stimulate active interest by mutual sympathy and co-operation. I do not wish to be understood as if there are no common features in our social organization. If that had been the case, we should never have come together. We are in a sense as strictly national socially, as we are politically. Though the differences are great for purposes of immediate and practical reform, yet there is a background of common traditions, common religion, common laws and institutions and customs and perversions of such customs, which make it possible for us to deliberate together in spite of our differences. In dealing with these differences, it would not do to forget the common background any more than by reason of the common background, it would be wisdom to forget the differences. We have to eliminate the differences, and correct the perversions, which have sprung up, and obscured the nobility of our common stock and ancient origin. It is a fortunate thing that most of the social evils complained of in these days, were unknown in the days of our highest glory, and in seeking their reform, we are not imitating any foreign models, but restoring its ancient freedom and dignity in place of subsequent corruptions.

I have dwelt long on this subject, because there are many misapprehensions entertained about it, which interfere with the work of the Conference. Having said this much upon the common principles underlying the deliberations at this Conference, I will only take a few minutes more to sketch the work we mean to do. You would, in the first instance, be called upon to reaffirm the work done in Madras by appointing Mr. R. Raganatha Rao to be your General Secretary. With a view to

secure local co-operation, it will be necessary to name gentlemen who will volunteer to act as Secretaries in different circles. In making these appointments, I would desire that the existing local associations should be recognized by their Secretaries being appointed to report their work to this Conference, and to correspond with each other. After these appointments of volunteer Secretaries have been made for the several circles, the President would call upon the local Associations represented here to affiliate themselves to the Conference, and to send their reports through delegates each year. After this work is over, a resolution will be proposed for your adoption, explaining the methods to be followed in the work of successfully carrying out reform in social matters. The last resolution would refer to the subjects on which attention should be chiefly directed for the present, and the limitations suggested by the conditions of our society in respect of desirable and practicable reforms. This is the programme of the day's work, and I will now request you to give effect to it in the way you deem most convenient.

One more general remark, before concluding these observations, may be permitted to me in regard to the existing condition of things. The chief event of the year in this connection is, no doubt, the great meeting at Ajmere in March last. The representatives of twenty large and small states met at Ajmere, and agreed to certain proposals for reforms in marriage and death expenses, and to certain limitations about the age of marriage, both of boys and girls. This indicates a great change of feeling in a most orthodox province, and in the most orthodox class of the people of that province. This change of feeling is not due to the adverse criticism provoked by the activity of the Congress. I would never have welcomed the change, if it had been the result of such adverse criticism. I have closely watched public feeling during the last four years, and though when we met in Bombay nothing great was done or thought of beyond a discourse by one or two friends, and in Calcutta we absolutely did nothing, we were able to put up the scaffolding at Madras, and we now hope to lay the foundations at Allahabad. Only one explanation can be given of this change of feeling and that is, that people have come to

see that, if they mean real work, that work must be on all the lines of their activities. Even a citizen's virtue is not the highest ideal to which we can aspire. There is a higher life still, and that is represented by our family and social obligations. The Rajputana people have set us a noble example, and a Conference such as this, consisting as it does of men who represent all that is best in each province, may well be expected to take a leaf out of the history of the Ajmere gathering. (*Loud cheers.*)

The Third Social Conference—Bombay—1889.

In moving the first proposition Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade said :—MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The Resolution I desire to place before this great meeting relates to a subject of considerable importance, and one which was very hotly discussed in the public newspapers in the early part of the year. It was at first expected that Mr. Dayaram Gidumal, who originally started this discussion by the publication of a small pamphlet, would have been able to attend to-day, and move the Resolution himself. Unfortunately he has been unable to attend the meeting, and I have been asked by him to supply his place. The Resolution is to the following effect :—

'That, in the opinion of this Conference, the distinction made by the Penal Code between the general age of consent (12 years) laid down in Section 90, and the special age prescribed in clause 5 and the Exception in Section 375 is both unnecessary and indefensible, and that with a view to prevent early completion of marriages, which leads to the impairment of physical health of both husband and wife, and to the growth of a weakly progeny, cohabitation before the wife is twelve years old should be punishable as a criminal offence, and that every effort should be made by awakening public conscience to the grave dangers incurred to postpone the completion of marriage till the age of 14 at least, as being in accordance with the dictates of our ancient medical works and modern science, and countenanced by the approved sentiment and practice of the country.'

The question to be considered is a simple one. All men are aware that, under the law as it now stands, connection by a husband with his wife or by a stranger with any woman is punishable as rape, if the wife's or woman's age is below 10 years. If the wife is above 10 years, the law has ruled that connection with her by her husband is not rape. In the case of strangers, connection with a woman with her consent is not an offence relating to the body under the Section, unless consent has been extorted or given under mis-impression, while in the case of the husband, connection with or without consent is not regarded as an offence at all. The age of consent in this section is fixed at 10. The general age of consent as laid down by Section 90 of the Penal Code is, however, 12, even in the case of assault (Section 350), while in the case of certain offences it is as high as 14 or 16 (Sections 361 and 373). These limits of age mean that the consent given by a child, who is less than 12 or 14 or 16 years, to certain offences being committed does not take away the criminal character of these offences; while in the case of rape the consent is of no avail only where the child is less than 10 years old. This is clearly an anomaly of the law which requires an explanation. If in the case of more venial offences against the person and property of a child the age limit should be so high, it does not stand to reason that it should be so low in the case of the offences described under Section 375. Mr. Dayaram's pamphlet, it must be admitted, raised side issues which provoked controversy. He compared the English with the Indian Law, and dwelt upon the contrast as one unfavourable to the Indian Code. Of course, there was some point in these observations, but too much stress should not be laid upon these differences, as the laws of different countries are intended to suit the different conditions of life and the habits of the people affected thereby, and it cannot be urged as a sufficient reason to modify the law of one country that in some other country the law is different. On another point also, Mr. Dayaram took up a position which was not likely to pass unquestioned. He maintained that as the law now stood, connection with a woman above 10 and below 12 years by a stranger with her

consent was not punishable at all as an offence. This position was questioned by Professor Tilak of Poona in a reply he published to Mr. Dayaram's pamphlet, and in which it was urged that up to the age of 12 such consent would not avail the offender. I do not wish to enter into these controversial points. They are not necessary for the purpose of recommending the Resolution I wish to move, in which particular care has been taken to steer clear of controversy. I take my stand on the Penal Code of the country, and on the gravity or otherwise of the several classes of offences, and on this basis I contend that if the consent of a girl does not avail a man who assaults her or robs her or cheats her or kidnaps her, if she is below 12 in some cases, and below 14 or 16 years in age in other cases, *pari passu*, it should not equally avail a stranger, or even a husband, when the offence is rape, and the girl is less than 12 years old. The thing has only to be stated in this clear way to make the anomaly appear a very invidious and unjust reflection on our national character. It might indeed be said, Where is the practical evil which needs relief? Has anybody complained against the existing state of the law? The answer is not far to seek. If the law protects the husband or a stranger in the matter, when the victim happens to be not less than 10 years old, how could you expect complaints in regard to it? And yet there have been cases of such offences, and in certain parts of the country it is almost an institution to bring the child husband and wife together, notably in Guzarath and Bengal. The fact that the legislature, in deference to what it regarded as our national weakness fixed the limit so low, itself serves to blind men's consciousness on the point, and blunts the moral sense of indignation and resentment. It is urged that the practice in all respectable families is superior to the law as it stands, and that therefore no change in the law is necessary. My own feeling is that it is very desirable to bring up the law to the limit of this respectable practice, and to direct general attention to the necessity of slowly raising the age of consummation. Even the limit of 12 years is too low; but as that age has been laid down generally in the Code, I do not seek to raise the limit above that age. Of course it is very desirable on medical

grounds that every effort should be made to put off the connection at least till 14, and the resolution is worded accordingly. While it seeks a change of the law by substituting 12 for 10 years as the age of consent, it requires us all to put forth our best efforts to enlighten public conscience, and in this way to raise the limit to 14. Private effort will thus supplement the work of legislative reform, and it will only seek legislative help in respect of removing an anomaly, which the law itself has created, and which no private effort can by itself remove. A change of the kind suggested would in its consequence produce a very healthy reaction on public feeling, and stimulate and strengthen private effort. I hope you will all accept the resolution as a very reasonable proposal. You will see that it is not a matter in which we go out of our way to seek the help of the law, where the law has hitherto not interfered. It relates to a matter in which the law has interfered to our prejudice, and we seek a change to establish a desirable harmony between the law and our most approved practice. (*Loud cheers.*)

In moving the second proposition, Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade said :—The second proposition relates to a subject which intimately concerns the future of all organised attempts at social reform. Whatever difference of opinion there might be as regards the general question of compulsory legislative interference for the prevention of great social evils, it is clear that no serious objection can be taken to a proposal to empower a certain body of persons, who voluntarily take solemn pledges in matters of social reform for their own guidance, to associate together with other similarly pledged members who consent to be bound by penalties enforceable by the society to which they belong, in case of a breach of these pledges. Every legally constituted society has this power. It may have no occasion to use it, but the power must exist as a last resource. Caste organisations have this power, and they enforce it on occasions. They enforce it against the wishes and consent of their members, while under the plan proposed, consent, free and voluntary, is an essential condition of enforcement, and this circumstance

differentiates the proposal from a law of the State, or a caste rule. Certainly no individual can claim power to dictate to others how they should act, but all conceptions of natural justice and civil polity imply that any one individual, or a number of individuals, can, in respect of matters not prohibited by law, prescribe the rule of conduct for his own or their guidance, and be in fact a law to himself or themselves. When the idea of compulsory prohibition by law of certain social abuses had to be given up as impracticable for various reasons, it became clear that for the success and solidarity of all organized efforts at self-help, it was necessary that this permissive protection and authorization by law should be secured to give effect to the pledges which might have been accepted as rules of conduct. The want of such binding and empowering law was seriously felt by a Social Reform Society in Sind, and it asked the help of the Government of India about three years ago. That Government, however, referred the applicants to the Companies Act VI of 1882, in which Section 26 provides for the Registration of Associations not carried on for profit. The suggestion was adopted, and the Society registered itself as an Association after obtaining a license from Government to do so. Since then a similar society in Guzarath has also taken some practical steps in this direction. We have also a movement in our part of the country based on the same lines. It is, however, plain that as the provisions of the Indian Companies Act are clearly intended to regulate large Joint Stock business undertakings, carried on mainly for the purposes of profit, these provisions cannot conveniently regulate the work of societies established for purposes of social reform by persons who bring no capital, and own no joint property, but who take certain common pledges for binding themselves to practise particular rules of conduct. The two objects being so inconsistent, the law regulating business societies can never be conveniently applied to the other set of Associations. Experience has also demonstrated that this inconvenience is a real, not a fancied grievance. I hold in my hand a letter written to me by a Sind gentleman, who is himself a member of the Sind Society, registered under the Companies Act. He observes

that the Companies Act is utterly unsuited to the genius of a Social Reform Association. The cumbrous procedure which has to be observed under Sections 76 and 77, when any alterations have been made in the Articles of Associations, the impossibility of altering the scope and object as set forth in the Memorandum of Associations under Section 12, the necessity of printing and publishing notices, balance sheets, &c., are obligations, which impose serious inconveniences. The Sind Social Reform Association has experienced the difficulty of complying with these onerous obligations, and it is the general desire that a special law for the better regulation of Reform Associations should be passed. Similarly the regulations in table **A** have to be expressly excluded under Section 38 by the Articles of Associations. If not so excluded or modified, the regulations in table **A** apply, and fix the procedure of Associations. The rules in table **A** regarding accounts, audit, notices, and the procedure to be followed at general meetings, are so elaborate, and require so much expenditure for printing that it is very necessary to provide that these rules shall not apply, unless made expressly applicable by the articles.

Then again the fees laid down under Section 40 are so heavy as almost to be crushing, and greatly disincline men from seeking the protection of the Companies Act. Government have only reduced the registration fees in the case of such Associations to Rs. 50, but this sum itself is not small, while the other fees on the registration of documents, (*e.g.*, on notices of change of office, Section 64) remain unchanged, and press inconveniently on the limited resources of the members. It is necessary, therefore, that these fees should be removed. Inadvertent omission to comply with the provisions of Sections 47, 50, 55 and 74 subjects Associations to heavy penalties. This deters men from volunteering to serve as Secretaries or Managing Directors of Associations. The winding up process is also very cumbrous, and must be made simpler and easier. I have made these quotations from the letter of my Sind friend, and as he speaks from experience and the letter represents, as I am informed, the views of the Secretary of that Society, his opinion is entitled to considerable weight. I may also state that Mr.

Dayaram Gidumal, though he does not go so far as the other Sind correspondent to whom I have referred, in condemning the Companies Act, joins with him in thinking that the Companies Act is unsuitable, and that the best plan to follow would be to enlarge the scope of Act XXI of 1860, which is in every way a simpler law, and to make it applicable to Social Reform Associations. Mr. Dayaram has himself prepared the draft of such an amending Act, which incorporates the most needful provisions of Act VI of 1882 and of Act XXI of 1860, and that draft was sent to me for consideration at this Conference. As it is out of place to expect a detailed consideration of the draft in this place, the Resolution provides for the appointment of a small committee to take the draft into its consideration. You will then all agree with me that a case has been made out for applying to Government for a special law, which necessity the Resolution affirms in its third paragraph, and further suggests the lines on which the amending Act should be passed. The first paragraph affirms the principle of such permissive legislation. The second paragraph of the Resolution will, I fear, require some more explanation from me. Section 9 of Act XXI of 1860 provides for the levy of penalties for breach of rules, and Section 15 prescribes the qualifications of the members. On the analogy of these provisions, it is proposed slightly to enlarge them by providing that when a member of a Reform Association dies without resigning his membership, his sons and other heirs shall, if the rules so provide, be regarded as coming in his place, unless or until they signify their intention to the contrary. Such a provision might seem unusual in such a matter of voluntary organizations, but it is a very necessary provision to safeguard the interests of the surviving members. It may safely be presumed that the son of a man will prefer to continue his adherence to his father's principles rather than disown them. There is an evident advantage in the arrangement, and the analogous traditions of castes and guilds are in its favour. There is no hardship in the provision, because complete liberty to resign is guaranteed to the heirs of a deceased member. I hope to have thus made my meaning plain in regard to the more important portions of the

Resolution, which I have proposed for your consideration. It seeks no compulsory interference of the law. It only seeks for the organised Associations a power to give effect to the rules and penalties to which their members have given express and voluntary assent. Without such a power, it is the experience of all of us that we are often in our weaker moments tempted to falter and go wrong. Of course, nobody expects that men can be made to practise as they preach by force of the law. The strength of motive, and the impulse to act up to it, must come from within. At the same time the fear of social opinion is not small. In a large number of cases, men fear the opinion of their fellows more than they fear their own conscience. There is no valid reason why this power should not be turned to account. Of course it will be turned to account only in the case of those who consent to join a society on these conditions. Others, who so choose, might join simply as sympathisers, but not prepared to bind themselves to the penalties laid down for a breach of pledges. Those, however, who stand aloof, have no right to dictate that none shall bind themselves, if they so choose. Such a principle of joint action cannot fail to be of great help, and I trust that it will meet with your approval. The power of registering Social Reform Associations already exists, and it is not a new law that is sought. The law is there. It is not a compulsory but a permissive law. It is, however, proved to be cumbrous and inconvenient in many respects, and all that is proposed is to simplify it. Under these explanations, I beg to move the adoption of the second Resolution entrusted to me:

'That in the opinion of the Conference, it is highly desirable that persons, who voluntarily associate together for the promotion of social reform, and accept certain pledges in respect of the obligations cast upon them as members of such Associations, should be enabled to enforce, without difficulty and expensive litigation, the rules against those who violate them, by the levy of any penalties sanctioned by the rules so accepted by them;

'2. That if the rules so provide, the heirs (sons, &c.)

of a deceased member shall on his death be deemed to be members of the said Associations, and clothed with all the rights, and be subject to all the liabilities of such membership, until they resign in accordance with the provisions contained in the said rules;

'3. And that as the provisions of the Companies Act VI of 1882 and Act XXI of 1860 (Literary and Charitable Societies Act) do not provide sufficient facilities for the proper organisation of Associations for the promotion of social reforms, and the conduct of their business and the enforcement of their penalties, a draft of a less cumbrous and more elastic Act, incorporating and amending certain provisions of both these Acts, be prepared and submitted to Government, with a prayer that it will take into its earliest consideration the desirablity of passing a Special Act for this purpose, and that in the meanwhile Government should exempt the levy of all fees under the Stamp and Companies Acts on all documents executed for the purposes of such Associations. The draft prepared by Mr. Dayaram Gidumal should be referred to a committee consisting of Rao Bahadur Ranade, the Hon. Mr. Telang, Mr. N. G. Chandavarkar, and Mr. Dayaram Gidumal.'

The Fourth Social Conference—Calcutta—1890.

In moving the (first) proposition, 'That this Conference has heard with satisfaction the account of the work done in the promotion of social reform by the various independent and affiliated Associations, established in different parts of the country, and it trusts that the good work that has been done during the past year will be continued with the same earnestness during the coming year,' the Hon. Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade said:—With the permission of the President, I propose within the short time at my disposal to lay before you a brief summary of the work done by the various independent and affiliated Social Reform Associations now at work in this country during the past year. The year that is now about to close has been in this respect a most eventful one. From one end of the country

to the other, there has been an earnest struggle going on in the minds of all classes of the community, and the fact has been recognised that the claims of social reform on our attention are of a paramount character, and that the time is past for a mere academical consideration of the same. You will be glad to notice that we are no longer liable to the reproach of devoting our attention exclusively to politics, while neglecting the more peremptory calls of duty nearer home. I have kept myself in touch with the beatings of the national pulse, and I can therefore speak with some authority from first hand sources of information. We have received reports from 16 circles, including large and populous districts and provinces in all the great Presidencies of the Empire. The mere enumeration of the names of these places will give you an idea and a much better idea than any description can convey of the universal character of this national awakening. The reports that I hold in my hand have come from distant Quetta, Punjab, Sind, Gujarath, Bombay, Deccan, Southern Maratha Country, the Berars, Madras, Malabar, Bellary, Oudh, Rohilkand, Agra, Meerut, Gorakhapur, Hyderabad (Deccan), Allahabad, Rajputana, and even from places where we have received no reports, messages of sympathy and co-operation have come to us during the last few days by letters or telegrams. Of course, as might be expected, action has provoked in some quarters a reaction, and orthodox communities, which hitherto treated the matter with indifference, have been stirred up to throw off their lethargy, and put forth their strength of numbers by way of protest against the coming change. This has been notably the case at Delhi and in my part of the country, as also in Madras. I welcome this orthodox struggle to discountenance the efforts of what they are pleased to style the so-called reformers, because it brings forcibly to the minds of many thousands of people, whom we could not otherwise reach, the urgent necessity of setting our house in order. Even the Delhi Pundits found it necessary to yield to the spirit of the times by taking up the cry of the reformers against extravagant expenditure on marriage and other occasions. The Shastris and reactionists on our side of the country, as also on the Madras side, found it necessary to admit

the existence of the evil, though they would have nothing to do with the suggestions for reforming the admittedly evil customs. The chief bone of contention was the question of the Age of Consent, in regard to which our views were formulated in the first Resolution adopted at the last Conference. The controversy has raged rather furiously round this central point. Memorials to the Government of India were sent from various parts of the country,—Sind, Gujarath, Bombay, Deccan, Madras, Mangalore and Meerut, and as a consequence counter-memorials were also sent up by the Benares and Delhi Pundits, and the Bombay, Poona and Madras reactionists. There is no dispute about the main question. All are agreed that the evil of premature connections is one which should be strongly put down. Those who oppose the proposals do so chiefly on the ground of the abuse of power by the police. This is however a question of procedure, and does not affect the amendment of the substantive penal law. All reasonable apprehensions can easily be set at rest by enacting certain provisions by which the offence can be made a non-cognizable one, and permitting bail in cases where the offence does not result in serious crimes. It can, therefore, no longer be said with justice that there is any serious difference of opinion on this point. The matter is now in the hands of Government, and it is an open secret that the legislature will before long take up this question on the unanimous recommendation of the executive Government. The point chiefly to be considered at this stage is the exact limit of age, which should be adopted. Outside the Hindu community, the feeling is that 12 years as recommended by the last Conference is too low a limit. The lady Doctors and the Public Health Society of this place have suggested a higher limit. On our side of the country 1,600 Hindu ladies have taken the same view in a memorial addressed by them to Her Majesty the Queen-Empress. As the subject is now engaging the consideration of Government, we deemed it necessary to refrain from including it in the business of this year, which you will see, from the draft Resolutions placed in your hands, includes no proposal for legislative interference, except in one small matter about which, however, I am glad to

see from the reports that have come to hand, there is not much difference of opinion. I refer to the proposed abolition of civil imprisonment in the case of married women in execution of restitution decrees.

I agree with my friend Mr. Manmohan Ghose in the view that social reform is eminently a question in which we must work for ourselves, and by ourselves, but there is one limitation to this freedom, *viz.*, that where, as in the case of the Age of Consent, as also in respect of the execution of restitution decrees and the disabilities of married widows, the law itself has laid down certain undesirable restrictions, a change in the law can alone remove the evil complained of. Mr. Manmohan Ghose is too good a lawyer not to be aware of this limitation. In regard to all other matters, the present programme of the Conference is to work out the changes proposed by organising and educating public opinion. On the question of infant and ill-assorted marriages, for instance, the various Social Reform Associations have proceeded on the principle of self-help. Their members pledge themselves to advocate and adopt certain changes. The pledge movement started in Poona has taken root, and has been adopted by Berar friends, as also by reformers in the N.-W. Provinces and Oudh and Beluchistan. In Rajputana, State agency is made available by its peculiar constitution. In Sind and Gujarath, friends have advanced a step further and have registered their Associations which are working satisfactorily. The general feeling on this subject appears to be that the marriageable age should be fixed for the present at the limit of puberty, that is, 12 years in the case of girls and 18 in the case of boys. In Rajputana they have gone further. In Sind and Gujarath and Berar the limits are lower. In respect of ill-assorted marriages, the feeling seems to be that more than 30 years' difference should not exist between the ages of man and wife. The draft Resolutions have been framed on these lines, and as they represent the general view it may be hoped that there will be no room for much difference of opinion. In regard to widow-marriages there were celebrated during the last year, a re-marriage among the Kayasthas in Punjab, one in Central Provinces, and three on

the Bombay side. About the excommunication of persons who undertake sea-voyages, public opinion is growing more favourable. The Indian Delegates, who returned about the middle of the year, were admitted back into their communities without much difficulty. The difficulties, however, are not altogether imaginary, as the records of the Jain defamation case in this city amply testify. A resolution therefore has been drafted on this subject to give expression to the wish of the Conference that a better feeling in regard to the admission of such persons by their castes should be created all over the country. You will thus see, gentlemen, that a good deal of work and very hopeful work, has been accomplished all along the line. The Conference, where we have gathered, brings all this work to a focus, and this appears to me to be its chief value. It strengthens the hands of local societies, it formulates the methods, and it regulates the aspirations of those who are working earnestly in this cause. It thus makes us feel for the first time in our history, not only that we are politically a united nation, but that our social arrangements are also being subjected to the inspiring influences of the national spirit. (*Loud cheers.*)

The Fifth Social Conference—Nagpur—1891.

Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade said (in moving the first resolution) :—

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—I have been asked to move the first resolution for the consideration of the meeting. The resolution runs thus :—

"That in the opinion of this Conference the recent decision of the Madras High Court, affirming the validity of the custom of exacting money in consideration of the gift of girls in marriage, not only conflicts with the decision of the High Courts of Bombay and Calcutta, but is also condemned by express texts of Hindu Law, and by the best orthodox sentiment of the country. The Conference accordingly recommends all Social Reform Associations to join together in one effort to denounce this practice, and ensure that monies

received by the father or guardian of the girl, shall be held as a trust in the interest of the girl, and the trust duly enforced."

The Madras decision referred to is reported in the Indian Law Report, 13 Mad. 83.—Viswanathan *versus* Saminathan. The parties in this suit were Brahmins, and the Plaintiff brought his suit on a bond for Rs. 200 passed by the Defendant in consideration of Plaintiff's giving his daughter in marriage to the Defendant's nephew. The Defendant pleaded that the consideration was illegal. The Sub-Judge of Kumbhakonum held that the consideration was not illegal, and allowed the claim. The matter came before the High Court. Justices Parker and Wilkinson held that Plaintiff's claim was maintainable, and was not against public policy or Hindu Law. They admitted that such contracts were illegal in England, but under the impression that the moral consciousness of the people in this country was not opposed to the practice, they decided that the consideration could not be regarded as immoral or against public policy. The decisions of the Bombay High Court in Dularai *versus* Vallabdas Pragji reported in the Indian Law Report, 13 Bombay, 126 and of the Calcutta High Court in Ramchand Sen *versus* Andaits Sen *Ib.*, 10 Calcutta, 1054, were referred to and disapproved for reasons stated in the Judgment.

The High Courts being thus in conflict with one another, it becomes necessary in this Social Conference to give an expression to the general feeling, that not merely the sympathies, but the convictions of the public generally and not of reformers only, are opposed to the view taken by the Madras High Court. In the first instance the Madras High Court appears to have overlooked the fact that the parties before them were Brahmins, and that the Asur form of marriage was condemned for the Brahmin caste. Out of the eight forms of marriage, the first four are commended for Brahmins, namely, the Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, and Prajapatya : and the *Asur* form is only for Vaishyas and Sudras (Manu, ch. 3, verse 24). Secondly, the Judges relied upon the commentator Siromani of Southern India, who identified the *Asur* with the *Arsh* form of marriage. The commentator may have been right in his view to the extent of

seeking to establish some resemblance between the two forms, but he could never have intended that the Asur form was as commendable as Arsh for the Brahmins.

The money consideration in this case cannot, under any circumstances, fall within the gift of a cow or two permitted in the *Arsh* form of marriage. In ch. 3, verse 53, Manu goes so far as to expressly controvert the position that the gift in the *Arsh* form was शुल्क, and lays down that whether the gift is small or great, it is equally a sale of the girl, and constitutes an offence described as the sale of one's own children.

There is, therefore, no Shastraic basis for the view taken by the Madras Court, and this is admitted by the Judges themselves. They, however, thought that the custom was widely prevalent, and was not opposed to the moral consciousness of the people. We can fairly join issue on both these points, and contend that the custom is not widely prevalent in the higher castes, and that in all castes, it is opposed to the moral feelings of the people. Mr. Justice Scott, in his judgment, has expressly observed that the *Asur* form of marriage is only legal among the lower castes; and that in this respect though the custom in the country may be defective, that is no reason why an additional evil should be engrafted upon the existing usage. It is immoral and against public policy even in the present state of matrimonial relations in India. This view of Justice Scott was concurred in by Justice Jardine. The Chief Justice Garth, in the Calcutta case also held that such contracts were void and illegal in this country, and were incapable of being enforced by the rules of equity and good conscience. The fact that marriages of girls take place during infancy is not a sufficient reason for encouraging parents and guardians to abuse their authority over their infant charges, by deriving money advantage from disposing of their wards. They were bound as parents to exercise their choice, not for their own advantage, but for the interest of the minor girls.

It was, indeed, contended in the Madras case that the parents had to maintain the minor, and might claim to be reimbursed the expenses incurred by them. Such an argument may hold good in other countries, but in this country, the

duty of the parent to support his child is not limited by such mercenary considerations.

The Madras Judges are themselves prepared to invalidate such contracts, where the girl is given in marriage to old and debauched men, but this distinction saps at the root of the principle involved. Who is to decide upon the qualifications of the old and debauched men? Where is the limit to be drawn? The better course seems to be to follow the rulings of the Calcutta and Bombay High Courts. Of course in this conflict between the High Courts, the Legislature can alone remove the evil by express law. It has, in Section 23 of the Contract Act, laid down the principle, and all that has to be done is to make the meaning more clear by an addition, declaring that all payments, received by the girl's father or by the guardian in consideration of the girl's marriage, are void and illegal.

Till this is effected, the next best course is to declare that all such payments are made in the interest of the girl, and that the parent or the guardian is only a trustee of the girl. Manu lays down (in ch. 3, verse 54) that if the payment is made to the girl, there is no objection, and he strictly prohibits the relations of the girl from seizing the girl's wealth (ch. 3, verse 52). It is on this account that the resolution is worded in the way proposed.

There are some who think that payments made to the bridegroom's father should be brought under the same category. In some castes these payments also are exacted from mercenary motives. There is, however, a difficulty in the way, caused by the fact that the approved forms of marriages, *Brahma* and *Daiva*, contemplate gifts of money, &c., to complete the gift of the girl. The circumstances of the two cases are not identical, and it will take some time to make people see any inconsistency in following the old law. We have, therefore, confined the resolution to the circumstances of the case, in which the custom is not widely prevalent and is certainly opposed to the moral consciousness of the people, and is, moreover, in conflict with express texts. I hope I have made my meaning clear to every body present, and that you will approve the proposition, which I have the honor now to move.

The Hon'ble Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade delivered an address at the Hislop College, explaining the objects and necessity of the Social Conference, and the methods of its operations. Rao Bahadur V. M. Bhide of Poona was in the chair. Mr. Ranade said that he was not uttering words of mere common-place courtesy often used on such occasions, when he said that the cordial reception given to him and his friends, strangers as they were, by the people of Nagpur, was exceedingly kind of them. When he left the Western coast, with its hill-forts and arid plains, which were at present threatened with scarcity, and when he first saw the fertile parts on this side, he could conceive the satisfaction his ancestors must have felt in settling here, in this land of plenty, verdure, and happiness. Those days are gone. The wounds then caused have been healed. The people have reconciled themselves to the effects of the British conquest. The old invasions from the West have ceased. But what is this new invasion, you will ask,—this new invasion which also comes from the West, and seeks to capture the East? There is first the Congress invasion,—you must surely have reconciled yourself to it. Its triumphal arch has been raised. The camp is ready; and all preparations are ripe for a mighty siege. The sieging operations will commence from to-morrow, and you will all be busy contributing your share in them. The Conference movement represented a more humble invasion, there are no battlements, no triumphal arches, no preparations for war. Before commencing its operations, as the spokesman of the Conference, he was desirous of having a parley with those that had assembled there, and of seeking their earnest co-operation in the work it had undertaken. The Congress invasion was an invasion which needed no advocate to plead its cause before them, as it had already secured their sympathies. His mission needed an advocate, for it was a delicate task,—this work of social reform. The work of the Conference concerned our family interests, it touched the hearts of the people, and if not wisely carried on, it was sure to arouse opposition. His party could not adopt the rôle of dictatorship, and they never thought of adopting it. Mr. Ranade then went into the

history and constitution of the Social Conference, the importance of which, he said, could be easily understood by his saying that it sought to purify and improve their character as citizens and as heads of families. There were at present scattered over this large country a number of associations, which aimed at reforming the social institutions of the people, some three of them were registered under the Company's Act or under the Religious and Charitable Societies' Act; there were some thirty others which satisfied themselves with mere pledges. There was an equal number of those who did not take any pledges, but had been striving to agitate for reform. All of these worked for a common purpose, *viz.*, the amelioration of the social condition of the people. But each of these worked independently. And for each of these to carry on correspondence directly with the other associations, and seek to benefit by their experience, was a cumbrous process. To make this process easier and more effective, the Social Conference was brought into being. Each Reform Association required the co-operation of the rest, and each sought the benefit of the experience of others which were working in the same direction. This want the Social Conference supplied, for at the Conference, views were exchanged, experience was communicated, varied information was focussed, and additional light was thrown each year on many subjects, and a unity of purpose was secured in the work of the different associations. The Conference, he repeated, was not a dictatorial body commissioned to command subordinate associations, but it was a gathering where the representatives from different parts met to inform each other and help each other in the work of practical reform.

In this social problem more importance was paid to the methods of reform proposed than in the agitation for political reform, and rightly. For there was such a variety of communities amongst them that what suited the aspiration of one may not fit in with the needs of the other, what was desired by one was not necessary for the purposes of others. He would illustrate his remarks by taking the marriage question. There were people, in remote India (about many lakhs of them known as Hindus) whose custom and law allowed one wife for five

brothers,—a custom which would be considered a sin, if not a crime, by us on this side, but which passed there as a commonplace occurrence. Again, in other parts lower South, there are people who do not attach any sacred character, as we do here, to the marriage tie. For the purposes of religious law or civil law or any law, there is neither husband nor wife in Malabar. This custom prevails not in a small portion of this country, but in a populous region which measures 400 miles in length and 30 to 40 miles in breadth. The learned lecturer said that a friend of his who was present here to-day, and who was trying to make marriage a permanent life-long obligation there, was denounced by these people as aiming at a dreadful revolution. In the East, there was a class very prominent and much respected, among whom one man (whether he be a young or an old man) could be the husband of any number of girls, irrespective of age. Such are the various customs obtaining in different parts of the country, and what he said of the marriage custom applied equally to other customs. Hence there is the difficulty of prescribing one method of reform for all India. Necessarily the methods must be different for different communities, and they must be so framed that the old continuity of each with its past history may not be broken up. The Conference proposes some common methods, and seeks to animate the workers with a righteous purpose common to all. Happily all the disputes in this Social Reform agitation related to the question of the methods to be pursued. The existence of the evil was admitted by reasonable men of all parties, and the necessity for reform was recognized everywhere by those who gave thought to the subject. The dispute was how shall they do it? In studying the history of their country during the past 2,000 years, they would find illustrations of various methods of reform. There were some who said that they should preach reform; but that they should in practice only drift into reform, which means that we should close our eyes, shut our mouths, tie down our hands and feet, and wait and wait till the train of events transferred us from one stage to another. Things should be allowed to take their own course. There was a fallacy lying at the root of this whole view which was so apparent that it

was not necessary for him to spend many words to expose it. When one drifts into reform, he is not reformed, he remains exactly as he was. The fastest railway train does not give exercise to our body, if we do not ourselves move. Some there were who thought that when they were asked to lend their support to reform, there was some objective reality outside themselves that they had to deal with. There was no such thing. The thing to be reformed was their own self, heart and head and soul, their own prejudices were to be removed, their superstitions to be eradicated, their courage to be strengthened, their weaknesses to be conquered, in fact their character to be formed again so as to suit the times, so as to fit with the spirit of the age. Mr. Ranade appealed to each of his hearers if his conscience did not tell him that there was something lacking in him to make him what he desired to be. And if so what were the methods which could supply what was wanting in them? Mr. Ranade then named four methods of making a conscious effort to reform. The first method was what he could approximately describe as the method of tradition, that is to say, of basing reform on the old texts. The weapon of the school of tradition was interpretation, in other words, taking the old texts as the basis, and to interpret them so as to suit the new requirements of the times. This was the method followed by Dr. Bhandarkar recently; and the same was the method of the venerable founder of the Arya Samaj—Pandit Dayanand Saraswati—who believed that, in dealing with the masses, it would not do to follow any other method than that of taking the old texts, and putting new interpretation on them, so as to make all feel that there was an effort made to preserve the old continuity, and that there was no attempt at innovation, which, in the eyes of the ignorant, always meant revolution. This is the method the Social Conference follows in connection with the question of widow-remarriage. The next method was that of appealing to the conscience of the people. The first method, in the opinion of a good many people, leads to disputations, and therefore they advocate the method of appealing directly to their sense of right and wrong, good and bad, sinful and virtuous. The weapon of this school of reformers is to seek to bind men by

their own pledge or promise. The third method sought to enforce reform by means of penalties,—imposed either by the caste or by the State, in either of which case it is equally a constraint imposed by the wise upon the ignorant in their common interest. It has its merits as well as demerits, but it must be advocated only in those cases in which the first two have no chance of success, for it is a coercive method, which should not be resorted to, until other ways have been tried. The fourth method is that of dividing from the rest, and forming a new camp, and shifting for ourselves. This has its merits too, but many more demerits, the chief among which latter is the breaking of continuity. All lead to the same goal, and excepting the fourth one, all the three have been accepted by the Conference. The Conference is not, as has been misrepresented, a body aiming at carrying out reform by mere legislation. This is as inaccurate a description of it as could possibly be given. Legislation steps in only when the other methods fail. He would refer as an illustration to the practice of the sale of girls in marriage. The Madras High Court has given its support to it. The Bombay and Bengal High Courts have pronounced their opinion against it. In such a case comes the need of legislation. Mr. Ranade then exorted his audience to lend their support and their active support to the cause of Social Reform. The Conference and the Congress, he said, were so closely united that they could not help the one and discountenance the other; they were two sisters,—the Congress and the Conference; and they must let them both go hand-in-hand, if they wished to make real progress. The cause of the Conference was the cause of the well-being of the people, even as the cause of the Congress was the cause of their country's progress.

The Sixth Social Conference—Allahabad—1892.

At a public meeting held on the 25th December, under the presidency of the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Ram Kali Chaudhuri, Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade gave an address on the subject of "Social Evolution." He said:—Mr. President and Gentle-

men, once more we meet in this busy week of December, this time in your historical and holy city, to take stock of our year's achievements, to count our losses and gains, and to pledge ourselves to help each other in the unceasing struggle to better our condition. When from our distant provinces we start on these annual pilgrimages, we are often twitted for our pains by those who take credit to themselves for superior wisdom, and the question is often asked, what mad freak lays hold of so many earnest minds in the country, which leads them to pursue this mirage of national elevation, which recedes further from our grasp the more eagerly we run after it. This same irreverent doubt also weighs down some among our own body in our weak moments, and it seems to me very necessary, before we enter upon more serious work, to purify ourselves by the discipline of a rigorous course of self-examination for the struggle. Nothing strikes our critics both European and Native, as more manifestly absurd than this our faith that these annual gatherings will prove helpful in attaining the objects we seek. Progress in the art of self-Government, both in its national and individual bearings, it is urged by some of our native friends, can never be secured by these half-confused gatherings of races and creeds and interests, and the jumble of tongues, and the tame imitation of methods not our own. Our European critics are more wise in their generation, and some of the wisest among them have demonstrated to their own satisfaction that all Oriental races have had their day, and that nothing is now left to them but to vegetate and die, and make way for their betters. Political elevation, and social emancipation, religious or spiritual enlightenment,—these gifts have not been, and will never be, according to their philosophers, vouchsafed any more to the Indian races. If these black forebodings were really inspired prophecies, our outlook would be dark indeed. Happily for us these prophecies are not true, and what is more, it is in our power to falsify them. History does not countenance them, and the teachings of science are not in their favour. No earnest prayer, no self-denying aspiration, no sincere battling with falsehood and ignorance, can ever under God's Providence, end in failure.

The methods may have to be changed, but the struggle is ever the same, and none need despair. It is not the gains that you make outside of you, it is not what you have, but what you yourselves become, that makes or mars a man's or a nation's destiny. Particular reforms may be out of our reach, or may not be for our advantage: but the earnest desire for reform, and sincere efforts of self-sacrifice directed towards their attainment cannot but elevate us above our weaknesses, and strengthen our strong points, and plant the banner of union in hearts torn with centuries of strife and disunion. This is the moral interest of the struggle, and those who cannot appreciate this invaluable privilege of fighting in the ranks in such a struggle are,—what shall I call them—superior persons living in a Paradise of their own. If indeed history and science both declared against us, we might find it necessary to pause. But the history of this great country is but a fairy tale, if it has not illustrated how each invasion from abroad has tended to serve as a discipline of the chosen race, and led to the gradual development of the nation to a higher ideal if not of actual facts, at least of potential capabilities. The nation has never been depressed beyond hope of recovery, but after a temporary submerging under the floods of foreign influences, has reared up its head—absorbing all that is best in the alien civilisation and polity and religions. The testimony of science points in the same direction. If the environments determine the growth, a change in the environments must bring about a change in the political and social organism. There is thus no cause for despair if we only remember one great lesson of history and science, namely, that no development of the body politic is possible, unless the new heat animates all our powers, and gives life and warmth to all our activities.

When we meet at these annual gatherings to seek our political elevation, we must not lose sight of the fact that our social emancipation should go along with it, if we desire to be an individual consistent whole, with a just balance of power in all our movements. In other words, the social evolution must take place side by side, if it should not precede the political growth that we desire to achieve. What is it, some

of you will ask, that you require of us to do in this work of internal freedom? I would reply, the evolution that we should seek is a change from constraint to freedom—constraint imposed by our own weaker nature over the freedom of our higher powers. It is a change from credulity to faith, from credulity which believes without grounds to faith which builds itself upon a firm foundation. Our station in life, our duties, and our limits of action are certainly fixed for most of us by circumstances over which we have no control, but there is still a large margin left for freedom of action. We voluntarily contract that margin, and bind ourselves by fetters, and glory in them as the Mahomedan fakir in Bombay, who thinks himself specially favoured because he bears heavy iron chains. The change which we should all seek is thus a change from constraint to freedom, from credulity to faith, from status to contract, from authority to reason, from unorganised to organised life, from bigotry to toleration, from blind fatalism to a sense of human dignity. This is what I understand by social evolution, both for individuals and societies in this country. Even if we accept the evolution view to be correct, it should not be forgotten that the environments which surround us have changed, and are not the same that they were a hundred years ago. Peace and order reign throughout the land instead of the old disturbances which made the preservation of life one's chief care. Instead of our country being a sealed book, we are now a part of the community of nations, feeling joy and sorrow in their prosperity or distress. In our own country distance and local barriers which so long separated us have been removed, and we are made more mobile and coherent than we ever were before. These are only physical changes. More important still is the discipline afforded us by the example and teaching of the most gifted and free nation in the world, whose rule guarantees to us a long continuance of these favourable conditions. The reign of law is supreme. Human skill and human sympathies are busy at work to correct all our failings, and it cannot well be that all this should have happened as a mere accident in human story. The European philosophers themselves admit that wholesale migration and infusion of new blood can alone revive

the old *effete* Oriental races. I contend that the changed order of things described above are the new environments in which, without change of place, we have been forced to migrate, they infuse new blood into our veins, and they bring down from heaven the spiritual fire which has strength enough to purge us of our grosser selves, if we only will do our duty. On their own theory, therefore, there is no cause for the despair which European thinkers feel. The process of growth is always slow, where it has to be a sure growth. The best natures naturally want to shorten this long process in their desire to achieve the work of a century in a decade. This temptation has to be resisted, and in this respect the teachings of the evolution doctrine have great force, because they teach that growth is structural and organic, and must take slow effect in all parts of the organism, and cannot neglect any, and favour the rest. There are those amongst us who think that, in this connection, the work of the reformer is confined only to a brave resolve to break with the past, and do what our individual reason suggests as proper and fit. The power of long-formed habits and tendencies is however ignored in this view of the matter. "The true reformer has not to write upon a clean slate. His work is more often to complete the half-written sentence. He has to produce the ideal out of the actual, and by the help of the actual." We have one continuous stream of life flowing past us, and "we must accept as valid the acts which were noted in the past, and on the principles of the past," and seek to turn the stream with a gentle bend here, and a gentle bend there, to fructify the land; we cannot afford to dam it up altogether, or force it into a new channel. It is this circumstance which constitutes the moral interest of the struggle, and the advice so frequently given—that we have only to shake our bonds free and they will fall off themselves,—is one which matured and larger experience seldom supports. We cannot break with the past altogether; with our past we should not break altogether, for it is a rich inheritance, and we have no reason to be ashamed of it. The society to which we belong has shown wonderful elasticity in the past, and there is no reason for apprehending that it has ceased to be tractable

and patient and persistent in action. While respecting the past, we must ever seek to correct the parasitical growths that have encrusted it, and sucked the life out of it. This is, at least, the spirit in which the societies and associations which are represented at the Social Conference seek to work. They seek no change for its own sake, or because it is fashionable elsewhere. They seek their inspiration in the best traditions of our own past, and adjust the relations of the past with the present in a spirit of mutual forbearance. The Shastras they revere, but they respect the spirit more than the letter of the old law. The road is difficult and beset with dangers, but as it is the only sure road, there is no choice. Looked at in this spirit, we may now review the work of the past year, and although, as in the political sphere of our activity, we have both gained and lost ground, there is, on the whole, no cause for thinking that we have wasted our opportunities during the year that is about to close. Being in touch with friends in all parts of the country, I can speak with some authority, and I am glad to testify to the fact that it cannot be laid at the door of the different local Associations that they have been idle all the year round. In the Bengal Presidency an agitation initiated by Kumar Bonoy Krishna Bahadur, and supported by such men as Sir Romesh Chandra Mitra and Pundit Mahesh Chandra and Babu Surendra Nath Bannerjee, has been carried on in the matter of removing hindrances in the way of the free admission of men who go to foreign countries. Vyavasthas numerously signed by Pundits and others, have advanced the solution of that question to a sensible extent. In the N.-W. Provinces and Oudh, the Kayastha Associations and their Conference have done a great deal for that community in the way of checking intemperance and extravagance, and promoting education. In the Punjab, the healthy activity of the local Arya Samajas has given to that body a position of great usefulness in the education and training of the community of the country. Two re-marriages, one in high life and the other in consonance with the old practices, have taken place with the apparent approval of many orthodox leaders. Lower down in Rajputana the Walterkrit Rajputra Sabha has developed its

organization, and enforced its rules with greater success than before, and the movement is now spreading among other classes of the community. The leading Native States are lending their support to the cause of reform officially. In Guzerath in our own Presidency, His Highness the Maharajah Gaikwar has been appealed to for help by the Mahajans of thirty leading sub-castes to help them in raising the limit of marriageable age, and checking extravagance. In the British territory in the same province, the Kunbi population has been similarly profiting by the operation of the rules framed under the Infanticide Acts. In the rest of the Presidency, the Marwadi Jains at Nasik and the Kayastha Prabhus have held Conferences for the promotion of reform in their own community. In Bombay a re-marriage was celebrated the other day which was also an inter-marriage. In Poona, owing to local distractions, much has not been done, but the Poona Association has received several more pledges, and some of the highest families in the city have arranged mutual marriage alliances, the actual celebration of marriage being postponed till the girls arrive at puberty. Even the local distraction had a higher moral interest than what people, looking superficially, would be prepared to admit. As the question is, however, still undecided, it would be premature to prophesy the final results. But there are evident signs that the struggle has commenced in earnest, and it will end in a compromise creditable to both the parties. In Mysore His Highness the Maharajah's Government is prepared to undertake legislation in respect of marriage reform, and has been good enough to show His Highness's appreciation of the work of the Conference by deputing a learned Shastri of his Court to help us in our deliberations. In Malabar the proposed legislation of marriage among Nairs has made some progress. In the Madras Presidency, three re-marriages took place, one of them being an inter-marriage. A new association of earnest workers has also been formed there, which represents the young Madras party, and promises the happiest results. Two of our most prominent workers undertook missionary tours in the Punjab, in the Central Provinces and in the Berars, at great self-sacrifice. In the Central Provinces a Native

Christian was taken back into his caste by the leading Pandits of Jubbalpore. Taking things as they are, this is not, I hope, a very unsatisfactory account of the year's work, and it shows that the conscience of the country is touched in all great centres, and with better organization, greater courage of conviction, and more faith in Providence, we may hope that this process of social regeneration or evolution, if you like so to call it, will continue to grow in strength and in power. To help that growth, by bringing all workers together once a year to exchange views and sympathies, is the object with which we meet here. Last time the people of Allahabad gladly welcomed our efforts, and we feel quite sure of a similar welcome on this occasion.

The Seventh Social Conference—Lahore—1893.

Speaking on Social Reform, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade said:—MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—This is not the first time that I have come to visit this beautiful city of yours. Nearly 20 years ago I first visited Lahore, and saw the sights and made myself acquainted with the notables of the city. One generation has passed away since then, and many of my old acquaintances have departed, and their place has been taken up by others who were then perhaps attending your schools and colleges. During these 20 years, a spiritual wave has swept over your province, and I see signs and indications which satisfy me that you have been all the better for the operation of this most elevating influence. I visited this place again 7 years ago; but my visit then was only for a short time, and now you find me here before you in your midst on the occasion of this great gathering of the Indian nations, which has been held annually for the past nine years in the great capitals of the British Indian Empire. I come this time in connection with a mission of peace, which the General Secretary of the Conference, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunath Rao has been pleased to assign to me, namely, to bespeak your favourable attention to the consideration of matters which more intimately concern the true welfare of the great Empire to which we all belong

than many others with the noise of which the air is singing all about us here. Perhaps few of you have been privileged to see Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao. He is the father and the patriarch of this movement. The respect due to age and rank and education is sanctified in his case by the charm of a highly spiritual life, a temper so sweet, a heart so warm and sympathetic, that I am not exaggerating when I say that many of you might well undertake a pilgrimage all the way to Madras to see him once in your life. By reason of old age and infirmities he has been unable to come over here, and has deputed me to deliver to you this message of peace, and to seek your co-operation in the great work of social reform, which has a claim upon your attention as legitimate as the more stirring political aspirations which for the time engage your attention. This reminds me of a story which I happened some months ago to read in a biography of the prophet of Arabia. You all know that Mahomed's first wife Khadja was older than himself, and that in later life when he became a power in Arabia, he took a second and a younger wife named Ayesha. This younger wife once asked the old prophet the reason why he did not give all his heart to the wife of his choice, so beautiful and so young, who had brought him accession of power and wealth, and why he still shared that affection with one who was old and decayed. Mahomed gave a reply which has a moral true for all eternity. He said to his young wife that though he loved her, he could not well give up his whole affection to her, for his old wife's claims on his love were stronger and far more legitimate than any that she could plead. Khadija had accepted him when he was poor and unknown, she had tended him, advised him, and helped him in his cares and anxieties, and her place could not be filled by any woman however lovely, whom he chose for her charm of age and beauty.

This beautiful little story has a moral, the significance of which we should not forget on occasions like this. Those who know me know full well that I should be the last person to condemn the political aspirations that have been created in our minds as the result of British rule and liberal education. They

represent a department of human activity, to the claims of which the people of this country have been long indifferent. No man can feel the full dignity of human existence, who is dead to the duties of the citizenship of a great empire. At the same time this new love, that has sprung up in us, ought not to dry up the fountains of our affection for the old claimant, who accepted us when we were poor and helpless, without whose anxious care and watchfulness we can never hope to be in a fit condition to undertake the higher responsibilities that we seek to deserve. It was a sense of this necessity of developing with equal care the whole of our being, both in its family and social relations, as also in its relation to the body politic, that impelled Dewan Bahadur and myself as his helpmate to attend these gatherings ever since their inception in Bombay in 1885. The Congress leaders have also, after some preliminary difficulties, recognized the fact that this old claimant upon our affections could not be entirely ignored, and have granted us permission to carry on in their camp our propaganda on our own responsibility. I hope these introductory observations will give you an insight into the nature of the message that I have been deputed here to communicate to you, and it is this mission that brings me and others of my friends to this great distance, at this by no means to us at least agreeable season of the year. About 135 years ago my ancestors came to your parts of the country for a brief interval, but then their mission was different. Our hands were at each other's throats then. The *Pax Britannica* has now released those hands for other and nobler work. We now meet as brothers and friends. You have treated us as your welcome guests, and we meet here to discuss, in a language that we all understand and with complete freedom, the many evils that we all more or less suffer, and which are so deep-rooted in the very vitals of our family and social system. Do I exaggerate in any way the character of this disorder in our system of family life? I am not given to exaggeration, and the subject is too serious to admit of such light treatment. I appeal to every one of the many hundreds of the men before me,—I appeal to them most solemnly,—I ask them to lay their hands on their hearts, and stand up before

this meeting and say, if any one can muster courage to say it,—that our family and social arrangements have not been out of joint for centuries together? Are we or are we not conscious that many of us, under the narcotic influence of custom and usage, too often violate the feelings of our common human nature and our sense of right and wrong, stunt the growth of our higher life, and embitter the existence of many of those who depend on us, our wives and children, our brothers and sons, our relatives and friends? Are we prepared to point out any single hour of the day when we do not unconsciously commit injustice of a sort by the side of which municipal injustice is nothing, when we do not unconsciously sanction iniquities by the side of which the most oppressive tyrant's rule is mercy itself? We resent the insult given by the oppressor. We protest against the unjust judge. Here however we are judge and jury and prosecutor and accused ourselves, and we are sometimes consciously and more often unconsciously committed to a course of conduct, which makes tyrants and slaves of us all and, sapping the strength of our resolution, drags us down to our fall—to be the laughing stock of the whole world. Till we set these matters right, it is almost hopeless to expect that we can have that manliness of character, that sense of our rights and responsibilities without which political and municipal freedom is hard to achieve and impossible to preserve.

I want you to recognise this fact. I have no authority to suggest to you remedies. These will suggest themselves to you. The fetters of the mind once realized as fetters, will drop off themselves. They cease to be fetters, and even become a discipline for a better existence. It may take years and generations to achieve this result. We may all have to die and become manure for the seeds of life in future generations. But once we enter upon the right path, the torch of light blazing inside us, which we only seek to darken with our artificial rushlights, will show to those who come after us the way to heaven. The way to heaven is a narrow path, and one has to tread upon sharp-edged instruments, carefully balancing the weak limbs and spirits. The way to

hell is, as you all know, a road well paved with good intentions, and we have only to close our eyes and shut our ears, to be listless and indifferent, lead a butterfly existence, and die intellectually and spiritually. We have pursued that way too long, and it is time now that we should take due care to set our houses in order, as no mere whitewashing and no plastering would remove these hidden sources of our weaknesses. The whole existence must be renovated. The baptism of fire and not of water must be gone through by those who seek a renovation of heart such as this

Perhaps some of you might think, and in this favoured land of yours you have good reason to think, that things are not so bad as they seem. That is also my own hope; and this faith in us alone makes us feel that if we all pull strongly and heartily, we may yet achieve our regeneration. I profess implicit faith in two articles of my creed. This country of ours is the true land of promise. This race of ours is the chosen race. It was not for nothing that God has showered His choicest blessings on this ancient land of Aryavarta. We can see His hand in history. Above all other countries we inherit a civilization and a religious and social polity which has been allowed to work their own free development on the big theatre of time. There has been no revolution, and yet the old condition of things has been tending to reform itself by the slow process of assimilation. The great religions of the world took their birth here, and now they meet again as brothers prepared to welcome a higher dispensation, which will unite all and vivify all. India alone, among all the countries of the world, has been so favoured, and we may derive much strength of inward hope from such a contemplation. Change for the better by slow absorption—assimilation not by sudden conversion and revolution—this has been the characteristic feature of our past history. We have outlived Buddhism, and we conquered it by imbibing its excellences and rejecting its errors. We have outlived Mahomedan repression, and have conquered it by being the better for the hardy discipline in the suffering we went through under its domination. The old world loseness of the relations of married life and of affiliation of sons has been

purged from us. The old world slavery of the Sudra millions has been quietly abandoned, the erewhile Sudra classes have been elevated into Vaishyas, our Brahmins have become warriors and statesmen, Kshatrias have become philosophers and guides, and our Vaishyas have become our prophets and saints. The old world fetichism has given place to idolatry. The old world polytheism has given place to a full recognition by the humblest of our people of the unity of the godhead. Our voracious love of flesh and wine has made room for an ideal of abstinence, charity, and mercy, unknown all over the world. The old sacrifices of man and beast have given place to the holier sacrifices of the passions in us. The patriarchal forms of society have made room for communal organizations all over the country. The sanctity of woman's place—if not as wife, yet as mother, daughter, and sister,—has been realized in a way unknown before or elsewhere.

All these changes have been brought about consciously or unconsciously without any violent struggle, and without breaking up the continuity of the old life. If the guiding hand of God in history has so favoured us hitherto, why should we despair now when we have been brought under influences of a still more elevating kind? The Old Testament testifies to the truth and benignity of the promise of the New Gospel. It is the Gospel which teaches us the supreme duty of unification in place of dissension. It teaches us by example and precept the supreme virtue of organization and self-reliance. It holds before us a brighter ideal of the dignity of the individual soul—the image of the God in us. It seeks to bridge the chasm we otherwise would have been unable to span by our own unaided efforts, and holds us out a hope of a more hopeful future than we have ever enjoyed in the past.

I hope thus to have shown the urgency of the work of social reform and the grounds which justify our hope that honest and united efforts will surely lead to success. Thanks to the Arya Samaj movement in your part of the country and the Brahmo Samaj organizations in other parts of India,—good and noble work has been accomplished within the past genera-

tion or two. I am here however speaking as a representative of no particular Samaj, but as a member of the great Hindu community which peoples this land and forms one-sixth of the human race. The true test of progress must be seen in signs which show that this vast mass of humanity is being vivified by the sacred fire which burns only to purify and elevate. There are those who think that no such signs can be seen, and that our highest duty is to separate ourselves from the decaying mass and look to our own safety. I have battled with this idea for the last 30 years and I shall protest against it, till life is spared and my voice permits me to speak. The Hindu community is not a festering mass of decay and corruption. It is no doubt conservative to a degree, but that conservatism is its strength. No nation has any destined place in history which changes its creed and its morals, its customs and its social polity, with the facility of fashions At the same time our conservatism does not prevent the slow absorption of new ideas and the gradual assimilation of new practices. You will naturally expect me to produce my credentials for such a statement. If you will not do it there are others who will, and I shall therefore pass briefly in review the social history of the past year, just reminding you of its leading features in support of my statement. (1) First and foremost in the list of such events I would put the action taken by the Mysore Government in the matter of improved Legislation for checking infant and ill-assorted marriages. The matter was taken up at the instance of the Representatives of the Mysore Assembly and after obtaining the consent of the heads of the great Mutts, the subject was discussed formally and, though the numerical majority was against this reform, the minority was respectable and was sure to carry the day sooner or later. (2) The example of Mysore was followed also by the enlightened ruler of Baroda whose help was asked by the leading Mahajans of that city to strengthen their efforts at reform by legal sanction. An infant Marriage Bill and also a Bill to encourage the formation of social improvement societies have been framed and published, and are now under consideration. (3) The Rajput Hitkarini Sabha has as you all know been the pioneer in these reforms,

and its work has been growing in scope and power. The example of the Rajputs is being followed by other castes in that Province. We have thus had three experiments conducted on different methods by the ruling authorities of Rajputana, Gujarath, and Mysore,—all tending towards the same end by different directions. This variety of methods is the best test of the genuineness of the reform movement. (4) While these leading Native States show clear signs of advance, the great Ecclesiastical Heads are not backward. In our part of the country the Shankaracharya of the Sankeswar Mutt has been moved by a petition signed by many thousands of persons to express his disapproval of the practice of the sale of girls in the form of marriage. (5) The Madras High Court three years ago gave some sanction to this illegal practice, and its action was commented upon in a formal Resolution at the Nagpur Conference. Since then it has seen reason to change its views and has disowned the inferences suggested by its previous decisions. (6) Another Shankaracharya at Dwarka in Gujarath has promised his support to a movement for the improvement in the native calendar about which discussion has been going on for a long time in our part of the country. (7) Sringeri Shankaracharya has been distinguishing himself on the same side by removing the hindrances to foreign travel, and advising the Maharajah of Mysore to undertake a trip to Calcutta by sea instead of by land. You will thus see that both the Civil and Religious heads of the community are feeling a new responsibility in this matter, which is surely a sign we cannot but welcome. It shows that the movement is not confined to a heterodox minority, as some people are pleased to call it. (8) In further proof of this progress I would draw your attention to the movement in Malabar for legalizing marriage,—a want which the Nairs had not till now felt. The question is still under the consideration of Government, and thanks to the efforts of my friend the Hon'ble Sankaran Nair, an improved marriage law will sooner or later be passed for that province. (9) Another of my friends the Hon'ble Bhashyam Aiyangar has brought in a Bill for relaxing the rigidity of the joint family system by extending the scope of self-acquired property. The Hon'ble Rash

Behari Ghose has actually carried a small measure of improvement in the ancient law of equal partition in his province. (10) It might be urged that all this was the work of the authorities and that people generally took no part in it. This was, however, not true. The meetings of the Social Conference from year to year would have no value by themselves, if they did not reflect considerable local activity in the same direction. The Kayastha community in the North-West Provinces may well claim the honor of leading this popular movement. In the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, their Sadar Sabhas, provincial and local Sabhas, their journals, their educational Institutions and benevolent Funds, are a feature of this activity too marked to be passed over. Their methods of operation are suited to their needs and they have fought successfully against intemperance and extravagance in their community. (11) Their example has been followed by the Bhargavas of the North-West Provinces, the Jains, the Agarvalas or Vaishyas, the Jats, the Malis in Rajputana, and the Sarins in the Punjab and by many other smaller communities, who meet in Conferences every year to provide for the education of their children, both boys and girls, and frame rules against early marriages and extravagance in expenditure. (12) The tendency of all these local bodies, especially the Kayastha Sabhas, is to break up the smaller divisions and promote inter-marriage and inter-dining among sub-sections of the same caste. The Jaitpur-Mahajans in Kathiawar have expressly proposed this latter object for the consideration of their caste. (13) Following the example of the North-West Provinces, the Audicha Brahmins in Gujarath, the Oswal Jains in Nasik and the Kayastha Prabhus in Thana have held similar meetings of their castes for the same objects with equally good results. These caste organizations do not reflect heterodoxy, but are intensely orthodox and yet they feel the necessity of reform and organized efforts. Many of these organizations are not regularly affiliated as societies represented at the Social Conference, but some of them are so affiliated and the Conference is chiefly of value in that it stimulates these local efforts. (14) There are regular circles, in which Associations exist, who send their delegates to the Conference; as for

example I might refer to the Bellary Sanmarga Samaj, the Berar Association, the Dharwar Samilani Sabha, the Madras, Poona and Ahmedabad Associations, the Gaziapur, Meerut, and Ajmere circles, and the Sind Association. Several of these are registered Associations and others are taking steps to register themselves. (15) These Associations while taking up social reform join with it a general movement in favour of purity of conduct, and of purging the community of vicious practices. The Madras Sabha has taken the lead against the dancing girl institution. Many others take pledges against intemperance, incontinence and polygamy. (16) The Bengal Presidency, while it is the centre of the Brahmo Samaj movement, has unaccountably shown a strange tendency towards bigoted conservatism among the masses in a way not known in other parts of India. Even there, however, the sea-voyage movement has been taken up in right earnest, and organized efforts are being directed to facilitate the admission into caste of persons who have crossed the seas. (17) On our side of the country the same movement has found greater favour with orthodox people, and admissions into caste have taken place in Ahmedabad and the Konkan, and Rajkot on terms, which show a great relaxation of the former prejudices. (18) Our Presidency has also been distinguished by the favourable reception it has given to the re-marriage movement. As many as seven re-marriages took place last year in our Province—spontaneous marriages not brought about by organizations. (19) Madras and the Punjab have also shown some activity in this direction. As might be expected these re-marriages frequently involve the breach of strict caste exclusiveness, and they thus serve a double purpose. (20) The Arya Samaj has distinguished itself by the re-admission into their community of repentant converts to other religions. (21) In my part of the country among the highest caste Brahmins two virgin girls respectively of 13 and 15 years were married last year, reflecting the highest credit upon their parents. Two or three other girls of the best families have had the Vakdan ceremony performed at the age of 12 or 13, and the marriage ceremony postponed till maturity. (22) The Baroda Government has taken steps to enforce

compulsory education in one part of its territory as an experiment.

I think I have said enough to show that this movement in favour of social reform is neither confined to any one province, nor to any class of the community, but is a general and popular movement all over the country, and embraces all castes. It covers a wide programme, encouraging foreign travel, remarriage of widows, interfusion of castes, the admission of converts, and checking infant and ill-assorted marriages, polygamy, sale of girls, intemperance, and incontinence. The methods on which it is conducted are varied, but all are animated by a common purpose. There is the method of legislation and of executive action, there is the method of strengthening caste organizations, and the method of appealing to the consciences of men by pledges. There is also the method of interpretation, and public preaching and popular enlightenment are also relied upon as helps. All these methods of work are carried on together with a common aim. There is thus no reason for feeling hopeless about the ultimate success of efforts so directed and so general. There is no other sphere of activity, political or educational or industrial, which seems to have taken such hold of the popular mind. Of course admission is slow, and change is gradual; and ardent and earnest minds desire to see the work accomplished in their own life-time. The method of rebellion, *i.e.*, of separating from the community, naturally suggests itself to such minds. I am constitutionally inclined to put more faith in the other methods mentioned above. They keep up continuity, and prevent orthodoxy from becoming reactionists out of a mere spirit of opposition. There are disadvantages in this slow process of working, but they have to be put up with. This has been the characteristic line of action followed by our ancestors, and there is no reason to think that they were essentially mistaken. The Social Conference meets every year to focus all this information and make it available to all local workers. By this mutual exchange of views, each circle and association is stimulated by example and precept to higher efforts, and these efforts are guided in the proper directions by the experience of those provinces

which are more advanced than others in particular matters. Its resolutions express the ideals to be aimed at. Each local association is recommended to approach these ideals in its own way, and is required to give an account of its work every year. This may seem to many a very small progress, but it is eminently practical. A few advanced reformers from all parts of the country meeting together will not be able to accomplish their purpose, because, as at present situated, they are separated from one another in all relations of life in a way to make joint action impossible. The resolutions are strictly binding upon those who accept them in the same way as the dictates of conscience are binding; and they cannot be made more binding in any other way except in small local organizations. I hope I have made the aims and purposes of the Conference clear to you, and with this explanation I feel confident that you will join with us and promote the work we all have at heart. I thank you heartily for the patient hearing you have given me, and hope that our session here will interest you, and enlist your sympathy in this good cause.

The Eighth Social Conference—Madras—1894.

The subject of the lecture was "The Past History of Social Reform." Mr. Justice Ranade said :—GENTLEMEN,—It is a source of unmixed satisfaction to me and to my friends interested in the cause of social elevation that after seven years' wanderings far and near over all the chief provinces of India, we have been spared to visit the Southern Presidency, which has for a thousand years and more maintained its reputation as the fountain source of all higher spiritual, social and moral development in this great country. Your Dravidian civilization has been always strong enough to retain the stamp of its individuality in the midst of Aryan inundations, which submerged it for a time. You thus possess an advantage over us, hailing from more northern provinces,—which advantage has been utilised by your Alwar saints to an extent unknown to us. By the side of the four Vedas, your Tamil songs of devotion constitute the fifth Veda, which is chanted by your priests

on occasions of festivals and religious celebrations. Twelve hundred years ago, the great Acharya of the Adwait philosophy finally overturned the Atheistic philosophies of the Buddhistic and Jain systems, and established the revived Hindu faith on the comprehensive basis on which it now stands broadened and deepened all round. Two hundred years after has another Acharya founded the Visishtadwait and Dwait philosophies, which have so profoundly modified modern Indian society and subordinated *jnyan* and *yoga* finally to the religion of love. These great Acharyas were the fountain sources of all the higher wisdom and spiritual elevation, that have distinguished the religious history of the last 1,000 years and more. Ramanand, who was the teacher of so many divers Vaishnava sects, and Chaitanya, who was the saintly leader of Bengal, and Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, derived their illumination from the philosophers of the South. The successors of Ramanujacharya were the first social reformers. They felt compassion for the hard lot of the poor and disfigured widow, and did their best to carry comfort to her. They also took pity upon the fallen condition of the lower strata of the social system and conceded to them the privilege of admitting them into a community of faith with the higher classes. It was not therefore without reason that the Conference movement was first started in this city, under the auspices of the late Sir T. Madhava Rao. Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunath Rao blessed the child and gave it into our hands, and we now bring it back to you after a lapse of seven years. These seven years have worked a great, and I believe, a hopeful change in the attitude of the community of races, who are represented in this gathering, towards questions of social reform. There are those who think that these seven years have been years of fruitless task, and that the heart of the nation has not been touched by the appeals made to it either from the political or social platforms. Some of you are better judges about the success of the work done on the political platform. I think it was Lord Salisbury, who observed that small maps are very delusive guides, when we have to decide on questions of frontier troubles. As regards social

progress I may say, with equal reason, that short spaces of time are similarly deceptive, and yet I shall venture to ask our despondent, though earnest, self-examining judges to pause and contemplate the change these seven years have witnessed. If the heart of the nation can be traced anywhere in its ancient strongholds, you will certainly see it strongly entrenched in the Native States. If any movement stirs the Native States, which are impervious to your political and industrial propaganda, that is a sign that the heart of the nation has been touched. Now what do we see has been the character of the change effected in these seven years amongst some of our premier States? Seventeen States in Rajputana—Odeypore, Jaipur, Jodhpore, Pratapgad, Sirohi, Tonk, Ulwar, Jeselmere, Kotah, Bundi, Ajmere, Kerowli, Kishengad, Jhallawar, Bansdah, and Dongarpore,—have been members of the Walterkrita Sabha, whose annual reports show how strong is the organization that has been set up in that province for the curtailment of extravagant expenditure on marriages and funerals and the regulation of child-marriages, not only amongst the Rajputs, but among many other castes allied to and subordinate to them. The ruler of Baroda has similarly exerted himself in the work of social elevation, not so much on his own motion, but at the instance of the Mahajans and Kunbi cultivators in his own and the neighbouring British territory. The Cambay ruler has also followed suit. Lower down and much nearer we have the Mysore Durbar. It has set an example of legislation, which cannot fail in time to be copied elsewhere. After full deliberation and consultation with his Parliament, the Maharajah of Mysore has passed into law this year the first instalment of measures intended to put a stop to marriages of girls below eight years of age and ill-assorted marriages of young girls below fourteen with old men above fifty. The Maharajah of Cashmere has also this year not only presided over a Social Reform Association founded in that State, but has taken steps to discourage the practice of hired crying and beating of the chest as also the custom which in those parts was supposed to prevent the father from seeing the face of his daughter after she was married. The rulers of Baroda, Indore, Kapurthala,

Bhavanagar, Morvi, Gondol, Wadhwan, Cuch Behar, Kolhapore and many other States have crossed the seas, some with large retinues and some with their wives and children. We do not claim any credit for all these movements in the name of the Conference. I only allude to them here as indicating the fact that these reforms have all been initiated and carried out during these past seven years or more by the same earnestness of spirit, which working on a lower sphere makes this Conference necessary and possible from year to year as an humble sister of the National Congress. The genuineness of the feeling is borne witness to by the fact that in inaugurating the new social regulations, different methods of procedure have been adopted by different states to accomplish the same end. The method of direct legislation has found favour with Mysore, of caste initiation in Baroda, and of executive regulations in Rajputana. This is a point which is but little understood, though this variety bears on its face the stamp of sincerity and shows that the movement is spontaneous and of indigenous origin. The foreign Government which rules over us, cannot but be encouraged by the results of such spontaneous action on the part of the rulers of Native States who reflect the higher wisdom of their population. We do not want it—and the Government is naturally averse to meddle with social matters in the way it did when it put down *Suttee* and infanticide. And yet in its own cautious way it is educating the people to a higher sense of their responsibility in this connection. It has by a formal notification abolished hook-swinging, directly legislated for several backward classes, and regulated the marriage expenditure of the Kunbi and the Rajputs and Jat population in several parts in the Bombay Presidency and in the North-West Provinces. It ventured indeed to pass the Age of Consent Act, but the agitation that the measure provoked has weakened its hands and it now fights shy of further legislation on that line, and it has refused to amend the law regulating religious endowments in the way some of you desired. I am glad, however, to learn that it is prepared to consider the Malabar Marriage Bill on the lines recommended by the Honourable Muthuswami Iyer's Committee and to abolish im-

prisonment in execution of decrees for the restitution of conjugal rights. It also permitted the Honourable Babu Behari Lal to carry through the Bengal Council a new partition law, which is a very great improvement on the general Hindu law of equal compulsory division. Both Native States and the British Government have thus paid homage to the supremacy of the new spirit that is actively working in our midst, and it is in this general fact and not in its particular manifestation that I see the hands of Providence at work for our good.

Perhaps some of you would say that after all kings and ministers should have no place on this platform, and that I must adduce some better evidences of the fact of an awakened conscience among the people rather than appeal to the acts of States. There is some truth in that observation. The work of social reform cannot be an act of a State. It is chiefly valuable when it is the work of the people. I shall therefore now appeal to the popular movements, which have been started during the past seven years and more, and which are so characteristic of our new life. If there had been no such background of popular effort behind its back, the Conference, in which we propose to meet here, will no doubt be an empty show. The fact however is far otherwise. Grander and more enthusiastic meetings than those we hold here are held just about this season in half-a-dozen cities in Northern and Western India. The great Kayastha community of the North met last year at Mathura,—the Vaishya Conference met at Lahore and meets this year at Shajahanpur under the guidance of my friend Lala Baij Nath,—the Bhargavas met at Lucknow last year, and the Audichyas in Bombay. The Jains in our parts met at Ahmedabad, and at the same place a Mahomedan Conference, in which Hindus joined, was held and passed resolutions condemning nautch and extravagance in marriage expenditure. In the Punjab there is a regular cobweb of Baradari and caste associations, the most prominent of which are the Sarin Sabhas, the Kayastha Sabhas, and the Khalsa or Sikh Sabhas. In your own part of the country the Sri Madhwas met similarly at Tirupati about this time. All this work is done within the sphere of each caste organization, and

their regulations are enforced by the sanction of caste rules. The reports, which most of these communities and caste associations forward to this Conference, are in my opinion the most interesting part of the year's work. The Conference focusses these reports for general information, points out the limits of practical work and suggests the lines of further development. These Associations furnish, as I have said above, the background of the work, which the Conference takes in hand in a more comprehensive spirit. At any rate these are some of the constituencies, to which the Conference hopes to appeal for help and guidance.

Of course while the Baradaris or caste systems of organizations prove useful in certain parts of the country, in other parts religious organizations, such as the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Dharma Mahamandal, the Sanatana Sabhas undertake the work of social reform on independent lines. These Samajes work towards the same end as the Baradari Associations, but with different sanctions. The Arya Samajes have done great wonders in this connection. They have started Temperance movements and Bands of Hope, and composed temperance songs, which are being sung by women on festive occasions. They have encouraged re-marriage, adopted reformed rites, which presuppose and enforce late marriages. They have founded Girls' and Boys' Schools and Colleges. They have organised charity on a large scale. They in a word constitute all that is most hopeful and worth living in the new life of the province of the Punjab. On the Bengal side the Brahmo Samajes, with their special marriage law, have gone far in advance of us all in many matters.

Next after the Baradari societies and the religious bodies engaged in the work of reform, we have a third class of organizations such as those represented by the Hindu Social Reform Association of Madras, whose annual gathering we have met here to-day to celebrate. There are innumerable other bodies such as the Sanmarga Samaj of Bellary, the Berar Social Reform Association, the Ahmedabad and Sind Associations and the re-marriage Associations in Bombay, Madras, Wardha and

other places, which rely not so much upon the sanction of caste rules or the religious sense of duty, but upon trust in the honour of members, who pledge to give effect to certain improvements in our social condition. As might be expected, these voluntary Associations have not the strength and efficiency of the first two organizations, though it may be noted as a sign of the times that they are slowly taking steps to register themselves with a view to strengthen themselves. They lack the strength of the sanction, and have wider grasp of the problem before us. There are also Purity Associations working on the same lines in all parts of the country; they also have a great field of usefulness before them. I have already noted the fact that Native States are working on different lines. The popular Associations are also trying to carry out their ends in three different ways—by caste action, by the sanction of religion, and by the method of pledges, and appeal to the sense of self-respect and love of public esteem and fear of public criticism. The voluntary Associations again are following different methods of practical work. Some place their reliance chiefly on an appeal to the ancient law, others prefer plans of forming a schism, and a few are for the method of open revolt. Then this is the situation, and much of the activity that we have noted above in these matters has been developed during the past seven years.

The result of all this awakening is best seen in the keener appreciation of the moral law of purity and charity. This constitutes in my view the most instructive and hopeful feature of the past ten years. Even the Government has been forced to acknowledge the force of this new feeling. It is at the root of the agitation against vivisection, the Contagious Diseases Act, the compulsory examination of women, in which last respect the Government here has had to yield to Indian and English public opinion. The same feeling also finds expressions in the great Temperance agitation, which has led to the appointment of two commissions of inquiry. The agitation against the abuse of Temple Endowments may be traced to the same source. The agitation against the nautch girl and loose habits of family life is explained by reform on

the same principle. The movements intended to help the Pariah classes are due to the same potent cause. The miserable condition of the child-widow is now more keenly recognised as a problem, which must be solved. Widows' homes are springing up in Allahabad, Calcutta and Poona, and the question of the re-marriage of child-widows has passed through the preliminary stage of a trial experiment. Polygamy and the sale of girls in marriage are also slowly disappearing from the land, though they will, I fear, fight hard to the end. More than 75 re-marriages have taken place in our Presidency and 25 similar marriages during the last 20 years in the Madras Presidency and the cause has shown a steady rule of slow progress all over the country.

I hope I have said enough to justify my position that the last seven years have not been fruitless of results, not measured by the standard of Western races, but by the conservative strength of our prejudices and by the rule of improvement observable in our political and industrial spheres of work. The members of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association may therefore comfort themselves with the consolation that, although the number of its members may be few, they represent much that is hopeful and living in the present constitution of our society. They are the burning coals snatched out of the hearth, the fire of which will not be smothered by the ashes of indifference and discouragement. They have their representatives in every house and province of India, and they are sure to win in the end, however unpleasant may be the struggle in the present.

Their movement against the Nautch girl approved itself to the sense of the Lahore Conference, and since then many Associations have given their adhesion to the cause. I need only mention the names of a few provinces and places here. The Punjab is one of them. The Hindus and Mahomedans at Ahmedabad recorded the same vote. The Associations in Rawalpindi, Berar, Dharwar, Salem, and Bellary, Chicacole, Masulipatam and Gulbarga have accepted the principle and are trying to enforce it.

As regards infant marriages, the Mysore Government has

crossed the Rubicon and broken the ice of the prejudices of centuries. The Rajputana rulers have set the same example by State regulations, and throughout the country there is a growing sense that this evil practice has been tolerated too long and that the time has come for a cautious retracing onwards of our steps. In our part of the country many castes are moving in the matter of the education of girls, and the the minimum marriageable ages of girls and boys are being slowly raised all round. The Deshi laws of Bamas have fixed the ages of girls at 13, the Bhargavas at 12, the Mathma Chobar at 13, and the Mahajans at 12. It cannot be long under these hopeful circumstances before we shall find a permanent change in this matter. As regards re-marriages there have been 12 re-marriages celebrated in the course of the year—1 in the Punjab, 2 in Madras, and the rest in our part of the country. The Bama caste at Surat actually went so far as to pass a resolution at a caste meeting that the second marriage of child-widows should be permitted. This resolution was again brought before the caste by those who opposed it, and even then the caste expressed its acceptance of the principle and deferred its experiment till other Bama castes joined. This circumstance clearly shows how the wind is blowing, and it must be a source of satisfaction to us all.

As regards social intercourse and the admission of people who had changed their religion or who had returned from England, three cases of special interest occurred in Bengal and Madras, which show a very happy change in the attitude of the caste-bound society. Mr. Chetty and one Deshastha Brahmin were taken back into their castes without much serious misgivings. In Bengal the Kayasthas admitted Babu Upendra Nath Das, who had not only gone to England but had married an English wife and had children by her. In the Punjab the Arya Samajas and Sikh Associations admitted as many as twelve Mussulman converts. Recently alliances have been formed between orthodox and heterodox reformed families under very favourable circumstances, both in Madras and in our part of the country.

I fear I have taken up your time too long, and that I should

not overtax your kind patience. We have need above all of two great virtues over and above our earnestness. We must have inexhaustible patience, which faith in an over-ruling Providence and the final triumph of right alone inspire, and we must have charity. Hope, faith and charity—these are the three graces we must all cultivate, and if we keep them ever in mind and hold steadily by them, we may be sure that we may still regain our lost position and become a potent factor in the world's history. The turn of life and light is in the individual. We have to purify it to feel the heat and the light of truth in us; and if we care each for thus acting in the faith of duty, we may be sure that God's helping hand will come to our relief. If we suffer misery, we have earned it by our sins in the past and present. If we purge them off, the bright rays of glory will shine in their old splendour. In that hope we rest assured that in the good work we share, and according as we share, we shall succeed.

The Ninth Social Conference—Poona—1895.

Speaking on "The Cause of the Excitement at Poona," the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade said:—

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It has been a custom for many years past on the occasion of these annual gatherings to deliver an introductory address on the aims and the scope of the Social Conference movement, and before its regular work is taken in hand to bespeak the favourable attention of the public of the place, in which we meet, to its claims upon them. In conformity with this practice I stand before you here on this occasion. Before, however, I proceed with the address proper, circumstances have rendered it necessary that one or two personal-explanations should be offered. The first explanation that I have to place before you on behalf of those who have been taking an interest in this Conference movement is in regard to the position of the General Secretary, Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao, in connection with the Conference. Some of you may have read a letter from a correspondent of Tanjore published in a paper here, in which it was stated that Dewan Baha-

dur Raghunatha Rao has ceased to be the Secretary, has resigned his office, and that he thinks the Conference a farce, if not a clever deception. A statement like that appeared a fortnight ago, and I was surprised to find that it should have been accepted as true without question. Because, until last October, when the subjects for this Conference were first proposed provisionally, in accordance with usual practice. I sent a list of them to him and he returned it with some suggestions. So I was quite sure till 27th October last things were all right. As the statement had appeared in a local newspaper, it became necessary in the opinion of some of my friends that we should ascertain what the truth was. And here is the reply which Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao has sent to a letter that I addressed to him.

[Here Mr. Justice Ranade read the letter which is as follows :—"The facts of the case are that Mr. Joshi of the American celebrity about a week ago called upon me at Kumbhakonum. He said in exultation that the Congress had rightly refused its *pandal* to the Social Conference. This rather startled me, as I had thought that he was a social reformer. I told him that I was glad that the *pandal* was not allowed to be used by the Social Conference, for the deception that used to be practised by the Congress upon the English people that it worked in conjunction with the Social Conference was unveiled, and the English people would now clearly understand that the Congress really did not mean to work with the Social Conference. I added I was therefore glad that the Congress refused their *pandal* to the Social Conference. With regard to my connection with reference to this year's Conference, I said I was too old, too weak to attend it, and that it was meet for me to spend my time now quietly without troubling myself with public controversies. My state of health prevents my going to Poona, I am sorry to say."]

I hope this reply will remove the apprehensions created in the minds of some friends as to whether the connection of Dewan Bahadur R. Raghuntha Rao still continues or has ceased and how far the opinions attributed to him were justified by the evidence of his own writing.

The other explanation that I have to give relates to the circumstances under which this Conference has to be held in another place this year. The controversy has been very bitter for the last five or six months, and I do not want to allude to that controversy. But as the matter has a sort of official character about it, it is necessary that a public statement should be made on an occasion like this, in order that there may be no room for misapprehension on either side. I shall now ask my brother, with the President's permission, to read a letter that was written and the replies that have been received. (Here the circular addressed to the various Standing Congress Committees asking their opinions on the question of the loan of the Congress Pandal to the Conference, together with their replies was read.)

There is a third matter and a very important matter which relates to the President-elect of this year's Congress.

(An extract from the Honourable Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee's letter was read in the meeting which was as follows:—'The *raison d'etre* for excluding social questions from our deliberations is that if we were to take up such questions it might lead to serious differences ultimately culminating in a schism, and it is a matter of the first importance that we should prevent a split. The request of the other side is very unreasonable; but we have sometimes to submit to unreasonable demands to avert greater evils.')

The question which I propose briefly to consider on this occasion is—how it has happened that while Bombay and Calcutta, Lahore and Nagpur, Madras and Allahabad had not shown such an excitement over this matter during the last nine or ten years—how has it happened that in this city of ours, which at least we all take a natural pride in, as being equal to all these other cities, if not superior to them in some respects—how has it happened that this city and this part of the country was made to feel such an unusual excitement over this subject. This is a subject to which we ought to devote some portion of our time. It is a phenomenon which requires an explanation. It is an event, which, I must say after twenty-five years' experience of Poona, surprises me—why it should have been so. I need hardly

say I was also pained that it should have been so. But whether we feel surprised or not, there is the objective fact before us. People got excited not only here, at Sholapur, Ahmednagar, Nasik, Bombay, but at Satara, Nagpur, Dharwar, and in many parts of the country, as you will see from the telegrams that have been read to you. I am quite aware, one most obvious explanation that occurred to many is, that this excitement is due to personal differences and party quarrels. This is a very convenient way of disposing of this question. Personal differences there are. Party quarrels and party misunderstandings there will be to the end of time, just as they have been from the commencement of the world. Wherever a dozen men meet together or a number of people go to work together, there will be misunderstandings. But that does not satisfactorily account for what we have seen—the loss of temper, the absolute waste of energy, the absolute waste of what I would call high powers on a subject on which it was not necessary to spend a word. And yet there is the phenomenon that on both sides our publicists and writers, our thinkers and preachers were all engaged in this matter, thinking every day and devoting all their attention in a way which almost provoked a cynical feeling whether we had all lost our wits. Party differences and personal misunderstandings, I believe you will find, are not confined to Poona. I have personal experience of nearly every large city in the country, having visited them three or four times and spent a good deal of time in making myself acquainted with their party differences. It is a characteristic of our people that where a dozen people work together one-half will call the other half mad or wicked. It is our general habit to misunderstand one another. People think that there is no good man among their opponents. But party differences and personal misunderstandings have never made a whole nation mad. It will not be fair to the intelligence of this city, or to the intelligence of other places in the country of which this city boasts to be the capital, to accept this explanation. This way of brushing away inconvenient questions may be very satisfactory to some, but we cannot accept such an explanation in this place. You should suppose

yourselves in the position of a naturalist, and try to see why so many otherwise intelligent animals should have lost themselves in a passionate mood for the last six months. Or think you are an anatomist and see what is there in the body of this nation which could have produced such disorganization. It would not be fair on an occasion like this to brush away this question and merely laugh over it. There is a serious significance which we must all lay to our hearts, if we want to derive the lesson which the exhibition of the last six months offers us. The question before us is, why should men otherwise intelligent get so much excited over petty matters like this Pandal question. The two assemblies as you know had nothing whatever to do with each other. Their organizations are separate, their modes of work are separate, their publications and objects are separate, but as so many people come from all parts of the country, it has been found convenient that those among them who cared for one or both, who cared for social and political reform, should have a common meeting ground provided for them at one and the same place and time, at common expense. While the rest of India has shown a good deal of prudence and wisdom, why is it that we were not able to show that wisdom and moderation of temper, which we naturally claim the right to command ? I confess I am not at all satisfied with the explanation usually offered. There must be something deeper which we must study, some weakness or strength whatever you may call it which alone can satisfactorily account for this phenomenon. According to some, Poona has done what no other place had the courage or folly to attempt, and this is the cause why this contest should happen here and not elsewhere. When we dive beneath the surface, I believe we do come to the traces of certain differences which mark this part of the country from others. Those differences require our most anxious consideration on this occasion.

Taking a bird's eye view of the social history of India, you will find that there are various methods of working out social reform questions adopted in different parts of the country by different races, into which this Continent has been divided. If you go to Bengal, you will find there that the religious (theistic)

development has taken up and absorbed all the more serious men who think about these matters. On the basis of their new religious ideas, they have developed a social organization and also formed a community by themselves. This community naturally attracts to itself all those among other classes of the people who feel seriously about these matters, and they strengthen and grow into a separate section, which has little or no connection with the rest of the orthodox or the general community from which they spring. The Brahmo Samaj there with all its sects takes up into its rank all those who are eager in the work of social reform. Outside the Brahmo Samaj the only name that figures prominently in connection with social reform is the name of Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. This Pundit did inaugurate a great reform, but as you know that outside the Brahmo Church or Churches that movement has failed not only since his death but even during his lifetime. Pundit Vidyasagar was one of those who felt aggrieved in his old age that he had taken part in a matter in which his hopes were not crowned with success. So far as the orthodox community is concerned, Bengal is more orthodox than any other part of India. So far as the reformed community is concerned, Bengal is more reformed than any other part of India. They form in fact two separate camps. Kulinism and the Kali worship thrive in all their extravagance on one side, and puritanical theism on the other. The great weakness that I attribute to the Brahmo Samajists is that they are so absorbed with the religious side of their creed and are so separated from the orthodox community that they fail to feel warm interest in other matters, which concern the people in the same way as reformers elsewhere feel. On the other hand the orthodox community also feels no interest in the Brahmo Samaj people. There is every day an attempt on both sides to make the difference as great as the difference between the Mahomedans and the Hindus. What the Brahmo Samaj has done in Bengal, the Arya Samaj has been attempting to do for the people of the Punjab with greater advantages. The Sikh development of the 17th and 19th centuries naturally elevated the Punjab people. The basis of their elevation is the religious development, and

on it you find based a social organism, which absorbs all the more serious and more thoughtful people. The Arya Samaj is a religious organization based upon a social superstructure into which a few people here and there find their resort, and the rest of the community slowly gets itself more and more hide-bound and more and more wedded to the old ways of thinking about these matters. In the North-West Provinces neither the Brahmo Samaj nor the Arya Samaj has produced any effect. They are a very slow mass to move. The present condition of the North-West Provinces with all their natural advantages of position and climate is characterised by lethargy and backwardness. The Brahmins there occupy a very unimportant position. But the rising generation and the fruit of the University education are devoting their best attention to this question and are trying to reform the usages of their caste. The reports of the Kayastha, Jat, Khatri, Bhargava and other Associations show us that they desire to promote reform within the sphere of their own castes.

The Social Conference does not wish to kick the old ladder, but it is composed of those who are eager to give and receive information on social matters, and to exchange thoughts on social reform. The present tendency of Hinduism is to throw off its exclusive character. (Here the speaker related the story of a hundred Hindus who had been converted to the Moslem faith and who were taken back into the Sikh community in the Punjab this year. Another story was told of fifty born Mahomedan converts who were converted into Hinduism. A Rangari at Mudhol was said to have been induced to become a convert to Mahomedanism, but in sober mood repented and wished to come back. But the Brahmins were not ready to take him back into his former community. So the Rangari caste at Mudhol appealed to Swami Nityananda, an Arya Samaj preacher, who consented to perform the ceremony of admitting him into his caste and gladly went there and performed it.)

You may think here that we are of course perfectly unconcerned with all these events which happened in other parts of the country. But time and tide wait for no man.

Social evolution will not allow you to rest where you are. There are stages in which a diseased mind is so filled with melancholy and hypochondria that the doctor finds that the only remedy is cure by faith, and to put more faith in him electrifies the patient from top to bottom, and when he is so shaken he feels himself relieved. We—every one of us—men and women—require that those of us who are working on different lines in this country should work harmoniously. Conservatism is a force which we cannot afford to forego or forget. You may talk and act in a way that appears to be the result of your voluntary efforts, but you are unconsciously influenced by the traditions in which you are born, by the surroundings in which you are brought up, by the very milk which you have drunk from your mother's breasts or influenced by those things in the world which you cannot disown. To say that it is possible to build up a new fabric on new lines without any help from the past is to say that I am self-born and my father and grand-father need not have troubled for me. That is the way in which things strike me at least.

One of the ways in which reform movements are being worked out in India is the method of rebellion. We go into another camp on a religious basis and a social structure is built upon it. The other way of introducing reform is by utilising caste organisations for the purpose of reform. The third is to go to the Acharyas and try to see that they are animated with a high purpose and move about the country and purify us and themselves in the bargain. The fourth way is to appeal to men's sense of honour and make them pledge themselves to certain reforms. The fifth and the least eligible way is to seek legislative help. But in order to work out reforms on any of these lines all of us must work together. We must meet at least once a year to derive what lessons we can from each other and exchange mutual help and sympathy—this is the reason why we go to the Conference. The rebellious method may be the most suitable for one reform, the traditional method for another, the pledge method for a third, and the legislative method may be the final solution of a fourth reform. There may be all these different lines not parallel but tapering

towards one point in the end; but till they meet we must work together separately.

I have now a register of 50 Associations, the registered members of which are not very many. They may not exceed ten thousand, but they are the hope and the strength of the future. They all work on their own lines, and in doing so they are likely to commit mistakes, from which their friends should try to help them. Now I have told you how things stand in Bengal, the North-West Provinces and the Punjab. On the Madras side the Brahmin element is preponderant, and as a result the lower classes are borne down with a weight which they are not able to bear. But there are thoughtful men among them for whom we all feel the highest respect. The most favoured method in that Presidency is of voluntary pledges. That being the condition of things in Madras, what is our position on this side? Are we working on a religious basis to which a new social superstructure is added, or are we proceeding on the more orthodox method of caste regulations? Are we proceeding on the lines of legislation, or of voluntary efforts? There are societies in this Presidency who have registered themselves under the Indian Companies' Act or the Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, and they find that their provisions do not suit their convenience and they want more facilities. In other places, the religious and caste leaders are appealed to for help. There are also those who prefer the method of revolt and schism.

The peculiar feature of the movement in the Presidency is that we want to work on no single line, but to work on all lines together and above all not to break with the past and cease all connection with our society. We do not proceed on the religious basis exclusively as in Bengal. We have the different Samajes, but somehow or other there is something in our nature which prevents us from bodily moving into another camp. We do not desire to give up our hold on the old established institutions. Some might say this is our weakness—others think in it consists our strength. Reform work has not been carried on in this Presidency on any one definite line, but we are trying all the methods which I have placed before you. If we were

to follow any one method, our quarrels would cease. If we were distinctly prepared to stand in a camp of our own, leaving the whole community to do what they like, we might be at peace; for this is exactly what our friends—the reactionist and the orthodox community—are desiring us to do. We do not put our faith exclusively in the caste method of work. We are not limited to the method of what I say is the method of pledges, *viz.*, each man taking a pledge to do what to him seems right. We differ from other parts of the country in our pursuit of this work of social reform on various lines,—we do not prefer any one method of work and try to utilise, adopting each as it is most suited for our purposes, all these ways, and this of course brings us into conflict with our orthodox and reactionary friends. I hope I have satisfied you that it is not mere personal differences or party quarrels or anything of that sort that explains the situation, but it is our systematic attempt to do the thing not on one definite line, which has intensified the conflict. We are not disposed to follow any one method to the end, and we apply a number of methods to a number of problems, and we do desire above all not to occupy a separate camp for ourselves. This is in my opinion the chief reason why there has been so much misunderstanding and such exhibition of temper, and when you add to that personal and private differences, you will understand why the unfortunate opposition which was not offered elsewhere was exhibited in this beloved city of ours. I hope on another occasion to give a retrospect of the work of reform carried on in different provinces of India during the year about to close.

Speaking on the "History of Social Reform," the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade said:—MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES and GENTLEMEN,—On Wednesday last my time was so taken up with personal explanations and a review of the general tendencies of the reform movement in the different provinces, that I was not able to present to you a brief retrospect of the year's work as I had at first intended to do. It is very necessary on an occasion like this to direct public attention to the more notable events of the year, and to see how far they mark out foot-prints on the

sands of time in our journey onwards. We are so scattered and so little in touch with one another that single workers in this field are too often disposed to look upon the work before them as a task beyond human endurance in which failure is certain, while the chances of success are well nigh hopeless. This sort of despondency would be impossible if we had more faith in an over-ruling Providence, and if we contented ourselves with the immediate work before us, leaving the final issue in His hands. The Conference gathering brings the individual workers together from all parts of the country, and when we exchange notes with one another, those of us who may have lagged behind are encouraged to persevere in the work by the example of their fellow-workers, who have attained better success or struggled more manfully with their difficulties. Viewed in this light the present gathering has to my mind a holy character, full of encouragement and hope, to all who come to it from far and near. The year that is about to close has not been altogether an uneventful one. I propose with your permission to travel from south to north and briefly direct your attention to the new social leaven which is stirring the apparently dormant and lifeless mass of the Indian community.

You will note with satisfaction that on the Malabar Coast, including the Native State of Travancore, a most healthy movement has for sometime been at work to legalise the institution of marriage in the great Nair community. Throughout this extent of the country marriage, as an institution recognised by religion and law, has no footing, except among a very small proportion of the Brahmin population. Men and women cohabited together but without the sanctity and sanction, which marriage confers upon man and wife. In this part of the country only the eldest representative in Brahmin families can marry in our sense of the word. The rest of the community both Brahmin and non-Brahmin have lived from ancient times till now in theory at least with the wild license, which lets the male and female members of the animal world consort together in temporary connections. Of course human beings cannot practise this licence without submitting to some restraint of custom, and there are such customs which have supplied the place indifferently of

the indissoluble life-long alliance which constitutes the essence of marriage. This state of things did well enough as long as Malabar and Travancore were cut off from the rest of the world. With better communications and with the greater spread of education a new sense dawned upon the minds of the thinking portion of the Nair community, and a general desire was felt among these people to rise to the social level of their fellow countrymen in other parts of India. An agitation was set up and after meeting with some opposition Government appointed a Commission to inquire into the matter, and on the basis of the report of this Commission a draft Bill was drawn up and this Bill has this year been introduced into the Madras Legislative Council by the Hon'ble gentleman who is now presiding at this meeting (the Hon'ble Mr. C. Sankaran Nair). The chief credit of this movement and the practical turn given to it belongs to the Hon'ble Mr. Sankaran Nair and his fellow-workers, and you will be glad to find that their labours have been crowned with success. The principle of the law is now safe and the Bill has been referred to a Select Committee to settle the details. Following the example in British India, the Travancore Government have also sanctioned the introduction of a Bill subjecting the customary connections to the pains and penalties of the Indian Penal Code. Both on the Malabar coast and in Travancore the movement has been entirely of popular origin, the officials and Governments reluctantly yielding to the pressure brought upon them by the people concerned.

Turning northwards you will be glad to learn that the marriage laws passed by His Highness the late Maharajah of Mysore have worked satisfactorily. The Dewan stated last October before the Representative Assembly that there were only four cases where the penal clauses had to be enforced during the course of the year, and in all these cases the prosecutions were instituted on the complaint of private persons and neighbours. This is a circumstance of great promise, as it shows that public conscience is on the side of the Government.

On the East or Coromandel Coast of the Madras Presidency the leaders of the social reform movement have been actively at work both in the Presidency town and in the Mofussil in

promoting female education, and in the protest they have made in favour of purity of life and against degrading and immoral customs. One re-marriage was celebrated by the Rajahmundry Widow Re-marriage Association, which is guided by the venerable Viresalingam Pantulu Garu, whose zeal in this cause has been unabated, and who has earned justly the fame of being the Pandit Vidyasagar of this part of the country.

Another notable event was the re-admission by the Chetty community of a young graduate, who had embraced Christianity and who afterwards desired to return back to his old faith. Another event of a similarly instructive character was the re-admission by his community of a Deshastha Brahmin, who had gone to England and who was admitted by the Deshastha caste at Coimbatore on easy conditions, which marked the growth of public feeling in this connection. To the West of Mysore in the Palghat country a very vigorous agitation has been set on foot by some earnest workers to fix the minimum marriageable age of boys at 18 and secure popular support for legislation on this subject. You will thus see that on the Madras side there are signs of very earnest efforts made to promote reform in all the main heads of our programme, such as higher female education, purity of morals, widow marriage, and the admission of foreign travelled persons and of converts to other faiths, and the improvement of marriage laws and of the condition of the Pariahs. These movements are directly of popular origin in all parts, and have in some cases support of both the British and Native Governments.

Going next to Bengal, the change is not a very agreeable one, as I observed on last Wednesday. Reform here is confined chiefly to those who have become members of the Theistic churches, while the rest of the community shows a retrograde tendency in the direction of reaction. The sea-voyage movement stirred Bengal two years ago. But apparently no progress was made in regard to it in the present year. The only visible movement attempted this year was about the reduction of extravagant expenditure on marriage occasions and even this movement was instituted by the Government of that part of the country. Meanwhile female education outside the presi-

dency towns showed no progress. Kulinism still flourishes in the land; the widow-marriage movement started by Pundit Vidyasagar evokes no interest; and things generally are at a standstill. I am afraid my statements about Bengal may appear to many as exaggerating the faults of our friends there. For Bengal is generally associated in our minds as the foremost province in matters of progress. I can only say in my defence that I depend for my sources of information on four or five friends in that province. One of them is a missionary of the New Dispensation Church, and another a social reform preacher, who belongs to no church. The other two gentlemen are of the old school. There are no social reform associations in Bengal, and I only received two reports from local bodies, who appeared to devote their attention chiefly to temperance and primary female education. Nothing will give me greater satisfaction than to find that my information about Bengal is not accurate up to date, but until this correction comes from proper sources, I must depend upon my own authorities, and you will join with me in regarding this state of things as very discouraging indeed.

Advancing northwards, we find in the North-West Provinces and Oudh more hopeful signs of a desire for social improvement. Here as I have stated in my first address the work is carried out on caste lines, and the great communities which constitute the middle and upper classes of these provinces, the Kayasthas, the Bhargavas, the Agarwalas, the Jats and the Jains are each heaving with new life, though that activity is restricted within very narrow spheres. These communities hold their Conferences from year to year. These Conference meetings are largely attended. They chiefly devote themselves to the work of reducing customary marriage expenses and also try to raise the marriageable age limits. Temperance also occupies a prominent place in their programme and the Kayastha Temperance movement has especially shown a good record this year. The Purity movement also occupies attention in these parts and some progress is also made in intercommunion between subcastes. The education chiefly of boys and in some cases of girls and the establishment of Boarding-

houses have occupied their attention to some extent. The movement is not based on any departure from the old religious creeds and the Arya Samajes established in different parts are not showing much zeal in their work. For certain purposes these caste organisations are very valuable, but they have their own weakness. They cramp and narrow the sympathies of those who belong to them, and the sphere of action is restricted within very defined limits. Such as they are however, they cannot fail to effect considerable change for the better in the social condition of the country, if only these separate caste movements work together for the common good. In regard to the question of widow marriage and foreign travel and female education, these provinces are very backward. Though they came under the British rule early in the century, the system of public education prevalent in these parts has been less permeated by Western influences and is more oriental in character than in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. The Allahabad University was established in 1887, *i.e.*, 30 years after the other universities were founded soon after the mutiny. Proceeding further on to the Punjab, the social movement is seen to be more energetic in character and more fruitful of results. The rise of the Sikh power, based as it was on a religious upheaval which tried to assimilate the better elements of Mahomedanism and the ancient Hindu faith, has secured for the Punjab a very favourable start. The caste restrictions against interdining are not so strictly observed as in other provinces. The supremacy of Brahmins is not so oppressive in its weight of authority, and altogether a healthy and manly tone distinguishes the people of those parts. No wonder, therefore, that the Arya Samaj movement found a soil already prepared for its reception, and nowhere else has it produced on the whole such beneficial changes. Though the founder of the Arya Samaj did not favour the marriage of widows except with the brother of the deceased husband, the Arya Samajes in the Punjab have for many years past shown greater liberty in this matter, and this year was distinguished in the annals of the Punjab by a most important accession to the strength of the reform party represented by the celebration of the marriage of Dewan Sunt Ram's

widowed daughter. As this family is one of the most respectable among the Khatri community, it is expected that this movement will have a new strength in that part of the country. As a matter of fact, there were two other re-marriages in the Punjab this year, one according to the Brahmo rites, and the other according to the Arya Samaj ritual. As regards foreign travels, the people in the Punjab have quietly solved the problem by openly receiving men who have gone beyond the seas into caste. The Punjab also has taken the lead in another matter, which shows more than anything else the advance made in their province. A portion of the Sikh community has been actively engaged in the work of conversion of Mahomedans into the Sikh faith, and the Arya Samajes also have shown readiness to make conversions from other religions. Some 150 converts were thus admitted back into communion with the Sikhs. Outside the Arya Samaj and the Sikh community, the Khatris, the Vaishyas, and the Agarvalas have also been carrying on good work in the fusion of subcastes, in cutting down extravagant expenditure, in promoting temperance, and raising the marriageable age of girls. The Purity movement in the Punjab is also conducted with great energy, and the crusade against intemperance is more systematic there than elsewhere. The Punjab has also earned the distinction of holding provincial social Conferences every year. Altogether the social movements in these parts are of a character to inspire hope and afford encouragement to all who take interest in this work. In the province of Sind we have some honest workers. Notable among them Mr. Dayaram Gidumal holds the chief place. The registered Social Reform Association of Hyderabad is the oldest of its kind, though this year it was unable to show much work. At present the Sind reformers are devoting themselves chiefly to the promotion of female education, which is in a very backward condition in that province. The Walterkrit Rajputra Sabha, representing twenty small and large States, has maintained its character as a most effective organisation for the promotion of the two reforms to which it chiefly devotes its attention, namely, the reduction of the marriage expenses and raising the marriageable age of girls and boys.

The example of the Rajput class, is slowly working a change in the other communities such as Brahmins, Agarwalas, and Jains. An attempt is being made by the Talukdars in North Gujarath to have a Sabha of their own based on the same model. This brings us back to our own Presidency with its two divisions, the Gujarath and Maharashtra districts, the latter including the Berars and Central Provinces. In the Berars there is a very vigorous Social Reform Association at work consisting of 400 members, and it has been the means of popularising the work of social reform in that part of the country. The members of the Berar Association have pledged themselves to certain reforms, including nearly the whole of the programme of the Conference, and their example and advice have resulted in directing public attention to these subjects. The Central Provinces have not shown equally good work this year. The widow marriage movement, however, has found considerable support in these provinces, and a band of young reformers has been formed at Nagpur, which promises better work next year. In the Gujarath districts of the Presidency, Ahmedabad has put forth considerable efforts in the promotion of female education. It is also the head-quarters of the re-marriage and temperance movements in those parts. The misfortune of Gujarath is the multiplicity of sub-divisions of castes and sub-castes. Among the Kunbis and the Brahmins alike there are higher and lower sections of the community, the lower aspiring to form alliances with the higher at any cost and the higher disdaining to form such alliances for their daughters with people of the lower sections. This unfortunate state of things leads to extortions in the shape of heavy dowries, polygamy, infanticide, and unmarried old spinsters. The efforts of Government under the Infanticide Act and of the communities themselves to check these evils have not been very successful, but it is expected that these mischievous customs will work out their own ruin by the rebellion of the lower sections against the tyranny of the higher especially the Kunbi Patidars and the Anavala Brahmin Bhathelas. There was one widow marriage in the Ahmedabad district among the Audich people, and three young foreign-travelled men of the Brahma Khatri caste found admis-

sion into their community without difficulty. The Audich Brahmins also have been holding annual Conferences of the caste on the North-West Provinces model. His Highness the Maharajah of Baroda has been moved by the Mahajanas in the Baroda territory to legislate with a view to strengthen the hands of the castes in enforcing their own regulations about reform, and two Bills framed for this purpose are still under the consideration of His Highness the Maharajah. In the Maratha country proper the work of reform has been carried on all along the line by utilising all available resources. The widow-marriage movement has been taken up actively by the Association at Poona, and its missionaries have travelled about the whole of the country securing sympathy and support. In all, four re-marriages were celebrated in Bombay and Poona this year, the celebrations in Bombay being confined to the Gujarath community. Foreign-travelled men returning back to the country are slowly finding admission into their caste without experiencing the difficulties that stood in their way before. The marriageable age limits are being sensibly raised, nearly half-a-dozen of the best families in Poona have practically shown that after betrothal the girls can remain unmarried till fourteen and boys till twenty without serious caste opposition. The sale and exchange of girls in marriage is also condemned by the head Acharya, who is prepared to inflict caste punishments on those who may be guilty of a breach of the order. Female education is also being encouraged by the success of the High School at Poona and by the Society's schools in Bombay. The Temperance cause also is actively propagated by Temperance preachers, and already there is a sensible change in the attitude of young men towards this indulgence. It will be seen from this review of the social history of the year that things are not so hopeless as they seem to casual on-lookers. The conflict between the reformers and reactionaries in the Deccan Districts has been especially useful in drawing public attention to the claims of the Conference upon public sympathy. In all towns wherever the Mahrathi language is spoken including the Berars and the Central Provinces, the struggle between the two parties has been keen and active throughout the year. For reasons which I have stated in my

first address, such a conflict, based on principles and not on personal differences, is not, under existing circumstances, possible in any other part of India. In view of this conflict it becomes the duty of all to consider what should be the attitude of the reformers towards those who are opposed to them. Strength of numbers we cannot command, but we can command earnestness of conviction, singleness of devotion, readiness for self-sacrifice in all honest workers in the cause. Even though these workers may be few in number, they will in the end succeed in overcoming opposition. We have above all to learn what it is to bear and to forbear—to bear ridicule, insults, even personal injuries at times, and forbear from returning abuse for abuse. In the words of the Prophet of Nazareth, we have to take up the cross not because it is pleasant to be persecuted, but because the pain and the injury are as nothing by the side of the principle for which they are endured. We may differ as individuals, but these differences are after all due to the weakness of the human temperament and to the errors of the human judgment. It is the mind which after all holds intercourse with other minds, and there is a basis of union in the common divine element present in all of us, which is the spirit, which binds together all men in a common bond of love and help. The waters of the heavens get their colour from the soil over which they flow; but after all these colours are not the water; they may conflict with one another for a time, but in the end they meet and flow in one pure stream into the great ocean, leaving the earth and the mud and the silt behind them. If we only work in this faith, the opposition to reform, which so much disturbs us at times, will only be an incentive to more sustained efforts. This should be the spirit in which I would wish you to regard the events of the last few months, and if anything I have said from this platform inspires you with such a spirit, I feel sure that you will not have attended the Conference sittings in vain.

The Tenth Social Conference—Calcutta—1896.

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade delivered his inaugural address which was as follows:—MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—After an interval of six years, during which period we have completed our round of the continent of India, we meet here again this time under the shadow of a great calamity —I might almost say in the midst of national tribulation and sorrow. At one time, indeed, the presence of this calamity suggested to many the thought that gatherings such as these had better be postponed to a more favoured season. On further consideration, however, it was forced upon our minds that visitations such as these had a deeper meaning, and that there was a solemn obligation on us all to make a confession of our errors and sins; and as the Jewish prophets of old called upon the chosen people in distress and in peril to renew their covenant with their Lord, we—the men who can read the signs of the times and feel the burden laid upon us—should meet to urge from this and other platforms the necessity of self-correction and self-exertion, in a spirit of pious resignation, joined with a fixed resolve that, come what may, ourselves and the generations to come after us shall suffer as brave men suffer—their very suffering making them braver still and better able to cope with danger than they ever were before. It was this feeling which prevailed over the better minds amongst us not to yield to the panic of the hour, and, while not making light of the danger that threatened us, to see in that danger the very best reason for taking counsel together how to provide against its recurrence in the future.

I submit to you, gentlemen, the question which you will all, each in his place, consider for yourself—why it is that famine and pestilence, poverty and distress, have the appalling terrors which they carry with them in this land? We cannot, of course, make the winds blow as we list, nor can we force the rain-clouds to shower their plentiful blessings as we need or desire. But with the advantages we enjoy, it should certainly be possible so to garner up our resources of health and wealth as to enable us to pass through such a crisis with a tolerable

assurance of safety. Visitations, such as these we suffer from, will lose half their horrors, if we could discount them in anticipation. If we were stronger and more manly, more prudent, more abstemious and more thoughtful, millions would not live and breed as if they were members of the brute creation, and not men and women made in the image of God for a higher purpose than to live and die like the butterflies. It may well be that these visitations are intended as warnings of our duty in this respect, to set our house in order and not to sin against the laws of our existence. Of one aspect of this question of our duties I have nothing to speak from this platform—the aspect in which we deal with it as citizens of a great Empire. But the sphere of our duties is not exhausted when we discuss the question as a question of State policy only. The State after all exists only to make individual members composing it nobler, happier, richer and more perfect, in every attribute with which we are endowed; and this perfection of our being can never be insured by any outside arrangement, however excellent, unless the individual member concerned is in himself prepared in his own private social sphere of duties to co-operate in his own well-being. It is this latter aspect of our duties with which we are more immediately concerned here, and it is to this side of the question that I bespeak your favourable attention on this occasion.

You will ask, gentlemen, what message has this Conference to deliver on an occasion of the kind which brings us here together? This is the tenth meeting of the Conference, and one has a right to expect that, after ten years of ceaseless activity, any movement with a vitality of its own should be able to allow itself to be judged by its fruits. Two years ago, at Madras, I turned a similar opportunity to account in presenting to you a brief survey of our seven years' work in the different provinces of India. It is, therefore, not necessary that I should go over the same ground here again. It will, however, interest you equally well if I give you a brief outline of the work of the year which is about to close—in some sense a very remarkable year indeed. In all such matters the first step towards betterment is to realise the fact that our social

conditions are not exactly as they should be, and that they stand in need of a healthy change, which can only be brought about by every one of us making the effort to pull himself out, and helping others to step out from the mire of false self-satisfaction or helpless despondency, than which there is nothing more dangerous by way of obstacle to our deliverance. Until the conscience is stirred up, nothing great or good can be accomplished by the agencies from outside, which hardly touch the surface. It is not an easy thing to stir up the conscience of a nation such as ours; but to judge from the signs around us, there are obvious indications that the dead bones are heaving with a new life, and that the cold limbs are reviving with a new warmth hitherto despaired of. This is but a mere commencement, full of hope and promise to those who are gifted with patience, but with little significance to those who, like children, are impatient to see tangible results. During the course of the year this awakening manifested itself, not only among the classes who are generally credited or discredited as reformers, but also in the very strongholds of orthodoxy, and the defenders of the established order of things. On our side of the country, the Sanatan Dharma Rakshani Sabha, presided over by the Goswami Maharajah, and attended by the most orthodox enemies of reform, met in solemn conclave, and sided with the reformers, whom they disliked, in condemning some of the existing customs, such as the sale of girls in marriage and infant marriages. On the Madras side, the Srivaishnava Conference and the Godavari District Conference, both very orthodox bodies, met also under similar circumstances and joined hands with the reformers in many questions over the gulf which separates them. There are some who think that the reform movements to be effective must be confined to each great caste or sub-caste. Judged by this test, we may draw consolation from the fact that full trial is being given to this view: for the Bhargava and the Kayastha and the Agarwal or Vaishya Conferences in the North-West Provinces, the Sarin and Kayastha and the Aurora Bansa Societies in the Punjab, the Audich and the Kayastha Prabhu Conferences in Bombay, and the Sri Vaishnava Conference on

the Madras side, were all bodies which met each in its own place, and will meet again under very encouraging circumstances. It is proposed to have a meeting of the Sanatan Dharma Rakshani Sabha in Bombay under the presidency of the principal Acharya of that part of India who, be it said to his credit, has set his face against the sale of girls in marriage, and is prepared to enforce prohibition on a proper case being made out. The Acharya of the Saraswat Brahmins is at this moment discussing with his followers, what treatment should be given to England-returned men; and the Berar people, led by very orthodox gentlemen, have asked the Sankeshwar Swami to relax the restrictions against widow-marriages. A very learned Shastri at Jubbulpore has been discussing the much vexed question of the admission back into the community of men who have returned from England, or joined other faiths and desire to return within the pale of Hindu society. Moved by the same feeling, the Nasik priests have in one instance admitted an England-returned gentleman back into his caste. The Lohana community in Bombay, who had for many years excluded the philanthropic gentleman, Sett Damodardass Goverdhan Dass from their communion, admitted him freely this year, in consideration of his many and great benefactions to the community and to the public at large. The Jain community in Bombay have not only welcomed Mr. Virchanda Gandhi on his return from America, but they gave him a grand farewell when he went out as a missionary to that country. Gentlemen, you will admit that these are all very hopeful signs; scattered and few though they are over this vast country, they show evidence of a desire to breathe a new life in quarters where you would least expect it; and they show also that the desire for reform in our social conditions is now penetrating below the surface to the very heart of the nation.

Of course this sort of activity is more manifest among the younger generation everywhere. I hold in my hand a list of Associations and Sabhas, which have been good enough to send to the General Secretary of the Conference reports of their work. Our appeal for such reports does not reach all who

work in the good cause, and even those to whom the appeal is made do not respond in time. I have, however, with me a list of Associations which have sent in their Reports, and their number comes nearly to sixty—the largest number that has been yet reached. We were hitherto unable to tap Bengal, but this year we have received reports from ten Associations from this part of the country, twenty-three from the Bombay Presidency, eleven from Madras, two from Mysore, four from the Punjab, two from Deccan Hyderabad, one each from the Central Provinces and the Berar, and five from the North-Western Provinces. The reports of these Associations have been summarised, and the summary will be placed in your hands when we meet to-morrow to discuss our plan of operations. Of course, these Associations do not subscribe to all the points to which the Social Conference draws attention from year to year. Some of them favour female education chiefly, others purity and temperance; others again, improvement in the condition of child-widows; a fourth class favour interdining and intermarriage between sub-castes; many more favour the further raising of the marriageable age limit—some by compulsory legislation, others by caste regulations, and others, again, by means of pledges. Many similarly interest themselves in curtailing the expenditure on marriage and death ceremonies. A few are striving to admit men returned from England and converts from other faiths, and some interest themselves in elevating the lower classes. Gentlemen, you will thus see that in part or in whole the Conference programme is one which covers the whole field of our activities in social questions, though there is, as might be expected, every variety of method, and full room for choice of different subjects according to the needs of each province and community. Such a variety is natural, and I should regret if there was not this difference of lights and shades and we were all echoing the same cry throughout the country.

There are, however, some general features of similarity which might be noticed here with advantage. Bengal, though it gave birth to Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, as well as to Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, seems at present (outside the

Brahmo Samaj) to be content with helping female education chiefly. Polygamy and Kulinism, widow-marriage and unequal and infant marriages—these subjects have not excited the same attention here as in other parts of the country. In the North-Western Provinces the method of working through caste organisations finds most favour. Female education is not much attended to, but extravagance in marriage expenses and temperance occupy the chief attention. The Punjab takes the lead this year in the matter of the widow-marriage movement, re-admission of converts from other faiths and inter-marriage in sub-castes. In the Madras Presidency the Purity and the Anti-Nautch movements find their chief advocates. On the Bombay side, including Berars and Central Provinces also, to a certain extent, the Reform Associations are more catholic in the number of subjects to which they direct their attention. Bombay took the lead in the widow-marriage movement till last year. It comes out second this year with eight widow-marriages, while the Punjab takes the first place, showing a total of twenty-five such marriages, Madras having contributed two, the North-Western Provinces one, and Bengal one. In the matter of foreign travel, the Central Provinces are coming to the forefront, as many as nine young men having been sent last year to England for study. In this connection we may note with satisfaction the fact that as many as one hundred and sixty-seven Hindu students are studying at this time in England; fifty-six from Bengal, forty-two from Bombay and Central Provinces, thirteen from Madras, thirty-six from Punjab, one from Mysore, three from Kathiawar, and five from the Nizam's State.

These figures show that year after year the pilgrimage to foreign lands, unhampered by domestic restrictions, and the substitution of Oxford and Cambridge for the old venerated cities of Benares and Nuddea, must inevitably take place, and they will be wise in their generation who remove the thorns from the way of the young pilgrims, and welcome them back on their return.

As regards inter-marriage and inter-dining—in other words the fusion of sub-castes into larger aggregates—the year about

to close has a good record to show. Among the noticeable events of the year was an alliance between a Madras graduate and a Marathi lady brought up in Poona and educated in our schools there. Two inter-marriages of a less noteworthy kind occurred in the Central Provinces, and twenty inter-marriages took place among the several Khatri sub-divisions in the Punjab. In the Province of Bengal, you will all be glad to learn that, owing to the exertions chiefly of Babu Rash Behari Mukerji, of Vikrampur, the artificial divisions between the several *mels* among the Kulins of this province have been made to give way to a better feeling of the essential union of the Kulin caste in one hundred cases during the course of the last twenty-five years. Our friends at Madras, in the course of the year, have set an example of practically popularising the claims of this reform to general adhesion by instituting what are called reform-dinners, where all sects of Brahmins are welcome as brothers. The exclusiveness of caste shows evident signs of gradual relaxation. This is, however, nowhere so manifest as in the province of Punjab, where, owing to the exertions chiefly of the cultured Hindus, Sikhs and members of the Arya Samaj, the admission into the Hindu community of Mahomedan and Christian converts has made a great advance, and as many as two hundred and fifty or three hundred persons were admitted during the course of the year. This movement has found support in unexpected quarters. I refer here to the advocacy of this reform in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of this place. Nothing could be more pathetic, nothing more profoundly true than the appeals made by this exponent of conservative opinion to the Hindu community generally to drop their ancient spirit of exclusiveness, and receive with open arms those who may desire to come back to the old religion, and thus ward off the danger of national suicide, which otherwise is inevitable. I would make the same appeal on the ground of the devotion we owe to truth and reason and the supremacy of the claims of conscience upon our allegiance, to allow free liberty in the matter of this interchange of faiths.

In regard to the claims of purity, temperance, and

economy in marriage and other ceremonial expenditure, much need not be said here, as these are matters in which both the reform and the orthodox parties in all the provinces of India are at one in their desire for change. About the question of infant and unequal marriages, there is also unanimity of public sentiment, which is being slowly but surely educated to perceive the necessity of adopting a higher standard of age both for boys and girls than what satisfied the generation that is past. Thanks to the marriage laws passed in Mysore, in Southern India, the sentiment in favour of legislation on the subject is ripening gradually to action. Meantime private efforts to raise the marriageable age to fourteen for girls and to twenty for boys and more are being actively pushed forward by the more advanced reformers in all parts of the country, among some of the very highest families, without meeting with much opposition from the orthodox classes.

This then, gentlemen, is a summary of the work done and recorded during the year in various directions and channels, in which the reform movement is proceeding. You will all admit that it is, on the whole, very creditable. What is the inner spring of action which is setting in motion both reform and orthodox workers almost against their will, even where their will does not consent to move? That inner spring, the hidden purpose not consciously realised in many cases, is the sense of human dignity and freedom, which is slowly asserting its supremacy over the national mind. It is not confined to one sphere of family life. It invades the whole man, and makes him feel that individual purity and social justice have paramount claims over us all, which we cannot ignore long without being dragged down to a lower level of existence. This or that particular reform or revival of ancient practices, as some would like to all them; the removal of this or that particular defect or vice, is not and should not be the only end and aim of the agitation to improve our social condition. The end is to renovate, to purify, and also to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty, and perfecting all his powers. Till so renovated, purified and perfected, we can never hope to be what our ancestors once were—the

chosen people, to whom great tasks were allotted and by whom great deeds were performed. Where this feeling animates the worker, it is a matter of comparative indifference in what particular direction it asserts itself, and in what particular method it proceeds to work. With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly to all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and, lastly, with a love that overleaps all bound, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it, happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more. Famine and pestilence, oppression and sorrow, will then be myths of the past, and the Gods will then again descend to the earth and associate with men as they did in times which we now call mythical. This is the message which the Conference has to deliver to you, and I thank you all for having listened to it with such patience.

The Eleventh Social Conference—Amraoti—1897.

Addressing on "Revival and Reform," the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade said :—MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—This time last year, when we met in the metropolis of India, I ventured to say that the gathering of the Conference was held under the shadow of a great calamity. Few of us then fully realised the accumulation of miseries and sorrows which this unhappy year now about to close had in store for us. The shadows darkened and deepened in their horrors as the year advanced, and it almost seemed as if the seven plagues which afflicted the land of the Pharoahs in old times were let loose upon us, for there is not a single province which had not its ghastly record of death and ruin to mark this period as the most calamitous year of the century within the memory of many generations past. No province has suffered more from these dire visitations than the Presidency of Bombay, and we are still carrying the yoke

of this hard discipline of sorrows with a patience, and, I might add, courage, which baffle all description. The fight has been very unequal, and we have been worsted at every point, our activities have been paralysed, and our losses great beyond all previous anticipations. Speaking on an occasion like this, I cannot but give expression to the grief which presses heavy on our hearts, as we remember the faces, once so familiar in these Conference gatherings, conspicuous by their absence here to-day—soldiers of God in the great fight with evil, who have been taken away from us in the full bloom of their manhood, and whose places we can never hope adequately to fill up. One such earnest soul, the late Rao Bahadur Chintaman Narayen Bhat, was the life and light of this movement. I had fondly hoped that it would be my privilege to hand over to him the charge of this great service, for which the many great and good qualities of his head and heart fitted him so well. But this was not to be, and we have now to console ourselves with the mournful satisfaction that he died a martyr to his self-imposed labour of love and charity. In another place I have described our sense of the loss suffered by us by the death of another veteran in the fight—the universally lamented Mr. Waman Abaji Modak. Though disabled for a time for active work, his soul was ever alive to the call of duty for which he lived and died. Friends who knew Mr. Gokuldas Leula of Sind have paid a similar tribute of their sorrow to the memory of this sincere worker, who died a victim to the plague, while administering relief to those who suffered from its ravages. A tribute of respect is also due to the memory of Mr. Kasinath Punt Natu of Poona, and Mr. Vaman Daji Oka, well-known in these parts. I might recall to your mind the names of many more whom it has pleased Providence to take away from us, but this is hardly necessary to convince you that the year's casualties in our ranks have been very heavy. When people in their impatience complain that our friends here and elsewhere are only glib talkers, and fail badly when they are called on to act, they seem to forget the most prominent feature of our experience of these great visitations—namely, that in every town and city, where distress in any form prevailed, whether it

was due to famine, or plague, or earthquake, or floods, or hurricane, the members of the various Reform Associations and their sympathisers have always been the first to volunteer their help, and if they have lost heavily, this loss is due to the perseverance with which they maintain the fight. We, who have been spared till now, may well pay this tribute of respect to their memories on an occasion like this, when we meet together to reckon our gains and losses for the year.

As might be expected, the reports of this year's work which have been received from nearly sixty Associations, large and small, and which have been summarised up to date, complain that their work for the year has not been as successful as in the previous two years. And yet to those who can read between the lines, there are manifest signs which show that the work has been as earnestly pursued as ever. To instance a few cases:—Under the head of female education, the Bethuen College of Calcutta, the Girls' High Schools at Poona and Ahmedabad, the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya at Jullundar, the Sing Sabha's Girls' School at Lahore, the Maharani's Girls' School at Mysore, the Mahakali Patshala organised by Mataji Tapaswini Bai, a Maratha lady in Calcutta, and the Sylhet and Mymensingh Unions, all show a record of progress each in its own line of development. There is not a single Reform Association of any position in the country which has not lent its best efforts to raise the standard and popularise the system of female education. Many Associations, Sabhas and Samajas maintain independent girls' schools of their own, and others have their home classes more or less actively employed in carrying on the work of the schools to educate the more advanced students. Others again have their lectures for ladies, and Ladies' Associations, such as at Ahmedabad, Bombay, and Madras, started and maintained by the ladies themselves. Though the condition of female education is still very backward, and though the experiments that are now carried on are on different lines, the signs are clearly visible that throughout India, the national awakening to the necessity of developing the moral and intellectual capacities and aptitudes of our sisters has found universal recognition.

As regards another sign of this liberal movement which seeks to do equal justice to the rights of the female as of the male sex, it is satisfactory to note that though the number of widow marriages this year has been smaller than that of the previous years, still all the provinces have taken part in the movement. The reports show that in all 25 widow-marriages were celebrated throughout India during the past year:—Punjab 10, Bombay 6, Central Provinces 4, Madras 3, North-West Provinces and Bengal 1 each. The widow-marriages in the Central Provinces have been all brought about directly or indirectly by the persistent efforts of Rao Bahadur Kolhatkar, the President of this gathering. For the re-marriages in Punjab the credit is due to Dewan Santaram and his friends of the Widow Marriage Association there, and in regard to Bombay the same honour is due to Mr. Bhagawandas, the son of the late Madhavdas Raghunathdas in whose house two re-marriages were celebrated. The credit of the widow-marriages celebrated in Madras is due to Rao Bahadur Viresalingam Pantulu. There was thus not a single province in which friends of the cause did not manifest their active interest in it, which remark does not equally hold good for the previous years. The paucity in the total number was partly due to the calamities of the year, and partly to the prohibition of all marriages due to the year being a Sinhast year. Another good sign of the times which may be noted is the fact that some of the castes, in which no re-marriages had been celebrated before, joined in the movement for the first time this year. It was also reported in the papers that the Maharajah of Nabha, in the Punjab, had exercised his influence in favour of bettering the condition of Hindoo widows, and inducing influential Hindoo gentlemen to support the widow-marriage movement. In the Chandraseniya Kayasth Prabhu caste of Bombay, a similar pronouncement was made by the leaders of the community in favour of re-marriage, and it was resolved to bring up the subject before the next Kayasth Prabhu Conference to be held at Baroda. Another satisfactory indication of the times is furnished by the fact reported from Guzerat, that the Audich Brahmin community at Damun made a similar pronouncement in favour

of widow marriage in their caste. The Widows' Homes at Baranagar and Poona have also been successfully maintained notwithstanding pecuniary difficulties, and the number of widows attending the homes has slightly increased, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Sasipada Banerjee of Baranagar and Professor Karve of Poona.

As regards foreign travel, the year has had a good record to show. Several Saraswata gentlemen have returned from England, and though the *Guru* of the caste has refused admission to them, the reform party at Mangalore and in North Canara have succeeded in openly showing their sympathy with these men. Raja Nowlojee Rao Gujar, a scion of the princely house of Nagpur, returned from England, and was well received, and Messrs. Booti and Alonikar of Nagpur, Mr. Krishna Rao Bholanath of Ahmedabad, Professor Gokhale of Poona, and Mr. Ketkar of Gwalior, have similarly, though not formally, been admitted by some of their caste people, and the opposition has not ventured to place any difficulties in their way. Two Bhatia gentlemen, for the first time in that community, left for England with the full support of their caste. In the Punjab, several young men in the Biradari castes, who had been to England, were admitted back without any opposition. Two young men from the Aurorbans caste went to England last year. The liberal section of the Cashmere Pundits' Sabha is strongly in favour of foreign travel. These instances show that slowly but surely in all parts of the country, the prejudice against foreign travel is on the wane, and that before long the orthodox community or the communities will learn to tolerate these departures from custom as an inevitable change.

In regard to the question of inter-marriage, the Bengal papers announced an inter-marriage in high life between two sub-divisions of the Kayastha community, which hitherto kept aloof. In the Punjab, there was a betrothal between two sub-castes of the Serin community. This was the first instance of an inter-marriage between these two sub-divisions. Many of the widow-marriages have also been instances of inter-marriages, and for the first time last year two instances of inter-marriage between Madrasee and Bengalee gentlemen

and ladies occurred. The North-West Provinces reports show instances of similar fusion between sub-divisions of the Kayastha caste there, and in Guzerat there is a similar tendency manifest in some of the castes to amalgamate together.

As regards the postponement of infant marriages, the reports from all provinces show a decided tendency to increase the limits of marriageable ages of girls and boys. In the Punjab, the Aurorbans Sabha has passed a resolution that no girl belonging to the caste should be given in marriage unless she has completed her twelfth year. In the Madras Presidency, the opinion is gaining ground that the time has now come for applying to Government for legislation on the subject to fix at least the marriageable age for boys, if not for girls and to lay down a maximum limit of age for old persons who marry young girls, on the plan adopted by the Mysore Government. The Madras Provincial Social Conference and the Godavari District Conference expressly passed resolutions on this subject. The Hindu Social Reform Association at Madras has also appointed a committee to draw up a memorial with the same object. The Hon'ble Mr. Jambulingam Mudaliar is reported to be contemplating the introduction of a Bill into the local Council there on this subject. There have also been individual instances in some parts of the country where grown-up girls have been married without experiencing any very bitter opposition from the caste.

Nearly all the Associations have been pledged to support the Purity movement, including the anti-*nautch* and temperance agitation and the work done during the year shows considerable progress under both these heads.

To turn next to another question in which the Conference has been interesting itself for the past few years,—the admission of converts from other faiths—some progress has been made during the year. The Shuddhi Sabha admitted nearly 200 Mahomedan converts this year. Hitherto the movement for the re-admission of converts to other faiths back into the Hindu society was chiefly confined to the Punjab. This year, however, there have been also instances of such conversions in Bengal, the North-West Provinces, and far away in Burmah,

one of them being a convert Christian and the others Mahomedans. The Shuddhi Sabha of Lahore and the Arya Samaj there have deservedly taken the lead in this movement, and it will be a source of great strength to them that the movement has been taken up in the other Provinces also. The Central Provinces Reports for the year show that Mr. Shanker Shastri of Jubbulpore has published a pamphlet on the subject, and it is a strange coincidence that Professor Rajaram Shastri Bhagwat of Bombay read this year a paper before the branch of the Asiatic Society there, showing how in old times the non-Aryan races were brought within the fold of the Aryan system.

As regards the reduction of extravagant expenses in marriage, a very important movement was started in Calcutta under the auspices of leading Kayastha gentlemen, including such men as Sir Romesh Chandra Mittra and the Hon'ble Mr. Chunder Madhub Ghose, who met at Babu Ramanath Ghose's house, and passed several resolutions which are likely to be attended with good results. Nearly every one of the reports of the North-West Provinces contain details of the manner in which the Kayasthas, the Bhargavas, the Chaturvedis, Vaishyas, the Jains and other castes have tried to lay down sliding scales of marriage expenditure, curtailing extravagance under many heads, abolishing *nautch* parties, fireworks, and other useless items. In the Punjab, the Aurorbans have very considerably reduced the extravagance in marriage expenses. On the Bombay side, the Bhatia *mandal* and the Dasa Oswal Jains have successfully worked in the same direction. Even in far off Baroda, the Dasa Porwad Bania caste people have been moving in the matter. Following the example of the Rajputra Hitkarni Sabha, many non-Rajpoot castes in Rajpootana and Malwa have laid down rules which are enforced by the same sanctions as those of the principal Sabha.

As regards Conference work generally, it may be noted that caste Conferences are the order of the day in all parts of India. I have, on previous occasions, mentioned the gatherings annually held this week in several large towns in the North-Western Provinces of the Kayastha and the Vaishya community. This year was distinguished by the holding of the first

Provincial Social Conference in Madras, in which Presidency also we have had two district Conferences, one on the East Coast in the Godavari District, and the other on the West Coast at Mangalore. New associations are being formed under very favourable auspices in many parts of the country, notably in the Bombay and Madras Districts, to support the work of the Conference, and to give effect to its resolutions.

Encouraged by the success which has attended the efforts of the Mysore Government, and the Malabar Marriage Law passed in the Madras Council, two Bills of great social importance have been introduced, one in the Imperial Council, to bring under better control religious charities and endowments, and another has been introduced in the Madras Council to remove all doubts in and codify the law in regard to what constitutes self-acquired property under the Hindoo joint family system. Both these Bills have suggested subjects for discussion at the ensuing Conference this year, and it is not therefore necessary for me to enlarge upon their importance. There is a third measure before the Viceroy's Council which, though it relates to a particular section of the Mahomedan community, has a wider bearing which interests us all. The Memon section of this community in Bombay were originally Hindoo converts, and though they embraced Mahomedanism, they retained their old Hindoo customs in regard to inheritance and succession, and these customs were recognised by our Law Courts. A majority of that community, however, now desire that in place of the Hindoo customs, the Mahomedan Law should govern their succession to the property of deceased persons. The Government of India accordingly intend to pass a sort of a permissive measure, by which a member of this community may retain or abandon the old rules by a formal declaration of his choice, which choice, once made, will be final. The subject bristles with difficulties, but the permissive legislation, if it proves a success in actual operation, will furnish a precedent which may prove of considerable help to those who wish to have more liberal laws of inheritance and succession without change of religion.

Such, gentlemen, is the brief record of the principal social

events of the year. Many ardent spirits amongst us will no doubt be very much dissatisfied with the poverty of this record. At the same time, we must bear in mind that hundreds and thousands—nay millions of our countrymen will regard this poor record as very revolutionary, and condemn this as one of the unseen causes which has brought about physical and moral catastrophies upon the land by way of punishment for the sins of the reformers. These are two extreme sides of the question, and it is not for me to say to an audience like this on which side the balance of truth may be found. The *Arya Patrika* of the Punjab, which is a recognised organ of the Arya Samaj there, has in its words of advice to the Conference expressed its view that we are radically in the wrong in seeking to reform the usages of our society without a change of religion, and it seriously suggests that we should, in the first instance, become members of their Samaj and this conversion will bring with it all desired reforms. Many enthusiastic friends of the Brahmo Samaj entertain similar views and give us similar advice. All I can say to these welcome advisers is that they do not fully realise the situation and its difficulties. People have changed their religion, and yet retain their social usages unchanged. The Native Christians, for instance, especially the Roman Catholic section among them, and many sections of Mahomedans are instances in point. Besides, it has been well observed that even for a change of religion, it is too often necessary that the social surroundings must be liberalised in a way to help people to realise their own responsibilities and to strengthen them in their efforts. Lastly, these well-meaning advisers seem to forget that the work of reform cannot be put off indefinitely till the far more arduous and difficult work of religious conversion is accomplished. It may take centuries before the Arya or Brahmo Samaja establish their claims for general recognition. In the meanwhile what is to become of the social organisation? Slowly but surely, the progress of liberal ideas must be allowed to work its way in reforming our social customs, and the process cannot be stopped even though we may wish it. In the case of our society especially, the usages which at present prevail amongst

us are admittedly not those which obtained in the most glorious periods of our history. On most of the points which are included in our programme, our own record of the past shows that there has been a decided change for the worse, and it is surely within the range of practical possibilities for us to hope that we may work up our way back to a better state of things without stirring up the rancorous hostilities which religious differences have a tendency to create and foster. There is no earthly reason whatsoever why we should not co-operate with these religious organisations, or why they should not rather co-operate with us in this work in which our interests are common, because the majority of our countrymen hold different views about religion from those which commend themselves to these Samajas. I am speaking these words with a full sense of my responsibility, for I am in my humble way a member of one, if not of both the Samajas, and I am a sincere searcher after religious truth in full sympathy with the Arya and Brahmo Samaj movements, and I hope therefore that these advisers of ours will take my reply in the same spirit, and will not misunderstand me. Schismatic methods of propagation cannot be applied with effect to vast communities which are not within their narrow pale.

On the other side, some of our orthodox friends find fault with us, not because of the particular reforms we have in view, but on account of the methods we follow. While the new religious sects condemn us for being too orthodox, the extreme orthodox section denounce us for being too revolutionary in our methods. According to these last, our efforts should be directed to revive, and not to reform. I have many friends in this camp of extreme orthodoxy, and their watch-word is that revival, and not reform, should be our motto. They advocate a return to the old ways, and appeal to the old authorities and the old sanction. Here also, as in the instance quoted above, people speak without realising the full significance of their own words. When we are asked to revive our institutions and customs, people seem to be very much at sea as to what it is they seem to revive. What particular period of our history is to be taken as the old? Whether

the period of the Vedas, of the Smritis, of the Puranas or of the Mahomedan or modern Hindu times? Our usages have been changed from time to time by a slow process of growth, and in some cases of decay and corruption, and we cannot stop at a particular period without breaking the continuity of the whole. When my revivalist friend presses his argument upon me, he has to seek recourse in some subterfuge which really furnishes no reply to the question—what shall we revive? Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our caste indulged in all the abominations as we now understand them of animal food and drink which exhausted every section of our country's Zoology and Botany? The men and the Gods of those old days ate and drank forbidden things to excess in a way no revivalist will now venture to recommend. Shall we revive the twelve forms of sons, or eight forms of marriage, which included capture, and recognised mixed and illegitimate intercourse? Shall we revive the Niyoga system of procreating sons on our brother's wives when widowed? Shall we revive the old liberties taken by the Rishis and by the wives of the Rishis with the marital tie? Shall we revive the hecatombs of animals sacrificed from year's end to year's end, and in which human beings were not spared as propitiatory offerings? Shall we revive the Shakti worship of the left hand with its indecencies and practical debaucheries? Shall we revive the *Sati* and infanticide customs, or the flinging of living men into the rivers, or over rocks, or hookswinging, or the crushing beneath Jagannath car? Shall we revive the internecine wars of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, or the cruel persecution and degradation of the aboriginal population? Shall we revive the custom of many husbands to one wife or of many wives to one husband? Shall we require our Brahmins to cease to be landlords and gentlemen, and turn into beggars and dependants upon the king as in olden times? These instances will suffice to show that the plan of reviving the ancient usages and customs will not work our salvation, and is not practicable. If these usages were good and beneficial, why were they altered by our wise ancestors? If they were bad and injurious, how

can any claim be put forward for their restoration after so many ages? Besides, it seems to be forgotten that in a living organism as society is, no revival is possible. The dead and the buried or burnt are dead, buried, and burnt once for all, and the dead past cannot therefore be revived except by a reformation of the old materials into new organised beings. If revival is impossible, reformation is the only alternative open to sensible people, and now it may be asked what is the principle on which this reformation must be based? People have very hazy ideas on this subject. It seems to many that it is the outward form which has to be changed, and if this change can be made, they think that all the difficulties in our way will vanish. If we change our outward manners and customs, sit in a particular way or walk in a particular fashion, our work according to them is accomplished. I cannot but think that much of the prejudice against the reformers is due to this misunderstanding. It is not the outward form, but the inward form, the thought and the idea which determines the outward form, that has to be changed if real reformation is desired.

Now what have been the inward forms or ideas which have been hastening our decline during the past three thousand years? These ideas may be briefly set forth as isolation, submission to outward force or power more than to the voice of the inward conscience, perception of fictitious differences between men and men due to heredity and birth, passive acquiescence in evil or wrong doing, and a general indifference to secular well-being, almost bordering upon fatalism. These have been the root ideas of our ancient social system. They have as their natural result led to the existing family arrangements where the woman is entirely subordinated to the man and the lower castes to the higher castes, to the length of depriving men of their natural respect for humanity. All the evils we seek to combat result from the prevalence of these ideas. They are mere corollaries to these axiomatic assumptions. They prevent some of our people from realising what they really are in all conscience, neither better nor worse than their fellows, and that whatever garb men may put on, they are the worse for assuming dignities and powers which do not in fact belong

to them. As long as these ideas remain operative on our minds, we may change our outward forms and institutions, and be none the better for the change. These ideas have produced in the long course of ages their results on our character, and we must judge their good or bad quality, as St. Paul says, by the fruits they have borne. Now that these results have been disastrous, nobody disputes or doubts, and the lesson to be drawn for our guidance in the future from this fact is that the current of these ideas must be changed, and in the place of the old worship we paid to them, we must accustom ourselves and others to worship and reverence new ideals. In place of isolation, we must cultivate the spirit of fraternity or elastic expansiveness. At present it is everybody's ambition to pride himself upon being a member of the smallest community that can be conceived, and the smaller the number of those with whom you can dine or marry, or associate, the higher is your perfection and purity, the purest person is he who cooks his own food, and does not allow the shadow of even his nearest friend to fall upon his cooked food. Every caste and every sect has thus a tendency to split itself into smaller castes and smaller sects in practical life. Even in philosophy and religion, it is a received maxim that knowledge is for the few, and that salvation is only possible for the esoteric elect with whom only are the virtues of sanctity and wisdom, and that for the rest of mankind, they must be left to wander in the wilderness, and grovel in superstition, and even vice, with only a colouring of so-called religion to make them respectable. Now all this must be changed. The new mould of thought on this head must be, as stated above, cast on the lines of fraternity, a capacity to expand outwards, and to make more cohesive inwards the bonds of fellowship. Increase the circle of your friends and associates, slowly and cautiously if you will, but the tendency must be towards a general recognition of the essential equality between man and man. It will beget sympathy and power. It will strengthen your own hands, by the sense that you have numbers with you, and not against you, or as you foolishly imagine, below you.

The next idea which lies at the root of our helplessness is

the sense that we are always intended to remain children, to be subject to outside control, and never to rise to the dignity of self-control by making our conscience and our reason the supreme, if not the sole, guide to our conduct. All past history has been a terrible witness to the havoc committed by this misconception. We are children, no doubt, but the children of God, and not of man, and the voice of God is the only voice which we are bound to listen. Of course, all of us cannot listen to this voice when we desire it, because from long neglect and dependence upon outside help, we have benumbed this faculty of conscience in us. With too many of us, a thing is true or false, righteous or sinful, simply because somebody in the past has said that it is so. Duties and obligations are duties and obligations, not because we feel them to be so, but because somebody reputed to be wise has laid it down that they are so. In small matters of manners and courtesies, this outside dictation is not without its use. But when we abandon ourselves entirely to this helpless dependence on other wills, it is no wonder that we become helpless as children in all departments of life. Now the new idea which should take up the place of this helplessness and dependence is not the idea of a rebellious overthrow of all authority, but that of freedom responsible to the voice of God in us. Great and wise men in the past, as in the present, have a claim upon our regards, but they must not come between us and our God—the Divine principle enthroned in the heart of every one of us high or low. It is this sense of self-respect, or rather respect for the God in us, which has to be cultivated. It is a very tender plant which takes years and years to make it grow. But there is the capacity and the power, and we owe it as a duty to ourselves to undertake the task. Revere all human authority, pay your respects to all prophets and all revelations, but never let this reverence and respect come in the way of the dictates of conscience, the Divine command in us.

Similarly there is no doubt that men differ from men in natural capacities, and aptitudes, and that heredity and birth are factors of considerable importance in our development. But it is at the same time true that they are not the only factors

that determine the whole course of our life for good or for evil, under a law of necessity. Heredity and birth explain many things, but this law of *Karma* does not explain all things! What is worse, it does not explain the mystery that makes man and woman what they really are, the reflection and the image of God. Our passions and our feelings, our pride and our ambition, lend strength to these agencies, and with their help the Law of Karma completes our conquest, and in too many cases enforces our surrender. The new idea that should come in here is that this Law of Karma can be controlled and set back by a properly trained will, when it is made subservient to a higher will than ours. This we see in our everyday life, and Necessity, or the Fates are, as our own texts tell us, faint obstacles in the way of our advancement if we devote ourselves to the law of Duty. I admit that this misconception is very hard to remove, perhaps the hardest of the old ideas. But removed it must be, if not in this life or generation, in many lives and generations, if we are ever to rise to our full stature.

The fourth old form or idea to which I will allude here is our acquiescence in wrong or evil doing as an inevitable condition of human life, about which we need not be very particular. All human life is a vanity and a dream, and we are not much concerned with it. This view of life is in fact atheism in its worst form. No man or woman really ceases to be animal who does not perceive or realise that wrong or evil-doing, impurity and vice, crime and misery, and sin of all kinds, is really our animal existence prolonged. It is the beast in us which blinds us to impurity and vice, and makes them even attractive. There must be nautches in our temples, say our priests, because even the Gods cannot do without these impure fairies. This is only a typical instance of our acquiescence in impurity. There must be drunkenness in the world, there must be poverty and wretchedness and tyranny, there must be fraud and force, there must be thieves and the law to punish them. No doubt these are facts, and there is no use denying their existence, but in the name of all that is sacred and true, do not acquiesce in them, do not hug these evils to your bosom, and cherish them. Their contact is poisonous, not the less deadly because it does not kill,

but it corrupts men. A healthy sense of the true dignity of our nature, and of man's high destiny, is the best corrective and antidote to this poison. I think I have said more than enough to suggest to your reflecting minds what it is that we have to reform. All admit that we have been deformed. We have lost our stature, we are bent in a hundred places, our eyes lust after forbidden things, our ears desire to hear scandals about our neighbours, our tongues lust to taste forbidden fruit, our hands itch for another man's property, our bowels are deranged with indigestible food. We cannot walk on our feet, but require stilts or crutches. This is our present social polity, and now we want this deformity to be removed; and the only way to remove it is to place ourselves under the discipline of better ideas and forms such as those I have briefly touched above. Now this is the work of the Reformer. Reforms in the matter of infant marriage and enforced widowhood, in the matter of temperance and purity, inter-marriage between castes, the elevation of the low castes, and the re-admission of converts, and the regulation of our endowments and charities, are reforms only so far and no further, as they check the influence of the old ideas, and promote the growth of the new tendencies. The Reformer has to infuse in himself the light and warmth of nature, and he can only do it by purifying and improving himself and his surroundings. He must have his family, village, tribe, and nation recast in other and new moulds, and that is the reason why Social Reform becomes our obligatory duty, and not a mere pastime which might be given up at pleasure. Revival is, as I have said, impossible; as impossible as mass-conversion into other faiths. But even if it were possible, its only use to us would be if the reforms elevated us and our surroundings, if they made us stronger, braver, truer men with all our faculties of endurance and work developed, with all our sympathies fully awakened and refined, and if with our heads and hearts acting in union with a purified and holy will, they made us feel the dignity of our being and the high destiny of our existence, taught us to love all, work with all, and feel for all. This is the Reformer's true work, and this in my opinion is the reason why the Con-

ference meets from year to year, and sounds the harmonies in every year which can listen to them with advantage.

The Twelfth Social Conference—Madras—1898.

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade delivered an address on "Southern India a Hundred Years Ago." He said :—

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Once more within a cycle of 12 years we meet for the third time in this holy region of Southern India, the birth-place of the Social Conference. Men and things have moved fast since we first met under the leadership of the late Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao, the first President of the Conference.

The shadow of the great calamity which has been dogging our foot steps for the last three years, is still upon us, and its dark clouds are still thickening on the Southern horizon, while it has not yet stopped its destructive work in our part of the country. The persistency with which these calamities succeed one another and intensify our suffering has made some wise men among you prophesy still more dire calamities in the years to come. These prophets derive their knowledge from observations of the conjunctions of stars and planets. We, less gifted creatures, can but bow to them as we look at the signs below our feet, on the earth we live in and move and have our being in.

A Christian missionary who worked in your Province for 30 years, more than a hundred years ago, has left on record his impressions of Southern India as he saw it in those old days, and the words of despair he has uttered fill one's mind with graver forebodings than the prophecies of our astrological observers. Abbe Dubois, whose work has been recently published, has in one of his chapters on the 'Poverty of India,' pronounced this curse upon the people :—"It is a vain hope to suppose that the English people can ever improve the condition of the Hindus. The efforts of a humane and just government may succeed up to a certain point, but as long as the Hindus cling to their civil and religious institutions, customs and habits, they must remain what they have always been, grovelling in

poverty and wretchedness. Those institutions and customs are insurmountable obstacles in their path of progress. To make a new race of Hindus, you must begin by undermining the foundations of their civilization, religion, and polity, and turn them into atheists and barbarians, and then give them new laws, new religion and new polity. But even then, the task will be half-accomplished, for, we should still have to give them a new nature and different inclinations; otherwise, they would soon relapse into their former state and worth."

This pronouncement by one who had no motive to judge us ill, and who had the best opportunities to judge us well, would, if true, be to my mind a far worse calamity than the physical sufferings and trials we are now enduring, and which according to some of our wise men we are fated to suffer a hundredfold more in the near future. It is strange that these Christian Missionaries and our wise men should thus join their hands over the wide expanse of time and space that separates them. There are those among us who have firm faith, quite independently of the planetary conjunctions, in the gradual decay of all virtue and piety in this land, when the fatal limit of 5,000 years from the commencement of the Kaliyuga has been reached, and according to whom we are now just on the verge of crossing this Rubicon which separates law from anarchy, and virtue from impiety, and nothing that men can do in the work of their own salvation will ever help to avert the crisis.

In this situation, gentlemen, we meet here under circumstances which are calculated to make us anxious and thoughtful, and to sober and moderate our enthusiasm. Here, we have met full of hope, and we find that Nature and Man, the latter as represented by an eminent Christian Missionary, and also by our own kith and kin, place this skeleton before our eyes in the midst of our rejoicings. Are we then all indulging in the fond dreams of a Fool's Paradise? Is this 'Holy Land,' peopled by one-sixth of the human race, fit for no other use than to be the accursed desert of human hopes and wishes, without the fertilizing rains of divine favour to water its dry and parched up plains, and no green vegetation to bless the eyes, and no sweet sounds of music to lull the ears? I, for one, refuse to believe

that such a doom is reserved for this favoured region, even though it is pronounced by reverend missionaries and our own revered religious teachers. I, for one, refuse to believe that we can make no headway in the path of progress, and that the British connection with this country, with all its humane, and just administration, will prove of no avail to lift us up from the mire of our wretchedness. The seeming alliance between the missionaries and our wise people has this weak point in its armour of defence. According to our people, the state of the country a hundred years ago, was much better in all respects, morally and socially than what it is now. The Missionary's despair was however forced upon him by the state of the country as he saw it a hundred years ago, and one can feel almost sure, from the way in which things have moved since he wrote, that, if he had lived a hundred years later, he would have joined with the contemporary men of his calling, in conferring on us his blessings instead of his curses. The formidable alliance thus turns out on examination to be not so formidable as it seems at first sight, and we can turn one of our assailants against the other, and await in hope the final result. What then was the social condition of Southern India a hundred years back, and have the past hundred years worked no permanent change for the better? This will be the theme to which I shall address my observations to-night, and I hope to be able to show that, if things are not all as bright as we wish them to be, they are not so dreary and cheerless as some would have them to be, and that the British connection and its 'just and humane' administration have brought about a change in our religion, law, and polity, of such a character as not to make it necessary that we should be all turned into atheists and barbarians, to be white-washed again into civilisation and manners, and that if we have not acquired a new nature, we have at least acquired inclinations and aspirations which will prevent our relapse into our former condition.

A hundred years ago, Abbe Dubois mentions that among the Nairs on the Malabar coast, the women had several husbands at one and the same time, and amongst the Nambudri Brahmins of that province, if a girl died unmarried, it was deem-

ed necessary for her salvation that the corpse should be married to some Brahmin hired for the purpose before it was burned. Then, in the Madura district, there was a caste called Totiyars, among whom brothers, uncles and nephews had a common wife among them, and in Eastern Mysore there was a caste in which the mother giving her eldest daughter in marriage had to puncture two of her fingers. On the Malabar coast in those days, all Sudras drank toddy and Brahmins used opium. In the Carnatic hills men and women did not wash their clothes till they wore away by use. In those days again, besides the caste and sect-divisions, there were what are called the right hand and the left hand factions in which the low-castes were divided upon such questions as the right to wear slippers, to ride on horse-back, or to pass certain streets, or to sound certain music before them. All these citations are made from the first chapter of Dubois' work, and the editor of that book has found it necessary, in his desire to state the truth, that all these customs of polyandry and uncleanliness, and these factious feuds have ceased to exist. In the second chapter of the same work, mention is made of the condition of the Pariahs. That condition is bad enough even now, but the details given of their wretchedness in this work baffle all description. They were forbidden to cross Brahmin streets, or to come in Brahmin neighbourhood. On the Malabar Coast, the Pariahs were attached to the land as serfs and sold with it. In those good old days adultery was punished with death inflicted on the woman, and that death was inflicted by the members of the caste. Expulsion from caste for breach of caste-rules was irrevokable unless a rival faction was created by the friends of the person excommunicated. Even when thousands of Brahmins of those days, as well as Sudras, were forcibly converted by Tippu Sultan, the Brahmins who were applied to for re-admission found it impossible, even with the help of the Brahmin Government of Puna, to effect their restoration, while many thousands of Christians who had been similarly converted by Tippu Sultan, were freely admitted back into the Christian community, by the intervention of Abbe Dubois, Colonel Wilks, and General Wellesley. The professors of the so-called Fine

Arts such as music, painting, and sculpture belonged in those days to castes which were held to be lower in the social scale than the Sudras, and their touch was pollution. These things have now been according to the editor of the work, all changed for the better. Adultery is not punished by death without trial, excommunication is not irrevocable, wholesale conversions by force are impossible, and there are movements to re-admit converts to other faiths when they seek such re-admission. This year, the Arya Samaj in Punjab admitted five such Christian and Moslem proselytes. And men of the highest caste are now engaged in the practice of the fine arts. As regards the Brahmins themselves, the power of the Gurus in those days in exacting Pada-Puja was something terrible. Dubois mentions without reserve that many had to sell their children for Gurudakshinas. Women dishonored by the Guru were called Garud Baswis or Linga Baswis, and had the stamp of Garud or the Ling branded, on tender parts of their bodies. And then, these women became wives of gods and served in the temple, till they became old and lost their attraction. In Dubois' time the girls were married at the age of 5, 7 or at the utmost, when they were 9 years old. Widows, of course, were not allowed to marry in the higher castes, and even the Sudras followed the example. On the fast-days people not only took no food, on the 11th day but also ate only once on the 10th and the 12th days. In Bengal the widows may not even drink water on the fast-days. People who happened to kill Nàg serpents had to expiate their offence by a ceremony called the *pavadan*, which consisted of an incision made on the thigh or arm of the offender, or of some other person who might stand as substitute on the former's paying a large Dakshina. In the last case, the blood was sprinkled on the body of the offender.

As regards intemperance, Dubois says, that while the Europeans are noted for their drunkenness, the Brahmins are in their turn open to the charge of gluttony, and even as regards drunkenness he says, they were not altogether exempt from the vice, and gives an instance in which a Tanjore Brahmin's house caught fire, and among the things saved were one vessel of salted pork and another of *arrack* or native rum. Of course these Brah-

mins must have been Shaktee worshippers or *vam-margees*, among whom the use of forbidden food and drink, and promiscuous mingling of men and women in indecent gatherings were tests for admission into the secret society. The respect due from the Sudras to the Brahmins, and from women to men was in those days best shown by uncovering the upper part of the body of the inferior person before the eyes of the superiors. As regards *Suttee*, it was the commonest occurence to witness. Dubois himself witnessed the deaths of several *Suttees*; among others the Ranees of Tanjore, who immolated themselves with the corpse of the deceased Raja. There were some seven hundred *Suttee* deaths in the year 1817 in the Bengal Presidency alone. As regards the belief in astrology, magic, omens and palmistry, Dubois states that there was in his time almost a general belief in these superstitious fancies. These beliefs are not still extinct but we have no idea of the influence they exercised a hundred years ago. Then again, turning to the popular religion of the country, the position of the Devadasees was recognised as so respectable, that even private gentlemen visiting each other on formal business had to be accompanied by these attendants. There were temples in Mysore belonging to the aboriginal gods where fairs were held, at which women cursed with barrenness made vows to get children, and in connection with these vows had resort to the most dirty practices, which cannot be described in decent language. Their gods and goddesses were carried in processions in those days being made to mimic obscene gestures to one another. These processions may still be seen in various parts of Southern India, but robbed of much of their obscene features. Walking on burning fire, hook-swinging, piercing the cheeks and the lips or the tongue with iron rods or silver wires—these were the received forms of devotion in many temples.

I think I have said enough to give you an idea of the state of things in Southern India which Dubois witnessed with his own eyes a hundred years ago. It is quite possible, that, being a missionary, he unconsciously exaggerated many points, and misunderstood many others. There are good reasons to think, that he was misinformed in many respects; but

making allowance for all these defects, the general correctness of his description, especially of the ignorant classes of society, can hardly be impugned. There are fossil remains and vestiges of all these enormities and superstitions even still visible outside our larger towns in the mofussil. Even if one-tenth of the evils and vices, and obscenities, and enormities which met his eyes were true, they make up together a picture sufficiently disheartening to the most enthusiastic defender of the past. The fact is, that Brahmin civilisation, with all its poetry and philosophy, with strict rules of abstinence and purity, had hardly penetrated below the upper classes who constituted less than ten per cent. of the population. We can easily understand these phenomena from our own present experiences.

The practical question for us to consider is whence came this polyandry and polygamy; this brutal conception of gods and goddesses, this confessed cruelty to women, these superstitions, these feuds between castes and sub-sections of castes and factions? Abbe Dubois has been very unjust to the Brahmins when he holds them responsible for all these enormities. The Brahmin civilisation, whatever else it was, was certainly not a civilisation which favoured polyandry or polygamy, drunkenness and obscenity, cruelty and vice. We have records which mirror the thoughts of the Brahmin settlers in Southern India. The ideal of marriage was monogamy, and it is best typified in the story of the Ramayana, where the hero is distinguished above all men for his single-hearted devotion to his consort. The women as depicted in the early Brahmin records as also in the epics are respected and honoured, left to their choice to marry or to remain single and are oftentimes noted as composers of hymns, and writers of philosophical works. The wife, even in the rituals we now recite, is the sole mistress of the house and as free an agent as her partner in life. The immolation in the form of Satee was not only not recognised as a duty, but second marriage was prescribed as quite open to her if she so wished it in all the first three Yugas. Early marriage was not dreamt of, and one of the qualifications for marriage was developed womanhood. The castes were not so

strongly separated as to prevent inter-marriages in the order of the caste, and as for inter-dining, the first three castes among themselves observed no jealous distinction. And the better specimen of the fourth caste was specially commended as servants for cooking food. Ghost-worship and Devil-worship were unknown to the Brahmin cult. As for crossing seas on long voyages, there is historical evidence that the Brahmin missionaries and settlers established themselves, and their religion in far off Java, and Sumatra, and their Buddhist successors converted half the human race in Burmah, Siam, China, Japan, Tibet and distant Mongolia. Even in India itself the Aryan settlers found no difficulty in incorporating with them the non-Aryan races into fellowship in the profession of the Aryan faith.

The question thus recurs again how it happened that institutions and practices so essentially just and pure, so healthy and considerate, came to be deflected from their natural growth, and made room for the distortions which struck Abbe Dubois as so monstrous, and excite surprise in us even at the present day; how the chivalry and honour of our noble ancestors disappeared and their spiritual worship gave way to ghost and demon worship the ministers of which in many cases are the descendants of these same old Brahmins? Unless we find some working solution which satisfactorily accounts for this transformation, we shall never be able to find our way with sure steps out of this labyrinth. Abbe Dubois's explanation is obviously untrue. The fact appears to be, though I speak with diffidence and subject to correction, that the Brahmin settlers in Southern India and the warriors and traders who came with them were too few in numbers and too weak in power to make any lasting impression beyond their own limited circle upon the vast multitudes who constituted the aboriginal races in the Southern Peninsula. In North India where their power was more distinctly felt they appear to have been about the commencement of the Christian era submerged by fresh hordes of Scythians or Shaks, of Huns and the Jats or Goths who subverted the Roman Empire. In Southern India it was not foreign invasion, but the upheaval of the aboriginal Dravidian races

which brought about pretty nearly the same results. There is a tone of despondency and panic in the Puranas written about this time which can only be explained by some such phenomena. However this may be, this is certain that when Hinduism revived from the depression into which it had fallen, in consequence of the rise of Buddhism, it did not revive in its old, pristine purity, but in the more or less adulterated form as we now see it even at the present day. In their anxiety to destroy Buddhism, and later on the Jain faith, the Brahmins, allied themselves with the barbarism of the land represented in the countless multitudes, whom they had till then contemptuously treated as Sudras, and as out of the pale of their early institutions. From being sages and prophets, poets and philosophers, they descended to the lower level of priests and *purohits*, and thus sacrificed their independence for the advantage of power and profit. The gods and goddesses of the Dasyus or the Rakshasas who had no place in the old pantheon were identified with being more or less pure forms of the old Brahmanical triad or rather of the two divisions of Shaiva and Vaishnava cults. The old elastic system of the three divisions of the Aryas and the fourth non-Aryan section became crystallised into local and professional castes, of which the Brahmins became the priests; and these sub-divisions became strict and insurmountable barriers. Such a change as this could not be brought about without a surrender all along the line to the brute force of barbarous influences. Woman ceased to be an object of respect and became the subject of distrust and jealousy who always must remain dependent on her relations. The institution of Satee found in all barbarous nations was introduced, marriage by choice gave way to the practice of sale in marriage, and polygamy and polyandry became legalised institutions. Brahminism having failed to conquer from want of power, allowed itself thus to be degraded and conquered by the multitudes whom it failed to civilize. As priests of the castes and the aboriginal gods and goddesses, it became their interest to magnify for their advantage the old superstitious beliefs; and with a view to justifying this action books called the Mahatmyas were composed in the name of the Puranas and new texts were

introduced, condemning all the old approved institutions such as celibacy, sea-voyages, late marriages, and widow-marriages as being unsuited to the new Kali-yuga, and therefore forbidden, though practised in old times. This seems to me to be the only possible explanation of the change of front which we see in the old records. Of course, in the midst of this degradation, the spirit of the old civilization was not entirely extinct, and the great Acharyas who flourished in Southern India, and the equally great saints and prophets who succeeded them, entered their protest against this cruelty and wrong and degradation of the priesthood, and held up the light on high with the independence of the old Rishis. Their labours bore no permanent result because of the eruptions of the Mahomedans which soon followed and the establishment of the Moslem power aggravated the old evils by the example which the Mussalmans set to the subject races. Even the Mahomedans, however, were not able to extinguish the old fire completely, and the spirit of righteous self-assertion and of faith in God which has distinguished Brahmanism from the first, only wanted an opportunity to regain its old liberty.

If this account of the deflection or corruption of Brahmanism be approximately correct, it furnishes us with a clue by which we can trace back our steps in this labyrinth of confusion. The opportunity so sorely needed has come to this country and slowly but surely priest-ridden and caste-ridden India is loosening its coils of ages. Abbe Dubois was unjust to the old civilization when he thought that we should have to unlearn all our past and to commence with atheism and barbarism, and then take our religion, law and polity from our foreign masters. Even if the task were possible, the remedy would be worse than the disease. We have not to unlearn our entire past,—certainly not—the past which is the glory and wonder of the human race. We have to retrace our steps from the period of depression, when in panic and weakness a compromise was made with the brute force of ignorance and superstition. If this unholy alliance is set aside we have the Brahmanism of the first three Yugas unfolding itself in all its power and purity, as it flourished in the best period of our history.

This is the work of the reform movement. Last year I spoke of 'Revival and Reform' and I tried to show how *Reform* was not *Revival*. The line of thought developed above shows that the work of *Reform* is really the work of *Liberation*,—*liberation* from the restraints imposed upon an essentially superior religion, law and polity, institutions and customs by our surrender to the pressure of mere brute force for selfish advancement. Our nature has not to be changed. If that were necessary, escape would be hopeless indeed. Our inclinations and aspirations have to be shifted from one quarter to its opposite, from the more immediate past of our degradation to the most remote past of our glory. We need no foreign masters for this purpose. It is enough if they keep the peace and enforce toleration to all who work for righteousness. Super-imposed laws will not do service to us unless as in some extreme cases the Surgeon has to be sent for to stop hemorrhage and allow the Physician time to heal the patient. This work of liberation must be the work of our own hands, each one working of himself for his own release. It is in this spirit that the work has been carried on during the last thirty years and more.

For the last twelve years the Conference has been trying to establish a bond of union between the several associations and individuals who are working in this direction in this and in other parts of the country, and to publish the results of that work for the information of all concerned. Measured from year to year, the progress seems small, and in many years the harvests are not plentiful. The year about to close has been, on the whole, a lean year owing to causes which need not be detailed here, the plague being the principal cause among others. The results of this year will be placed before the delegates in a summary form at the first preliminary meeting to-morrow morning. One general observation may be made on this occasion. The question is often asked who are the heroes and martyrs in this reform work, the prevailing impression being that unless heroes and martyrs are forthcoming, no cause can make progress. I would say in answer that to the extent that this impression is true, the cause had its heroes and martyrs in Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Pandit Vishnu Shastri, Mr. Karsandas

Muljee and Mr. Madhavadas Raghunathdas, and even now we have Rao Bahadur Kolhatkar, our President of last year, Dr. Bhandarkar, our President of one of the previous years, our honoured President this year, Pandit Vireshlingam Pantulu, Prof. Karve, and others who require no mention, who have in their own lives set an example which shows that the fire is not yet put out altogether. Dr. Jaising and Mr. Dwarkantha Ganguli, who died this year, may also be mentioned, one as the life and soul of the Shudhi Sabha, and the other as a practical reformer from among the Brahmo community. It is not given to all to be heroes and martyrs in such a cause. But it is given to every one to be an earnest and genuine worker. In that capacity the names of hundreds may be mentioned who are unknown beyond their own circles and whose work therefore is one of pure love and self-sacrifice. Lala Devraj and Lala Munshiram of Jullundhur, Lala Hansraj and Lala Ruchiram of Lahore, the late Gokuldas of Succur, Mr. Dayaram Gidumal of Sindh, Mr. Lal Shankar of Ahmedabad, Mr. Damodardas Goverdnandas, the late Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, who died during the year, Babu Shashipad Bannerjee, Babu Rash Behari Mukerjee who also died this year, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao, Mr. R. Venkataratnam, of your part of the country, Mr. Vishnu Pant Mahajani of Berar and Lala Baijnath of N. W. P. may be mentioned in this connection as persons about whose genuine devotion to the cause there can be only one opinion. In spiritual, if not in temporal matters, the remark is true that a man's wealth is measured not by what he has in the way of possessions outside himself, but by what he is or may become in the way of his own development, from year to year into higher and fuller life. Liberties bestowed on us by foreigners are concessions forced on us by the force of circumstances. These are not really ours; they are possessions only and not developments. But when multitudes of people in different parts of the country yearn for a change in their social surroundings, and each in his place seeks to work it out at great sacrifice of his present interests, it can hardly be but that those yearnings and struggles must bear fruit. One of our most popular saints has in his own inimitable way described

this fruit to be, the strength which comes from the resolve to be better; and judged by this test there can be no reason to doubt that this desire to be better, and this resolve to strive for it are both growing in all the many races that dwell in this land. Other influences co-operating help on the work and make it smoother and easier of accomplishment. But without such a desire and such a resolve these forces would be powerless to act. We have therefore no reason to be depressed by the calamities and by the prophecies of evil to come and of our unalterable doom pronounced by our own or other people. The harvest is ready to the hand of every one who is prepared to give his honest labour for the day, to earn his rest for the night, in life and after life.

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade, in bringing the proceedings of the Conference to a close, said:—LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I am glad that all these expressions of thanks have been given by the Secretary of the Conference Committee. I now beg to propose that the General Secretary and the Joint Secretaries be re-appointed for the next year and that the next year's Conference be held in some place in the North-West Provinces, most likely at Lucknow. The General Secretary has written to me that on account of his advanced age and delicate health he has been unable to be present at this Conference, but he has sent his blessings and words of advice which I believe will sink deep into the hearts of those present. He says, "The work that is being done is holy work. We do not seek to advance our temporal interest, we seek to promote our spiritual welfare." If we look at the programme that we have gone through, some of us may be inclined to ask what, after all, has been done. But suppose in place of the several resolutions that have been moved, seconded and supported during this day, we put in their negatives, suppose instead of saying on this day, the first day of the new year, "I shall take for myself a vow that, as far as lies in my power, I shall undertake the education of my female relations," we say "I shall not undertake the education of my female relations," shall we be the better or the worse for our resolution? Suppose instead of saying "I shall take a vow

not of temperance which is without much meaning for most of us, but of total abstinence," you put it the other way, and say "it shall be our pleasure and convenience not to observe these restraints which our forefathers had placed upon us"; will our resolution be to our advantage or loss, spiritually or morally? Suppose instead of saying, "I shall, as far as possible, protract and prolong the period of celibacy amongst men and women," we were to say, that "as far as possible, that period shall be shortened"; shall our country be the better for our efforts or the worse? Suppose we ask ourselves what plan of life we are to follow; shall we not be just and merciful to those who need justice and mercy at our hands? Shall we not be more considerate to those whom we have hitherto treated as if their very touch was pollution, and help them in rising higher, or shall we say to them, "Do not stand near and cast your shadow on us"; will the inner man in each one of us grow stronger, braver and more charitable and humane, by reason of our resolve in one way and not in the other? The issue is thus, a choice between life and death; we live or we die according as we make the choice. We all desire to live, and yet most of us, by our course of conduct show as if we welcomed death. Whether reformer or non-reformer, let each one in the seclusion of his home, when he retires into his own hearth, ask himself the following question:—Does he feel the desire that he should grow in purity, temperance, justice and mercy, and that these virtues be more and more incorporated into the practical life he leads from day to day? I believe every one of us, whatever be his particular views as to different points and methods we have discussed, realises the importance of the main issue. That issue is not this or that particular reform about which people have so much controversy, but the general spirit of purity, justice, equality, temperance, and mercy, which should be infused into our minds and which should illuminate our hearts. Is it to be the spirit of justice, charity, mercy, toleration and appreciation of all, or is it to be exclusiveness, haughtiness, pride, cruelty and misery of all kinds? The choice lies with us and we may choose whichever we prefer. It is not on this platform only but wherever we go, and whatever we do, these two paths are

constantly coming across our vision. One of them asks us to go one way, the other the other way. We have to make the choice, and as we make the choice, we succeed or fail in our lives. Of course, the failing in life may not seem to many, to be a very serious affair when they do not come to any positive trouble. But whether we are great in riches and possession, and whether we are great in the estimation of the world, the only thing that is really ours is how far during the short time that has been allowed to us all, we succeed here in making ourselves better fitted for the existence that is to come. If we can guage our advance from day to day and from year to year, by this standard, then I believe we shall find the true reward of our work. We are spending unnecessary breath in thinking that the strife lies between the one and the other party in these matters. There is really no strife and there are no parties outside us. If those, who do not agree with the methods that are pursued here, think they can attain the same objects by other methods, then they should adopt those other means. Somebody here said we are in a minority, but when we embrace the whole world in our vision, the minority is turned the other way. If we may not at present be in a position to assert the strength of the majority which is represented by the sentiment and the sense of the world, still you may depend upon it that wherever you go, this sense and these sentiments must carry the day in the end. It is on such considerations that we must rely for our ultimate success. Majority and minority I keep absolutely out of sight. I put the question to myself, "Do I feel any yearning, any regret, any compunction, that there is anything wanting, anything wrong, anything cruel in me, and do I try to abstain from doing anything that I ought to, and feel inclined to do things which I ought not to do?" If I feel this sort of compunction, this sort of struggle, if I feel noble impulses, if I feel at the same time that these noble impulses have been weakened by nature, the work before me of reform is clear. Remember, the work of this Conference and of gatherings like this is really this work—to make men feel that they have duties and responsibilities for which alone, life and health are given to them. That is the sort of philosophy which comes upon me at times,

and which I believe comes upon every one of us when we look seriously at these things. If any of us feel in our hearts that we have to make amends for the past, I believe that man is the better for his attendance here, even though he may disapprove of any particular items of our programme.

We have every reason to thank the Conference Committee for the great trouble they have taken in providing for all those small matters which to strangers from outside represent no end of small inconvenience. We have every reason to be thankful to the Secretaries of the Committee, to the Volunteers, to the Reception Committee of the Congress, to the lady visitors, and above all, to the President of the Conference and his lieutenant, the Hon'ble Mr. Subba Rao, who have done their work to-day with such efficiency and success. On behalf of the larger India which is not represented here, we have every reason to thank our Madras friends for the hospitable and enthusiastic way in which they have conducted the work of this day. (*Loud cheers.*)

The Thirteenth Social Conference—Lucknow—1900.

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade delivered his inaugural address on "India a Thousand Years Ago." He said:—

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—This time last year, I had occasion, at the inauguration of the Conference held at Madras, to speak on the subject of "Southern India a Hundred Years Ago." To-day I find myself far away in the North, surrounded on all sides by the traditions of a civilisation older than the oldest known to history, the land of the Aryan race settled in India, tracing its descent from the self-born Swayambhu Manu, where the Solar dynasty flourished for thousands of years, the land of the Ikshwâkus, of Dilip and Raghu, of Dasharatha and the incarnate hero Rama, with his illustrious brothers and the still more honoured wife Sita, the land where Vashistha and Vishvamitra lived and flourished, the home of all that is beautiful and true, and lovely and godlike in Aryan history. This favoured land of yours gave birth also in later times to Sákhya Muni Buddha who has been well des-

cribed as the perfection of humanity in its highest and noblest development, and whose "wheel of law" still regulates the thoughts and feelings of half the human race in its efforts to attain beatitude. The South and the North thus contrasted together suggest recollections that are so overpowering, that I am tempted on this occasion when we meet to inaugurate the work of the Conference at Lucknow, to dwell for a few moments on this subject, and I bespeak your thoughtful attention to the lessons it suggests. Far in the South, which is now the stronghold of Brahminical ideas uninfluenced by outside contact, the Aryan civilisation no doubt made its way, but it continued to be an exotic civilisation confined to a small minority of Aryan settlers, so few in numbers that they were overwhelmed by the influences of the earlier Dravidian dominion. It never made its home in those remote regions, and the common people continued their adhesion to their old worship and to their old faiths under new names. What the effects of this subordination were, was depicted in my address at Madras in the words of a foreign missionary who lived and worked a hundred years ago, and who had exceptional opportunities of studying these effects. I propose this time to draw your attention to the turn which the Aryan civilisation has taken under the influences represented by the conquest of this part of the country by the Mahomedans, nearly a thousand years back. The one factor which separates Northern India from its Southern neighbours, is the predominant influence of this conquest by the Mahomedans which has left its mark permanently upon the country, by the actual conversion to the Mahomedan faith of one-fifth of the population, and by the imperceptible but permanent moulding of the rest of the people in the ways of thought and belief, the like of which is hard to find on the Malabar or Coromandel Coasts. I propose to draw my materials from the Mahomedan philosophers and travellers who visited India, both before and after the Mahomedan conquest had changed the face of the country. Owing to the absence of the historic instinct among our people, we have necessarily to depend upon the testimony of foreign historians. That testimony is however unexceptionable, because it was for the most part given before

the Mahomedan domination had effected the separation which distinguishes the Old India of the past from the Modern India in which we are now living. This domination also separates the line which marks off Southern India, of which I spoke last year, from the North, in one of the most representative centres of which we are met here to-day. At the outset, we must have a correct understanding of what Northern India was before Mahamad of Gazni made his numerous expeditions for the plunder of its far-famed cities and temples, at the commencement of the tenth century. Fortunately for us, we have a witness to this period of our history in the writings of Alberuni, whose work on India was written shortly after the time that Mahamad crossed the Indus as a conqueror of infidels. That work has been translated by Dr. Sachau, a professor in the Berlin University, and in its English form, is now accessible to us all. Alberuni was a native of Khorasan, his birth-place being near Khiva. Mahamad of Gazni conquered Khorasan, and Alberuni had thus to shift to Gazni which was then the seat of a flourishing empire, the rulers of which were great patrons of Mahomedan learning. Alberuni was in special favour with Masaud the son of Mahamad, and he was thus enabled to travel throughout India, where he spent many years, having mastered the Sanskrit language. He was a philosopher by profession and temper, and had a special liking for Indian philosophy, which he studied with the same care and attention that he bestowed on Plato and Aristotle. His work on India consists of 80 chapters, relating to Religion, Philosophy, Caste, Idolatry, Civil Polity, Literature, Science, Mathematics, Medicine, Geography, Astronomy, Cosmogony, Alchemy, and Astrology. He took great pains to give a full description of all that was known to the Hindus under these several heads, and being naturally not a bigoted Mahomedan, his book shows that he wrote his whole work with a single desire to promote the cause of true learning. While Alberuni shows a great regard for the Hindu Philosophy, Astronomy, and Medicine, he was not slow in finding out the weak points of the Indian character. In his chapters on caste and idolatry, in the condemnation he pronounces on the want of practical aptitudes of our people, and in their

devotion to superstitious observances, Alberuni did not spare his censures. He contrasted the democratic equality of the Mahomedan people with the innumerable divisions of the Indian races. He notices the helpless position of the women of India, and the filthy customs and the habits of the people in those days. He gives praise to the few educated Brahmins whom he separates from the superstitious multitudes, whose fallen condition he deplores. Even among the Brahmins, he notices the verbosity of their writings and the words-splitting which passed for wisdom. He notices the greediness and tyranny of the Hindu princes who would not agree to join their efforts together for any common purpose, and the timidity and the submissiveness of the people who, in his expressive language, were 'scattered like atoms of dust in all directions' before the invading Moslems. The prevailing feeling among the Mahomedans of the time was that the Hindus were infidels and entitled to no mercy or consideration, and the only choice to be allowed to them was that of death or conversion. Alberuni did not share in these views, but these were the views of his master Mahamad of Gazni and of the hordes who were led by him on these expeditions. Another traveller, Ibn Batuta, a native of Tanjiers in North Africa, visited this country about a hundred years after Kutubudin established the Afghan kingdom at Delhi. Like him he was taken into favour by the then Delhi Emperor, Mahomad Taghlak, under whom he acted for some time as Judge of Delhi. Ibn Batuta travelled more extensively than Alberuni. He travelled from the extreme west of Africa to the extreme east of China, and went round the coast from Malabar to Coromandel. He was however not a philosopher nor a scholar. His Journal of Travels is interesting, but he did not observe the manners and customs of the people with the same mastery of details that Alberuni's work shows on every page. The only points which struck Ibn Batuta in the course of his travels through India were the rite of Sati of which he was a witness, and the practice of drowning men in the Ganges, both of which struck him as inhuman to a degree he could not account for. He also notices the self-mortification of the jogees and their juggleries, in describing which last, he mentions the fact

that in the presence of the Emperor he saw a jogee raise his body up in the air, and keep it there for some time. Another traveller Abdur Razzak visited India about 1450 A.D. His travels lay chiefly in the southern peninsula, Calicut, Vizianagar and Mangalore. The narratives of two other travellers, one a Russian and the other a Venitian, who both visited India in the fifteenth century, are published by the Hakluyt Society which afford most interesting reading. The general impression left on the minds of these travellers was a respect for the Brahmins for their philosophy and attainments in astrology, but for the common people, the vast multitudes of men and women, their sense was one of disgust and disappointment. Abdur Razzak expressed this feeling in his own words in a reply to the invitation of the King of Vizianagar. He said to the king, "If I have once escaped from the desert of thy love, and reached my country, I shall not set out on another voyage even in the company of a king." In Southern India, these travellers found that both men and women, besides being black, were almost nude, and divided into innumerable castes and sects, which worshipped their own idols. This abuse of idolatry and caste struck every traveller as the peculiar characteristic of the country, and gave them offence. The practice of self-immolation or Sati, and of human sacrifices to idols by being crushed over by the temple car are also mentioned. Finally, we have the testimony of the Emperor Babar who in his memoirs thus describes this country:—"Hindusthan is a country which has few things to recommend. The people are not handsome. They have no idea of the charms of friendly society or of freely mixing together in familiar intercourse. They have no genius, no comprehension of mind, no politeness of manners, no kindness or fellow-feeling, no ingenuity or mechanical invention in planning and executing their handicraft work, no skill or knowledge in design or architecture. They have no good horses, no good flesh, no good grapes or musk-melons, no good fruits, no cold water or ice, no good food or bread in their bazaars, no baths, no colleges, no candles, not even a candle-stick. They have no aqueducts or canals, no gardens, and no palaces; in their buildings they study neither elegance nor climate, nor

appearance nor regularity. Their peasants and lower classes all go about naked tying on only a *langoti*. The women too have only a *lang*." The only good points which Babar could find in favour of Hindusthan were that it is a large country, and has abundance of gold and silver, and there is also an abundance of workmen of every profession and trade for any work and employment.

Such was the picture presented to the Mahomedans when they entered India through the passes in successive hordes for three or four centuries. A great portion of the disgust and disappointment felt by these Mahomedan invaders may be set down to ignorance and the pride of race. At the same time, it is always of advantage to know exactly how India appeared in its strong and weak points to intelligent foreigners, such as those we have mentioned above. The question for consideration to us at the present moment is, whether in consequence of the predominance of the Mahomedans for five centuries which intervened from the invasions of Mahamad to the ascendancy of Akbar, the people of India were benefitted by the contact thus forcibly brought together between the two races. There are those among us who think that this predominance has led to the decay and corruption of the Indian character, and that the whole story of the Mahomedan ascendancy should for all practical purposes, be regarded as a period of humiliation and sorrow. Such a view however appears to be unsupported by any correct appreciation of the forces which work for the elevation or depression of nations. It can not be easily assumed that in God's Providence, such vast multitudes as those who inhabit India were placed centuries together under influences and restraints of alien domination, unless such influences and restraints were calculated to do lasting service in the building up of the strength and character of the people in directions in which the Indian races were most deficient. Of one thing we are certain, that after lasting over five hundred years, the Mahomedan Empire gave way, and made room for the re-establishment of the old native races in Punjab, and throughout Central Hindusthan and Southern India, on foundations of a much more solid character than those which yielded so easily before

the assaults of the early Mahomedan conquerors. The domination therefore had not the effect of so depressing the people that they were unable to raise their heads again in greater solidarity. If the Indian races had not benefitted by the contact and example of men with stronger muscles and greater powers, they would have never been able to reassert themselves in the way in which history bears testimony they did.

Quite independently of this evidence of the broad change that took place in the early part of the eighteenth century when the Mogul empire went to pieces, and its place was taken up not by foreign settlers, but by revived native powers, we have more convincing grounds to show that in a hundred ways the India of the 18th century, so far as the native races were concerned, was a stronger and better constituted India than met the eyes of the foreign travellers from Asia and Europe who visited it between the period of the first five centuries from 1000 to 1500. In Akbar's time this process of regenerate India first assumed a decided character which could not be well mistaken. No student of Akbar's reign will fail to notice that for the first time the conception was then realized of a united India in which Hindus and Mahomedans, such of them as had become permanently established in the country, were to take part in the building of an edifice rooted in the hearts of both by common interests and common ambitions. In place of the scorn and contempt with which the Mahomedan invaders had regarded the religion of the Hindus, their forms of worship, their manners and customs, and the Hindus looked down upon them as barbarous Mlenchas, whose touch was pollution, a better appreciation of the good points in the character of both came to be recognized as the basis of the union. Akbar was the first to see and realize the true nobility of soul and the devotion and fidelity of the Hindu character, and satisfied himself that no union was possible as long as the old bigotry and fanaticism was allowed to guide the councils of the Empire. He soon gathered about him the best men of his time, men like Faizi, Abul Fazel and their Father Mubarak, the historians Mirza Abdul Rahim, Nizamuddin Ahmed, Badauni and others. These were set to work upon the trans-

lation of the Hindu epics and Shastras and books of science and philosophy. The pride of the Rajput races was conciliated by taking in marriage the princesses of Jaipur and Jodhpur, and by conferring equal or superior commands on those princes. These latter had been hitherto treated as enemies. They were now welcomed as the props of the Empire, and Maharaja Bhagvandas, his great nephew Mansingh for some time Governor of Bengal and Kabul, Raja Todarmal and the Brahmin companion of the Emperor Raja Birbal, these were welcomed to court, and trusted in the full consciousness that their interests were the same as those of the Musalman noblemen. The Emperor himself guided by such counsel of his Hindu and Mahomedan nobles, became the real founder of the union between the two races, and this policy for a hundred years guided and swayed the councils of the empire. A fusion of the two races was sought to be made firmer still by the establishment of a religion of the Din-i-ilahi in which the best points both of the Mahomedan, Hindu, and other faiths were sought to be incorporated. Invidious taxation and privileges were done away with, and toleration for all faiths became the universal law of the Empire. To conciliate his subjects, Akbar abjured the use of flesh except on four special occasions in the year, and he joined in the religious rites observed by his Hindu Queens. In regard to the particular customs of the people relating to points where natural humanity was shocked in a way to make union impossible, Akbar strove by wise encouragement and stern control where necessary, to help the growth of better ideas. Sati was virtually abolished by being placed under restraints which nobody could find fault with. Re-marriage was encouraged, and marriage before puberty was prohibited. In these and a hundred other ways, the fusion of the races and of their many faiths was sought to be accomplished with a success which was justified by the results for a hundred years. This process of removing all causes of friction and establishing accord went on without interruption during the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahajahan. Shahajahan's eldest son Dara Sheko was himself an author of no mean repute. He translated the Upanishads, and wrote a work in which he sought to reconcile

the Brahmin religion with the Mahomedan faith. He died in 1659. This period of a hundred years may be regarded as the halcyon period of Indian history when the Hindu and Mahomedan races acted in full accord. If in place of Aurangzeb, Dara Sheko had succeeded to power as the eldest son of Shahajahan, the influences set on foot by the genius of Akbar would have gathered strength, and possibly averted the collapse of the Mogul power for another century. This was however not to be so, and with Aurangzeb's ascent to the throne, a change of system commenced which gathered force during the long time that this Emperor reigned. Even Aurangzeb had however to follow the traditions of his three predecessors. He could not dispense with Jaising or Jaswantsing who were his principal military commanders. In the reign of his son, whole provinces under him were governed by Rajput, Kayastha and other Governors. The revival of fanatic bigotry was kept in check by the presence of these great Rajput chiefs, one of whom on the reimposition of the zezia addressed to the Emperor a protest couched in unmistakable terms that the God of Islam was also the God of the Hindus, and the subjects of both races merited equal treatment. Aurangzeb unfortunately did not listen to this advice, and the result was that the empire built by Akbar went to pieces even when Aurangazeb was alive. No one was more aware of his failure than Aurangazeb himself, who in his last moments admitted that his whole life was a mistake. The Marathas in the South, the Sikhs in the North, and the Rajput states helped in the dismemberment of the empire in the reigns of his immediate successors with the result that nearly the whole of India was restored to its native Hindu sovereigns except Bengal, Oudh, and the Deccan Hyderabad. It will be seen from this that so far from suffering from decay and corruption, the native races gathered strength by reason of the Mahomedan rule when it was directed by the wise counsel of those Mahomedan and Hindu statesmen who sought the weal of the country by a policy of toleration and equality. Since the time of Ashoka, the element of strength born of union was wanting in the old Hindu dynasties who succumbed so easily to the Mahomedan invaders.

Besides this source of strength, there can be no doubt that in a hundred other ways the Mahomedan domination helped to refine the tastes and manners of the Hindus. The art of Government was better understood by the Mahomedans than by the old Hindu sovereigns. The art of war also was singularly defective till the Mahomedans came. They brought in the use of gunpowder and artillery. In the words of Babar, they "taught ingenuity and mechanical invention in a number of handicraft arts," the very nomenclature of which being made up of non-Hindu words, shows their foreign origin. They introduced candles, paper, glass, and house-hold furniture and saddlery. They improved the knowledge of the people in music, instrumental and vocal, medicine and astronomy, and their example was followed by the Hindus in the perversions of both these sciences, astrology, and alchemy. Geography and history were first made possible departments of knowledge and literature by their example. They made roads, aqueducts, canals, caravansaries, and the post office, and introduced the best specimens of architecture, and improved our gardening, and made us acquainted with a taste of new fruits and flowers. The revenue system as inaugurated by Todur Mal in Akbar's time is the basis of the revenue system up to the present day. They carried on the entire commerce by sea with distant regions, and made India feel that it was a portion of the inhabited world with relations with all, and not cut off from all social intercourse. In all these respects, the civilisation of the united Hindu and Moslem powers represented by the Moguls at Delhi, was a distinct advance beyond what was possible before the tenth century of the Christian era.

More lasting benefits have however accrued by this contact in the higher tone it has given to the religion and thoughts of the people. In this respect, both the Mahomedans and Hindus benefitted by contact with one another. As regards the Mahomedans, their own historians admit that the Sufi heresy gathered strength from contact with the Hindu teachers, and made many Mahomedans believe in transmigration and in the final union of the soul with the supreme spirit. The Mohorrum festival and saint worship are the best evidence of the way in which the

Mahomedans were influenced by Hindu ideas. We are more directly concerned with the way in which this contact has affected the Hindus. The prevailing tone of pantheism had established a toleration for polytheism among our most revered ancient teachers who rested content with separating the few from the many, and established no bridge between them. This separation of the old religion has prevented its higher precepts from becoming the common possession of whole races. Under the purely Hindu system, the intellect may admit, but the heart declines to allow a common platform to all people in the sight of God. The Vaishnava movement however has succeeded in establishing the bridge noted above, and there can be no doubt, that in the hands of the followers of Ramananda, especially the Kabirpanthis, Malikdasis, Dadupanthis, the followers of Mirabai, of Lord Gauranga on the Bengal side, and Baba Nanak in Punjab in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the followers of Tukaram, Ekanath and Namdev in the Deccan, Babalalis, Prannathis, Sadhs, the Satnamis, the Shiva-Narayans and the followers of Mahant Rama Charan of the last two centuries—this elevation and the purification of the Hindu mind was accomplished to an extent which very few at the present moment realise in all its significance. The Brahmo and the Arya Samaj movements of this century are the continuations of this ethical and spiritual growth. Caste, idolatry, polytheism and gross conceptions of purity and pollution were the precise points in which the Mahomedans and the Hindus were most opposed to one another, and all the sects named above had this general characteristic that they were opposed to these defects in the character of our people. Nanak's watchward was that he was neither Hindu nor Mahomedan, but that he was a worshipper of the Nirakar or the formless. His first companion was a Mahomedan, and his teacher is said to have been also a Mahomedan. Lord Guaranga had also Mahomedan disciples. Mahomedan saints like Shaik Mahomed, Shaik Farid and Mahomed Kazi were respected both by Hindus and Mahomedans. The abuses of polytheism were checked by the devotion to one object of worship which in the case of many of these Vaishnava Sects was supreme God, the Paramatma,

and the abuses of caste were controlled by conceding to all, Hindus and Mahomedans alike, the right to worship and love the one God who was the God of all.

In the case of the Sikhs, the puritanic spirit even developed under persecution, into a coarse imitation of the Mahomedan fanaticism directed against the Mahomedans themselves; but in the case of the other sectaries, both old and new, the tolerant and the suffering spirit of Vaishnavism has prevailed, breathing peace and good-will towards all.

Such are the chief features of the influences resulting from the contact of Mahomedans and Hindus in Northern India. They brought about a fusion of thoughts and ideas which benefitted both communities, making the Mahomedans less bigoted, and the Hindus more puritanic and more single-minded in their devotion. There was nothing like this to be found in Southern India as described by Dubois where the Hindu sectarian spirit intensified caste pride and idolatrous observances. The fusion would have been more complete but for the revival of fanaticism for which Aurangzeb must be held chiefly responsible. Owing to this circumstance, the work of fusion was left incomplete; and in the course of years, both the communities have developed weaknesses of a character which still need the disciplining process to be continued for a longer time under other masters. Both Hindus and Mahomedans lack many of those virtues represented by the love of order and regulated authority. Both are wanting in the love of Municipal freedom, in the exercise of virtues necessary for Civic life, and in aptitudes for mechanical skill, in the love of science and research, in the love and daring and adventurous discovery, the resolution to master difficulties, and in chivalrous respect for womankind. Neither the old Hindu nor the old Mahomedan civilisation was in a condition to train these virtues in a way to bring up the races of India on a level with those of Western Europe, and so the work of education had to be renewed, and it has been now going on for the past century and more under the *pax brittanica* with results—which all of us are witnesses to in ourselves.

If the lessons of the past have any value, one thing is quite clear, *viz.*, that in this vast country no progress is possible

unless both Hindus and Mahomedans join hands together, and are determined to follow the lead of the men who flourished in Akbar's time and were his chief advisers and councillors, and sedulously avoid the mistakes which were committed by his great-grandson Aurangzeb. Joint action from a sense of common interest, and a common desire to bring about the fusion of the thoughts and feelings of men so as to tolerate small differences and bring about concord—these were the chief aims kept in view by Akbar and formed the principle of the new divine faith formulated in the Din-i-ilahi. Every effort on the part of either Hindus or Mahomedans to regard their interests as separated and distinct, and every attempt made by the two communities to create separate schools and interests among themselves, and not to heal up the wounds inflicted by mutual hatred of caste and creed, must be deprecated on all hands. It is to be feared that this lesson has not been sufficiently kept in mind by the leaders of both communities in their struggle for existence and in the acquisition of power and predominance during recent years. There is at times a great danger of the work of Akbar being undone by losing sight of this great lesson which the history of his reign and that of his two successors is so well calculated to teach. The Conference which brings us together is especially intended for the propagation of this 'din' or 'Dharma,' and it is in connection with that message chiefly that I have ventured to speak to you to-day on this important subject. The ills that we are suffering from are most of them, self-inflicted evils, the cure of which is to a large extent in our own hands. Looking at the series of measures which Akbar adopted in his time to cure these evils, one feels how correct was his vision when he and his advisers put their hand on those very defects in our national character which need to be remedied first before we venture on higher enterprises. Pursuit of high ideas, mutual sympathy and co-operation, perfect tolerance, a correct understanding of the diseases from which the body politic is suffering, and an earnest desire to apply suitable remedies—this is the work cut out for the present generation. The awakening has commenced, as is witnessed by the fact that we are met in this

place from such distances for joint consultation and action. All that is needed is that we must put our hands to the plough, and face the strife and the struggle. The success already achieved warrants the expectation that if we persevere on right lines, the goal we have in view may be attained. That goal is not any particular advantage to be gained in power and wealth. It is represented by the efforts to attain it, the expansion and the evolution of the heart and the mind, which will make us stronger and braver, purer and truer men. This is at least the lesson I draw from our more recent history of the past thousand years, and if those centuries have rolled away to no purpose over our heads, our cause is no doubt hopeless beyond cure. That is however not the faith in me; and I feel sure it is not the faith that moves you in this great struggle against our own weak selves, than which nothing is more fatal to our individual and collective growth. Both Hindus and Mahomedans have their work cut out in this struggle. In the backwardness of female education, in the disposition to over-leap the bounds of their own religion, in matters of temperance, in their internal dissensions between castes and creeds, in the indulgence of impure speech, thought, and action on occasions when they are disposed to enjoy themselves, in the abuses of many customs in regard to unequal and polygamous marriages, in the desire to be extravagant in their expenditure on such occasions, in the neglect of regulated charity, in the decay of public spirit in insisting on the proper management of endowments,—in these and other matters both communities are equal sinners, and there is thus much ground for improvement on common lines. Of course, the Hindus being by far the majority of the population, have other difficulties of their own to combat with; and they are trying in their gatherings of separate castes and communities to remedy them each in their own way. But without co-operation and conjoint action of all communities, success is not possible, and it is on that account that the general Conference is held in different places each year to rouse local interest, and help people in their separate efforts by a knowledge of what their friends similarly situated are doing in other parts. This is the reason of our

meeting here, and I trust that this message I have attempted to deliver to you on this occasion will satisfy you that we cannot conceive a nobler work than the one for which we have met here to-day.

The Bombay Social Conference—Satara—1900.

As President of the First Bombay Provincial Social Conference held at Satara in May 1900, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade delivered the following inaugural address:—

GENTLEMEN,—The idea of holding periodical gatherings in each Presidency for the discussion of provincial matters of public interests is a legitimate offshoot of the great national gatherings which have now become an institution of the land. This year these gatherings have been held in all the three Presidencies, and it is obvious that this success indicates a healthy growth of public sentiment. In the Madras Presidency, the political gatherings in that Province have always been accompanied by the friends of social reform utilising the occasion, on the analogy of the great national gatherings of the Congress and the Conference to meet together, for the discussion of social subjects, and though hitherto in the political Conferences held in this Presidency, it has not been found possible to follow this example, it is a matter of great satisfaction to find that our Satara friends have realised the necessity of supplementing the work of the political Conference by inviting the friends of social reform to come together and take stock of our gains and losses in the social sphere of our activities. Owing to the circumstances under which this work had to be undertaken at Satara, we have had to content ourselves with a very brief programme, but it is to be hoped that the seed sown to-day will bear a rich fruit hereafter.

ADVANTAGE OF SUCH GATHERINGS.

I know there are those among us who see no advantage in holding local or national gatherings of this sort for the consideration of social topics. There are others who think that though such gatherings may have their uses, they should

not be joined together in place and time with the political meeting, as they only serve to detract the attention of the workers, and lead to no practical results. It may be of use to attempt a brief reply to both these objections.

As regards the first difficulty, it seems to me to arise from a confusion of ideas, which is very prejudicial to the right appreciation of our duties, both in the political and social sphere. The underlying assumption is that in politics, our duties consist chiefly in stating our wants and grievances to strangers who have been placed by Providence in command over us, and who are ill-informed about our real condition. Politics in this sense means simply formulating claims for gifts or favours which require no other action on our part; while in the social sphere, our duties lie more exclusively with the regulation of our own actions, in which outside help is not needed for guidance or control. As I understand it, this distinction between the two spheres of our activities is based on a radical mistake. The integrity of any human being cannot be broken up into separate spheres of activities of the sort contemplated by those who raise this objection. For the sake of convenience, you may say that the rose has its beauty and its fragrance, but you can no more separate the fragrance from the beauty, and any attempt to do it can only end in the destruction of both. What is true of the individual, is true of the collections of individuals, whom we may call by any name, tribe, class, or community. These communities are organisations, and you can no more separate the activities, except provisionally, and for the time. Every little village in our land, however poor it may be, has its temple and its "chowdi," its resting place, and watering place, and every town or city must have its township or civic life made up of interests which are not wholly political, not exclusively social, or religious, or commercial. The shops and the bazaars, the temples and the theatres, the schools and the hospitals, the courts and the barracks, the young and the old, the men and the women, the poor and the rich—it is this variety and concourse which constitute the interest of village, town and city life. Some may rule, others obey; some may advise, others follows; but the dis-

tinction is only provincial, and not in the nature of things. You cannot even build a house of your own where you do not keep a place for strangers, or the way-farer. You have to provide for the God's place of worship, a place where the thirsty, hungry and the sick have to be cared, and there is no man so poor and so selfish that he does not share in all these varied interests and recognise their claims. Each concern has to be attended to in its own time, and in its own way, but it is the whole collection which makes it a human interest. What is true in our private concern is equally true of our public life. Politics is not merely petitioning and memoralising for gifts and favours. Gifts and favours are of no value unless we have deserved the concessions by our own elevation and our own struggles. "You shall live by the sweat of your brow" is not the curse pronounced on man, but the very conditions, his existence and growth. Whether in the political, or social or religious, or commerical, or manufacturing or æsthetical spheres, in literature, in science, in art, in war, in peace, it is the individual and collective man who has to develope his powers by his own exertions in conquering the difficulties in his way. If he is down for the time, he has to get up with the whole of his strength physical, moral and intellectual, and you may as well suppose that he can develope one of those elements of strength and neglect the others, or try to separate the light from the heat of the sun or the beauty and fragrance from the rose. You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economical system when your social arrangements are imperfect. If your religious ideals are low and grovelling, you cannot succeed in social, economical or political spheres. This inter-dependance is not an accident, but is the law of our nature. Like the members of our body, you cannot have strength in the hands and the feet if your internal organs are in disorder; what applies to the human body holds good of the collective humanity, we call the society, or state. It is a mistaken view which divorces considerations, political from social and econo-

mical, and no man can be said to realise his duty in one aspect who neglects his duties in the other directions.

THE FAMINE CRISIS.

As an example, the present crisis of the famine may well be considered. If our social arrangements were as perfect as they might be made, half the terrors of famine would vanish, and the political problem would be much simplified. There is no question which is purely political any more than social, or economical, or even religious and they make a fatal mistake who suppose that these are separate departments in our composite nature. The same forethought, the same resolution, the same historical spirit, the same comparative scrutiny and the same strenuous endeavours are needed, in all the spheres of our activity and, therefore, it will not do for us to say that in politics, our duties are clear, but not so in other spheres. The whole man has to be developed and perfected for his own advantage and the glory of God, and it is only a conception like this which can strengthen our efforts, and crown them with real success. It is on this account that when we take stock of our wants, our mind must be open on all sides; the eyes must see and the ears hear, the hands move, and the feet support. This can only be done by our devoting attention to all claims. Owing to our difficulties of every day life of toil and sorrow, we cannot always find time for all things. When we therefore meet for one purpose, of taking thought of our political condition, that is just the time when we have the spirit of unselfish devotion stirred up in us to approach our internal man in its most tender moments, and there is an obvious convenience in seeking to utilise the advantages of time, place, company, and the enthusiasm which springs from association with equals, and you will thus see why the Congress and Conference gatherings have been joined together. If I had the choice, we should long since have added other spheres of work so as to make the national gathering really national in name and aims. The claims of some kind of work might be more absorbing than those of others, but each must have its time and place and proportional attention devoted to it, and I am glad to

see that these considerations have weighed with our friends in inviting us to this gathering at Satara on the present occasion. But it may be said that our social fabric is not the work of human hands like the political institutions under which we live, and that in regard to these social customs, the law has been laid down from time immemorial, and we have only to follow it, and it is not for us to attempt changes to suit our exigencies. This is another of those misconceptions for which there seems to be no excuse except a false pride, which makes us cherish dangerous delusions. As a matter of fact, the social arrangements at present are admittedly not those for which we can plead the sanction of the great law-givers whose names we revere in lip worship, but whose behests we disobey at every step. Most of the customs which we now profess to follow run counter to the practices observed in the old times when the institutes were written. The dependent status of women, the customary limits of the age of marriage, the prohibition of marriage to widows in the higher castes, the exclusive confinement of marriage to one's own division of the sub-castes into which the country has been split up, the ignorance and seclusion of women, the appropriation of particular castes to particular professions, the prohibition to foreign travel, the inequalities made by the license enjoyed by men and the abstentions enforced on women, the jealous isolation in matters of social intercourse as regards food, and even touch, indiscriminate charity to certain castes, for all these, and many more alienations from the old standards, you cannot hold the old law-giver responsible. They are the work of human hands, concessions made to weakness, abuses substituted for the old healthier regulations. They were advisedly made by men whose names are not known to our ancient history. They are interpolations made to bolster up the changes introduced about the times when the country had already gone from bad to worse. They were innovations for which no sanction can be pleaded. It may be, they were made with the best intentions. Admittedly they have failed to carry out these good intentions, if any, then entertained; and in seeking to upset them, and restore the more healthy ideals, they were superseded. The reformers of the

present day are certainly not open to the charge that they are handling roughly with time-honoured institutions. It is rather for the reformers to take their stand as defenders of these ancient ordinances, and denounce those who have set God's law at defiance to suit their own purposes.

THE INEVITABILITY OF REFORM.

But even if this were otherwise, and even if it could be shown by a long special pleading that the changes made are, to some extent, proper deductions from the old texts, it is quite plain that no lapse of time can bar the way of reform where such is needed by the exigencies of our present difficulties. Above all mere ordinances and institutes, stands the law eternal, of justice and equality, of pity and compassion, the suggestions of the conscience within and of nature without us. We can no more resist the stream of these influences as working for righteousness than we can roll back the tide. All real prudence would dictate that we should take full measure of these influences and decide how far we must accommodate ourselves to the inevitable. All classes of society, reformers and anti-reformers alike, unconsciously admit the force of these considerations. The only difference between the two consists in the fact that while the latter yield unconsciously and under pressure, the former seek to use conscious effort to accomplish the same purpose; and between the two, the victory must be for those who do not wish to drift, but wish to be guided by the admonitions of their inward monitor, and the lessons of past history. People will visit England whether their elders like it or not; and the force of circumstances will prevail. The education of women will similarly be encouraged as each year rolls on. The limits of age for marriage will be raised. Intermarriage restrictions will be dissolved. Caste exclusiveness must relax, and greatest freedom predominate in all transactions between man and man. As prudent men, the question for us will be, shall we float with this current or resist it? As these influences are providential, our duty is clear, and this duty becomes more pleasant when we find that in so acting, we are not only obeying

God's law, but, also returning to the ways of our forefathers, overstepping the obstacles put in by our fathers in the way.

There is one objection still which hampers the way of reform. Granted that reform is desirable, it is still claimed that only the ecclesiastical heads of the different communities and the caste elders alone have legitimate authority to act in such matters, and that it is not for the miscellaneous crowd of people like ourselves to claim this privilege. To a certain extent the caste elders and even the Acharyas are moving in the right direction. In the great caste Conferences, held in all parts of India, the Kayastha, Vaishya, and other organisations that might be named without number, there are visible signs of the dead bones heaving with the life of a new spirit. Even the Acharyas in the South, when moved by native rulers, and in some cases when not so moved, have spontaneously put forth efforts to promote what is right and proper. There is, therefore, no occasion to quarrel with these agencies. They, however, have their vested interests at stake, and it will be more than human if they look at these things in the same light as those who feel the pinch are disposed to regard them. Their co-operation should be welcomed, but the question does not close here. The duty is cast upon us to see that the commonwealth to which we belong, is not endangered by any vested prejudice. We can never forego the right of every human being to act in concert with others of his own way of thinking, and make the effort to better our condition with the light that is given to us, and with the help that religion and history afford us. Of course, our powers are limited, but the work of education consists in increasing the strength of those powers by propagating both by precept and example, what we feel to be right and proper. We may fail, or even miscarry, but the effort will do us incalculable good, and the very failure will serve as a warning. This is the law of all progress, and we can claim no exemption from it.

Lastly, it has been said that we are so split up into sects and divisions, castes and sub-castes, that no common concert is possible for the best of us, and that if we mean real work we must begin with castes and sub-castes, and not indulge in the dream of joint action at least for many centuries to come.

This argument is double-edged, and has been used by those who do not feel with us, to damp our energies in the political as also the social sphere of action. When we examine it more carefully, we find that it is more fallacious than true. Castes and sub-castes have, no doubt, their particular preferences and dislikes, their own evils and iniquities to account for, and as we see everywhere from the reports of the Social Conference, their best men are manfully struggling to cure these evils. It should, however, not be forgotten that this caste difficulty is the main blot on our social system. The great fight has to be maintained here, and not on the outskirts. Quite independently of this circumstance, the differences between the castes merge into minor matters by the side of their great similarities. In the social sphere of our activities, all castes and even creeds are alike defective in not recognising the claims of justice and equality, and according the respect and freedom due to the female sex and cherishing the abuses claimed by men as men; and by the members of one class of men to the disparagement of other castes. This furnishes the common platform on which all can act, and it is only by the education received on this common platform that we can command the elevation and freedom which alone will help us to be taller, wiser, and better individually and collectively.

I have thus attempted to forestall by anticipation many of the objections which might be, and are, urged by those who are not disposed to be friendly to the work of social emancipation. With the work that has been done in the different provinces by more than a hundred associations that are in full sympathy with the cause of social progress, it is not my purpose here to deal. The reports of the Conference for the last 13 years furnish a living record to which all can refer with advantage. It is a record which does not allow large achievements in accomplished facts, but to those who can read between the lines the spirit that animates this work, there is a land of promise opening its vistas before them in a way to encourage the most despondent. To go no further back than the past five months, I find from the notes of events kept with me that even in this year of distress some seven re-marriages took place, 3 in the

Punjab, 1 in Bombay, 1 in the North-West Provinces, 1 in Madras, and 1 in the Central Provinces. In Bengal, where the widow marriage movement commenced in Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's time, as many as 46 marriages were celebrated, 30 were celebrated since and 41 more were celebrated among the Brahmos, making a total of 117. Including the Central Provinces and the Berars, the Bombay Presidency has during the last 30 years, since the movement began, shown more than a hundred such marriages distributed equally between the Gujeratis and the Deccanis. The Punjab and the N.-W. Provinces show a total of more than thirty, and Madras presents nearly the same figure. The total of marriages would, therefore, be about 300 throughout India in the several provinces in the higher castes. Miss Manning's "Indian Magazine," in one of its recent numbers, gave the total number of Indian residents, mostly students studying in England, to be 315, of whom nearly half, 141 were Hindus, 61 Parsees, 79 Mahomedans, and 22 Native Christians. These figures show how the wind is blowing, and how the stream of events is steadily on the right side. The native papers in the Punjab show that during the last five months some 7 admissions of converts from Christian and Mahomedan faiths were made by the Arya Samajas, and there is an active controversy going on for the wholesale admission of some hitherto despised castes. The success of the Bethune College in Calcutta, the female schools and colleges at Jullunder, Poona, Ahmedabad, and Mysore has been full of promise in this as in previous years. Among the legislative events, next after the passing of the Mysore marriage laws, the most noteworthy event during the past five months has been the enactment of the Hindu Gains of Learning Bill by the Madras Council. The local Sabhas such as the Deshamukha and Kunbi Sabhas in Berar, the Rajput in N.-W. P., the Sowrashtra in the Madras Presidency, and Khatris in the Punjab have held their meetings and passed resolutions in favour of marriage reform under good auspices. Many instances of late marriages have taken place throughout the country, also of intermarriages in different parts of India, the most noticeable on our side being Mr. Javeri's daughter's marriage the

other day, and the intermarriage between the families of Malad Bhagvat last year. This is, no doubt, a brief record, but as observed before it is full of promise.

The present crisis through which our part of the country is passing under the stress of plague and famine has intensified the necessity of taking adequate steps for alleviating the distress suffered by all classes. There are particular directions in which all social reform organisations might work with advantage in such a crisis. Many thousands of poor orphans have been rendered homeless, and although they are supported through famine by private and Government charity, the time is coming when, with the rains on us, this charity will cease to flow, and the unclaimed orphans will have to be provided for when the distress is over. The Missionary societies have pledged themselves not to effect conversions while the distress is at its height, and they are prepared to give over the children to those who will claim them. The rest who will be unclaimed will have to be cared for by these societies, and people everywhere must consider the question of how to deal with these poor children. Freedom to return to their community is a charity which we all can display if we have the largeness of heart to understand the issues involved. The economical question here becomes one of religion and social amelioration. Equally affecting is the claim which has been urged on behalf of hundreds of child-widows who have been rendered miserable in consequence of the famine and the plague visitation. In normal times their condition was bad enough; but their misery has been aggravated by the misfortune of these hard times, and those who have any heart to feel for their wrongs, might well be asked to take thought as to how their misery might be alleviated. The question of postponing marriages to the latest limit of marriageable age, the age of puberty while these visitations are upon us, will not fail to attract the attention, both of the reformers and of those who profess to be indifferent to this subject. These and other matters will, I doubt not, engage the attention of friends who are assembled to-day. We shall not be able to take any immediate action, but if these matters are allowed their claims on our thoughtful consideration when we go to our places, the work of

reform cannot fail to lead to some useful results. For this, and work like this, concerted actions is needed, and concerted action is only possible, under existing circumstances, when we think and work together. A committee consisting of all those who sympathise with the progress of reform, is, therefore, sorely needed in this part of the country to co-operate with similar workers elsewhere and it is with this view that our work to-day will chiefly consist in forming such a committee, and laying down the lines on which it is to work. This is a duty in which, I trust, you will all join, and join with a heart that will suffer no disappointment, but will strain every nerve each within his own sphere to bring about the practical well-being of our people in which the well-being of every individual is involved. This is the message that I was commissioned by friends elsewhere to communicate to you here, and I now commend this subject to your anxious care, in the full conviction that the work is one in which we can all co-operate with advantage, and in which no progress is possible without such co-operation.

THIRD PART.

The Presidential Addresses at the Social Conferences.

The Third Social Conference—Mr. Justice K. T. Telang's Address.

In opening the proceedings of this meeting, I should like to make a few preliminary remarks. At first everybody must admit it to be a matter of sincere congratulation, that at this third meeting of the Social Conference, we have present among us a few ladies of our own community. The question has been doubtless raised in England, whether women ought or ought not to enter into the heat and dust of political warfare. But whatever the true answer to that question may be, there can be no possible doubt, that in the sort of work we are to discuss to-day, the presence and co-operation of women is most desirable. And in order to carry out any of the reforms, which may be discussed at such gatherings, the help and co-operation of our ladies is absolutely essential. Therefore I think we may say that we have this year been enabled to take one step forward. It may not be a long step. I don't think it is a long step taken by itself. But we may fairly look forward with hope to further progress and advancement, along the road on which the first short step has now been taken. Those who have hitherto criticised the National Congress and its proceedings, have, as we are aware, often twitted us with not paying sufficient atten-

tion to social reform and devoting our energies exclusively to the political improvement of the country. I think I may fairly say that such gatherings as these, which have met every year since the time of the Madras Congress, afford an adequate and conclusive answer to those criticisms. But while I think this answer conclusive, I must also say that I think there is something in the criticisms from which we ought to derive some useful lesson. I have myself noticed, in the writings and speeches of many of our countrymen, a strong tendency towards devoting, I cannot say exclusive, but I must say an overwhelming share of attention to political matters. Social matters thus get entirely eclipsed, so to say, by political in some quarters, and that is the basis of truth in the criticisms to which I have alluded. Well, I think that to this extent, we ought in time to take warning from these criticisms, and as far as may be, set our house in order. There is one other remark I wish to make. And that relates to a tendency which has also been noticeable in recent discussions to assume that social and political activities can be entirely dissociated, and to ignore the fact that the underlying principles in both groups of activities are in substance the same. We often hear propositions confidently asserted by many persons in the course of discussions on social topics, which when applied to politics, must lead to results that those persons entirely repudiate. No one will charge me with being an out and out imitator of European ways. I have not the slightest desire to adopt bodily the whole of the European social economy for myself or for our community. But at the same time I do hold most strongly to this view, that it is our bounden duty to study English social institutions, in the same way that we study English political institutions, so that we may consider how far they will suit the conditions among which we live and move. The adoption of English methods of work and of English ideals to be worked for, to which on the political side, we are so partial, is not a thing to be entirely scouted on the social side, in the way which may be observed in some quarters. The need for improvement in political matters is not greater than in social; and the principles of improvement in both are in substance identical, whatever dif-

ferences there may be in their applications. And therefore it is my conviction that it is our duty to learn, correctly appreciate, and apply the real principles adopted by those who stand in the forefront of civilisation as much in our social as in our political concerns. (*Loud cheers.*)

The Fourth Social Conference—Babu Norendro Nath Sen's and Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar's Addresses.

Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, the President-elect, not having come in time, Babu Norendra Nath Sen was elected President. He said :—I feel extremely flattered by the honour that you have done me by unanimously voting me to the chair. I have always held the opinion that political, social, moral and religious reforms should go hand in hand (cheers), and that political reform means nothing unless it is accompanied by social, moral and religious reforms (cheers). It is said that Congressmen are opposed to social reform. This is not so (cheers). I myself am an active member of the Congress, and no one is in greater sympathy with the cause of social reform than myself (cheers). Most of those who are present at the Conference to-day are Congress-men. I am entirely in sympathy with the objects of the Conference, and with most of the resolutions that will be brought forward for consideration and adoption to-day. The people of India owe a great deal to the British Government for their political advancement, their intellectual advancement, and, to a certain extent, even for their moral advancement (cheers). They must be grateful to the Government also for the anxiety that is now being shown by it for their social advancement (hear, hear). I was very glad to hear that our beloved Queen-Empress (cheers) is most anxious to see that we should take interest ourselves in the cause of social reform, and that we should take every step to advance ourselves socially (hear, hear). Nobody can deny that we are in several respects socially degraded or at least that we are not advanced socially to that extent as we ought to have been. Such being the case, I think every true Indian patriot should take some interest in the

cause of social reform (cheers). I am glad to see that the gathering on the present occasion is a large and influential one. Probably it would have been much larger, if the people had been assured betimes that this Conference would not ask for legislative interference in the matter of Hindu marriage customs (cheers). You will find from the copy of the Resolutions placed in your hands that we do not ask legislative interference in any matter except as regards the amendment of Act XXI of 1860, so as to include voluntary Social Reform Associations within its scope. The subject was referred to a Committee appointed at the last year's Conference. This is a simple matter, and the law that is sought for is a permissive and not a compulsory one. Nobody can have the least objection to such a law. I do not know why the Hindus should be at all opposed to social reform, because all the reforms that they want are sanctioned by their own religion (cheers). The Vedas, which are the earliest records of the Aryas and which have the highest authority among them, teach us that we should not marry early (cheers). As regards females, the Vedas say that they should not marry before the age of sixteen years, and as regards males, that they should not marry before the age of twenty-five at least. With a larger dissemination of the knowledge of the Vedas among us, the very reforms that are now being advocated in many quarters will be most gladly accepted by the Hindus. It is only because the study of the Vedas has been neglected that many social evils have crept into Hindu society. I say that if our own religion sanctions the reforms asked for, I do not see why you should hesitate in the least to accept them (hear, hear).

(At this stage of the proceedings Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar having arrived, Babu Norendra Nath Sen vacated the chair in his favour.) Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, who was received with cheers, said:—Ladies and Gentlemen,—I must thank you for the cheers with which you have greeted me, but I am sorry you shall soon find that your cheers have been quite mistaken. You have dragged from his sick-bed a man, who was for the last

few days on the verge of his grave. Such a man can scarcely be deemed fit to preside on this solemn occasion. However, as it is your pleasure that I should occupy the chair, I will just make a few remarks. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a meeting of the Social Conference, and I see that this is the Fourth Social Conference that has been held in this country. That we all feel that we are the victims of some social custom or other, is such a patent fact that it needs no words from me to prove. My reluctance in taking the chair to-day proceeds from other grounds also than the state of my health. You have not only dragged me from the verge of the grave as I have said, but you have taken me out of my groove. Social matters have not been in the line of my studies. All my life I have been a humble practitioner of medicine, and the only other matter I have been engaged in, has been to introduce a study of the physical sciences among my countrymen, and therefore I am not in any sense at all competent or fit to discharge the duties of the office of President of the Social Conference. But I have all my life been a victim of the tyranny of social custom in my own country (Laughter). Ladies and gentlemen, I see before me a very lengthy programme, but all the Resolutions that are before us hinge upon one chief social custom, which has acted most injuriously upon the development of the Hindu race and that is child-marriage (cheers). This pernicious custom has done what nothing else could so effectually do, namely, it has deteriorated the once noble and glorious Hindu race,—a race that gave enlightenment to the whole world (cheers). How has it done this? Since it has taken a deep root in our country, whatever might have been its original philosophy, this custom has ruined us, and has been working detrimentally at the very fountain of life. The Hindu race consists at the present day, if you would pardon me for the very strong expression that I am bound to utter, by virtue of this very blessed custom, of abortions and premature births. Are we all born at the proper time? If the laws of physiology are true, and I believe they are eternal verities, then every man and woman born of parents of such tender years as ten or twelve years for a girl and fifteen or sixteen for a boy must be pronounced to be either an abortion

or a premature birth (hear, hear). And are you surprised that the people of a nation so constituted should have fallen easy victims under every blessed tyrant, that ever chose to trample upon them? Whatever of intellectual and moral qualities we still possess is by inheritance from the past; whatever we have lost we have to thank this custom, against which we are bound to raise our most emphatic protest (cheers). Do all you can, let the Government concede everything that you want, and let the Government even leave our shores to-day, do you think, gentlemen, that we shall be able to do without that Government from to-morrow? And why not? You will find that it is because you have not got the capacity for work. Look at the root of the evil (cheers). By virtue of the law of inheritance, you have got the intelligence of the old Hindus (cheers); by virtue of this accursed custom you have lost all that capacity for work which our Hindu ancestors possessed in olden days (cheers). How can you expect, if you go on at this rate, to take a lead in any work whatever? You cannot possibly do it. You must improve the fountain of life itself (hear, hear), before you can expect to cope with races which have held their own for so many centuries, which, under better social customs consist of units infinitely more mature than ourselves. This is the simple law of nature, and you cannot go against it. Do all you can, talk as much as you like, abuse your Government as much as you like, there you are—a race, degenerated, paralysed in all your energies. What then can you do? Therefore I say that it is a happy sign that along with the Congress, you have this Conference on the most vital point that concerns us (cheers). The Congress may successfully do all its work; you may have the elective principle and the representative principle and everything else you want and every concession that you claim, but how can you maintain the position in which you may be thus placed? You cannot possibly do it. It is a notorious fact that our children are very smart so long as they are at school, but where do they go after that? They go to the wall. Shall I say it? They go to the very dust, they mingle themselves with the dust, they are nowhere. They very creditably and successfully pass their examinations, and

after that where are they? You do not find them anywhere. With the exception of a very few, you do not find your Graduates engaged in any substantial work, and as regards the few that are so engaged, what reward do they receive? What but discouragement and abuse? (Hear, hear.) I have been spending my whole life, and I am almost tempted to say that I have been waiting my whole life, in order that I might succeed in introducing the study of the physical sciences amongst my countrymen; and what is the reward that I have got? The reward is that after fourteen years of cogitation and agitation and working amidst insuperable difficulties, I have not yet got a Laboratory built for my Science Association. The root of all this is that we do not know what we are. If we knew that, there will soon be an end of all this ruin. Without, therefore, any further remarks, ladies and gentlemen, I would ask you to proceed at once with the business of the meeting (loud cheers).

The Fifth Social Conference—Mr. G. S. Khaparde's Address.

I am proud to become the President of the Indian National Social Conference, although I must say I do not deserve the honour you have done me. To the word *Social* in the title of the Conference, I attach the greatest importance, for to my mind it is clear that this Social Conference is fraught with good and great results. When I said I was not worthy of the honour that has been given to me, the phrase was not used by me as a conventional method of acknowledging thanks, but because it was literally true. For you all know who the President of the first Conference was. It was no less a personage than Sir T. Madhava Rao, one of the greatest statesmen India has produced. The second President was Rai Bahadur Sabhapathi Mudaliar, a man well-known for his sincerity and substantial sympathy in the cause of reform, and well-known also as a writer on the subject of reforms, and a shrewd man of business. The third President, that is to say when the Congress assembled at Bombay, was the Honourable Mr. Justice

Telang, whose praises it would be superfluous to sing. At Calcutta Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, who is known all over India as a ripe scholar, great reformer and profound thinker, presided and lent his strong support to the Conference. When we have had such a roll of illustrious Presidents of this Conference, it is not conventional modesty on my part, I assure you, to say that I do not feel myself a worthy successor to my predecessors in this office. Gentlemen, we have had heavy losses during the past year. Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao, the great "Native Thinker" is no more. His pen no more writes, and his brain has ceased to work. The other loss I have to mention is that of Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, than whom you could not find a truer reformer in India. He worked heart and soul for the cause of reform, and was a deep thinker and sincere man. And lately, we lost a friend, Row Saheb Mahipatram Rupram, whose efforts in the cause we have at heart need no mention. Gentlemen, you all know that this year began with the agitation about the Age of Consent Act, which stirred the country so greatly. You know, gentlemen, that my attitude towards the Bill was one of opposition. I would not have let the Bill pass, if I could. And why? My position was that such reforms should spring from the people, and should not be forced on them; for this appearance of force disinclined people to all reform, and this made matters worse. However I shall leave that question now, and would turn to compute the results of the agitation, as far as they have come under our observation during this year. You know there were some people who thought that the Bill had made a breach in native society, and that it could not by any means be bridged over. But these people never made a greater mistake. Now that the Bill is law, it is wrong to fight against it. To throw dirt at it now is, in my opinion, little short of,—from one point of view,—sedition. The other result of the Bill, I am going to note, is that for the first time our old people and our new people began to fight shoulder to shoulder,—which was in itself a distinct gain to all of us, both for those who won and for those who were defeated. These are, in my opinion, results of no small importance Now, in the heat of the controversy, there was in some quarters a great deal of misconception about

the reformers and the reform movement It was thought, and it is thought even now, by some that the reformers wanted to have all possible laws passed, and by that agency to carry out the programme of Social Reform. This is a sheer misunderstanding. Our first method is that of persuasion. We try to find out what the belief and the sentiments of the people are, what they would accept or do actually accept, whom they revere as authoritative writers on Dharma Shastra, and then after finding that out, we try to meet them on their own ground. If they accept the Shastras, we accept them too, but interpret them in the light of the knowledge we have acquired. I will honestly tell you that our interpretations are correct, and not distorted through our zeal to further the cause of reform. We accept the premises supplied by the old text writers, and then we stop there, and resort to logic and reason. This is the method of what is called *Yuktivad*. We do not resort to legislation when there are other ways open to us. Where the mischief has been caused by law, we try to get it removed by law, and I think you will all agree with me in saying that it is only fair, after what I have told you, not to describe this Conference as aiming at reform by legislation. You know very well that I am myself against legislation, except in very special cases. But that does not mean that I would not go in for the help of the Legislature in these matters, at any time, and under any circumstances. I am against legislation, first because I believe in the maxim that reform should begin from within, secondly because it creates opposition for opposition's sake, and thirdly because it destroys the self-acting machinery which we desire to create in our society. But where this is not possible, or has been found by trials to be impracticable, then and then alone, by all means I go in and go in with a zest for legislation. The objects of this Social Conference are not any other than what I have indicated. What we seek is to promote organisation and self-help. Our people have already done something in this direction. Take for instance the institution at Ajmere presided over by the Political Agent in Rajputana. They have regulated the age of marriage, and laid down lines of reform in other matters. The movement at Ajmere may be

said to have fairly succeeded, for the report of that Reform Association shows us that out of 1,481 marriages that were celebrated, there were only 307 marriages in which the self-imposed rules were broken. Take another instance, if you like, that of Mysore—which is even more advanced than the British Government in some matters, for they have there a Representative Council now. They in Mysore have taken up the question of reform in right earnest. They have asked their Pandits to find out authorities in favour of long sea-voyages, and I am sure the Pandits will lend their support to the progressive party in this matter. Really speaking, reform is not quite the word to describe the demands of the Conference. For in most cases it is return to old ways that we are advocating. Take for instance the question of marriage. You all know what the progressive party says on this subject. Now I put it to you, if you would not rather have marriages after the manner of Shakuntala than after the fashion prevailing more or less in this country, of an old man taking his little daughter on his knee and giving her to another. Or to take another instance, which do you prefer I ask you: Do you like the marriage of Sita with Rama? Or, to take another instance,—you have Nala and Damayanti? Would you like it better if Damayanti was given away by her father to one of the Gods that competed with Nala on the occasion? But I might go on for any length of time multiplying instances till you are weary of them. All I mean to say is that what we are advocating is not a frightful innovation, as some of our critics seem to take it. It is only, as I have said, a return to genuine old ways. And I sincerely exhort you, gentlemen, to go back to these old ways and old methods, for they are good men and true, who have shown these old paths to you. Gentlemen, I like the caste system, as I also like numerous other old things. I like my good old religion. I would not leave it under any circumstances. Nor would I wish a Mahomedan to give up the Koran, nor also do I ask the Brahmo Samajists to leave the faith which their great founder has established for them. So then, this is not a new religion, nor even is our programme a new departure. Gentlemen, progress is the law of the universe, and you cannot stop

it. You must either advance or fall back. By the blessings of God, and by the blessings of the benign British Government, we are under the influences of a progressive civilisation, so that whether a man will or no,—I am a fatalist in my own way, gentlemen, and so I say, whether a man will or no,—he must move. Now, which is better, walking of our own accord, or being pushed on from behind? That represents the whole problem of Social Reform in this country, and indicates the lines on which our Resolutions are drawn. (*Cheers.*)

The Sixth Social Conference—The Hon. Ram Kali Chaudhuri's Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Reform in the social condition of our fellow-countrymen is the sole and single aim of our Conference. The social evils we are subject to are infant marriage, extravagant expenses attendant on marriages and certain other ceremonies, prohibition of widow-marriage, polygamy, prohibition of intermarriage, disfigurement and other discomforts to which widows are subjected, money consideration for which girls are given in marriage, seclusion of women, and many others. These evils prevail more or less in all parts of our country.

In the growth of our society from the Vedic times, the evils have gradually come into existence in the same way as many good institutions that are found in our social system. The social system of our country in its outward appearance presents a diversity of detail, that has led not only interested writers but also disinterested thinkers to deprive us of the character of nationality. But, if deeply considered, the generalisation cannot but be deemed a specious one. In all essential characteristics the Hindu society has features that go to make it into a single nation. Take *Religion*, the first authority. The Hindus of all parts of the country look up to the Vedas and the religious works based on their interpretations. Then take *Social matters*. It is well-known that religion enters into all the important parts of their social and individual life. And if there is the unity of source in purely religious matters, it necessarily follows that the social department of our community has the same

unity in its important aspects. Whether it be in Northern India or Southern India, the same "*Samskars*"—ceremonial rites performed for social and religious purposes—mark the life of every individual member of the Hindu society at its different periods from birth to death. All of us assembled here, coming from various parts of the country, have undergone the same ceremonies of "*Namakarn*," "*Annaprashan*," "*Mundan*," and others. The "Smriti" works, that prescribe rules for all the important functions of our social and religious life, and lay down what our duties and obligations are throughout life, and even show us the way how our properties are to be dealt with in life and after death, govern all parts of the country with but slight differences. Again the tongues in which we speak in our respective homes, are but closely allied dialects, derived from the same mother language—Sanskrit. And all these important elements of unity in the religious and social life of Hindus are daily receiving strength from the common lines of feelings, thoughts and ideas, that are being created in the mind of educated Indians owing to the flow of Western knowledge and thought. If there are such solid reasons in support of the view thus taken, there can be no doubt that the Hindus of all parts of India form *one nation*; and we are well justified in calling our Social Conference a *national* one. Indeed the social evils referred to, as has been observed above, are more or less common to all parts of India, in other words—*National*.

It is obvious that various causes combine to make human life miserable. The social evils referred to having been created by circumstances—that in the various stages of the growth of our society came into existence—have only contributed to the increase of the miseries of life. It is therefore our manifest duty to make efforts to remove them, as far as lies in our power, from our society. This is not only the plain dictate of nature, but in doing so we find that our attempt will take us back to the simple ways in social life, followed by our remote ancestors in the days of our old Vedic period. It is also necessary for us to move with the progress that is going on in other parts of the world. The other evening we heard our learned

friend, the Honourable Rao Bahadur Ranade, calling our attention to the forebodings in the conclusion arrived at by evolutionists in respect of old nations like ourselves to the effect that the force that was in us has been spent and our society has no longer a life worth having. If indeed we are to live the apathetic and stationary life our society has hitherto lived, the melancholy doom the modern men of light predict for us is soon to overtake us; but if the signs of the times are to be properly read, if the activities our countrymen are here and there beginning to put forth have any meaning, for which we have to thank the enlightened policy pursued by the British Government in India, we have no reason for despair. The life in us, as was observed by our friend referred to in his lecture, is not dead, but has only remained torpid owing to various causes. It is now our part to show by our exertions that the life, that has been left in us, is still capable of being revived.

Now what are we to do in introducing reforms in our social conditions? In our zeal for reform let us not lose patience. If we conceive what reforms we should have, let us not take action at once. We thereby alienate our less advanced countrymen from the ways we aspire to adopt, and our failure is the consequence. The first step in our procedure, as far as I am able to judge, is to create a widely spread public opinion in favour of reform. This, I know, requires an immense deal of talk, for which we are subjected to so much taunting criticism. But ignoring such taunts, we should strenuously go on to convert gradually the minds of our countrymen. I know a great deal of time—perhaps the period of a generation or two——is required for such conversion. Our people—even of the lowest class—are, however, very intelligent; and the English education—thanks to the Government we are placed under—is doing us great help in this respect, and we are sure to succeed in this first step of our procedure.

We know what difficulty we experience from the resistance shown by our females, when we attempt to introduce a social reform. It is therefore extremely necessary to take measures to educate them and convert their minds.

In the work of this conversion of mind, we can avail ourselves of the agency of preachers. These should, however, take care that they abstain from proceeding in a manner that might offend the minds of their hearers. In this connection I may observe that it is the duty of every educated person often to mix with the old class of people, and place convincing arguments before them in regard to reforms. This mode is, I can say from my personal experience, a very effective one in gradually creating a public opinion in favour of social reform.

We should avoid State help in introducing reforms in social matters. This mode is calculated to bring about evils of other kinds and tends to retard progress. We are only to avail ourselves of the social force that will be created along with the formation of public opinion. We should also avoid creating factions. The method of conciliation, in my opinion, should always be adhered to. This method takes much time to carry out reforms, but it is a sure and certain one.

The most effective agency for organising reforms is the formation of reform associations all over the country. And this I am glad to see is being gradually done. I may observe here that the rules of such associations should not be enforced with such rigour as to deter people from joining them. We know what a strong force there is in our society that keeps the old state of things a-going, and we are also aware of our weaknesses. Under the present state of society we must make allowance for such weaknesses.

In conclusion, I may say that I advocate the usefulness of our annual Social Conference. We meet together once a year and compare notes as to what we have been able to do, and measure the little bits of progress we are making in various quarters. Also we in our several local quarters feel aspirations to show a better record to the general Conference. And after a deliberate consideration in annual meetings, we recommend to the several bodies in the country the way and means to the several reforms. The Honourable Rao Bahadur Ranade has said so much on this head on various occasions, that it is superfluous to dwell any more on this. It now only remains for me respectfully to request you to keep the work of

social reform a-going throughout the year, and not turn to it only when the Annual Conference meets.

The Seventh Social Conference—Dewan Narendra Nath's Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I must thank you for the honour that you have conferred upon me by selecting me as your President. I confess I find myself unworthy of presiding over the deliberations of such an august assembly as I find here to-day, and I wish your selection had fallen on an abler person.

Nothing conduces more to vigorous action and to a concentrated application of our energies than a clear understanding of the nature of the work we set before ourselves. It is not difficult to find an answer to the question which in the words of the Honourable Mr. Ranade 'is often asked by those who take credit to themselves for superior wisdom' as to the object of that part of the annual gathering which meets here to-day. The answer is covered by a couple of words 'Social Reform.' Every one has a fairly correct notion of what is included in these words, but it will not be amiss to attempt something like an analysis of the ideas which these words convey. It is impossible to give a logical definition of social reform, which may have different meanings in different countries and under different circumstances. In British India, under this head we include, reforms of such institutions as are not directly conversant with the amelioration of our spiritual and religious nature,—reforms which have for their direct sanction the strength of public opinion and which are enforced by social approbation and disapprobation, as distinct from those introduced and enforced by political authority.

Ever since the time that Governmental functions become other than purely military, the Government of each country and nation has uniformly directed its attention to the suppression of a certain class of evils. This class by a successive process of ages has come to be regarded as a separate one by itself. But with the exception of the prominence given to this class of evils, which has always been regarded as the fit subject of legislation,

there is no radical and essential difference between them and the evils which are suppressed by an opinion of the majority expressed in the form of social opprobrium. Even the rules of social etiquette, which are apparently so distinct from laws properly so called, deal with matters which cannot be separated by any hard and fast lines from matters dealt with by our laws. You can easily imagine how a course of conduct, which would be only an offence against the rules of etiquette, by slight changes which introduce no new element, comes to be regarded as an act against which the instrumentality of our courts can be brought into exercise. The question is only one of a fitness of things, of the proportion between means to be employed and ends to be achieved. The magnitude of the evil to be suppressed has to be weighted against the evils inseparable from employing legislation as a remedy. Whether it is possible to create a public opinion in our favour and to achieve by exortation and advice what would otherwise be attained by more stringent measures,—whether it is worth while to abandon our self-help and reduce ourselves by one further step as automatons in the hands of Government—are questions which we should put to ourselves before deciding to seek the help of legislation. There is however no touch-stone which we can employ as a test to distinguish the evils, to the suppression of which legislation can be directed, from other evils.

Circumstances have brought us into contact with a nation in whose social institutions, speaking generally, are reflected all the intellectual and moral traits which distinguish the civilisation of the West from the civilisation of the East. A stern regard for the realities of life as opposed to a vain pursuit after transcendental mysteries and a tendency to regard all human beings as entitled to claim and exercise equal rights and privileges as human beings as opposed to the encouragement of a domination of the stronger class over the weaker—are, amongst others, the main characteristics of the institutions which are placed before us for imitation. I do not enter into the recondite problem of history, whether the antagonism which I have described would exist, if our pristine institutions were by a magical process revived. But that such an antagon-

ism exists now admits of no doubt, whilst it is equally undoubted that we are an Eastern nation and that we are not a barbarous people. I will presently discuss whether the characteristics of the Western institutions, which I have above described, are worthy of our imitation.

But let me first invite your attention to the peculiar circumstances of our position. According to an eminent historian of the present day, the experiment which is being tried by the British nation in India is one unprecedented in history. He says this with reference to politics, but the remark applies with equal force to the changes in the whole moral fabric of our society, which are being worked at the present day. Never before within memorable history did one nation having a progressive civilisation come into contact with another nation having a defunct and stationary civilisation, in the relation of rulers and ruled, with prospects of the permanence of that relation backed up by a desire on both sides for its permanence. In infusing therefore a spirit of the West into our social institutions we have facilities and difficulties that are peculiarly our own, and these arise from the fact that we are a civilised and not a barbarous nation, though our civilisation is now defunct. The facilities are all intellectual, and the difficulties are all moral. We have had a language, the perfection of which is simply a marvel to those who study it; we have had a religion which to say the least is capable of assuming a most scientific and a monotheistic garb; and we have had a code of laws which is remarkable for the consistency with which its principles are worked out through its various branches. Much of all this is lost, but in all the vicissitudes, through which we have passed, we have retained our intellectual capacity. Therefore so far as the apprehension of an idea —even the most advanced—is concerned, we are not behind any nation; but when the question comes to carrying these ideas into practice our chief difficulty commences. All human beings are intellectually more flexible than morally, but the fact that we have certain institutions amongst us founded on a state of society, which was admittedly the foremost in civilisation at one time, marks a certain stage of intellectual advance-

ment, and gives us intellectually an advantage over others who have to learn the very first lessons of civilisation, and because these institutions are the heritage of a civilisation, all consistent with one another and based on principles, which by influence of ages have become a part and parcel of our nature, it is all the more difficult to change them. The changes that we are to undergo are not those incident to the growth of an organism, but those incident to a metamorphosis which takes place when one kind of organism changes into another kind of organism,—when one accustomed to live under a certain habitat into another living under a different habitat. We have a double process to undergo,—we have not only to put on a new garb but to take off the old one as well. People of most other countries, in which civilisation is being spread by European influence, have only to exchange savagery for civilisation, which in many respects is a much easier process.

There is another intellectual advantage, which we possess even over the nations foremost in the scale of civilisation and to which I have not referred. A new mode of conduct or living strikes only to the most original and advanced minds amongst them. But we are spared the pains and troubles of originality. The discovery is made by the thinkers of the West, and we have only to grasp and apprehend the idea for which, as I have shown, we have a distinct advantage over many other people. Modes of life in advance of the age are more commonly known amongst us than even amongst the foremost nations of Europe. Hence it is that in no other nation do we discover so many instances of individuals in whom a wide divergence of beliefs from acts is to be found. We are not behind any other nation in the virtue of moral courage, but owing to the peculiar circumstances of our position, we have intellectual advantages and moral difficulties, which others have not. To give you an instance, it does not require a very high order of mental calibre to grasp and apprehend the uselessness or even the perniciousness of the institution of caste with its manifold divisions and sub-divisions. But you can very well realise the moral difficulties that stand in our way of even slightly deviating from these rigid rules. A foreigner is astound-

ed, when an intelligent Hindu who is able to talk with sense and ability on all the topics of the day, declines to accept a cup of tea from him. He must think that the Hindu has some extraordinary mental or moral weakness. But neither of these accusations is true. The Hindu understands that abstinence from eating and drinking with foreigners is a practice which should be abandoned and he does display a certain amount of moral weakness in not acting up to his convictions, but no extraordinary weakness. Courage is to be measured by the amount of self-sacrifice which a person is prepared to undergo, and the foreigner has no idea of the fate which awaits his friend for breaking his caste rules. To the Hindu it means excommunication or social death,—nothing short of a kind of martyrdom How many in other nations are prepared to undergo such an extreme form of punishment? Very few, not more than those who amongst ourselves, can most aptly be styled martyrs for the cause of social reform. Excommunication or cessation of commensality and intermarriage is a punishment quite unknown in the West, and a European has no idea of the moral courage which a Hindu requires in order to break his caste rules. Those in favour of established customs can easily take to themselves the credit of having the courage of their convictions, but it is a courage which hardly deserves the name.

From these considerations follow two conclusions which are worthy of your attention: 1st, that we stand more in need of organised action than of mere thought and speculation, and if we have to exercise our thinking faculty, it is not so much in discovering new modes of social life as in considering how we are to introduce them, and 2nd, that we must proceed very gradually, seeing at every moment that "old order changeth giving place to new." We are not changing chaos for order, but an old regime for a new one, and we have to take care that we do not in the process introduce anarchy for a regime which, however ill-suited may be its principles to our present requirements, still possesses the advantages of an organised system. There is much force in the objection which the cavillers of all reform movements urge against the necessary evils of a transi-

tional stage, and we should spare no pains in seeing that these evils are reduced to a minimum.

From these preliminary considerations I now proceed to the main subject. The Honourable Mr. Ramkali Chaudhuri, the President of the Sixth Social Conference, gives an exhaustive list of the subjects that are included in our programme of social reform. These are "infant marriage, extravagant expenses attendant on marriages and certain other ceremonies, prohibition of widow-remarriage, polygamy and prohibition of inter-marriage, disfigurement and other discomforts to which widows are subjected, money considerations for which girls are given in marriage, and seclusion of women." On the evils of infant-marriage I wish to say nothing; this is a subject which I think may fairly be assumed to have passed the stage of controversy. Prohibition of inter-marriage is also a subject which I propose to leave untouched, as I think, I will have sufficiently tried your patience, with the discussion of other subjects with which I propose to deal. The remaining subjects then may be classified under two heads: removal of female disabilities under our social laws, and curtailment of expenses on marriage and other ceremonies, and I wish to say a few words about each.

First as to the removal of female disabilities. If you look at the history of human progress you will find that one chief trait by which its successive steps are characterised is the gradual assertion of the principle that all human beings as such have equal rights and privileges. This principle has been slowly making a triumph over the opposite one of 'might is right.' 'Love thy neighbour as thou lovest thyself.' 'Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by' said a great moral preacher and religious reformer 1900 years ago. Once give up the doctrine of equality of rights of all human beings and assert that physical force ought to determine the superiority of rights and you undermine the very foundation of morality. For what remains of the laws of property is that the stronger neighbour by mere dint of physical force is allowed to have every advantage over the weaker, and to usurp what belongs to him. The laws of contract will be

reduced to a mere mockery, if the stronger promisee were to break with impunity the promises made to the weaker promisor. Passing from individuals to groups of individuals or nations, we find that the same principle has gradually established itself. There was a time when the stronger nations used to invade and plunder their weaker neighbours. The inroads of Nadir Shah and his followers are still painfully fresh in our memories. At the present day we find that amongst the civilised nations of Europe, one of the cardinal principles of international morality is that no nation shall invade its weaker neighbour for purposes of self-aggrandisement. Conquests are permissible in self-defence and for the still worthier, though very often ostensible object of spreading civilisation. Leaving aside the code of morality that guides the conduct towards each other of such two groups as are fit to be called nations, we find that by the abolition of slave trade all civilised nations of the world have recognised that one chief duty of every human being is to regard every other human being as having some claims to equality in the exercise of some of the essential functions of human existence. To come nearer home, what induces us to demand from our rulers who are in every way stronger than ourselves a redress of certain grievances,—a redress which chiefly consists in establishing equality between the rulers and the ruled? And what, may I further ask, leads our rulers to make gradual concessions to our demands? Is it not a silent belief on both sides that a tyranny of the strong over the weak is a rule of the past? Liberalism in politics and conservatism in social reform, at least so far as the rights of women are concerned, is an anomaly and is explicable only upon the hypothesis that those who profess these inconsistent creeds entertain too high an opinion of everything belonging to themselves—too high an opinion of their institutions and too high (which of course includes if you so choose a sufficiently high) opinion of their rights and privileges. In claiming equality for our women we do nothing more than push by one more step the principle of equality, which you have seen has making successive inroads on the opposite one of domination by physical force, and to which all the civilised nations of the day have

yielded and yielded with immense benefit to the human race. None of you is prepared to admit that we should revive the slave trade, or that we should once more allow that it is proper for the stronger nations to invade and plunder the weaker, or that it will conduce to human welfare to drive away altogether the notion of equality from our laws of property and of contracts, and least of all will you admit the justice of the principle that by sword have our rulers conquered India, and by sword they should maintain it and treat us as slaves. But when a further accession to that same principle, the subversion of which will restore a state of things at which every one will shudder, is claimed, the demand is resisted.

There is however nothing strange and wonderful in this. In all departments of human knowledge and conduct the onward march of every progressive principle is resisted at every step in the same way. Look at the manner in which the domain of science has gradually increased. In the opinion of Socrates a search into physics and astronomy, says a historian, was not considered within the domain of science, but was looked upon as impious. A similar reproach is even at the present day made against an attempt to bring social phenomena within the domain of science. Another instance of an opposition against a progressive principle is afforded by the history of religion, in which all attempts to drive out the anthropomorphic tendency have been met with resistance at every step. The most wonderful part of the opposition is that no lesson is taken from the past experience of the human race; it is not recognised that in the past similar struggles were made which are now admitted to have been unwise.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, what more can be said in favour of a principle and in derogation of its opposite than that it forms the very foundation of our morality. But, say our adversaries, all human beings are not equal in power and capacity, and therefore it is preposterous to claim equality of rights for all of them. None can deny that human beings differ much from one another in powers and capacities. I am not going to enter into the controversy whether absolute equality of rights for all in every respect is possible or desirable. The

controversy is foreign to my purpose. But on the other hand, if human progress has not taken the direction just the opposite of that which it should have taken, no one will assert that inferiority of powers justifies an utter annihilation of rights. Not even the most conservative tyrant will have the courage to affirm that our women should be converted into marketable commodities, and that we should have power of life and death over them. What then is the golden mean between these two extremes, which, as we have seen, are both equally unacceptable? The only criterion, which I think we can employ in determining the rights and privileges of a certain class when considered in connection with their powers and capacities, is that rights should be commensurate with powers,—that the measure of right should be the measure of power and capacity. By this process we arrive at that principle, which forms the foundation of all our Political and Moral Philosophy, *viz.*, that every human being should be allowed the free exercise of his power, with the usual proviso that the exercise should be consistent with the harmonious development of all other powers and with a similar exercise of those powers on the part of others. Now, ladies and gentlemen, what rights do we claim for our sisters? The right of re-marriage for widows, the right of free movement, and the right of intellectual advancement. Can any one assert that women have not the powers and capacities for the exercise of these rights, or that their exercise arrests the harmonious development of other powers, or that it is not possible so to arrange that the exercise of these powers may be consistent with a similar exercise on the part of others? On the contrary the present state of our females degrades them from the position of human beings to that of mere machines,—dwarfs and stunts what is noblest and highest in human nature, for no intellectual advancement is possible with so many restrictions of movement as we impose on our women.

But, say our opponents, there are evils in removing the disabilities of females, and that a removal of them will interfere with the development of their moral nature. Before proceeding to consider these evils, let me point out to you one danger which we should guard against, while forming an

opinion on the merits and demerits of every kind of innovation. In the beginning of this address I mentioned incidentally of the inflexibility of our moral nature. Our moral sentiments are formed by the influence of opinions and ideas which we have imbibed from our childhood. We judge of every new movement presented to us in the light of sentiments which have been formed in a state of society inconsistent with the existence of circumstances which the movement advocated proposes to bring about. From our very infancy we have been accustomed when deciding between the respective claims of males and females to put all advantages on the side of males and all disadvantages on the side of females,—to put a high value on our advantages and to think lightly of the sacrifices to which we subject the fair sex. This process when discussing the question of the equality of the rights of women must be abandoned, for to adopt it would be to commit the fallacy so well known to all students of Logic by the technical name of *petitio principii*.

Bearing this precaution in mind and taking first the evils of widow-remarriage I defy any one to point out a single evil, and I will show him a corresponding evil to exist in the re-marriage of widowers. Why is the latter permitted? If the combined prayer of all of us assembled here to-day could convert human beings into angels and make them free from all desires and wants, to which they are subject, I would be as glad to lead the congregation as I feel honoured to-day to preside over your deliberations, and then we could by one stroke abolish the re-marriage of both widows and widowers. But alas this is impossible!

It is preposterous to say that certain moral virtues are secured by compulsory widowhood. The case is very often just the reverse. But assuming for the sake of argument that they are secured, is no account to be taken of the miseries and the privations to which widows are subjected? The misfortune of a Hindu woman becoming a widow does not only consist in the loss of a husband, very often her sole protector in this world, but in the train of miseries and privations which must follow in a complete renouncement of all the pleasures of this world and in short in a compulsory asceticism. For otherwise

her position becomes more degrading in other and more important respects. No moralist to whatever school he may belong will affirm that misery and suffering are concomitants of virtuous actions, and that a course is to be recommended as virtuous which brings more misery and suffering than happiness. To a utilitarian the idea of securing virtue by attempts, which entail an amount of misery outweighing the happiness resulting from the so-called virtue, would be as absurd and false as the idea which prompts the miser to pass his life in misery and to horde up money, knowing that wealth is desirable not for its own sake but for the enjoyment which it is the means of procuring.

Let us now consider for a few moments the objections which are urged against female emancipation, but before doing so let me explain what I mean by this phrase. An idea cognate to that of equality is the idea of liberty. While I refrained from expressing an opinion on the question of absolute equality, I have no hesitation in saying that absolute liberty of action can and will never be permitted. For the welfare of humanity some laws must exist, and every law implies a restriction of liberty. What is objected to by us is an inequality of law—laws imposing many restrictions on one class and few on the other.

I have never been to England and have never moved in English society. I am therefore unable to form an exact idea of the restrictions, which in place of our Purdah system exist in English society, regulating the association of males with females. But there is no doubt that some restrictions of the sort do exist. Every one of you is familiar with what you see marked on Railway carriages 'For Ladies only.' It is, as you know, an offence under the Railway Act for a male passenger to travel in a carriage reserved for females.

If I were given the privilege of framing a code of social rules regarding the association of males with females, I would make one of which the cardinal principle could be couched in some such words as the following:—Let no adult male or female enjoy the society or company of the opposite sex except in the presence of his or her relations. I do not see that there could be any reasonable objection to this principle. It gives no unfair advantage to one sex over another. It implies

equal liberty as well as restriction of liberty to both. It does not arrest the development of anything that is good and noble in human nature, nor do I see that it is open to the objection of impracticability. It is possible to enforce a strict observance of it by creating a strong public opinion and moral sentiment in favour of it. A few words more will make this clearer. In what does our Purdah system essentially consist? It consists in the seclusion of women from men by the former being confined within the four walls of Zenana. Hiding the face is not its principal feature. There are many respectable societies in which the rule of drawing a veil over the face is not observed, but which keep their females in the Zenana, and do not in any way regret the absence of that rule. People have an exaggerated notion of the potency of the Zenana system in securing the seclusion of women from men. To no other mode of confinement do the words of the poet:—

> 'Strong walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage'

apply with greater force than to our Zenana. There are no sentinels standing at the door of every Zenana any more than there are at the doors of those who do not observe the system. Nor is there any dynamite placed at the threshold of every female apartment of respectable Indians liable to explode whenever there is an attempt at an ingress or egress. A person who wantonly enters within the four walls of a Zenana without an intent to intimidate, insult, annoy or commit an offence is not liable to prosecution under our laws, and if he does enter the Zenana with any of these intentions, he is as much guilty of trespass as he would be if he were to enter the Mardāná under similar circumstances. The Zenana system therefore has no physical or legal sanction at the present day. In the absence of all these forces, what is it then that prevents a gentleman who is a stranger from going into the Zenana, or a lady from coming out of it? It is nothing more than a fear of public opinion or moral sentiment engendered by the force of early education and habit. In securing the separation of one sex from the other by creating a public opinion in favour of the principle enunciated above, we do not substitute an incorporeal thing

such as a moral sentiment for a corporeal and tangible obstacle such as the walls of the Zenana appear to be at first sight, but only one moral sentiment in place of another, whilst we remove the inequitous domination of one sex over the other.

There are other instances too in our experience, in which we see that by the spread of civilisation and enlightenment a moral sentiment serves the same purpose as a strong masonry wall. Not to go far, even in the town of Lahore, you will find that the houses of all the members of the old gentry of Sikh times are built within the city in such a style as to defy all attempts of intruders and trespassers. In place of these we find respectable gentlemen of the present day, most of whom fill as high a position in society as some of the old raises did in their times, building houses, outside of the city, entry into which could be made by a flimsy door that could be forced open by a strong kick from a stalwart Sikh. In Presidency towns and in Simla we find that even the shops of jewellers are protected only by doors having large glass panes. Nothing of the sort is possible in Afghanisthan or even in British territory in some of the frontier towns. All this is due to the strong development of a moral sentiment which respects the law of private property and public peace. Is it not then possible that by a similar development of another moral sentiment we may attain without giving any undue advantage to one class over another, that which we now attain by subjecting our women to a miserable kind of slavery ?

A stock objection of all opponents of innovations is that the new rule of conduct proposed is liable to be abused. To such of our conservative friends as take an optimistic view of the present state of our society, I have nothing to say beyond appealing to the past experience of mankind, which shows that every change has been liable to abuse and that if there had been no change, there could have been no progress. But to those who think that our present condition stands in need of reform, the simple answer is : guard against the abuse. In the present case the advocates of established customs give a very plausible form to their objection. They say every force follows the course of least resistance; female emancipation may

be carried to an extent to which it exists in English society and this is an evil. Well, as I have said at the outset, I have no personal knowledge of the state of English society,—there may be some evils amongst them. Some of the modes of their social amusement do appear to us to be objectionable. But it is not impossible to avoid them. Drinking prevails very commonly amongst Europeans and was imitated by a very large number of the earlier batch of our educated men. But within the last ten years much good has been done by Temperance Societies, and, I think, I can say without any fear of contradiction that within this period our schools and colleges have turned out men a large majority of whom are teetotallers. Once admit that the principle, which I have enunciated above as forming the basis of our future social code, is a sound one and you can avoid overdoing it as well as underdoing it.

No stage of the advancement of human civilisation comes within my mental view, in which we will have to change this principle. If it is not observed in English society (which I am inclined to think is not correct,—only I cannot speak with authority for want of personal knowledge), it is a mistake to believe that the extent of liberty which prevails amongst them, is an outcome of the advance of civilisation. Freedom of movement has been enjoyed by English women ever since the dawn of British civilisation, and, so far as I am aware, there have been no accessions to this liberty with the advance of civilisation. Some of their customs, which appear to us to be objectionable, are the product of peculiar circumstances, have existed amongst them for a long time, and by no means indicate a particular stage of civilisation, in the same way as our Zenana system was imported under peculiar circumstances and is not a mark of any particular state of intellectual and moral advancement.

What I have described above is the ultimate goal which we mean to reach in our onward march in social progress. What particular steps should be taken by each society is a question which has to be determined with the greatest wisdom, precaution and forethought, and with a special regard to the circumstances of that society; for in no other department of

social progress is a defiance of public opinion more injurious, and in no other department is liberty on a certain principle liable to be abused for liberty without any principle.

You will be amused to hear certain rules of etiquette in our society based on an extreme refinement of the ideas connected with our system of the seclusion of women from men,—a refinement which is sometimes inconsistent with the notions of purity, which ought to permeate all our conceptions about conjugal relationship. A husband does not speak with his wife in the presence of his elders. In conversation it is against decorum to speak of the *wife* of another person, the word 'house' is used instead of wife. In the Multan district when a gentleman enquires about the health of his friend's wife, he does not even use the word house, but *Didhi* or entrance to the Zenana. The enquirer dares not even in imagination enter the house, but falls short of it at the very threshold. In such societies the emancipation of females would indeed be a big jump,—a sudden change as impossible as it would be undesirable. I would suggest that in societies, in which no education is given to females, some education may be given, and in others, in which education is already given, an advanced course of education may be introduced. If you develop the intellectual power, there will naturally be a demand for the exercise of the power. Make your sisters capable of understanding the world, and they will, as a consequence, require to be allowed to move about and see the world. Not only this, but inculcate a taste for knowledge, and the desire for it which is the most insatiable of all other desires will grow, until it will be impossible to satisfy it without slackening the restraints that exist at present.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have detained you long on the subject of female disabilities—though perhaps not longer than the importance of the subject justified, and I will now say a few words on the curtailment of expenses on marriage and other ceremonies. A few months ago my friend Pundit Shiv Narain, Pleader of Jullundhar, wrote a nice little book on the subject of social reform amongst Kashmiri Pundits, a community to which he and I have the honour to belong. A greater part of the book is devoted to proposals for reducing ex-

penditure on various ceremonies. A friend of mine wrote on the back of it a couplet, which with slight alterations in the second line to suit the rhyme stood thus :—

'Karo aish o ushrat ko apne zara kam,
Ki manen nasayeh tum hanke bhiham,'

which means: reduce your luxuries, before you expect us to follow your advice. A few days later, I had occasion to talk with another friend of mine on the subject, and he said in prose what is expressed above in poetry. Our efforts are partly misunderstood. 'Never a borrower but a lender be' is the principle which we mean to inculcate for all kinds of business. We do not recommend extravagance in anything, A person who expends more than his income on the ordinary comforts of life, is as unwise as the person who incurs debts on marriage ceremonies, but our efforts are specially directed to reduction of expenses on the latter, because in respectable circles debts are more generally incurred on celebration of marriages and other ceremonies than on comfortable living, and there is a great disproportion in the minds of the people between the importance of living comfortably and of making a show on ceremonies. To pass years under misery and in a state below what your means can command in order that you may be able to spend five or six days in a life-time with pomp and show is a peculiar mode of employing your resources to the best advantage and of securing the greatest amount of happiness. Our contentions can be summed up in three sentences—never outlive your means, reduce your expenditure under one head and increase it under the other, and see if you are happier. In fixing scales of expenses for the marriages of our daughters, we must not however lose sight of the fact that under our present laws daughters inherit in very few cases, and that the dowries given on their marriages form the principal part of their personal property. Large dowries within the means of the persons giving them are not to be deprecated in societies in which early betrothal is followed by marriage at an age at which the bridegroom though past minority has not entered the world and has not begun to earn his own livelihood.

Rich men in all societies form always an influential class,

whose example is looked up to and followed by all the rest. It is therefore very necessary that if they sympathise with our efforts to reduce expenses in social ceremonies and if they realise that their poorer brethren suffer by the disproportion that exists in our ideas between the importance of living comfortably and of making a show on ceremonies, they should be a little more frugal than is strictly justifiable by their means. For often a morbid activity has to be checked by showing some unusual energy in the display of a healthy activity, which counteracts the morbid one.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have now to say a very few words on the functions of this Social Conference, and I have finished. This assembly, which consists of the representatives of different societies whose circumstances, needs and requirements are more or less different, meets only once a year. It partakes therefore of the character of a representative body. It affirms certain principles, the working of which is left to the various Committees. The proper work of the Conference is to enunciate certain principles and to see that the Committees try to work them out,—in short to guide the work of subordinate working bodies. In the words of our veteran reformer we meet here 'to take stock of one year's achievements.' If by meeting once a year and passing a number of resolutions we are able to awaken the representatives of different communities to a sense of their work, we achieve much. The subject of the organisation of the Conference on a provisional basis will come up before the meeting. The chief difficulty is that in each province, there are different communities, each at a different stage of advancement. Some communities,—perhaps all, except some advanced religious communities,—will be startled at the very name of widow re-marriage or female education, but there are two very important subjects in our programme, which can afford a common platform of work for different Associations and Sabhas, that exist in the country—I mean early marriage and reduction of expenses on social ceremonies. If different Associations affiliate themselves to the Conference, the more advanced spirit which characterises our programme can be infused into them. Let us however hope that the earnestness and zeal,

which characterises our action to-day will mark our efforts throughout the year before we meet again, and that whilst we display undaunted courage and unfailing perseverance in our onward march in social reform, we make our way with the greatest wisdom and forethought through our present stage of marked transition.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I sit down let me apologise to you for having detained you so long over this address, and let me thank you for the patience with which you have listened to all that I have said.

The Eighth Social Conference—Dewan Bahadur (now the Hon'ble Justice Sir) S. Subramania Iyer's Address.

I beg to thank you most sincerely for the honour you have done me in asking me to preside at this Conference. When I look back to the record of your past Conferences, I cannot help feeling that this duty had devolved on some one more capable of doing justice to the task and some one who can speak with much greater emphasis than I can upon questions which will presently come before you for consideration. Gentlemen, we are, I think, very lucky this year in having in our midst some of the leaders of the social reform movement. I refer first to our venerable friend Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao, whose devotion to the cause is so well known to you all. I also refer to that large-hearted man whose indefatigable and wise work in the cause of reform is also well known to you—I mean the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade. I also refer to that profound scholar whose deep learning, erudition, and unflinching devotion to the cause of reform is also well known to you—I mean Dr. Bhandarkar, Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University. With such learned and experienced men ready to guide you and instruct you in your deliberations this day, I feel great hesitation and diffidence in having to stand up and address you. But orthodox precedent requires that I as the Chairman should open these proceedings with a few prefatory remarks. In fol-

lowing the rule I propose to be brief, because there is so much work to get through and because so much of what I can say has been so well anticipated in the admirable address delivered by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade the other day in the Christian College Hall. It was an address which contained a luminous and masterly survey of the work done and the progress made during the seven years which have elapsed since the Social Conference was held in this city. Gentlemen, I believe all of you know the large gatherings that were held during the last few days, composed of persons who came from various parts of India. They have come here at considerable sacrifice and inconvenience from distant parts to attend these meetings. What do we find on close examination? We find that a considerable number of these gentlemen are more or less interested in all three movements, thus proving beyond the possibility of a doubt that the revival, which is taking place just amongst us, is not one-sided,—is not confined to politics, but that it extends to and embraces matters, social and spiritual. However much individuals may differ as to which of these particular movements is entitled to special attention and support at their hands,—however much individuals may disagree as to the actual steps to be taken to achieve the end which is in view,—I think I can safely say that it has come to be generally recognised that none of these movements can be neglected altogether, if the general progress of the country is to be placed on a true and sound basis. I am quite sure that this conviction is growing stronger and stronger amongst us every day, and that it is beginning to be felt that there is no real antagonism, and there ought to be no real antagonism amongst these various movements. I believe it is this growing consciousness that makes such of us as are specially interested in the Indian National Congress look upon the work of the social reformer with greater favour than was the case at first. I believe it is this general feeling that likewise disposes the social reformer to endeavour to evolve out of the indigenous literature of the country certain doctrines to meet the requirements of our age. This naturally leads me to offer a few observations on the methods employed by some of the most enthusiastic reformers.

I have noticed with great regret that hastiness, insufficient examination of causes and effects, exaggeration and intolerance characterise some of their writings and utterances. I believe such writings and utterances are retarding rather than advancing the progress of our cause. Allow me to say what I really think of the policy thus pursued. I am anxious to take advantage of this opportunity and state it publicly, because I wish that the outside world should not judge of the soundness and the wisdom of our cause by such utterances and such writings, which I am free to confess are open to objection. I urge most earnestly upon those gentlemen, whose enthusiasm and whose honesty I perfectly recognise, not to provoke enmity and not to make enemies to the cause by such a procedure. We must avoid that narrow dogmatism that we so much complain of in our companions. The habits, the feelings, and the institutions, which are the result of a long history, cannot be altered in a day. To some of those ardent reformers I have just referred to this may sound very harsh. They may ask how are those evils to be eradicated, unless we make it a point of exposing them and holding them for reprobation in season and out of season. To them my reply is—try and educate public opinion—try and get public opinion on your side, and custom such as you wish will certainly soon grow out of such public opinion, and, as has been remarked before, even religion will not delay long to strengthen herself by establishing an alliance with the accomplished fact, and thus adopting with her sanction and grace the altered practices of domestic and social life. Nor do I think that the religious practices and ceremonies, which seem inconsistent at first sight with our altered programme, to be ridiculous. I wish that the reformer gave a thought to the question how these practices, which are inconsistent with our present position of affairs came to receive the sanction of religion. Once the true foundation of the situation is explained on a rational basis, I feel that much of the opposition which is offered will disappear. In this connection I wish to offer one more observation, and I trust that you will receive it in the spirit in which it is offered. I believe it was the late lamented Professor Ranganadham

Mudaliar, for whom all of us have such admiration, who said that, with reference to some matters which the reformer is advocating, no one has a right to demand from another that amount of self-sacrifice, which is consistent with his thoughts and ideas. With reference to these matters I am inclined to grant and endorse his views. Put yourself the question how many of you are willing to become martyrs of the cause at once. That is the difficulty, which I ask the enthusiastic reformer to realise fully before he loses patience with those who are desirous of seeing those changes effected. I should however ask my enthusiastic friend not to misunderstand me.

I shall now proceed to offer a few observations with reference to another class of persons. The great charge which is brought forward against us is that if we proceed long with these measures that are being advocated, we are sure to be launched in the chaos of irreligion. I feel certain that there is not the slightest foundation for such an apprehension. I have always found it difficult to understand why a religious reformer working for the spiritual elevation of our people, if he is fully liberal, should quarrel with his fellow-countryman, who is seeking to effect in our social usages the necessary changes gradually, cautiously and in a reasonable and truly patriotic spirit (hear, hear). I trust, gentlemen, that as long as the social reformer confines himself to his limits—as long as his practice is characterised by sympathy and discrimination, so long will he receive nothing but sympathy from those educated men who are coming under the powerful influence of philosophy and religion, which is now being preached in this country with a zeal, a fervour, a felicity, and an eloquence, almost unmatched (cheers). I can assure you that I am behind none in my admiration or reverence for the philosophy contained in our Indian scriptures. I feel fully satisfied that the precious contents of these great remains of antiquity are before long destined to find acceptance and due recognition at the hands of the thoughtful men not only in this country,—its ancient home, but also at the hands of the thoughtful men of civilised Europe, America, and Australasia. But no amount of faith in these scriptures can blind any one to

the mischievous character of some of the practices, which the social reformer is endeavouring to rectify. I shall proceed now to take one or two points and make a few observations on them. I first ask how can any one with a spark of reasonableness in him question the mischievous consequences which flow from the system of infant marriages, which is so much in vogue at present. Who will not deplore the disastrous consequences that flow from premature maternity and paternity, which necessarily follow from this extremely vicious custom? How can anybody defend the procreation of feeble children by parents hardly capable of looking after themselves and utterly unable to bring up their children in such a way as would make them useful citizens of the country, into which they come into being? Does our religion require that such early marriages should take place? I deny it, and say that very little reflection and scrutiny will satisfy any of you that entertain a doubt in this matter, that such a practice is absolutely inconsistent with that portion of our Shastras, which lays down rules of self-restraint to be practised by every male member of the so-called regenerate class, before he becomes a householder. As this subject has been the topic of every reflecting and meditating man, I need not say anything further. Passing on to the vexed question of the condition of widows, can anybody defend it and say truly that their condition is all right? Would anyone say that the unfortunate lot of these widows requires no remedy? I know, gentlemen, that this is a very troublesome topic. It is one on which the few are opposed to the many; and I certainly do not belong to the few and yet cannot sympathise with the many. I trust that the observations which I make in regard to this matter will be received as coming from a man who belongs to neither side. I say that the subject is indeed a very difficult one, and beset with difficulties. I say it is beset with difficulties, because I look upon any attempt to mould our marriage institutions on the footing of a mere contractual basis as an extremely retrograde movement. I will deplore the day when the very high ideal of marriage laid down in our Shastras will give place to the modern notion, which seems to be gaining ground everywhere and every day.

The modern notion is that it should be a mere matter of contract. That is a position which little examination will show to be contrary to the spirit of the entire history regarding the subject of marriage in this country. Still it is impossible for me to reconcile myself to the position in which our custom places those widows whom I have just referred to. I believe it serves an extremely useful purpose. It makes them remarkable specimens—self-denying specimens of humanity. If the practice of self-denial was a voluntary one, then it would be entitled to our admiration. But it is absurd to talk of those specimens as specimens of remarkable self-denial, when that is enforced by the rigid rules of society. I submit, gentlemen, that it is impossible to recognise that the self-restraint, which you impose upon children who have no intelligence, would be regarded as producing that self-denial, which is generally admired by all. That being the position of affairs, I cannot possibly agree with those who would band themselves to persecute those who are seeking to find some way out of the difficulty. I think a way should be found, and the position of affairs restored to what it was, when those *Rishis* legislated on a plan akin to the present ideal of marriage and yet did not impose this custom of enforced widowhood. Of course there is a certain class of people who are disposed to look upon everything old contained in the Shastras as by-gone nonsense, and there are those who have not read the Shastras, except through the medium of translations, to judge what the Shastras contain. I have neither to mind the one nor the other. But I have to discharge my duty as a member of this community, whatever the position you may take with reference to me and the acceptance I receive at your hands. I am not pressing my own thoughts upon you as if they were original. The substance of what I said was expressed in a felicitous way by the late Justice K. T. Telang than whom there was no more impartial observer of things—than whom no other person possessed a more independent judgment. But as I observed before, the difficulty, on the other hand, is equally great. Once the solemnity of the bond of marriage is made loose, there is a danger of suits being filed for divorce, for the dissolution of marriage, for incompatibilities of temper and so on. We

are, therefore, by the system of infant marriages principally launched in this position of difficulty, and the truly patriotic and reflective man must make up his mind to find a way out of the difficulty without on the one hand destroying the solemnity of marriage or discouraging the bonds of unity, and on the other hand by finding a remedy for the unprotected class. Whether it is possible to get out of the difficulty is a question about which there is a great difference of opinion. I believe that, if the young and the enthusiastic would both apply their minds dispassionately and endeavour to find a remedy which will not destroy the national character of marriage, Providence will find a way to get out of the difficulty. It is a problem which will take a long time to solve. That is the reflection that is forced upon one's mind. But if you will, as I have said, meet on a friendly basis dispassionately, with a desire in fact to solve the difficulty on national lines, it would not be difficult to find a *modus operandi*, which would satisfy both sides in due time. This is the reflection that forced itself upon my mind, when I looked at some books with reference to this very question. Old *Rishis* did not act as you do. They did not absolutely prohibit re-marriages. On the other hand, they provided for cases of the sort that have created a difficulty and are still creating a difficulty amongst us. They did not by an inviolable custom enforce widowhood on those who are not willing to adopt that life. Therefore I say that if reformers and those that oppose them reasonably meet, some arrangement could be made, which would seem to us a way out of the difficulty. I am not competent to go into the question fully. But even if I were, time would not permit this being done. That is the matter which every honest man must apply his mind to and see whether he could not effect a reconciliation by which the difficulty might be got over. It is not right that if the reformer endeavours to effect a change in the manner which is not consistent with present practices, he should be punished with excommunication—the biggest punishment that can be awarded; for it only indicates that enemies' hearts are callous to the mischief the present practices are working. On the other hand, the reformer should take care not to go and pro-

pound a theory which may lead to a complete breach. I have now taken up the two important social questions of infant marriages and enforced widowhood. I shall now refer to the question of female education—the all-important subject in my view. It is a question which will enable us to tide over the difficulty far more easily than any other question. Can any reasonable man contend to leave the other sex in utter darkness without providing for it the means of acquiring proper learning and culture? I believe this is a subject on which you have heard a great many speeches. Therefore my observations will be very few indeed. I have one more observation to make, and that is that Sir William Hunter very truly once observed that whatever the ultimate sanction for human conduct, whatever the influence of religion, whatever the fear of punishment in the future state, whatever the present fears of the criminal law may be, the best safeguard for a man against the temptation for wrong-doing is his self-respect. This is not an ideal picture merely, and one object of the social reformer in endeavouring to secure education for our women is to enable them to discharge their sacred duties as mothers, as wives, and as sisters more nobly and more truly than they are at present able to perform. It is usual, gentlemen, to speak of this as a new ideal, an outgrowth of purely Western education. However that may be, it is satisfactory to note that a change for the better is taking place in the attitude of the community as a whole in the matter of female education, and the other things which I have referred to before. It is not much, but I believe the old aggressive hostility, confining myself to the general tendency of the people, is slowly dying away, and I believe that the number of people amongst our countrymen, who are disposed to look with greater sympathy with the movement of the reasonable social reformer, is on the increase, and I trust that in the hurry to go on much more quickly than we do now, this favourable attitude on the part of the general community will not be lost sight of. I trust, gentlemen, that no pains will be spared to win over by sympathetic efforts the majority of our countrymen to our way of thinking. I trust that you will resolutely avoid the method of rebellion, as Mr. Justice Ranade aptly termed it. I trust that you will not even

under the most provoking circumstances say it is impossible to get on with this old community, let us form a new community. We shall not then be able to confer any benefit upon the society by such a process. You may become a new caste and have a new marriage law enacted in the statute book. But so far as the cruel customs that you complain of and so far as relief to the oppressed are concerned, you will not be able to do any good. You will be able to say I have saved my daughter, my sister, and so on, but you will not be able to say I have been able to effect a good and salutary change in the general community. I trust, therefore, that you will bear in mind that this method of rebellion may be avoided even under the most provoking circumstances. Our object should be to try and draw to our view the majority of the community, and I think that in going about the work of reform we should also bear in mind the observation of Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer, which he made when addressing an association of young men: 'Your work should not partake of the character of indiscriminate destruction, but of construction on old national lines.' Of course I know that many of you will go back and say that it is usual for Subramania Iyer to indulge in all these platitudes (hear, hear). Many of you may also say that it is easy to suggest good old national lines without being told what these national lines are. If you take ancient books, I trust you will be able to find out that there are a good many national lines. We need not destroy the old history and start a fresh one; you may be able to rectify yourself, but the community will not be able to change, unless you proceed on those lines on which it has gone on for a considerable period, and our efforts should simply be to remove the excrescences of the injurious customs, which in every climate and in every nationality necessarily crop up from time to time. I do not think I should detain you any more. I have spoken to you upon the principal questions. I know that this slow process that I have been endeavouring to press upon you will certainly be distasteful to certain minds. This will fill many minds who are in favour of a rapid change being effected with a feeling of despondency. But I must say that in my opinion the surest way of reaching our goal is to adopt a policy of persuasion and education—the

policy of educating the community and evoking their sympathy thereby. There are some I know amongst my friends who take a much less favourable view of the destinies of our people. They are those who look upon the inhabitants of this great country as belonging to that inferior type of humanity, which is destined, to adopt the language of Dr. Pearson, to occupy the black belt as opposed to the white belt of the globe. Gentlemen, if you proceed on the lines indicated by me, I am sure you will be able to make a great many improvements, and eventually you will be destined to get a large measure of success within the limit supposed to be allowed to this inferior branch of the people. To those who think that our future is indefinitely great, there is no room for despair. Even if you suppose that it is so, judging from our own procedure, our own habits and customs, our want of self-reliance and so on, even to those who take that despondent view, I say, 'Consult any book which is written on the subject of social evolution, and you cannot but see that there is a great future before you, and in order to achieve this end you should proceed not only with the perseverance, which is worthy of the great cause that we have before us, but also with the spirit of patient confidence and hopefulness, which I think our surrounding circumstances justify.' I have detained you longer than I expected. But before I sit down, I have a duty to perform, of saying a few words upon an event of no small importance which has taken place in the neighbouring Province of Mysore, whose benevolent sovereign paid his debt of nature the other day at a premature age. I think after the vote you have just passed, it is unnecessary for me to dwell upon his great excellences, upon his benevolent nature, his statesmanlike qualities and other excellent traits in his character. It is to that enlightened sovereign that the Mysoreans are indebted for the law, which now prohibits the marriage of girls under 8 years of age and also prohibits ill-assorted marriages. I think His late lamented Highness and his equally enlightened Dewan as well as his wise and able Councillors have earned the gratitude of the whole community by passing such a law as the one in question. Not that this is going to bring in a large amount of relief, but that it has applied the principle of legis-

lation for the removal of social evils. I trust that the example thus set by a native Government, guided by very experienced and cautious men by no means unsympathetic to the dominating orthodoxy—I trust that the example set by that enlightened Prince will lead to similar legislation elsewhere. Gentlemen, I have done,—I have only to thank you for the kindness you have shown me in listening patiently to what I have said. I shall now proceed to call upon the various speakers to move the resolutions that are to be placed before you to-day for your consideration (*loud applause*).

The Ninth Social Conference—Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar's Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I must in accordance with the usual practice begin by thanking you for having elected me your Chairman. On the present occasion, however, this is not a mere matter of routine and formality. Certain circumstances have this year very widely evoked enthusiasm for the cause of social reform, and have led to a sort of constitution being given to this Conference similar to that which the political Congress possesses. I have before me to-day a large number of my countrymen, who, I believe, are sincere advocates of social reform, as calculated to improve the fortunes of our country and to place her in a condition to enable her to maintain her position in the keen competition and rivalry that is now going on between the different countries and races of the world. To be the Chairman of a body of such true lovers of their country is an honour that cannot but be highly appreciated.

About sixty years ago, none among us had any idea of the reform of our society and a Conference such as this was out of the question. But since that time we have come in closer contact with Western civilisation chiefly through the means of English education; and that has led us to take interest in the concerns of Indian society in general and consider its good to be our good, and has evoked in us feelings of justice and com-

passion for the various classes that compose our society. If then you are animated by these sentiments, the task before us to-day will present no difficulties. For the end aimed at by the propositions that will be laid before you is justice and fair play to all classes of persons, the alleviation of their sufferings and the removal of obstacles in the free development of our individual activities.

And first, a good many of the proposals have reference to the condition of the female portion of our society. Gentlemen, one-half of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual resources of our country is being wasted. If our women were educated as they ought to be, they would be a powerful instrument for advancing the general condition of our country. They will bring up every new generation in a manner to perform its duty efficiently and will shed the influence of the benign virtues peculiar to them on men and, so to say, humanise them. All the means of educating women, therefore, that have been indicated in the propositions, you will, I feel sure, approve of. You will see that the opening of High Schools is one of them. That necessarily implies that the study of English language and literature is considered to be beneficial to our women. Though there has been some difference of opinion as regards this point, still I believe the necessity of such education has been recognised by the majority. But I think it still remains an open question whether our ideal for the education of women ought to be the same as that for the education of men,—whether after they finish their High School education, they ought to be made to go through the whole University course up to the M.A. Degree. If bitter complaints have recently been urged as to the great pressure which our University education imposes upon our men, much stronger grounds there are for fear as regards women, whose constitution is more delicate and certain incidents in whose life and whose domestic duties tax them so heavily. Perhaps after finishing a High School education, if further progress is desired, there should be a selection of such subjects as are more calculated to develop the peculiar aptitudes of womanly nature. The other points

concerning our daughters and our sisters have reference to the unjust and cruel sufferings to which our present social usages subject them, and which no man in whom the sentiments of justice and compassion are developed can find it in his heart to tolerate even for a moment. The misery of our widows has been the subject of frequent remark; I will therefore not detain you long by a full exposition of it. I will only make a general observation that that society which allows men to marry any number of times even up to the age of sixty, while it sternly forbids even girls of seven or eight to have another husband after one is dead,—which gives liberty to a man of 50 or 60 to marry a girl of eleven or twelve, which has no word of condemnation for the man who marries another wife within fifteen days after the death of the first, is a society which sets very little value upon the life of a female human being, and places woman on the same level with cattle and is thus in an unsound condition disqualifying it for a successful competition with societies with a more healthy constitution. Oftentimes the marriage of a girl under certain circumstances proves her death-warrant. This matter has within the last few years forced itself powerfully upon my observation. A young man of thirty or thirty-five loses his first wife; straightway he proceeds to marry another, who is a girl of ten or twelve. That girl dies by the time she reaches the age of twenty; another takes her place, immediately after; she too dies similarly; then comes a third who meets with the same fate; and a fourth is married by the persevering man and is eventually left a widow before she is out of her teens. A great many such cases have occurred within the last few years and amongst our educated men. The medical men, whom I have consulted, say that the results are due to the marriages being ill-assorted, *i.e.*, to the great inequality between the age of the girl and of the strong and vigorous man. I do not know how else to characterise these cases except as cases of human sacrifice. Surely, if the men who have married girls successively in this manner are educated men, their refined sentiments and feelings ought to make them spare poor innocent girls and marry grown up women,—widows, if unmarried ones are not to be had. Gentlemen, this

case of ill-assorted marriage deserves greater condemnation at our hands than the other, which is the only one that seems to be contemplated in one of the resolutions to be brought forward, and in which an old man of even fifty or sixty marries a girl of ten or twelve.

I will next call your attention to those points in the resolutions which concern the institution of castes. And first of all allow me to observe that a very great revolution has been effected in this matter by the mere fact that we are governed by a people amongst whom the sense of equal justice for all classes of people has received a high development. A Shudra at the present day is not more heavily punished than a Brahmin for the same crimes. Manu, Yajnavalkya and others have been set aside in this respect, and the privileges which in the eye of the criminal law men of the highest caste enjoyed, have been taken away from them. I remember about forty-five years ago when a Brahmin was hanged for committing a murder at Ratnagiri, it created a stir among the people, since such a punishment for a Brahmin was opposed to all past traditions of the country. But of course the change did not provoke active hostility and has been acquiesced in on all sides. Similarly a Shudra's tongue is not now cut off for repeating the letters of the Vedas. On the contrary, if a teacher in a Government school refuses to teach the sacred mantras to a Shudra, he is apt to be dismissed from service. In our schools and colleges we have to teach Sanskrit literature including the Vedas to all castes and classes. But it is very much to be regretted that the treasure of knowledge which has thus been thrown open to all is not availed of by the lower castes to the extent to which they should. This is to be accounted for in a great measure by the fact of the old traditional feeling not having gone out—education is not what the Shudra thinks of first, nor are endeavours made by others to induce him to educate himself and smoothen his path to a University degree. Similarly the railways have been effecting a silent revolution. A holy Brahmin does not scruple to sit in a third class carriage by the side of a Mahar, whose very shadow is an abomination on ordinary occasions.

The Mahars and Mangs on this side of the country and the Pariahs on the other, who form the lowest classes, have been entirely neglected. They are the outcastes of Hindu society, and have been from the remotest times in a very degraded condition. The reference made to this fact by a Mahar Haridas in his prefatory remarks, while performing a Kirtana at my house a few years ago, was very touching. He said, 'the Vedas and Shastras have cast us aside, but the Santas or saints of the middle ages have had compassion on us.' And be it said to the credit of the Santas of Mahrashtra headed by the Brahmin Eknath and to the Santas of other provinces that they had compassion for the outcastes of Hindu society, and admitted their claims to religious instruction and a better treatment. If then in those olden days these pious men, with their hearts elevated by faith and devotion, admitted the lowest Shudra to religious communion and instruction, shall we, upon whom a greater variety of influences have been operating, refuse to exert ourselves for bringing enlightenment in the dense darkness in which his mind is shrouded? And I believe from the opportunities I have had of observation that the despised Mahar possesses a good deal of natural intelligence and is capable of being highly educated. So that to continue to keep him in ignorance is to deprive the country of an appreciable amount of intellectual resources. And generally, allow me to observe that the rigid system of castes, which prevails among us, will ever act as a heavy drag on our race towards a brighter future. To tie men down to certain occupations, even when they have no aptitude for them, renders those men less useful to the country. When all men belonging to a certain caste must follow certain occupations only, the field is overstocked and poverty is the result. You can get a Brahmin schoolmaster for five or six rupees a month, but a good carpenter or stone-mason cannot be had unless you pay from twenty to twenty-five rupees per mensem. And unless perfect freedom is allowed to men in this respect, and each allowed to make the best possible use of his own powers, the country cannot economically advance. Special privileges enjoyed by certain castes must keep the members of others in a disadvantageous position in the

rivalry and competition of life. In order that a nation as a whole may put forth all its power, it is necessary that there should be no special privileges and special restrictions. Again the principle of caste has throughout our history operated in such a way that each caste has now come to form a separate community with distinct usages, even as to the kind of food that is eaten and the manner in which it is cooked. And there is no social intercommunication between them of a nature to bind them together into one whole. Hence instead of there being a feeling of sympathy between different castes, there is often a feeling of antipathy. As long as this state of things lasts, I shall feel greatly obliged to any one who will explain to me how it is possible to form a united Hindu nation. If therefore we feel at all concerned as regards the future of our country in the great struggle that is going on in the world, something must be immediately done to induce a feeling of unity among these distinct communities and convert active antipathy into active sympathy.

And I will here make bold to assert that the chronic poverty of the agricultural classes and the depredations of the proverbial Savkar or money-lender constitute a great social evil. The Government has been endeavouring to do a good deal by means of mere special legislation; but that does not seem to have remedied the evil and the money-lender continues to charge interest from 18 to 25 per cent. on loans raised on the security of lands, and two or four *pice* per rupee per month, *i.e.*, $37\frac{1}{2}$ or 75 per cent. on smaller sums lent for shorter periods; and there are also enhancements of interest, when the money is not paid at the stipulated time. In this manner, the poor peasant is ever a prey to the rapacity of the money-lender and is never allowed to raise his head. This is a political as well as a social question. The Government has been on several occasions urged to establish agricultural banks, but it has not yet seen the wisdom of doing so, and we too, whose countrymen the agriculturists are, have not shown particular solicitude to remedy the evil by establishing banks of our own. I do not think any special banking institution with elaborate machinery, such as has been recently proposed, is wanted. An ordinary bank

with agencies at the District towns and sub-agencies for circles with a radius of about ten miles will, I think, fully answer the purpose. Money should be lent on the security of land at an interest of from 9 to 12 per cent. payable about the same time as the land revenue. Sympathetic, though firm, treatment should be accorded to the peasants and the agents employed should not be unscrupulous men exacting perquisites for themselves. But I will not trespass on the province of the man of business, and whatever be the scheme that may be considered suitable and whatever its details, this I feel certain about, that shrewd men ought not to be allowed to prey upon the ignorance and entire helplessness of the agricultural classes and perpetuate their wretched condition.

Then there are other points in the resolutions, the aim of which is to remove positive obstacles to our healthy development. The early marriage of boys and girls is of this nature, since its effect is to undermine the strength of both and bring forth a progeny of weak children. The growth of the parents themselves, intellectual as well as physical, is stunted; and in a course of evolution our race must become incapable of that energy and stillness of application, which are so necessary under the conditions brought into existence by the rivalry and competition of races. The prohibition of travel in foreign countries I would put under the same head, since it acts as an obstacle to the free expansion of our energies and capacities.

These are the principal points aimed at by the social reformer. You will see that what is necessary in order that these reforms may come into practice is that there should spring up in our hearts a sense of justice, a keen sympathy for the sufferings of others and a love for one's own country and race, and an anxiety for their future well-being. If the feelings have been awakened in us with any degree of intensity, they cannot fail to realise themselves in some sort of action, and I believe that the contrary holds true that when no action follows, the feelings are either not awakened at all, or if really awakened, are very weak. It is this fact and also the general conservatism of our nature as well as the fear of excommunication that hold us back and we devise a number of excuses for our inaction. Sometimes we are disposed

to leave the whole matter to the action of time, thinking that all we desire will come into practice just as the rigidity of caste rules is being gradually lessened by railway travelling and such other circumstances. But time is not a force, it is simply a conception of the mind to connect events together and cannot work any changes. If therefore any changes have come on in the course of time, they must be brought about by the force in the human heart that leads to action. As a matter of fact, such changes are often very extensive and important. For instance the practice of early marriage of girls, and of female infanticide and Kulinism have come into existence in comparatively recent times. But if you examine their origin, you will find that the first owes its introduction probably to the circumstances that when the girls grew up, they went wrong in some cases. In order to prevent such a result, they were tied down to a husband before they were of an age to go wrong. To avoid sin was of course a laudable object, but the desire was not under the guidance of reason. Consequently the many evil effects of early marriages were overlooked, and the attainment of that one object was exclusively attended to. If, however, the desire to prevent the evil had been under the guidance of reason, other modes would have been devised for effecting it than the one actually chosen. Similarly the practice of female infanticide and of Kulinism must in the beginning have arisen from family pride. One's daughter should not be married into a family possessing no importance or distinction. To marry her into a high family requires a heavy expenditure of money, which the father cannot afford, and in the case of Kulinism such a family is not available. Hence rather than suffer the disgrace of allying himself with a low family, he allowed his daughter to be destroyed, and in the other case to be married to one who had innumerable wives already. Here again you will see that the motive of action was not under the guidance of the higher feelings of love and tenderness for a human being and especially for one's own child. Thus then what time brings about is very often not under the guidance of reason or the higher feelings of our nature, and consequently very often degradation is the result and not elevation. It will therefore not do to leave

reform to time or the slow and unconscious operation of causes. It must be effected from a conscious intention, and the motive force should be, as above remarked, a sense of justice, a keen sympathy and an anxiety for the future of one's own country. Unable to appreciate the feelings of the true reformer, we often accuse him of being hasty in desiring to do everything at once,—we sometimes say that if he had adopted a particular way, the reform he desires would have long come into practice. Comments such as these I always suspect, especially when they come from a man who has done little or nothing practical. I am however not an advocate of headlong action. The motive force of reform should be powerful in our hearts, but they must be tempered in a manner not to lead us to cut ourselves from a vital connection with the past. We should not adopt the procedure of the French Revolution, but imitate the mode of action of English people, whose pupils we are. They have realised as great changes as the French Revolution sought to effect, but in a manner which connects them with the past history of the country. It will not be impossible to devise such a mode of action. One who has returned from foreign travels should live like an ordinary Hindu. A re-married widow should conduct herself just like an ordinary Hindu lady. And even as regards caste, we should behave towards each other in ordinary matters as if no such distinction existed between us; while as to eating together and inter-marriage, they must come in by and by especially when the sharp distinctions as to usages and customs between the several castes are obliterated by a closer intercommunication than that which exists at the present day. But the great danger of delayed reform is that in a short time the feeling which dictated it becomes cool, and the necessity for it is entirely forgotten. To prevent this result it is essential that the motive springs of reform should always be kept alive in our hearts. We should make an earnest effort never to lose sight of the goal we have to reach. But the modest proposal that will be laid before you as regards these two matters, *viz.*, inter-communication as regards eating and marriage-alliance between members of the sub-divisions of the same caste, involves no violent change whatever; consequently, there is, I believe, no

excuse for delaying its realisation. Generally it may be observed that what we have to avoid is the formation of a separate caste cut off from all social intercourse with any of the existing Hindu castes,—that is to say, we should avoid such complete isolation, as for instance, conversion to Christianity leads to. And most of the reforms we advocate involve no break of continuity. Some of them will be welcomed by the orthodox people themselves, and as regards a great many others what we propose is merely to go back to the more healthy condition in which our society once existed. In ancient times girls were married after they had attained maturity, now they must be married before; widow-marriage was in practice, now it has entirely gone out, women were often highly educated and taught even music and dancing, now they are condemned to ignorance and denied any accomplishments. The castes were only four in number, now they are innumerable. Inter-dining among those castes was not prohibited, now the numberless castes that prevail cannot have inter-communication of that nature. Consistently with the maintenance of continuity in this manner, there ought to be, I think, as much action as possible. A strong public opinion must be created among the whole body of educated natives, condemning any departure from the programme of reform, while no mercy should be shown to one who does what even the orthodox disapprove, and at sixty marries a girl of ten or twelve, or another wife immediately after the death of the first. The exhibition of any caste partiality must also be severely condemned, as no religious rules require it. Unless we act in this manner, all our advocacy of reform will sink into the merest sentimentality more demoralising in its effects than sturdy orthodoxy.

But even sentimental advocacy is an homage done to a right cause and consequently is better than stolid indifference or active hostility. This, however, is unfortunately the mental attitude of a great many educated natives in all parts of the country. In Bengal, as was pointed out by our friend the Honourable Mr. Justice Ranade the other day, social reform is now confined to Brahmos. The great body of educated Bengalees, who are not Brahmos, are indifferent or hostile. The late

Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, who inaugurated the reform about widow-marriage and first ransacked our *Smriti* literature to be able to make out that it was sanctioned by the Shastra, and worked for a life-time to make it popular, was in his latter days filled with despondency and expressed his conviction to visitors from this side of the country that Hindus as Hindus would never accept social reform. It is certainly a matter of the deepest regret that it should be confined to a religious body. We on this side have not come to this pass yet, though we have our full share of indifference and hostility. The aim of our reformers here has always been to reform our society—our nation. I am happy to find that our Madras friends agree with us in this respect. Reform through the agency of caste, which is attempted in some parts of the country, is very unsatisfactory. Very little can be effected in this way. The reduction of marriage expenses and measures of this nature only can be carried out by its means, and the great danger of this method is that caste which has corroded the vitals of this country will be strengthened by it.

Thus then we should nurture in our hearts the great forces which bring about the reform of society, *viz.*, truth, justice, and sympathy. Two of the greatest historians of England have told us that the moral law governs the affairs of the world; its observance alone ensures national prosperity. One of these I have quoted elsewhere, and will now ask your attention to the observations of the other. The strongest of the forces which are steadily bearing nations onward to improvement or decay are, according to Lecky, the moral ones. 'Their permanent political well-being,' he says, 'is essentially the outcome of their moral state.' The moral law seeks to purify private life and to effect social justice, and through these alone is the political well-being of a nation possible. And evolutionary science is beginning to teach us the same lesson. Competition and rivalry are the necessary conditions of progress towards a higher condition among men as well as among the lower creatures. This competition and this rivalry tend to establish the supremacy of the stronger individual over the weaker; his race propagates itself and that of

the other disappears. It is this law that is leading or has led to the extinction of the aboriginal races in the presence of the stronger European races in America, Australia, New Zealand and other islands. This competition and rivalry need not assume the form of an actual war of extermination. It has been clearly ascertained that even in the midst of profound peace, the primitive races show a tendency to disappear. If this law were in operation in our country, our future must be very gloomy. But our climate will, I think, come to our rescue as it has been ascertained that the stronger races of Western Europe cannot, if settled here, exhibit the same energy and perseverance that they do in temperate regions. Colonisation of India by the European races is, therefore, an impracticability; but does not deliver us from the dangers of competition and rivalry with them. And again that law must be in operation among us to ensure our own progress. But to estimate its full effects we must understand the conditions under which it acts in the case of man. Man is a social animal, and the competition that comes into operation in his case is a competition between societies. The ancient history of the human race consists of war between such societies and the triumph of one and subjugation of another. This competition and rivalry between different societies is going on still, and in order that a society may carry on the contest to a successful issue, it is necessary that it should be so organised that the individuals composing it should not be borne down by artificial restrictions, but be able to put forth their best powers and capacities. The history of England, for example, shows a gradual emancipation of the classes that were once in a condition of little better than slavery and a renunciation of their privileges by the dominant classes. The effect of this has been to place the individual in a more advantageous position to conduct the battle of life, and thus to render the society, of which he is a member, fitter for competition and rivalry with other societies. But it is the development of sympathetic or altruistic feelings only amongst the privileged classes and the society generally that can lead to the removal of the disabilities of others and the redress of their grievances. Without such feelings, internal dissensions and

eventual degradation must be the results. And these feelings are now leading the English people to devise means for relieving the chronic poverty of the lower classes, to readjust the relations between labour and capital, and undertake a variety of schemes to relieve distress and misery. It is a patent fact acknowledged by all disinterested persons that the English people have developed the altruistic feelings in a higher degree than any other European nation, and by the way, this constitutes the basis of our hopes in a better future for our country. Just as England has been endeavouring to remove the disabilities and sufferings of the lower classes of her population, so shall efforts not be wanting on her part to remove our disabilities and sufferings. But the law of social evolution cannot cease to operate; and in order that our society may be able to hold its own in the competition and rivalry with other societies, which is inevitable, we must abide by the conditions of that law. That law is thus stated by the latest writer on the subject, whose book has created a great stir:—'That the moral law is the unchanging law of progress in human society is the lesson which appears to be written over all things. No school of theology has ever sought to enforce this teaching with the directness and emphasis, with which it appears that evolutionary science will in the future be justified in doing. In the silent and strenuous rivalry in which every section of the race is of necessity continually engaged, permanent success appears to be invariably associated with certain ethical and moral conditions favourable to the maintenance of a high standard of social efficiency and with those conditions only.' If then social efficiency and consequent success are what we desire in our contest with other races, we must, because the law is immutable, endeavour to realise those ethical and moral conditions. We must cultivate a sense of justice and a love and sympathy for others, relieve the poor widow of her sufferings, remove the disabilities of womankind and of the lower classes, and allow free play to the energies and capacities of all. And the necessity for our doing so becomes the more imperative from our political condition. If we ask England to remove our disabilities, we must as a necessary preliminary show that we are worthy of the favour by removing the dis-

abilities of the oppressed classes of our society. Thus and thus alone will our country prosper. Every scheme for bettering our condition is destined to fail if it does not make provision for the growth of these sympathetic virtues and through them for the realisation of social reform. Let us then invigorate and elevate our souls by ever placing before our mind's eye the precept of the great Indian Reformer of the 6th century before Christ, the Lion of the Sakya race, Goutama, the enlightened: 'Cultivate a mind boundless (as sympathy) for all beings as is that of the mother, who protects her only son by sacrificing her own life'; and with him proclaim from this Social Conference hall, 'May all living beings feeble or strong, long, great, middle-sized or short, small or large, seen or unseen, living far or near, born or to be born be happy.' (*Prolonged cheers.*)

The Tenth Social Conference—Babu Norendro Nath Sen's Address.

It is nothing new to say, that opposition is the very life-breath of a public movement, and that no great cause in the world has triumphed without opposition. The history of every important agitation teaches that it did not attain to its object, till after severe strifes and struggles, and repeated reverses. This lesson is well illustrated in the case of the Congress. You require not to be told what fierce opposition that movement evoked in the early years of its existence, and how it has outlived all clamour, till it fairly promises to be an institution of the land. The history of the Congress movement shows, however, that the opposition it encountered, was mostly from without, while the Social Conference has had to experience opposition from within. But we may now be said to be well out of the wood. To-day the Social Conference is far stronger than it was a few years back. The movement now enters upon the tenth year of its existence, and every year we find it gaining ground, step by step, while the number of its friends and supporters has steadily increased. The fact, at the same time, remains unquestionable, that the Conference is exercising a healthy edu-

cating influence upon the different castes and sub-sections of castes, into which Hindu society is divided. From small beginnings the movement has expanded into its present dimensions. We have our delegates, like those of the Congress, duly elected, and among the visitors to Calcutta at this season, not a few have come, not as delegates to the Congress, but as delegates to the Conference. I happen to be acquainted with people, who entertain more sympathy for this movement than for the Congress itself, and with others, who somehow find themselves deterred from attending the Congress, but readily assist at the deliberations of the Social Conference. But rightly speaking, the Social Conference is a fitting corollary to the National Congress. It is well that, when claiming higher privileges, we should fit ourselves for such privileges.

There was a time, and that not so very long ago, when our countrymen concerned themselves with politics only, and with political agitation. But that time is fast passing away, and it is quite refreshing to see the re-awakening of national life in all directions, and the people shaking off their torpor, and engaging in reforms of all kinds, such as might be needed to raise them as a nation. We are beginning to see all our weak points, and discovering the causes that retard our national progress, and applying ourselves to the task of remedying the evils. There are abundant signs of national activity all around us. Our people are seeking not only their political enfranchisement, but also their material, moral, social and religious welfare. There is an upheaval and a revival everywhere. The amelioration of our social condition is so mixed up with our future greatness and prosperity, that we cannot afford to neglect it any further. However we may try to raise ourselves as a nation, we shall find our efforts quite paralysed, because of the crying defects in our social system. You will therefore see that social reform is even of more immediate concern to us than political reform. But somehow or other, social reform has come to be regarded with the utmost distrust and suspicion. It is viewed in some quarters in the light of something outlandish and foreign. I do not know why it should be so. We are not a new nation, but an old one, that has long known decay. It

is this decay, which, in part at least, we have met to arrest. We are not so very unfamiliar with the character of the social system existing in India in olden times, and in her palmy days. That system was nothing like the hybrid one, which we have hugged all too closely in recent times. Knowing that to be the case, what should prevent us from reverting to the old system? Social reform, then, means nothing more than a return to the social structure that was built up in Ancient India. Thus, there can be nothing much to object to it. One of the principal causes of our present misfortunes is that we have receded a very long way from the laws and institutions of the past, and adopted some mongrel ones in their stead. Our national decadence is mostly due to the later corruptions, which have been allowed to permeate both our social and religious systems. Our efforts, therefore, should be directed solely to the removal of those corruptions. All that we call upon our Hindu countrymen to do is nothing more than this.

Already the Social Conference has achieved great good for the country, as you will find from the published summary or reports, forwarded by the different Social Reform Associations in India, copies of which have been placed in your hands. A more interesting publication, it has hardly been my lot to peruse. You will now have some idea of the social progress that the country is making along with progress in other directions. Such subjects, as marriage-reform, sea-voyage, and foreign travel, female education, temperance, &c., have been engaging the attention of these Associations. Some of them have been working with remarkable vigour and zeal. Besides these Associations, there have been several Caste Conferences, held annually, such as the Kayastha Conference, the Vaishya Conference, and Sri Vaishnava Conference. Those Conferences are meant for the social benefit of the castes whose names they bear. The proceedings of those Conferences will indicate what advance some of the important Hindu castes are making in self-help, self-reliance, and social progress.

The so-called benighted and conservative Madras evidently leads the van of social progress, and, in this respect, sets an ex-

ample to the rest of India. Next comes the Deccan, and other parts of India follow it. It has been said that Bengal lags behind the rest of India in the matter of social reform. I do not know how far this charge is true. Here in Bengal, there is evidently a decided feeling against early marriages among the educated classes. An agitation has been set on foot for sometime in favour of the reduction of Hindu marriage expenses, with as much genuine earnestness as we displayed in connection with the sea-voyage question a few years back. Then as regards the higher education for women, Bengal holds decidedly more advanced views than any other reform circle in the country. But it must be said that the above remark holds good chiefly of the Indian Christian, Brahmo, and the England-returned classes. What is particularly wanted however, in Bengal, as in the other parts of India, is that social reform should be carried on strictly national, that is, Aryan and old Shastraic lines, among those who aspire to be known as good Hindus. If we wish to make the cause of social reform a success, we must proceed with caution, and make no attempt to introduce violent changes in our social organisation. The object of this Social Conference is more to educate public opinion in all the problems of social reform than anything else. You may safely leave to time the results. We must call to our aid the authority of our sacred books, and of the ancient history of our country in our work of social reform. There is enough in our ancient volumes to show that the social system of the Hindu in the past, was altogether a model one, and we cannot do better than follow it, if we are at all anxious to regain our lost national greatness.

And now, before I conclude, I hope that the deliberations of this Conference will be conducted with as much moderation, forbearance and wisdom as possible, and that no want of harmony will disturb our proceedings. There is not another question more difficult and delicate than that of social reform, and it should be approached with the utmost sobriety, and discussed in such a spirit as might not give rise to the least friction. We must show extreme tolerance for the opinions and feelings of those who differ from us on the subject, so that even the most orthodox and bigoted might, in time, come into our fold; and

become of our way of thinking. Social reform is not meant for the liberal few, but for the backward many.

The Eleventh Social Conference—Rao Bahadur Vamanrao Madhav Kolhatkar's Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I thank you very much for the honour you have done me by voting me to the chair, and I beg to assure you that I feel very much flattered by it. But I cannot conceal from you the consciousness of my inability to fill with credit a position which has been honoured at previous gatherings by eminent and distinguished personages, with whom the humble individual now addressing you can bear very little comparison. In fact when the proposal to make me President was first communicated to me about six weeks ago, it caused me considerable surprise, and I almost suspected that a practical joke was being played upon me. But when I considered that the proposal emanated from friends whose good sense and friendly feeling I could not very well for a moment doubt, and when I consider further that the race, as has been well said, was not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, I took heart and braced myself up, as well as I could, for the difficult task that was to be laid on me. I will first beg you to overlook my shortcomings, and then proceed according to time-honoured custom to make some observations in connection with the work for which we have assembled here to-day.

The first matter to which I have the pleasure to invite your attention, is the gratifying fact that the short-sighted prejudice which had sought sometime ago to dislodge our Conference from its legitimate habitation—the Congress *pandal*—is now happily a thing of the past and has given place to good sense and wisdom. The credit of first discountenancing that prejudice does no doubt belong to enlightened Bengal. But we of the Berars and the Central Provinces also might well be excused for claiming a share in it, and for having walked in the wise footsteps of Calcutta. I am informed on good authority that there

was not a single discordant note struck when the question of placing the Congress *pandal* at the service of this Conference came on for consideration before the local Congress Committee, and that the question was disposed of with perfect concord, and in such a manner as to even imply that it admitted of no two opinions at all. This, you will allow, is a matter for sincere congratulation, and you will doubtless join with me in saying that "all is well that ends well."

I will next address you a few words about the present position and future prospects of the Social Reform Movement. My humble opinion is that, all things considered, social reform is steadily gaining ground in the hearts of our people. In view of the magnitude of our task, the difficulties in the way, the comparative paucity of real workers in our field, and the slowness of the pace with which we are moving, one is apt not to recognise this onward motion, and many people are disposed to grumble, and be despondent, and even doubt at times whether we are going forward at all. When we are in this undesirable plight, we cannot do better than cast at once a mental glance at what things were like, say, about ten or twenty years ago, and ask ourselves if we have not made any progress. This useful retrospect will at once lift us out of the slough of despondency, and restore us to a hopeful, if not even cheerful, mood. If one has any doubt on this question of the progress achieved, he has but to turn the pages of the report of the last Conference to be convinced of the general fermentation that is taking place in matters social in so many places, and in such unexpected quarters. And in this connection, let us also always lay to our heart and constantly bear in mind the golden advice so often repeated by our great guide, friend and philosopher, the life and soul of the Indian Social Conference—I mean the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade—and sedulously cultivate in practice the useful virtue of patience, which is ever the greatest friend in need, and is therefore the best friend indeed. But the indispensable friend, I am sorry to observe, does often fight shy of us, and is conspicuous among us only by his absence, simply because we do not sufficiently care to cultivate his friendship. And again, let us

remember that the causes of the slow pace with which we are moving onwards are not confined to the Social Reform Movement alone, but are simultaneously hindering the onward march of other movements also. The principal drawback everywhere is the paucity of earnest, loyal, and enthusiastic workers, combined with the superfluity of irresponsible, unsympathetic and do-nothing critics. This is the chief canker at the root of all our activities, whether in the social, the industrial, the religious, or any other field. There is, on the one hand, the more or less large following, whose chief business is talk, the whole talk, and nothing but talk; and on the other hand there is the larger herd still of the ever-carping critics, who are pleased to live in a well-known paradise, and to fancy that the reforms we advocate do not concern them or their society at all; and who, doing nothing themselves, but standing at a safe distance from all the risk and toil and moil of all progressive work, are satisfied with nothing that the reformers will do, but are, on the contrary, immensely delighted with the easy and patriotic-looking work of crying down reform and reformers. If a reformer in any of the fields already mentioned serves the cause for which he is working merely by speech—and yet speech, let us remember, is the first and the most potent instrument of ventilation and agitation—he is, according to these dainty gentlemen, only a lip-reformer or a canting hypocrite. But the moment the reformer reduces his professions to action, he becomes at once a dangerous firebrand, a revolutionary character who, instead of taking up some other non-descript reform first, is moving on too fast and headlong, and without the previous consent and sanction of the majority, if not the whole, of his countrymen, or moving on in contravention of the laws of evolution, or the teachings of history, or the strict lines and dictates of the Shastras, or in a word, what not! Good God!! Are not these objections grand, and high-sounding, and if you please even crudite? Sure enough, they are. But these gentlemen forget that it is generally not in the nature of individuals, belonging to a supremely conservative race like ours, to move on too fast, that no reform has yet taken place at any time with the previous consent and sanction of the majority of mankind; that even the laws of evolu-

tion require human aid in furtherance of their work in social matters; that history, if read aright, teaches something else than mere cynical inaction; and that the lines and dictates of the Shastras run counter neither to the spirit, nor in many cases to the letter, of our proposals for reforms. Let us not, ladies and gentlemen, look at things from the high and giddy altitudes of theoretical beauty and perfection, but remain satisfied with the humble and sober stand-point of practical good sense and discretion. Let us not be carried away and deluded by fine phrases and catch-words, and let us not allow our equanimity to be disturbed by them; but let us, at the same time, take care to keep our minds free from the taint of self-sufficiency or self-satisfaction, which seems to me to be one of the most besetting sins of the present day. For no one, whether a reformer or a non-reformer, can afford to indulge in these mischievous luxuries, and scorn the honest advice of friend or foe. No true reformer has, so far as I know, yet claimed perfection and infallibility for himself or his ways. The sensible portion of them, conscious of their own defects and shortcomings, are no doubt, profiting by past mistakes and failures. If our worthy critics only practise half the moderation, which they are fond of preaching to us in season and out of season, and take to honest and sympathetic criticism, their fault-finding will be a great and useful light in our path, and we shall not only be duly grateful to them for that light, but shall also gladly excuse their inaction or apathy which when timid, is often concealed, if the truth must be told, under the mask of cautious prudence. Between half-hearted work and unsympathetic, irresponsible criticism, the work of reform is bound to be a good deal stifled, if not even strangulated; and the wonder to me very often is that the social reformer, who is the favourite butt of ruthless criticism proceeding from both the educated and the uneducated critics, has still managed not only to keep his head above water, but also to win his way steadily, though slowly, to the unwilling hearts of his dear countrymen. The workers in the other fields are better placed than ourselves and the religious reformers, inasmuch as they have to face only external opposition, whereas the opposition

we have to meet and face is opposition proceeding from our own dear and near ones--parents, wives, daughters, sisters, brothers, neighbours, friends and countrymen—with whom we have to journey on in this pilgrimage of life, and for whose welfare we are striving to the best of our lights and opportunities. The other workers are cheered on in their paths by encouragement and approbation from persons for whose well-being they labour. But ours is truly a thankless and therefore much more difficult, task. The only reward we get for our pains is jeer and ridicule, which frighten away many a man who would otherwise willingly work for the cause we have at heart. No wonder then that we have a smaller number of even half-hearted workers in our field, and that our outturn of work is perhaps not so large in quantity, or so nice to look at as the labourers in the other fields can show and boast of.

This then is the explanation that accounts for the fact that our educated men, upon whose shoulders alone the responsibility of the regeneration of our beloved country can rest, are either half-hearted workers or uncomfortable critics. Why is it that our engines are so few and weak, while our brakes are so numerous and powerful? The reply to my mind can only be one and it is this, that our homes not being in order, we send forth into the world only weakly and ill-equipped soldiers to fight the battle of life. Our nursery is so full of unhealthy influences, that a supply from it of healthy and vigorous plants that grow in the fulness of time into large, shady and fruit-laden trees, is well-nigh impossible. Being children generally of girl-mothers and boy-fathers, we naturally lack the physical stamina which is a *sine qua non* of all our different activities. Being brought up in homes where ignorance and superstition are generally allowed to reign supreme, and where blind custom is permitted to be the principal guide and regulating force, we naturally lack that mental freedom and those moral and religious influences which are so necessary for the robust growth and development of individual soul and character. Being exhausted in body and mind in early years by too much educational cramming, unrelieved by sufficiently nourishing diet, and being encumbered with a wife and children almost at the threshold of

life, besides having in numerous instances to bear the anxious burden of supporting a host of other relations, our budding spirits are soon blighted by these cares and anxieties, and little energy or inclination is left for any other serious work in life than that of earning bread and butter. Add to these cramping and stunting influences the habits of servility, submission and supineness engendered by climatical and other causes, and the result is the unavoidable one which we actually see and so much deplore.

The social reform movement has set to itself the all-important task of removing these evils, which are eating into the vitals of all our movements, and of giving them life, health and vigour. If our difficulties and sacrifices are greater than those which have to be encountered and endured by the workers in the other fields, the guerdon, the prize, and the reward which must, by the grace of God, come to us in the long run, if we are true to our salt, is also very much greater. By stopping early and unequal marriages, we shall be bringing into being a robust race of workers, with frames better adapted to stand the wear and tear of life. By destroying the cruel customs which deprive our widowed daughters and sisters of the joys and comforts of holy matrimony, and which disfigure them against their will, we shall not only be giving them, if they wish to have it, the happiness of family-life, the absence of which makes the generality of our widowers so miserable with all their vaunted superiority in knowledge, wisdom and philosophy, but we shall also be laying a deep, broad, and strong foundation of moral courage in our character by trampling under our feet tyranny of every description. By educating and emancipating our females, by setting our faces against the mischievous vice of intemperance, which, not content with the ravages it has wrought in its old homes of Europe and America, is now seeking a new field for its unhallowed work of destruction in this holy land of Bharat; and by advancing the purity-movement, worked for with such laudable zeal and persistence principally by our good friends of Madras, who promise ere long to my mind to be the exemplars and the models of earnest workers for the rest of India, we shall be creating better environments for ourselves and our children,

who must be the architects of the distinguished position of eminence to which we wish to restore this ancient land of ours. By moving for a better organisation of public and private charity, by curtailing extravagance on marriages and other occasions, we shall be placing ourselves in a position not only to give a greater amount of relief to real distress and helplessness, but also to supply the indispensable capital without which our workers in the industrial line are so seriously handicapped. By rescuing caste from its present absurdities and exaggerations, and confining it within its ancient reasonable limits, we shall be practically preaching to our division-loving countrymen the holy gospel of love, peace and concord, without which a united India is an impossibility, and a common nationality a myth and a fiction. By successfully solving the question of foreign travel, we shall not only divest ourselves of the narrow-minded conceit, self-satisfaction and exclusiveness of the proverbial frog in the well which we at present undoubtedly cherish, but also place at the service of our youth a wonderful educational agency which has almost a magical power for good —a power that has been so well illustrated in the recent history of our plucky neighbours of Japan, the brightest spot at present in old Orient. And by re-admitting into society converts from other faiths, we shall not only be vindicating the liberal catholicity of the pristine Hindu faith, but also showing a practical appreciation of that faith, and turning into friends a large number of our countrymen who are now forced into a hostile camp by our wayward obstinacy.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are questions which are intimately bound up with our national progress and welfare in all directions; and this being the work which it is the noble mission of this Conference to further, we have met here to-day to discuss and consider several of these questions. Until we build up a better mind in a better body, and until our souls are made fit temples for the great soul of the universe to live in, the materials necessary for great and rapid progress in all the directions in which we are now moving, and wish hereafter to move, will be wanting. Until we can produce in our race the able, the brave, the honest, the earnest, the steady, the persistent,

the self-sacrificing and the enthusiastic workers, who made ancient India what it was, and who have made modern Europe and America what they are, we cannot hope to make any solid and substantial progress, and this melancholy truth is brought home more and more every day to the minds of those persons who are engaged in the work of reform in different fields. Let us then gird up our loins, and give up the lethargy engendered by causes already touched upon, and rise equal to the importance of our work by putting forth in future more earnest efforts than we have hitherto done. Although speech is necessary for the ventilation of our programme, and we must again and again have recourse to it in future, as we have had recourse to it in the past, still mere lip-devotion to our cause cannot take us to the goal in view, as we must have now found by sad experience. The time has now surely come for translating speech and ideals into action, and showing by our sincerity and our enthusiasm to those of our countrymen whom we wish to win over to our views, that we really believe in all that we say. If we adopt and adhere to this course resolutely, manfully and in the proper spirit of self-sacrifice, the time will soon come when our Social Reform programme, which is transparently simple, and cannot be long misunderstood, will, under Providence, be viewed with favour by those who are now looking askance at it, and sure enough, those who now come to scoff and flout us, will then remain to pray and bless us.

Before I conclude and sit down, I beg to tender my heartfelt thanks to our good sisters of Amraoti, who, headed by our friend Mrs. Gangubai Joshi, and ably assisted by such ladies as my clever friend Mrs. Manoramabai of Nagpur, were able to organise almost in a trice a very successful exhibition, which we have had so much pleasure to witness in the course of this week. Let us all hope that such exhibitions as these become the normal feature of our annual gatherings, and that this exhibition proves to be the nucleus of regular and full-fledged Fine Arts Exhibitions of the kind annually held at Simla by our advanced sisters from Europe. I also note with pleasure the very gratifying fact which must have struck you all as a

very prominent feature of this year's gathering—the fact, *viz.*, that our Conference this year has been graced with the presence of such a large number of lady friends as might well excite the envy and emulation of even the more advanced provinces. Our best thanks are surely due to these good angels, who have lent so much grace and dignity to this gathering and this pleasant debt of gratitude I beg to discharge with all my heart.

The Twelfth Social Conference—Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam Pantulu's Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I consciously feel that I, an humble and incompetent individual, am not worthy of the position which has been thrust on me and which has been filled with credit at the previous Conferences by eminent and worthy gentlemen with whom I hardly bear any comparison. I wish your selection had fallen on an abler person. As it is however your pleasure that I should occupy the chair, I heartily thank you for the honour you have conferred on me.

We are met here to consider questions of the gravest importance to our society and hence to the commonwealth ; for, I believe the political development of a country must largely depend upon the social condition of the community which supplies the physical, intellectual and moral resources of the people. The real work of improving our social environment undoubtedly lies outside Conferences of this kind, but meetings, discussions and resolutions are also necessary to prepare the ground and to fill the moral atmosphere of the community with ideas, which when they enrich the blood of the people, will stimulate them to action.

I have myself always endeavoured in my own humble way to work on the plan which makes action follow as closely as possible upon the heels of conviction. I may therefore be pardoned for the observation that discussions and resolutions do not by any means exhaust the real work of social or any kind of reform, although they have their own part to play in the grand drama of the evolution of humanity. I understand that the

methods of physical science have influenced all departments of modern thought in the West. My acquaintance with the physical sciences is not as wide as I should have liked it to be, but as far as I am able to judge, men of science work on the principle that true knowledge must be based on experiment and observation. I fancy that that wonderful engine which has brought many of you across hundreds of miles from the various parts of this vast continent was not devised by a single effort of imagination, but its evolution was a slow process in which hundreds of trials had to be made with patience and perseverance by as many brains and hands. The electricians who have harnessed lightning to drag the tram car, though by no means at lightning speed in our city, did not, I conceive, rely on mere *a priori* speculations as to how the development of the electrical science ought to proceed, but they had to make innumerable trials patiently and perseveringly. And if patient and plodding work is necessary in the domain of physical science where the laws which the elements obey are more easily ascertainable, patient and plodding and often painful work is still more necessary for social reform, inasmuch as the laws of the human mind and of human society are more difficult to understand and more difficult to be made the basis of any dogmatic theory. I have sometimes been bewildered by the discussions in newspapers about what are called methods of social reform. That bewilderment is no doubt largely explained by the fact that I am not competent to grasp the latest sociological discoveries of Western *savants*, but I must confess that I have generally missed in these discussions any reference to the efforts made by the disputants to check their theories by this experience. Patient, honest and intelligent work is not only the one indispensable condition of the success of the social reform movement, but it is also the only safe-guard against errors of judgment and the results of preconceived theories. The work cannot of course be done in annual meetings like the Conference, but as I said before, meetings of this kind have also an important function to perform in the economy of the social reform movement.

It should not be necessary in the twelfth Conference, and

it would be presumptuous in an unsophisticated individual like me to attempt to set forth the objects which may be served by a Conference like this. But as I laid some stress on the work that has to be done outside the Conference, I wish to be permitted to point out that these annual meetings contribute in an eminent degree to keep the ideas of reforms, as it were, in the air. That in itself is insufficient, and forms no part of the work of social reform, but it forms a material part of the means of reform. You often hear it stated that the Conference is all talk, and that nothing will come of it but mere waste of breath. I hope nobody will accuse me of fondness for hearing my own voice, for I seldom speak in public, but it seems to me that those that regard these Conferences as mere *tamasha* take altogether a narrow view of the imperceptible influence of such gatherings. The annual Conference should certainly be supplemented by the activity of smaller local bodies working throughout the year. Without such activity the Conference will sooner or later begin to suffer from the effects of inanition. But while I think that the Conference must have a large number of feeders, the annual gathering itself will rest on those feeders and serve to combine them into one harmonious system of organisation.

The Conference may thus be reckoned among the educative agencies which make for reform. You often hear it stated that education is the best remedy for the evils from which our society is suffering. If by education you mean that which is imparted in your schools and colleges, this statement does not express the whole truth, and our educated men themselves will bear out the truth of my remark, for, we know the majority of our educated men are as backward in espousing the cause of social reform in *practice* as their uneducated countrymen. Then again observation will reveal to you communities in which education has made such great progress that there is hardly a man in them who is unable to read and write, and yet which would not give admission into society to an England-returned man, and much less to a re-married widow. A friend was telling me the other day that a well-known local Hindu gentleman of great age and experience was once bitterly remarking to him

that education, while it makes good men better, makes bad men worse. This epigram, like others of its kind, must no doubt be accepted with a good deal of reservation ; but observation will show you that literary education is often a double-edged weapon. For your purpose, this education, which makes men think and undoubtedly prepares the ground, must be supplemented first, by a familiarity with the ideas of reform, and secondly, by the influence of personal example. But personal example cannot of course be set in annual meetings. These can only contribute to render the right kind of ideas more familiar to the people. These Conferences, therefore, have an important function to perform.

The subjects which you have to consider, though generally called social, relate to the individual and to the family, as well as to society at large. The questions of temperance, purity and perhaps of female education may be said to primarily relate to the individual. The questions of infant-marriage, widow-marriage and others of that kind may be said to relate to the family. The elevation of the depressed classes, inter-marriage between sub-sects, foreign travel, religious endowments, and such other subjects may be said to effect the society at large. But all these questions are intimately connected with one another. For, what affects the individual affects the family and what affects the family must affect society. It is not for me now to speak on any of the particular subjects which you may discuss. I have no doubt that the various speakers will do ample justice to the several subjects which are entrusted to them and discuss them with maturity of judgment, fairness of reasoning, but coupled with courage and enthusiasm for the cause they uphold. There is one matter to which I should like to refer before I conclude. The President of last year's Conference expressed an opinion that your Madras friends " promise ere long to my mind to be the exemplars and the models of earnest workers for the rest of India," and similar compliments have from time to time been given to us by our kind friends of other parts of India. I am afraid, however, that the notions which seem to be entertained in other parts of India about our activity and earnestness, are very much exaggerated. My friends may not thank me if I

dispel that illusion about Madras, and it may even be quoted as another instance of the iconoclastic tendencies of social reforms. But if truth must be told, we in Madras, are as earnest, or as apathetic as our brethren elsewhere. There is as much of vacillation and temporising here as in other places. We are fond of inventing false theories and lame excuses to justify our conduct as people are elsewhere. We undertake difficult schemes as hastily, and fail in them as woefully, as perhaps in other parts of our country. In these circumstances, to accept all the kind encomiums which are now and then showered upon us for our earnestness, will go to prove that we are neither earnest nor honest. We may have more to learn from you than you say you have to learn from us. At any rate, let us all learn from one another, and help and encourage one another.

The Thirteenth Social Conference—Rai Bahadur Lala Baij Nath's Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Permit me to offer you my sincerest thanks for the great honour you have done me in electing me as the Chairman of this august assembly. As I call to mind the many distinguished gentlemen who have so worthily presided over the deliberations of this Conference which aims at devising methods of reform for the whole of the Indian community, I feel that your choice might have been bestowed more advantageously upon a worthier head. As, however, you have been pleased to bestow the honour upon me, I gratefully accept it, craving your indulgence if I fail to justify your expectations.

We are met here to discharge one of the most solemn duties which each of us owes to his mother-land. Who is there, be he the most pronounced radical or the most pronounced conservative, who does not wish his country to prosper, all her sons and daughters morally elevated, possessing strong and well-developed bodies, properly cultivated minds, well-trained intellects, and in every way the best men and women of their age. The goal of all Indian reformers in the past has been to bring

Indian society to such a condition, and the goal of modern Indian reformers can also be no other. The reformer in the past had, however, to work under conditions, somewhat different from those under which the reformer in the present has to work. Society had not then so widely gone astray from its ancient ideals as it has done now, nor had later corruption taken such deep root in it as it has done in these times, nor were the forces the reformer had to contend with so strong and so numerous as they are now. The Rishis of ancient India declared all individual and national progress to lie in adherence to truth and duty, and the ten indications of Dharma, according to Manu were fortitude, compassion, control of the mind and the organs of sense, purity, intelligence, study of the Sastras, rectitude of behaviour and absence of anger. But the Rishis appealed to a society not so corrupt or lifeless as ours. Being the best, and the most morally elevated men of their age, they knew that the elevation of the race consisted in a harmonious development and satisfaction of all its wants. The task of the modern reformer in India is therefore one of peculiar difficulty and taxes his resources to the utmost. He should not only know thoroughly and clearly the wants and tendencies of his society and be capable of taking a broad survey of all its institutions, but also the evils under which it labours. Courage of conviction, firmness of purpose and a determined resolution to do the right looking neither to the right nor to the left, are demanded of him in a greater degree than they were from his predecessors.

He cannot, moreover, afford to lose sight of the fact that the evolutionary science of modern Europe makes the development of the intellectual capacity subordinate to the development of the religious character, and declares the future of nations to lie in assigning to reason a lower plane than religion. Said Mr. Lecky, speaking of the causes of the prosperity of nations as indicated by history : " Its foundation is laid in pure domestic life, in commercial integrity, in a high standard of moral worth, and of public spirit, in simple habits, in courage, uprightness, and a certain soundness and moderation of judgment which springs quite as much from character as from intellect. If you would form a wise judgment of the future of a nation,

observe carefully whether these qualities are increasing or decaying. Observe carefully what qualities count for most in public life. Is character becoming of greater or less importance? Are the men who obtain the highest posts in the nation men of whom, in private life, irrespective of party competent judges speak with genuine respect? Are they of sincere convictions, consistent lives and indisputable integrity? It is by observing this current that you can best cast the horoscope of a nation." (Lecky's Political Value of History.) The conclusion of the Rishis of ancient India was no other, and the Indian reformer has therefore to keep this ideal as steadily in view as the reformer in Europe.

A revival of Hinduism is noticeable almost everywhere in India, and many think such a revival to be somewhat hostile to the work of social reform. But no Hindu revival, if it is to be at all genuine, can have any other object in view than the removal of all such barriers as impede the progress of the Hindus in the march of civilisation—an object which the social reformer has also in view. What applies to individuals also applies to societies and no society, which aims at a revival of Hinduism without making the necessary reforms in the social conditions of the Hindus, can hope to succeed or earn the sympathy of any right-minded Indian. All that a society, whether it be for social or religious reform, can do, and ought to do, is to find out how far the nation has gone astray from its best and truest ideals, and what portion of its present institutions favours, and what retards its attainment of those ideals; to have the latter retained and the former reformed and modified. This and no other is, I believe, the programme of this Conference, as well as of all other bodies that derive their initiative from it. They are not revolutionary but reforming bodies, working on the lines of the least resistance, and never losing sight of the fact that their goal is the harmonious development of the Indian society in order to make it as perfect as possible.

Opposition there has always been, and shall always be, to the work of reform. Buddha, Sankara, Nanaka, Chaitanya, and others who set themselves about reforming Indian society of their times, had to do so in the teeth of the bitterest opposi-

tion from the advocates of its then existing systems. In some cases it was active hostility, in others passive indifference. But if the cause was right, success came in the end. Perseverance was all that was required. So it ought to be with us also. Our difficulties in the work of social reform are our best helpmates, and if we but persevere in our efforts, we shall find our difficulties growing less, and ourselves making greater impression upon the community. "Perseverance," says the Mahabharata, is the root of prosperity, gain, and all that is beneficial. The person who pursues an object steadily without giving it up in vexation, is truly great, and enjoys everlasting happiness."

I am not one of those who believe our cause is losing; on the contrary the large and sympathetic audience around me is the best proof of the increasing interest taken in our proceedings throughout the country. It is the Social Conference which has given the initiative to the many caste reform associations, like the Kayastha, the Bhargava, the Vaisya, the Rajput and others, which are now working in these parts of the country in the direction of social reform. In fact, the contagion has spread to the class which was hitherto considered to be altogether hostile to all reform—to Brahmanas, and it is a sign of the times that they too are having sectional Conferences of their own for the same purpose as the other castes. I need only refer to the Gaur, the Sanadha, the Chaturvedi, and the Kashmiri Conferences of that community. All these reform bodies are working on the lines of this Conference, discussing the subjects discussed by it and passing almost the same resolutions. Their success is proportionate to the degree of their effort in the work of reform, and the time during which each of them has been in existence. I shall, with your leave, speak of the work done by the Vaisya during the eight years it has been in existence. Its first sitting in Meerut was attended by only 36 members of the Vaisya community. Its seventh sitting in Delhi was attended by more than 350 delegates from out-stations, and about 2,000 visitors from Delhi. Its last sitting in Bareilly was attended by delegates and visitors not only from the North-Western Provinces, but also from the Punjab, Rajputana, and other parts of India. It has now

more than a hundred branch associations subordinate to it, all working on the lines laid down by it. It counts among its members not only men of the new, but of the old-school also. Many of them are leaders of the community in their respective centres, and so great is the interest taken in its proceedings that last year, when in Delhi the question of the lowest marriageable age for girls came up for discussion, the excitement among the Vaisya community of that place was very great. The question became the topic of the day all over the town, and the resolution was passed after the most vehement discussion and amidst the greatest excitement. Similarly in 1896, in Ajmere, when the question of the settlement of caste disputes by private arbitration was being discussed, some sympathetic outsiders appealed to the Conference to procure the amicable settlement of a local dispute about a religious procession, which had been going on among the Vaisyas of Ajmere for some years past, and had cost them enormous sums of money. The matter was enquired into, and some of the members of the Conference undertook to act as arbitrators. The lecturers of the Conference and its papers are doing good work in disseminating its aims and objects in the community, and it is some satisfaction to find the more progressive among us often inviting our lecturers to lecture on social reform on occasions of marriages, and providing these as entertainment for their guests instead of the nautch girls of old. The ages of marriage both for boys and girls prescribed by it have the sanction of the best Sastris of these parts and are being adopted by the community. The scale of expenditure prepared under its direction is also finding favour among the community, and it is not uncommon to find people settling beforehand that marriages shall be conducted according to its rules. The old system of indiscriminately throwing away large sums of money on occasions of marriage is now gradually giving place to its employment in a more useful manner, and one of our prominent members last year set a good example of giving a part of the money he was going to spend on the occasion of his son's marriage, as a donation to the Hindu College of Benares, and another as a fund for the establishment of a female school in Delhi. Even in the latter place, which is re-

markable for its love of show and pomp, a branch of the Conference has been successful in materially reducing the expenditure on some of the marriage ceremonies, and in altogether cutting down the others. The offenders against the rules of the Association are looked down upon and in some cases a nominal penalty is also imposed upon them. The system of advertising for husbands and wives may seem new to the East, but we find our caste paper, the *Vaisya Hitkari*, generally full of advertisements from parents and guardians of both boys and girls eligible for marriage. These advertisements are always matter of fact productions, and describe the position in life of the advertiser, the age, health, education of his child, and the kind of husband or the wife he requires. Last year the Conference discussed the effect of the present system of education upon the youth of the community and it was probably due to its initiative that some very desirable changes in it were introduced by the authorities in these provinces. In order to widen the field of employment of the younger portion of the community, the Conference has set itself about having them trained in arts and manufactures in foreign countries as well as in India by those of its members who own mercantile and manufacturing or banking firms. Its orphanage and Ayurvedic dispensaries are also gaining in popularity and altogether it has a good future before it. Above all it has succeeded in rousing the *Vaisyas* to a sense of their condition both in the past and the present, as well as provided the means of inducing a feeling of affection and regard among its members, and even if it had done nothing else, that alone would have entitled it to its gratitude. I have spoken of the work of the Vaisya Conference as I happen to know it best. The work of the other caste Conferences, like the Kayastha and the Bhargava, is no less praiseworthy. If the reformers have not been able to achieve the success they deserve, it is because they have to work in a society where education has not yet made much progress among the masses, and where old but unreasonable customs are still holding their sway.

As remarked by a great writer, "custom is a violent and treacherous schoolmistress who, by little and little, slyly, unperceived, slips in the foot of her authority, but having thus by

gentle means and humble beginnings with the aid of time established it, unmasks a furious and tyrannical countenance against which none has the courage nor the power so much as to lift up his eyes." The reformer in a country like India, especially in provinces like these, has therefore to meet with great difficulty in making good his standing-place. This is a work of years, requiring the utmost patience. He has not only to be a whole man all round and have a clear conception of his aims and objects, but has also often to work unassisted, deserving little sympathy from those around him, and having generally to rely upon his own resources in his efforts to undo the work of centuries. He requires to look neither to the right nor to the left, neither backwards nor forwards, but always towards the object he has in view, and if he adheres to the well-known Persian saying of "*Himmat mardan madad Khudá*"—Heaven helps those who help themselves,—success will come to him in the end, tardily though it be. This, I believe, is the steady aim which all reformers have or ought to have in view, and I hope the day may soon come when we shall be able to show you more tangible results than we have done hitherto.

We are told that, in having so many caste Conferences and Associations, we are wasting power and are scattering force which ought to be conserved, that it will be much better, if instead of having so many separate bodies working independently, we had one Social Reform Association like this Conference. I regret I cannot subscribe to this opinion. We are not, by working in the way we are doing, perpetuating distinctions and differences which ought not to be perpetuated. On the contrary we take society as we find it, and are beginning the work of reform in the only way in which it could possibly begin, *i.e.*, from the bottom upwards. A general social reform organisation like this Conference, though most useful and necessary as an advising body cannot, from the present circumstances of the country, be a working body. All that it can do is to lay down a general programme of social reform, leaving it to each caste and community to carry it out in the manner most suited to its conditions. The number of earnest reformers in the various provinces is yet few and far between, though as time goes on we hope

to see a larger accession to our numbers, and each community shall reckon not a few but many workers in the field till the cry of social reform is re-echoed from one part of the country to the other. I need not cite for our workers the well-known saying of a Sanskrit poet, that where these six, *viz.*, exertion, courage, fortitude, intelligence, strength of character, and enterprise, are found, there even the gods are ready to offer their help. Well did the wisest Indian of his time say: "Thy sphere is action, not regard for the fruit of action."

I shall not say much on the subjects we are going to discuss. None of them is new, and they have all been very fully and ably discussed both in the press as well as on the platform, so much so that a vast amount of useful literature has grown round most of them. All that seems to be necessary is to devise practical methods for carrying out the suggested reforms. We do not, for instance, now require to be told the advantages of female education which are now being recognised by almost the whole of the Indian community, a few men and women of the orthodox school excepted. On the contrary the questions which demand serious consideration are: (1) Whether we should educate our girls on the same lines as we are doing our boys in the matter of primary, secondary and college education; if we are to do so with certain modifications, what ought to be such modifications? (2) Are we, as is the general opinion of many of our greatest sympathisers, to give our wives, and daughters, only such education in their vernaculars as is necessary for the successful management of an ordinary Indian household, or are we also to give high education to those who seek for it? (3) What are the kinds of subjects we are to teach our females, and what books are we to place in their hands?

All these questions are periodically discussed in the various reform Conferences in the country, and any suggestions from a distinguished body like this Conference will materially help the movement. In some communities fathers of boys, and boys themselves, insist upon having educated wives, and this is made a condition precedent in some marriage negotiations. Might I suggest a more universal adoption of this suggestion in order to afford greater impetus to the work of

reform? In connection with this subject, I beg to appeal to those of our countrymen who have received the benefits of a Western education to bring their knowledge to bear upon the compilation of suitable text-books for our females and thus make them sharers in their culture. For some years past we have been advertising for suitable text-books for females, and are prepared to give handsome prizes for a series of such books, but our advertisement has not yet been responded to on the part of those who are best able to give us good text-books.

The subject of promotion of the physique of our boys and girls is so closely connected with the question of raising the marriageable age that the two may usefully be considered together. The lowest marriageable ages prescribed by the various Conferences in the country have not yet been universally adopted in the community, yet the progress we have already made in this direction is very hopeful, and parents and guardians of boys, and the latter themselves, are gradually coming to recognise the advantages of marrying at a proper age. This is producing a good effect upon parents and guardians of girls also, and I submit for the consideration of all who are assembled in this Conference, that if they but determine to have their boys marry at a proper age, they will soon find some progress in the direction of raising the marriageable age of girls also. I need scarcely tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that in Western countries the lower the station in life, the earlier the age of marriage, and that among classes which aspire to rise high in the social scale marriage is delayed even up to middle age in order to have fewer children, but such as shall be more capable of succeeding in the present struggle of life in those countries. For instance among the working classes, the average age of marriage among women is between 22 and 24, and among men between 24 and 26. Among farmers the averages are 26 and 29, and among the professional classes 31 and 36. The number of confirmed bachelors among the last mentioned classes is greater than among the first two. Here in India the case is exactly the reverse. The higher the station in life, the lower the age at which children are married, with the result that we are adding every year to a population already incapable of achieving

any success in the modern struggle for existence, or swelling the number of child and girl widows dragging a life of misery, and instead of decreasing are only adding to the general poverty of the country. All indulgence in show and pomp at marriages is also due to this system of child-marriage. Reform it and you lessen the inducements to extravagance on occasions of marriage.

The question of reform in the caste system is closely connected with the questions of unequal marriages, sales of boys and girls for enormous sums of money in the name of marriage, as well as with the restrictions on foreign travels. Broaden the basis of caste by having those sub-sections of a caste which inter-dine also to inter-marry, and *vice versâ*, and you widen the circle of choice of husbands and wives and affect some reform in the system of unequal marriages, and sales of boys and girls; you would also thereby promote brotherly feeling among the members of the caste, and make them less exclusive and more devoted to public good. Many of the restrictions upon foreign travel will also be relaxed, if not removed, by reforming the caste system. Such restrictions are due more to prejudice than to any religious prohibition. The most learned Sastris in the country have given their dictum in favour of sea-voyages, but caste prejudices defy the Sastris and their Sastras. In some communities in the Punjab and parts of the North-Western Provinces such restrictions have been removed in the case of those who, on return from Europe, live and mix with their fellows, in the same manner as they did before going to Europe. In some of these communities a visit to Europe does not excite much notice. The members of those communities have come to recognise the danger of alienating the sympathies of, and throwing overboard, those who are best capable of helping them on in the race of progress by their widened knowledge and experience of foreign countries. On the other hand the latter have also come to recognise the importance of their living with their brethren and keeping themselves in touch with their own community, in preference to unsympathetic relations with foreigners.

These are some of the most important subjects we are going to discuss, and I beg most earnestly the attention of all speakers

to the importance of dealing with each of them in a practical manner. We require not only ourselves to recognise but also to bring home to our less favoured countrymen, the fact that no society can hope to prosper where artificial restrictions or class privileges prevent individuals from putting forth their best powers both to their own and their country's advantage, where the high are prevented from sympathising actively with the low and the mean, where the standard of virtue is neither the same as it was in its own past nor what it is in the most progressive nations of modern times. We have long defied the moral law. In unmistakable tones it tells us that if we aspire to rise in the scale of nations we must purify private life and effect social justice, that our safety lies only in defying it no longer. Says Tennyson :

> Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
> From out the storied Past, and used
> Within the present, but transfused
> Thro' future time by power of thought.
> Watch what main-currents draw the years ;
> Cut Prejudice against the grain ;
> But gentle words are always gain ;
> Regard the weakness of thy peers.
> Nor toil for title, place, or touch,
> Of pension, neither count on praise,
> It grows to guerdon after-days ;
> Nor deal in watch-words overmuch ;
> Not clinging to some ancient saw,
> Not master'd by some modern term,
> Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
> And in its season bring the law
> That from discussion's lip may fall
> With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
> Set in all lights by many minds,
> To close the interests of all.
> For Nature also, cold and warm,
> And moist and dry, devising long,
> Thro' many agents making strong,
> Matures the individual form.
> Meet is it changes should control
> Our being, lest we rust in ease,

We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the Soul.
So let the change which comes be free
To improve itself with that which flies,
And work a joint of state that plies
Its office moved with sympathy.

I should now conclude. Our ancestors call to us not to let the glorious inheritance they have left us rot and perish. They tell us: "You are proud of us, let your children be also proud of you. According as the generations that come bear honourable witness to your deeds, so shall your fame be." What great deeds, what great institutions, what noble manners and customs of many a nation of antiquity have passed away because succeeding generations could not maintain them in their original purity, nor improve upon them as the times required. It is now for us to prove whether those are right who believe that humanity ever advances in a course of ceaseless improvement and that the great ideals of old are no mere empty dreams, or those who slumber in the sluggish indolence of a mere animal existence and mock every aspiration towards a higher life. Such an answer can only be given by us by deserving the blessings of those who blessed their followers in these words: "May your minds be always devoted to *Dharma* during every day of your lives. That alone is man's friend in this world as well as in the next. Those who follow *Dharma* do their duty without expectation of honour or reward, though both came in the end. Let us therefore never renounce truth and duty, remembering that truth protects those who protect it and kills those who kill it."

धर्मएवहतोहन्ति धर्म्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।
तस्माद्धर्म्मो नहन्तव्यो मानो धर्म्मो हतोऽवधीत॥

Ladies and gentlemen, permit me now to thank you very sincerely for the kind attention and patience with which you have listened to these words of mine.



FOURTH PART.

Miscellaneous Papers on Social Reform.

Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, PH.D., C.I.E., on "Social Reform and the Programme of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association."

Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar delivered the following address as President of the Second Anniversary meeting of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association, held on the 27th December 1894 :—I have been all my life a schoolmaster and as such it has been my duty to castigate boys and young men. In the observations I am going to make, therefore, you may find a good deal not flattering to you nor to your taste ; but I assure you it will be said with a pure and unmixed desire to promote the real good of my country. The Hindu Social Reform Association has done me very great honour by inviting me to preside at its annual meeting. But great as the honour is, it had not a sufficient attractive power to drag me about seven hundred miles away from my closet in Poona. What I come for is to encourage the members of the Association and congratulate them on having begun real practical work in matters of social reform by taking pledges, and on their determination to withstand all the inconveniences or persecution that may result therefrom for the sake of the truth and their country's good. They have thus shown rare moral courage, and given evidence of the possession of what I call moral force. By moral

force I mean in the present case strong indignation against the evils, injustice, and even the cruelties that at present disgrace our society, and an earnest desire to eradicate them. Moral forces of this sort our race has not shown within the last twenty centuries, and we have allowed ourselves without any thought and feeling to be drifted into our present deplorable condition.

The social ideal was much higher and more rational in ancient times than it is now. I will, therefore, go into the history of the several institutions and practices which your pledges refer to. For this purpose, I propose to glance at what might be called the several layers of Sanskrit literature. The oldest layer is that of the *mantras* of the Vedas. Next in antiquity come the Brahmanas and Aranyakas or forest-chapters including the Upanishads. Then we have the so-called Sutras which deal with sacrificial matters and the religious concerns of daily life of the first three castes. Next we have the epic poems, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, and last of all the metrical Smritis or law-books and the Puranas. The point of view from which I shall consider this extent of literature is that of the critical scholar, whose object is to trace out history, and not of the Pandit, according to whom sequence of time either does not exist or is unimportant.

Now with reference to the first point about the education of women, there is no question that in the very olden times, they were not debarred from the highest education. In the list of teachers which a Rigvedi Brahman has to repeat in connection with a daily ceremony called the Brahma Yajna there are the names of three women—Gargi Vachakneyi, Sulabha Maitreyi, and Vadava Pratitheyi. The works of some of the male teachers therein named have come down to us, wherefore they were historical persons. Hence the three women mentioned along with them were also historical persons, and were teachers though there are now no works which go by their names. The first of these is also mentioned in an Upanishad, as forming a member of an assemblage of learned Rishis in which the highest problems about the world and the Supreme and individual soul were discussed, and as taking part in the debate. In the epic poems girls are represented as going through a regular course of

education of which dancing, drawing and music formed parts; they are represented as mixing freely with men and taking part in conversation on the highest subjects. Buddhistic literature also represents women as actively assisting the reform which Buddha had inaugurated, and as discussing with him points about virtue, duty and absolution. Gradually, however, their importance lessened and about the time when the dramatic literature arose, we find that as a class they were not taught Sanskrit though they could read and write in the popular languages and even compose poetry in them. Even so late as the eleventh century women were not condemned to exclusion, and were taught scientific music, as follows from a copper plate inscription recently edited and translated by me in which a queen, one of the wives of a king of the Deccan, is represented to have sung a beautiful song in an assembly composed of the highest officers of that and the surrounding kingdoms, and to have obtained as a reward the consent of her husband to give land in charity to Brahmans. The seclusion of women and their ignorance is, therefore, a custom that was introduced in later times, and the Mussulman domination contributed to render it very rigid.

Now as to early marriages, it admits of no question whatever that girls were married after they came of age. The religious formulas that are repeated on the occasion of marriage ceremonies even at the present day can be understood only by mature girls. The bridegroom has to say to his bride that she has become his friend and companion and that together they would bring up a family. It is impossible that a girl below the age of twelve can understand such expressions addressed to her. When the formulas were composed, therefore, girls had already arrived at maturity. Then again, in some of the Sutras, the bride and the bridegroom are directed to live apart from each other for a certain number of days and in some cases for a year. It is not possible that such a direction should be given, if the girl was of an age when she could not cohabit with her husband. In some of the Sutras there is an actual direction for their being brought together on the fourth day after the marriage ceremony. All this necessarily implies that the girl had

arrived at maturity before the marriage ceremony was performed. In profane literature also, we have the clearest indications that girls were married after they attained maturity. But early marriages began soon to come into practice. Asvalayana, Apastamba and others say nothing specific about the age of the girl at the time of marriage, leaving it to be understood, from the nature of the ceremonies that they were to be of a mature age. Hiranyakesen and Jaimini expressly prohibit a man's marrying a girl before she has arrived at puberty. After the completion of his study, the student, they direct, shall marry a girl who is *anagnika*, *i.e.*, not immature. Evidently when these Rishis wrote, the practice of early marriages was coming in; but they set their face against it as irrational. The authors of later Sutras, such as Gobhila and Manu, after giving general directions as regards marriage, lay down that it is best to marry a girl who is *nagnika*, *i.e.*, one who has not arrived at puberty. They only thus recommend early marriages. This shows that when they lived and wrote the feeling against late marriages had grown strong. Of the writers of Metrical Smritis, Manu is not quite decidedly opposed to late marriages, but other writers prescribe early marriages only under religious penalties. In this manner late marriages gradually went out of use and early marriages became general. When the custom of such marriages became established, the evils arising from them were not perceived by anybody, and gradually in this part of the country in particular, the age at which boys and girls were married became lower and lower, until now a female infant nine months old is tied in holy wedlock to a male infant about a year old. Here there is an instance of the fact that our people through the influence of custom lost all sense of the utter absurdity of the practice.

The practice of re-marriage of women also prevailed in the olden times. The Aitareya Brahmana contains a statement which may be thus translated: 'Therefore one man may have several wives, but one woman cannot have several husbands simultaneously.' This shows that polygamy was in practice, but not polyandry. And to exclude that only and not a woman's having several husbands at different times, the writer uses the

word 'simultaneously.' Thus a woman can have several husbands at different times. In the performance of the funeral ceremonies of the keeper of the sacred fire, the practice prevailed of making his wife lie down with his dead body, but before setting fire to the latter, the wife was made to rise and a verse was repeated the sense of which is : 'Rise up, O woman, to join the world of the living, thou liest down with this man who is dead ; come away, and mayest thou become the wife of this second husband, who is to take hold of thy hand.' This verse occurs in the Rig Veda Samhita and in the Taitireya Aranyaka. In the latter it is explained by Sayana in accordance with my translation, but in the former he explains the word *Didhishu*, which occurs in it, not as a second husband as he does here, but 'as one who impregnates,' and makes it applicable to the first husband. European scholars of what might be called the 'etymological school' also explain the word in the latter sense, but the word *Didhishu* acquired by usage the sense of 'a second husband,' and it is not proper to set aside that sense and explain it etymologically as 'one who impregnates.' And another school of Vedic scholars, who attend more to usage, is growing up in Germany, and I feel confident that they would explain the word and verse in the manner in which Sayana explains it in the Taitireya Aranyaka. This verse is in the Atharva Veda preceded by another, the sense of which is 'this woman wishing to be in the same world with her husband lies down by thy side, O mortal who art dead, following the ancient practice ; grant her in this world children as well as wealth.' If he is asked to give her children after his death, they must be children from another husband. In another place in the Atharva Veda, it is stated that 'she, who after having had one husband before gets another afterwards, will not be separated from him and if she and he perform the rite called Ajahanchandana.' Here you have a clear statement about the re-marriage of a widow. In later times, the practice began to go out of use, and in the time of Manu it was restricted to a child-widow. But the condition of re-married women was considered lower than that of the wife of a first husband. Still however in two other metrical Smritis occurs a text, in

which women under certain circumstances are allowed to marry a second husband and the death of the first husband is one of these circumstances. This shows that even in later times, the practice of widow-marriages prevailed in some parts of the country, while the existence of texts prohibitory of it in the Puranas and some Smritis shows that it had gone out of use in others. Widow-marriage was a thing by no means unknown even at such a late period as the beginning of the twelfth century of the Christian era, for, in a work written by a Jain in 1170 of the Vikram era corresponding to 1114 of the Christian era, a story is told of a certain ascetic sitting down to dinner along with other ascetics. The other ascetics rose up when he sat down and left their seats. He asked them why they had done so, upon which they told him that he had committed an irreligious deed in having taken the vow of an ascetic, before going through the previous condition of a married life. They then directed him to go away and marry a wife. He went away and demanded the daughters of men belonging to his caste in marriage. But as he had become an old man, nobody would give his daughter to him, whereupon he went back to the ascetics and told them of what had occurred. They then advised him to marry a widow, and he went away and did accordingly. In connection with this, the same text about the re-marriage of women, which I have quoted above, is given as occurring in their Sastras. But in still later times the practice became entirely obsolete.

There prevailed among us, you know, the practice of burning widows on the funeral piles of their dead husbands, till it was put a stop to in 1830 by the British Government. Now in the Rig Veda Samhita there is no trace whatever of the existence of this practice, and it is supposed by a German scholar that it was adopted by Indian Aryas from another Aryan race, with whom they afterwards came in contact; for it did generally prevail amongst some of the cognate European races such as the Thracians. But the Vedic Aryas had given it up; and that it once prevailed among them and was afterwards given up is indicated by the second of the two texts which I have quoted from the Atharva Veda in which it is said: 'This

woman following the ancient custom lies down by thee, O mortal.' Thus you will see that the custom which had gone out of use amongst the Vedic Aryas was revived later on about the time, when the metrical Smritis were written through the influence of the practice of other races.

The corruptions which the more rational practices of olden times underwent must have been due to such foreign influence and also to other causes. A few centuries before the Christian era and a few after it, India was exposed to the inroads of foreign races from the West, some of which afterwards settled in the country. The lowering of the status of women generally must have been due to the influence of these new settlers. But other causes also may have been in operation ; for instance, the fact that when girls remained unmarried for several years after puberty a few sometimes went wrong, must have contributed a good deal to the introduction of the practice of early marriages. But the great point to be noticed is that the excesses to which even a good motive led, did not strike our people. Thus the later practices of female infanticide and Kulin marriages in Bengal must have been due to the feeling natural in parents to marry their daughters into a respectable family. But it is not everybody that can get a husband for his daughter in a rich or respectable family, and to marry her to a man in a lower condition of life or belonging to a low family was considered disgraceful, and rather than suffer such a disgrace, the Rajputs destroyed their female infants, and the Bengali Brahmans gave their daughters to a man even though he had wives already ; and he came to have a number of them, often so many as 125. Here you will find the inability of our people to perceive the cruelty or the absurdity of a practice, when they are under the influence of an idea sanctioned by custom than which nothing is more sacred.

One social institution, and that perhaps the most important, remains to be noticed. In the very early times the system of castes did not prevail, and it seems to have developed about the end of the Vedic period. It arose from a difference of avocations or professions. The feeling of a father that a son should follow his trade or calling is natural, and it is this

which in the beginning, at least when unchecked by other influences, gives rise to separate castes. The word Brahman signifies in the older portion of the Veda a hymn composed in praise of a deity. There were some men, who were skilled in the composition of such songs. In return for these songs the gods, to whom they were addressed, were believed to confer favours on the singers, and on those Kings and Princes for whose sake they were composed. Singers such as these were therefore always in requisition, whenever a god had to be propitiated, and it became a lucrative trade. And fathers bringing up their sons in that trade, there came to be in course of time a certain number of families devoted to the avocation of composing these songs and singing them in the worship of gods. The members of these families became 'Brahmanas' and thus they came to be recognised as a separate caste. Similarly the descendants of princes, chiefs and soldiers followed the avocations of their ancestors, and came to form a caste of warriors. The cultivators of soil constituted the Vaisya caste. When the Aryan race left the Punjab and spread over Northern India, some of the aboriginal races were incorporated with their society, and formed the caste of Sudras. Thus there were four castes, but the rules about these were by no means so rigid as they afterwards became. Even in the time of the epics, the Brahmans dined with the Kshatryas and Vaisyas, as we see from the Brahmanic sage—Durvasa—having shared the hospitality of Draupadi, the wife of Pandavas. A member of a higher caste could marry a woman belonging to any of the lower castes, there were also many instances in which a man belonging to a lower caste married a woman from the higher castes. Amongst the composers of the Vedic hymns there were some such as Kavasha Ailusha, who did not belong to the Brahman caste, but was still admitted into it on account of the faculty they possessed. What caste has become in the course of time you need not be told. The smallest difference as regards locality, trade, or profession and practice was enough to constitute a separate caste, and thus four original castes have grown to four thousand, and there are no inter-marriages or inter-dining between any two of these. These four thousand castes form so many different com-

munities and the phrase 'Hindu community' is but a geographical expression. The evil results of such a system on the social, religious and political condition of a country cannot be overstated.

Thus then you will see that our social institutions and practices were healthy and rational in the olden times, and they have latterly become corrupt and irrational through some cause or other. But the most wonderful thing about the matter is that the excesses which in the downward course our race was led to, did not attract attention and rouse the moral sentiments or excite moral indignation ; and women were committed to the flames, crying child-widows were forcibly disfigured and condemned to a solitary and unhappy life, little girls were sacrificed at the hymenal altar in numbers, female infants were murdered and there was nobody to protest against these cruelties as Hiranyakshin and Jaimini once did against early marriages. On the other hand, these later practices acquired the forces of custom. Custom is a god whom our race devoutly worships, and religious sanction was accorded to these practices by the insertion of texts in the later books. The moral sentiments were not strong enough to burst through the thick veil of custom and assert the claim of truth, justice and humanity. The question now is whether with our minds liberalised by English education and contact with European civilisation, we shall still continue to worship custom and be its slaves, and allow our moral sentiments to remain dead and unjust, and cruel social practices to flourish. If our education does not lead us to protest against them, that education must be considered to be merely superficial. Gentlemen, we have in the course of our history not emancipated ourselves from the tyranny of our political potentates and from the tyranny of custom, our social potentate. Fortunately now the British Government has freed us from the former and granted us rights and allowed us a large measure of freedom ; but not satisfied with that we are seeking for greater freedom. Shall we then with the spirit of freedom thus awakened stoop slavishly to the tyrant custom, and bear all the cruelty that it inflicts upon us ? If we do, the spirit of freedom that we think

is awakened in us is illusive and delusive. No! if we have to march on along with the progressive races of the West, with whom we are now indissolubly united, our social institutions must improve and become more rational and just. There can be no advancement politically, I firmly assert, without social and moral advancement. And by seeking the several reforms that we have in view, we certainly shall not be taking a leap in the dark, for the condition of our society once was what we are now endeavouring to make it. This is the spirit in which we should approach the question—of sweeping away from our institutions the corruptions of later ages.

It has often been suggested that on the strength of the texts in the old books we should convince the orthodox leaders of our society of the reforms we seek being sanctioned by the Sastras, and endeavour to introduce them with their aid and consent. But such a thing to my mind is an impossibility. Our old books do not constitute the real authority in religious matters that we obey. Custom has been and is our authority,—custom is our religion. Texts creep into our religious books, as I have already observed, sanctioning current customs and even when they do not do so, our Paudits, who in later days have developed a great deal of logical acumen, prove by means of their subtle arguments customary practice to be the only one sanctioned by our religious books. The later development of the Hindu religious law has proceeded just on these lines. We must therefore begin the work of reform in spite of the orthodox leaders, trusting simply to our awakened moral consciousness and to the fact that it is not an entirely new thing that we are going to introduce.

I am therefore glad that you have begun the work in earnest and taken certain pledges. These pledges are good as a first instalment, though that about caste does not signify much in accordance with the standard prevailing in my part of the country. No one can excommunicate us in Western India for eating food prepared by Brahmins in the presence of members of *most* of the lower castes. I do not wish you, however, to obliterate all distinctions at once. Caste has become so inveterate in Hindu society that the endeavour to do so will only result

in the formation of new castes. But the end must steadily be kept in view. We must remember that caste is the greatest monster we have to kill. Even education and intercourse as regards food does not destroy it. The feeling that we belong to a certain caste and are different from those constituting another caste returns again and again in a variety of shapes, even when we have broken through the restraints imposed by caste as regards eating and drinking, and if not studiously driven away will ever keep us apart from each other and prevent the formation of a homogeneous nationality. I will ask you to consider whether a pledge not to be guided by caste considerations in the disposal of your patronage if you happen to be placed in a position of influence and in the whole of your ordinary practical life, and to act in all matters except inter-marriage and inter-dining as if you belonged to one community, will not be a more effective pledge. You might also gradually pledge yourself to dine with members of sub-castes.

Your pledges about concubines and nautch women are also highly commendable in my eyes. They show a correct appreciation of one of the problems before us. One who takes liberties in these matters cannot claim that he has respect for his wife's personality or for womankind generally. Our aims about the elevation of women and the assignment to her of her proper position in society, from which she may exercise a humanising influence over us all, cannot be realised, unless respect for her becomes a part of our nature. Again looseness in these matters deteriorates the character of a man and this deterioration must produce evil effects in other respects also. Your determined attitude in this matter therefore and the earnest efforts you have been making during the last two years to propagate your views have been to me the source of the deepest gratification, and deserve all the commendation that is possible for me to bestow. Moral rectitude here as elsewhere is the essential condition of progress all along the line.

As to your pledge to bring about widow-marriages and to admit the re-married widow and her husband to your table—that indeed is a bold step that you have taken. You will for a time be subjected to persecution, but I hope you have prepared

yourself for it, and if your educated countrymen who have not had the courage to join you will but sympathise with you and not aid the orthodox, I have little doubt that this reform itself will gradually become a custom and cease to be looked down upon. The great thing we have to remember is that we should go on practising what we consider to be good without making much ado about it. It will then come into general practice, and growing into a custom will become sanctified. For our previous history has, I again affirm, shown to my mind that custom is the spiritual potentate that sanctifies, and sanctifies even horrid deeds.

The Association you have started renders me hopeful. There is nothing like it on our side; and everywhere among educated natives there is lukewarmness about social reform. The minds of some are not liberalised at all, others think that the reforms we have in view are good but flatly refuse to do anything to aid them; while there are a great many who are supremely indifferent. I agree with my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade in thinking that there has been an awakening. But he has allowed us the option of being satisfied or dissatisfied with it. I exercise the option and declare that I am dissatisfied. The lamp has been lighted; but the light is flickering and in view of the attitude of even our educated brethren, it is just as likely to my mind that it will be blown out as that it will blaze. In these circumstances the endeavours that you are making are a great source of comfort and encouragement, and I earnestly hope you will continue your work as boldly as you have begun it, and that you will find imitators both in your Presidency and in other parts of India, and our country's cause will make a real advance.

The late Mr. Mano Mohan Ghose on "Social Progress in Bengal during the last Thirty Years."

The late Mr. Mano Mohan Ghose delivered the following address at a meeting of the National Indian Association in 1895, the Right Hon'ble Lord Hobhouse presiding:—LADIES AND

GENTLEMEN,—I confess I feel very diffident after Lord Hobhouse's kind introduction, as I am afraid you will be greatly disappointed if you expect me either to read a paper or deliver a speech on the present occasion. I think I ought to explain that, being on a short visit to this country and having been connected with this Association almost from the beginning, I felt I could not possibly decline the honour which Lady Hobhouse was pleased to confer upon me by inviting me to address the members of this Association upon some topic likely to be interesting to them. I must state at the outset that I have had no time whatever to write a paper upon the important subject on which, according to the notice, I desire to make a few remarks. The subject I have chosen is a wide one consisting of various topics, on each of which a good deal could be said. My remarks, however, will be of a somewhat desultory character and confined to three or four of the most important heads connected with social progress in Bengal during the last thirty years. There are two limitations which I have felt it necessary to prescribe to myself. The first is that my remarks will be confined to social progress among the Hindus in the Lower Provinces of Bengal. It is right that I should confine my observations to that part of India only with which I am familiar, and particularly to the Hindus of Bengal, as my experience of other races is exceedingly limited. The second limitation has reference to the period of time during which I have myself tried to be a careful observer of what has been going on around me. It is now nearly thirty years since I returned to India after my first visit to England as a student, and I therefore desire to limit my remarks to that period of time of which I can speak personally.

In order to be able rightly to estimate the character of the progress which has taken place during thirty years, it is necessary to bear in mind the state of things which existed formerly, and the difficulties which the people of Bengal had to encounter. It is equally necessary to have regard to the character and ideas of the people as they existed when the English were first brought into contact with them. Unless this is borne in mind it would be impossible rightly to guage the character of the social revolution which is taking place amongst us. Having re-

gard to the state of things which existed in Japan, for instance, or to the advance recently made by the people of that country, the progress made by the people of Bengal may not be regarded as very considerable. But it would be scarcely right to institute any comparison between the people of Bengal and those of Japan for obvious reasons. The Hindus, as you are aware, have always been a conservative people, wedded to their own social institutions, and have always been opposed to the introduction into their country of foreign institutions. As I have said, I propose to touch only on some of the salient points connected with my subject, and I must confine myself to three or four heads, as it is impossible to do full justice even to any one of them in the course of a single hour.

The first point I wish to dwell upon is the Hindu Caste system ; I propose next to point out to you the progress made by the women of Bengal—and in this connection I wish to make a few observations on the marriage system, and certain other social customs which have undergone considerable changes. Before I conclude I shall have to point out some of the difficulties which are still in the way of further progress ; and in this connection I shall have incidentally to refer to the most important question, in which, I know, the members of this Association are deeply interested—namely, the social relations existing between the European and Indian races.

It should be borne in mind that the peculiar caste system of India constitutes the most formidable difficulty in the way of the introduction of European civilisation among the people of India. In religion, manners, habits, ideas, and I may say, almost in every particular which binds man to his fellow-creatures, the two races are widely apart. According to the old Hindu ideas, the very touch of a foreigner was pollution. This was the state of Hindu feeling when English schools and colleges were first established, and no wonder therefore that the Hindus should have suspected that the English Government was animated by some ulterior purpose in inviting them to send their sons to English schools for education. As you are aware, the peculiarity of the Indian caste system has reference chiefly to restrictions imposed upon the people as

regards their food and drink. No food or drink touched by a foreigner could be taken by a Hindu. These restrictions were of so rigorous a character that in course of time people strongly objected to eat any vegetable not indigenous to the country, but introduced by foreigners. A remarkable illustration of this is to be found in the fact that not very long ago Hindus could not be persuaded to eat potatoes. I am assured that, incredible as it may seem at the present day, my own grandfather, who died in 1817, could not be persuaded to sanction the eating of potatoes by members of his own family. It is curious that nearly 600 years' association with Mahomedans only tended to strengthen this feeling of antipathy towards the foreigner though the Hindu and the Mahomedan lived side by side. As I had occasion to point out some years ago, it is a curious and suggestive fact that, apart from its flavour or smell, Hindus strongly objected to the use of onion, because it was supposed that the Mahomedans had introduced it into India as an article of vegetable food. Even now there are Hindu widows who, on the same ground, object to cauli-flowers and cabbages. Such, then, was the state of things when the English first attempted to try this great experiment which is now going on. You have all heard that crossing the seas entailed upon the Hindu loss of caste; this was because he could not be expected to do so without departing from the strict rules of food prescribed for him. But at the present day, these caste rules have become so elastic, that, so far as Bengal is concerned, a man may now live in England for years, and on his return to India be looked upon a good Hindu provided he does not, by his own conduct, in any other way forfeit the confidence and the respect of his own people. During the last thirty years there have been many men who have returned from England, and the majority are now regarded as members of the Hindu community, though they have not thought fit to perform any of those expiatory ceremonies which were at one time considered requisite for the purpose of getting back into caste. Of late years young men belonging to some of the most orthodox families in Calcutta have been received back into their families on their return from England, and many are now living in English style, without visiting England, who are

for all practical purposes reckoned as good Hindus. This is a state of things which 30 years ago could not have been predicted. There have been even a few instances of inter-marriage among persons of different castes, but inter-marriage strikes at the very root of the entire social system of the Hindus. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that there have not been many cases of inter-marriage. As regards the restrictions with reference to food, which formed the greatest difficulty in the way of the progress of the Hindus, it is satisfactory to note that they have been completely relaxed.

I now come to the position occupied by Hindu women. I believe and I have always believed, that it is impossible for any race in the world to rise in civilisation if one-half of their population is kept in subjection and ignorance. As you are aware, in Bengal Hindu women had for centuries been kept in a state of seclusion; this may have been partly due to Mahomedan influence, but whatever was the cause, thirty years ago the position of the Hindu women in Bengal was most deplorable. The state of things is altogether different now. As regards the seclusion of Hindu women, the change has been of a marvellous character. The introduction of railways and the necessities of travelling have done much towards bringing about this change. I well remember being much struck about thirty years ago, on my return to Bengal, at the number of palanquins and screens at every railway station on the arrival of a train to enable Hindu ladies to get into or out of a train without being seen by men. But at the present time almost at every railway station in Bengal you will see Hindu women of the middle classes walking to and from a train without any palanquin or screen to hide them. As regards the education of our women, we have also made rapid progress. There was a time when it was thought that the education of women would necessarily lead to the breaking up of Hindu homes and of Hindu society. At the present moment there are female schools in almost every village in the country, and in the city of Calcutta we have a College for Hindu women, supported by Government, where Hindu ladies are qualifying themselves for the highest University Honours. In that respect I may say we have gone further even than Eng-

lish Universities, for we have now a considerable number of Hindu ladies who have received degrees from the University of Calcutta. In Bethune College there are at the present moment Hindu ladies of different castes boarding together, and receiving the highest education which our University can impart. In this connection I shall go back a little and refer to the history of this institution as you will find it exceedingly interesting. The boarding department of the Bethune College owes its existence to the philanthropic exertions of an English lady, who, a little more than twenty-three years ago, went to Bengal and laid the foundation of the first Boarding School for Hindu girls. This lady was Miss Akroyd (now Mrs. Beveridge), who, with the help of Lady Phear, was able to start a boarding school for Hindu women. In those days most of the pupils were married women or widows and some of them had to be induced by means of scholarships to attend the school. This institution was subsequently taken up by the Government of Bengal, and amalgamated with the Bethune School, which was before the amalgamation an infant day school. At the time of its amalgamation, in 1878, there were about half-a-dozen boarders, and it was then very much doubted whether it would be wise to keep up an institution which received so little support from the Hindu community. The Government of Bengal was, however, persuaded to erect a building, at a considerable cost, for the residence of these boarders, and when this building was completed not long ago, it was considered doubtful whether even one-half of the accommodation provided would be required by the pupils. The accommodation provided was for forty-six pupils, and it may be interesting to note that just before I left for England in September last, it was reported to me, as Secretary of the institution, that not only the entire accommodation had been filled up, but there were half-a-dozen further applications for admission, which for want of room I was obliged to refuse. The number forty-six no doubt sounds a small one amongst so vast a population, but considering the difficulties which had to be overcome I cannot but look upon it as exceedingly encouraging. It is curious to find that many of the Bengali ladies who are now seeking admission

to this boarding school do not hesitate to describe themselves as Hindus by religion. I mention this, lest you might be led away by the idea that this school consists entirely of girls belonging to the Brahmo Samaj persuasion, though undoubtedly this latter class have chiefly availed themselves of the benefits of it. I well remember the time when our hostess, Lady Hobhouse, used to encourage the pupils of this institution by offering scholarships to deserving young widows, with a view to induce them to continue in the school; and it must be exceedingly gratifying to her to hear that at the present time not only is it not necessary for us to attract boarders to the school by means of such scholarships, but the fees prescribed are in every case being readily paid. While pointing out the marvellous progress which the women of the middle classes are thus making in point of education, I must guard against my remarks being understood to imply that female education has permeated to any considerable extent among the masses of the people.

The advance made by the women of Bengal is intimately connected with the marriage customs prevailing in the country, and I should like to make a few observations on that subject. I am aware that the ordinary idea in England on the subject of our marriage laws is that Hindus are given to polygamy. This, I may be allowed to say, is a very serious error. It is true that there are no penal laws prohibiting bigamy or polygamy by men, but any one who has an intimate acquaintance with the people of Bengal must know that the Hindus are essentially a monogamous people. Bigamy is no doubt sanctioned by law in certain cases, but except among the Kulin Brahmins it is never practised. The feeling is getting stronger everyday in the Hindu community against bigamy, and I venture to assert that there is, numerically speaking, perhaps less bigamy committed in Bengal than is surreptitiously committed in countries where the law makes it a criminal offence. The question of early marriage or rather child-marriage is also intimately connected with the education and advancement of our women. As regards child-marriages, though I regret I cannot say that they have been discontinued, there has undoubtedly been a remarkable progress of late years. The history of the

Bethune School, to which I have already alluded, shows also the progress which has been made in this respect. I remember the time when there was scarcely one pupil in that school above the age of ten years unmarried. But at the present moment all the boarders I have referred to are single women, and there are among the day pupils many girls who, although they have attained the ordinary marriageable age among Hindus, have been left unmarried. This fact also indicates to my mind great progress in the ideas of the people on this subject.

As regards the domestic habits of the people, I may say that, having regard to the tenacity with which Hindus cling to their ancient customs, they have also undergone a marked change, and I think it may be said generally that the progress made by the people of Bengal of late years has been of a very encouraging and hopeful character. My remarks have necessarily been confined to the Hindu community. As regards the progress made by our Mahomedan fellow-subjects, I feel that I am not competent to speak with any degree of confidence. I hesitate to speak on a subject regarding which I know so little, and especially as I should be sorry to say anything likely to be misunderstood by my Mahomedan friends. There is one point, however, on which I feel strongly, as it is intimately connected with the question of female improvement. I mention it in the hope that if I am mistaken in my inferences and opinions I may be set right by some one or other of the Mahomedan gentlemen whom I am glad to see present to-night. It is generally believed that it was the influence of the Mahomedans which led to the seclusion of Hindu women. As regards Hindu women, I have already said that they are throwing off gradually the restrictions which were imposed upon them, but I wish I could say the same with regard to the Mahomedan women of Bengal. I am well aware of the fact that female schools for Mahomedan girls have been established by the Government, but what the result of that experiment has been I am not in a position to state. There is one fact, however, which has struck me very forcibly—namely, that residence in this country among Englishmen has had generally the effect of

changing the view of young Hindus on the subject of the position that women ought to occupy in society. Whether a similar change has been effected in the ideas of Mahomedan gentlemen who have visited this country is a question which I should like to be answered by some of my Mahomedan friends. There has not been, I regret to say, one single instance of a Mahomedan gentleman educated in this country who, on his return, has thought fit to break through the restrictions of the Zenana. In one or two notable instances Mahomedan gentlemen whose ideas have undergone a great change on this subject have solved the problem by marrying English wives, but that is a solution which is scarcely calculated to improve the status and position of their own countrywomen.

Coming back to the progress which Hindu society is now making in Bengal, I have to advert to a matter which threatens, in my judgment, to be a formidable difficulty in the way of further progress. Of late years there has been a decided reactionary tendency among a large and influential section of my educated countrymen in Bengal, whose well-meaning efforts have been directed towards opposing any further influx of European civilisation into the country. The growth of the class of revivalists, or reactionaries, is in my humble opinion partly due, no doubt, to the existence of a feeling of extreme veneration for the ancient institutions of the country, bordering almost upon conceit. If I felt sure that this desire to revive the ancient civilisation of India did not owe its origin to that feeling of contempt which Hindus entertain for European institutions, and, above all, to a dislike of the English people, I should be disposed to respect the patriotic views of this class of reactionaries, however impracticable I might consider their scheme to be. Our ancient civilisation is undoubtedly a legitimate matter for pride, and nothing would be more deplorable than if English education were to extinguish in our minds that just and national pride which every Hindu ought to feel in the thought that he belongs to a race which not only has the credit of being the most ancient in civilisation, but can boast of a language and literature indicating intellectual culture of a marvellous character. But this feeling of pride must not be

permitted to go beyond its legitimate limits. It must not be permitted to generate conceipt, the result of which must be to obstruct all real progress. I am constrained to make these remarks because I have been given to understand that this unfortunate wave of reaction has even reached some of our young men resident in this country. There is now springing up in India, under the guise of reviving the ancient civilisation of the Hindus a feeling of deliberate opposition to the English people and all their social institutions. This is much to be deplored, because I foresee that the result of such a feeling must be to throw back the hand of progress very considerably. These revivalists have been reinforced, I regret to find, even from this country: they have welcomed amongst them Theosophists and English leaders, whose well-meaning utterances can have only the effect of further embittering the unhappy feelings now existing between the two races. If English friends who go to India dilate upon the dark side of modern civilisation, they naturally attract a great deal of applause from certain sections of my countrymen, who applaud not because they have any knowledge themselves of the character of European civilisation, but because all tirades against the English people find a natural response among those who are brought up to dislike them. If I only thought that it was possible for us now to do without the help of England, I should be the first to sympathise with these well-meaning people; but believing as I do that it will take many generations yet before we are likely to be in a position to dispense with the assistance which England and her civilisation can give us, and knowing also full well that for our own sakes it is absolutely necessary at the present moment that we should know a great deal more of England and her institutions than we at present do, I cannot help pointing out to my countrymen, so many of whom I see before me to-night, that the course which these re-actionaries are following is fraught with grave danger to the future of our country. It is not permitted to me to encroach upon the domain of politics, but it is only fair to my countrymen that I should not hesitate to point out that the fault is not entirely on their side. I can fully understand and make due allowance for the feeling of revulsion in the minds of

some of my countrymen at what they rightly or wrongly imagine to be the attitude of the English people towards them, I will go further and say that I believe the English in India have not helped us in this great work of social reform in the way they might have done; and I will further not hesitate to declare my conviction that one of the chief causes of this unfortunate re-actionary movement on the part of my countrymen is the attitude of the English people themselves. As one of the most important objects of this Association is to bring about a better feeling between the two races, I venture at some length to dwell on this topic. To my mind it is one of the most difficult and at the same time most important questions connected with the future of India. The gulf which unhappily exists between the two races is no doubt greatly due to the misunderstanding which exists on both sides. England has done great things for India, but I am disposed to agree with a writer in the *Contemporary Review* for October—the Rev. Mr. Bonnar—who, after twenty-five years' residence in India, points out that, in spite of the great things which the English have achieved in that country, their rule has been a signal failure in one important respect, and that is, they have failed to convince the people of India that they possess any sympathy for them. If the people of India could be made to feel that the English out there, sympathised with them in this great struggle for social reform, the work, I believe, would be carried out much more speedily than it is now being done. It is necessary that while on the one hand my countrymen should be a little less sensitive than they at present seem to be, on the other hand our English friends who go to India should not only be a little more tolerant of foreign ways and customs, but should even go out of their way to show their sympathy to the people among whom they live. I am one of those who firmly believe in the ultimate success of the grand and unique experiment which England is now engaged in trying in India. That experiment consists in engrafting a Western civilisation upon an Eastern stock. There are undoubtedly great difficulties in the way, but I have no misgivings whatever regarding its success if we could only feel assured of the sympathy of the English people.

Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, LL.D., C.I.E., on Female Medical Aid to the Women of India.

In seconding the First Resolution moved by the Hon'ble Mr. (afterwards Sir Andrew) Scoble at the Third Annual Meeting of the National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India, held on Wednesday, the 8th February, 1888, the Hon'ble Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar spoke as follows :—

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It is nothing but a pure sense of duty, tardily awakened, which has forced me against myself to appear before you this evening, and presume to open my lips before this august assembly, presided over by His Excellency the Viceroy, and graced by the presence of Her Excellency the Lady-President of this Association, and of other distinguished personages. My consolation, in this predicament, is that the Hon'ble gentleman, who has moved the Resolution for the adoption of the Report of the Central Committee of the Association, has fortunately so exhausted his subject that he has left nothing for his seconder to add to what he has already said. All that I have now to do, indeed, all that I can do, is to add my feeble testimony to the flood of testimony already received, and is being daily received, of the good and noble work which this National Association for the supply of Female Medical Aid to the Women of India is doing, and is calculated to do for a long time to come. As you are aware, Ladies and Gentlemen, the necessity for such an Association has arisen from the existence in this country of a social custom prevalent both amongst Mahomedans and Hindus, which has led to the seclusion of women, forbidding them to show their faces to men other than their nearest and dearest kith and kin, a custom which has curbed and cribbed our society, arresting its due development by withholding from it the healthful and benignant influence of its own fairest portion. It would be idle, at this moment, to speculate on the origin of this custom. It is enough for philanthropy to recognise the evils which have come on in its train as its most inevitable consequences. Of these evils, besides the one I have just alluded to, the most stupend-

ous, the most heart-rending, the most universal, is that which directly affects the fairest portion of both Hindu and Mahomedan communities. The seclusion of women in this country for centuries has been synonymous, as was happily expressed by an Hon'ble speaker on this very subject last year, in this hall,—the seclusion of women in this country has been synonymous with their exclusion from the comfort and relief of medical aid in sickness and from knowledge of the conditions of a healthy life. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, realise for one moment, what this state of things means. It means that, for centuries nearly half the population of this vast continent had scarcely had any medical aid, certainly, no proper medical aid, in even sickness which, unrelieved, either costs life or entails lifelong suffering. Even at this very moment, when I am speaking to you, countless are the Indian homes which are the scenes of the acutest agonies of disease, which might be relieved, of premature death which might be averted, by timely and skilful medical treatment. And yet, strange to say, the necessity of counteracting this evil was not even thought of in this country till recently. And this thought did not originate with those who are directly concerned. It came from abroad. And the reason is not far to seek. The same custom, which has consigned the fair sex within the prison walls of the Zenana, has prevented them from undertaking the severer duties of life, duties which require rough training in the beginning for their due performance, duties which, up to this moment, are looked upon as peculiar and proper to the sterner sex. I must confess, and it is in expectation of absolution at your hands, gentle Ladies, that I make this confession of a grave sin against you,—I confess that, in the pride of my sex, I had believed that man was more fitted for intellectual work, woman for the exercise of the gentler affections. I had erred with the sublime poet of the world in believing as absolute that—

> "For contemplation he and valor formed,
> For softness she and sweet attractive grace."

But stubborn facts, which recent times have unfolded, have convinced me that while woman's heart is really and vastly superior to man's, her intellect, if allowed fair play, can com-

pete on equal terms with his. Nay, in some instances, her natural acuteness and the exquisite fineness of her temperament are likely to give her the advantage even in matters intellectual. And now my humble belief is that in the matter of ministering to the sick, her heart and her head alike contribute to render her eminently qualified. Whether she will ever approach the stronger sex in high surgery, whether she will ever display the coolness and the nerve that have been displayed by the gentleman surgeon on the operating table, whether, indeed, it is desirable that she should, I will not stop here to discuss. She can well leave this really manly part of the medical art to the gentleman surgeon. She has enough and ample field in the exercise of the purely physician's part, and even this I would limit to the treatment of her own sex. For the treatment of her own sex, she must be infinitely more competent than man. The disorders of the organisation peculiar to women can only be understood by women. And here I am bound to point out how evident and triumphant is the confirmation of the scientific character of the glorious and beneficent system of medicine I have the honor and the privilege to practise, a system which administers for diseases peculiar to women medicines that have been proved by female powers. Differently constituted as man is, he can only indirectly understand diseases peculiar to the other sex, and, therefore, as a matter of course, cannot fully sympathise with them. This is no reproach. The Son of God himself had to take on our form, had to become one of us, to know the magnitude of our sins, and fathom the depth of our misery. I, therefore, venture to think that the necessity of lady-doctors, not only for the women of India, but for womankind all over the world, having thus been demonstrated, we are now in a better position to understand the supreme necessity and realise the full importance of the scheme, which has been inaugurated, and is in fair working order, for the supply of female medical aid to the women of our country, under the auspices of the highest lady in the land and of the Sovereign Lady of the Empire. Efforts in the same direction were in existence before the advent in this country of H. E. the Lady-Founder of this Association. But those efforts were

of a solitary character, few and far between, "local in aim and limited in extent." It was reserved for her noble genius "by a bold attempt," indeed by one of the boldest attempts that have ever emanated from an undaunted will, guided by a philanthropic heart, "to rouse the conscience and the imagination of the public at large, and so to bind together in one common effort all parts of the Empire and all classes of the community." Well might we, men and women, take our lesson of untiring energy and unflinching devotion in the carrying out of a righteous cause from the bright example of the Countess of Dufferin. The third annual report of the Central Committee with its accounts, which is now laid before you, bears ample testimony to the literal truth of what I say. I have, therefore, great pleasure in seconding the Resolution which has been moved for the adoption of the Report, and the confirmation of the accounts therein contained.

In proposing the First Resolution for the adoption of the Report at the Sixth Annual Meeting of the National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India, held on the 9th February, 1891, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar spoke as follows:—

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, YOUR HONOUR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Her Excellency the Lady-President and the Central Committee of this the National Association for supplying Femal Medical Aid to the Women of India, have done me the honor to ask me to move the adoption of the Sixth Annual Report which has been just so ably presented to you, and it is due to myself to tell you that while I feel proud of the unusual honor done to me, that feeling is associated with its antithesis, a sincere sense of my own utter unworthiness of the honor, by virtue of my incompetency to discharge the duties which the honor demands of its recipient. Had it not been for the august source whence the honor has come, I should certainly have hesitated to accept it with its heavy responsibility. I have however no other alternative now than with all humility to submit, in full reliance upon your indulgence for my shortcomings.

This the Sixth Annual Report of the Association is the biggest of all that have been published, and I am happy to be able to say that its increased size is indicative of the increase in the magnitude of the sphere of its operations. A comparison of this with the previous Report shows that in place of *fifty* local and district associations and committees affiliated or attached to provinces and in touch with the central committee, there are now over *a hundred*; in place of *ten* lacs spent in the erection of hospitals there have been over *twelve*; in place of *two hundred thousand* of women who had received medical relief there were over *four hundred and eleven thousand*; in place of *thirty* there were *forty* Lady Doctors and Assistant Surgeons and Female Medical Practitioners working in connection with the Fund; and in place of *two lacs* which the local associations and committees had in actual and in promise, there are now actually invested *three lacs and thirty-nine thousand*, in hand *thirty-five thousand rupees*, and in donations promised of over *a lac and seventy thousand*. Now this is progress beyond all expectation, and testifies to the deep and genuine sympathy with which Her Excellency the Marchioness of Lansdowne has taken up the duties of Lady-President, and also to the loyalty and earnestness and energy with which those under her are working for the Fund.

So far therefore as the Central Committee and its Lady-President are concerned the Report is eminently satisfactory. The Association, far from suffering on the departure of its benevolent Founder and first most energetic President, has made immense strides under her successor who has shown herself in every way worthy of the mantle of benevolence and practical good work which has fallen on her and which she has taken up with all the earnestness of genuine conviction. The Report is also satisfactory inasmuch as it shows that the Lady-Founder on her retirement from India has not only not forgotten the noble work which she inaugurated with such unexampled enthusiasm and devotion, but has infused new life into it by working for it with the same undiminished enthusiasm and devotion in her native land, and drawing towards it the active and substantial sympathy of the womankind of England, the noblest of their type in all the world.

So far then as the originators and workers of the Association are concerned the Report is more than satisfactory, and it gives me very great pleasure to move its adoption, fully confident of your unanimous acceptance of my proposition.

But before I sit down, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have one question to ask, and that is a very serious one. Is the Report satisfactory so far as those are concerned who are really interested in this movement of benevolence and charity in the highest sense of the word? Now who are they who are really interested? Who, but we the natives of India? Does the Report show that we have done our duty to ourselves, and to those who have pointed out to us what that duty is? It would be ingratitude, with the fact before us of the magnificent and princely donations that have been made to the Fund, to say that some of us have not. But would it not be a violation of truth to say that we as a nation have awakened to a lively sense of that duty?

Boast as much as we may of our ancient civilization, there is the unerring index, the condition of our women, which points to the melancholy fact that we have not only not advanced from the point attained by our ancestors in ancient time, but that we have receded much from it, that we have not only not profited by a literature, a philosophy and a religion which were marvels and models for the rest of the world in their days and which are the admiration of even the most cultured moderns, but that in every respect we are showing ourselves unworthy of that noble heritage. Look at the condition of woman in Vedic and even in Puranic times, and look at her condition now, and then say if we have not fallen from our high state.

Whatever the cause, about which it is now idle and unprofitable to speculate,—whatever the cause, it is a positive but most lamentable fact that for centuries the fairest of our community have been immured within the prison walls of the zenana, shut out not only from the light of day, but from what is equally essential, the light of knowledge, and subjected to the tyranny of a most degrading and ruinous custom, the custom of child-marriage. The result has been most disastrous to the very life of the nation. And, what is worst and most painful of all, under the mistaken idea of obedience to the dictates of

religion the fair sex has been patiently enduring the acutest agonies of disease, preferring relief in the hands of the great Deliverer himself to relief in the hands of the physician if of the opposite sex. It is only the professional man who can understand what this state of things means, what the amount of suffering is which is so heroically endured, what the consequences in most cases life-long in the shape of chronic uncured and incurable ailments are, and how almost countless are the fatal terminations from all these causes combined, most of which might be averted by timely medical aid. This state of things has been going on in our midst from time almost immemorial, and we have been complacently looking on as if all was right, as if no intervention on our part was necessary. And this state of things would have gone on unremedied till probably the end of time, had it not been for the divine attribute of sympathy in woman. A knowledge of this melancholy state of things in her Indian Empire reached the Queen-Empress, and with that wide and prompt sympathy which has been the charm of all her life, Her Majesty lost no time in commending the matter to the Countess of Dufferin before her departure for India. That recommendation has borne fruit in the foundation of the most magnificent and the most needed charitable institution in the world, the National Association for the supply of Female Medical Aid to the Women of India.

In this fact of this National Association owing its very existence to the direct initiative of our Sovereign, and its maintenance and development chiefly to the philanthropy of our noble sisters of England, we ought to read the two-fold character of the duty that is now imposed upon us, duty to our mothers and sisters and daughters and wives, and duty to our Sovereign and the womanhood of England not only for having pointed out to us that duty but in heping us with head and heart and money to enable us to perform that duty. Now, I think it would be quite superfluous on my part to tell you that the best way to discharge the second duty is by fulfilling the first one to the best of our ability.

Is any incentive necessary to prompt us to do this first

duty, our duty to our own mothers, and to our own sisters and our own daughters and our own wives who are or are to become mothers in their turn, all of whom we have been hitherto most culpably neglecting with a selfishness which has its origin in the pride of our sex? If any incentive is necessary, I should ask you, my countrymen, to find it in the glorious words pregnant with the highest wisdom and the deepest religion attributed to the Founder of Islam—Aljannatu táhtá aqdáme ummahátekum: "Paradise is beneath the feet of your mothers." Woman is essentially mother, and verily, a mother is the incarnation of God's love on earth. In neglecting women we do in reality neglect our mothers, and thus neglect our very salvation. We have been guilty of this sin all along our later national life, and the world has to see whether we are to continue in it, or whether we should attempt to purge ourselves of it. Let us raise woman from the subordinate position she now occupies to the co-ordinate position she ought to occupy, let woman with man be in reality one flesh, one heart and one soul, as God has designed, and then all will be right, and there will be no room for foreign intervention.

Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar's letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal on the Age of Consent Bill.

The following is the full text of the letter addressed by Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar to Sir John Edgar, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, in reply to his letter inviting his opinion on the Age of consent Bill:—

To SIR JOHN EDGAR, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,

Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 306 J, dated the 26th January, asking my opinion on the provisions of the Bill now before the Legislative Council of India to amend the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1882, and have to apologize for the delay due to continued illness in forwarding my reply.

2. My opinion on the custom of early marriage prevalent in this country is before the public since 1871, when, in reply to a circular letter of the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen requesting opinion on the age of puberty of native girls and their minimum marriageable age, I gave my views on the subject in a rather lengthy letter to the Babu, and in an article, both of which were published in my Journal of Medicine (*Calcutta Journal of Medicine* for July 1871).

3. In the *letter* I said :

"Early marriage, in my humble opinion, is the greatest evil of our country. It has stood, so to say, at the very springs of the life of the nation, and prevented the normal expanse of which it is capable. And I am inclined to date the fall and degeneracy of my country from the day Angira uttered the fatal words, and those words became law, or custom which is stronger and more mischievous than law itself :—

अष्टवर्षा भवेद्गौरी नववर्षा तु रोहिणी ।
दशमे कन्यका प्रोक्ता अत ऊर्ध्वं रजस्वला ॥
तस्मात् संवत्सरे प्राप्ते दशमे कन्यका बुधैः।
प्रदातव्या प्रयत्नेन न दोषः कालदोषतः ॥

"The girl of eight years is Gauri (*i.e.*, of the same elevated character and purity as Gauri or Parvati, the goddess Durga); of nine, Rohini (one of the wives of the moon); of ten (a simple) virgin; of above that age, a woman who has menstruated. Hence the learned should give their daughters in marriage whenever they attain the age of ten, and they will not be liable to the fault of not marrying their daughters in due time."

"I have no doubt in my own mind that high and luxurious living and early seeing and knowing of child-husbands and child-wives, favored by the anxiety of fond parents to see their little ones become fathers and mothers, are the chief causes of the forced puberty which we so much regret in our female no less than in our male children.

"The advocates of early marriage urge that the custom is nothing else than the expression of a stubborn necessity which has arisen from the fact of early pubescence in this country. I think, however, we are warranted, by what has been already

adduced, in concluding that early marriages have been the cause of early pubescence. The primary object of marriage is no doubt the production of healthy offspring, and physiologically speaking it ought not to be consummated before the ages when the offspring is not calculated to be long-lived or healthy. The commencement of the menstrual function is no doubt an index to the *commencement* of puberty. But it is a grave mistake to suppose that the female, who has just begun to menstruate, is capable of giving birth to healthy children. The teeth are no doubt intended for the mastication of solid food, but it would be a grievous error to think that the child, the moment he begins to cut his teeth, will be able to live upon solid food. Our anxiety, on the contrary, should be that the delicate masticatory organs are not injured or broken by giving the child too hard food. So when we see a girl is beginning to have the monthly flow, we should not only anxiously watch its course and regularity, but should also watch the other collateral developments of womanhood to be able to determine the better the time when she can become a mother, safely to herself and to her offspring. For it should be borne in mind that while early maternity results in giving birth to short-lived or unhealthy children, it at the same time seriouly compromises the health of the mother also. I can speak positively on the subject from personal experience. A host of complaints from which our females suffer life-long or to which they fall early victims, arise from early pubescence and early maternity.

"This view of the state of things imperatively demands that, for the sake of our daughters and sisters, who are to become mothers, and for the sake of generations, yet unborn, but upon whose proper development and healthy growth, the future well-being of the country depends, the earliest marriageable age of our females should be fixed at a higher point than what obtains in our country. If the old grandmother's discipline could be made to prevail, there would be no harm in fixing that age at 14 or even 12, but as that is well-nigh impossible, or perhaps would not be perfectly right and consistent with the progress of the times, I should fix it at 16."

4. In the *Article* I said :

"We know the disastrous effect the custom has produced in the shape of deterioration of race, and it will be culpable perversity on our part, if informed of the remedy we fail to apply it, through prejudice or pride. The generations, that are being born under the present system of things, in the eye of modern science and of our own ancient Ayurveda, are no better than abortions and premature births."

"The development of the sexual instinct, in the human subject, is not immediately consequent on the development of the physical signs of puberty. That development is, to a great extent, dependent upon moral training or education, and may be delayed or hastened for a considerable time after or before the menstrual function declares itself. We have seen children, who have been born and bred in scenes of sexual immorality, manifest the instinct at an age long anterior to the first menstruation, and we have seen grown up females, who have been born of parents jealous of their children's morals, remain unconscious of it long after the attainment of physical puberty. And this very fact would point to the imperative necessity of the radical reform for which we are contending. Early marriages have led to precocious offsprings, and this state of things must be done away with at once and without hesitation. And in fact, parents ought to be ashamed of themselves if they prove unequal to the task of watching over the morals of their children."

"It is true that at each menstrual period there is chance of conception, but it is equally true, as was pointed so early as in the days of Susruta, that the product of conception at an age, when the mother herself has not attained her full development, is not likely to be a normal human being. The object of Nature, in the union of the sexes, is no doubt the production of offspring for the perpetuation of the species. But in order that the species may be truly perpetuated, it is necessary that the offspring should be healthy. And whatever therefore interferes with the production of healthy offspring must be looked upon as frustrating the intention of Nature, and therefore cannot be regarded as the dictate of sound religion. On the contrary, in our humble opinion, it should be condemned

not only as unscientific, but because of that, as irreligious also."

5. I repeated these views at the Social Conference recently held and over which I presided; and I gave expression to them in my lecture on the "Influence of the Physical Sciences on Moral Conduct" delivered at the Town Hall under the presidency of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, when I said:

"The burning topic of the day in my country, which is convulsing Hindu Society and has roused, I am glad to say, earnest patriotism, is the perniciousness of the custom of child-marriage, a custom which has been the most efficient cause of the ruin and degeneracy of the Hindu race. I believe it would be impossible for this custom to endure, if the leaders of our society or better still, if every man and woman of our community, were made to see in the light of physiology what child-marriage in reality means, if they could be made to fully realize that it not only inevitably and to a living certainty prematurely exhausts the couples who are forced to reproduce before the proper season, before they themselves arrive at maturity, but by virtue of that give rise to offspring who must necessarily share all the immaturity and attendant weakness and incapacity of the parents, and that a succession of such generation means progressive degeneracy and imbecility of race."

6. While I was thus strong and uncompromising in my condemnation of the custom of child-marriage, I must confess I was opposed to legislative interference in the matter. In the article in the *Calcutta Journal of Medicine* from which I have given extracts, I said:—"It is beyond our province to say whether legislative interference in such social matters is likely to be beneficial or not. We for ourselves hate coercive legislation. And we would leave such questions to be decided by the good sense of the community." Again: "The only other objection that can be entertained is that the contemplated abolition of early marriage being against a time-honoured custom, ingrained in the mind of the Hindu Community as having all the authority of religion, however false the connection between them may now be shown to be, will be attended with serious

social inconveniences, which it will not be possible even for enlightened and educated men to endure. It is not possible to effect a sudden change in the fabric and organisation of any society, far less of Hindu Society. We admit the force of the objection, and we are therefore afraid of the consequences of legislative interference, should the legislature consent to interfere. But we do not see any ground of its not interfering when the interference is for a particular section of the community and prayed for by that section."

7. At the time I penned the above I was not aware that the Indian Penal Code had made some provision however slight for the protection of child-wives against outrages by brutal husbands, by constituting intercourse by a husband with a wife under ten years of age rape in the eye of the Law and therefore punishable accordingly. The protection is very slight indeed, as intercourse by a husband with a wife under ten is a a very rare occurrence. The legislature, evidently as a first attempt, dealt very leniently with the customs and usages of Hindu Society, and therein in my humble opinion made a mistake. For the very large class of little ones who really needed protection was left to the tender mercies of the brutal custom. This large class is constituted by girls between ten and twelve, at which age from precocious development, itself the product of the custom of child-marriage, the function of menstruation very frequently appears, and then the opportunity is seized of declaring the little ones as being fit for becoming mothers, and are then by the twisting and torturing of doubtful texts, and by the ignoring of the more positive and authoritative texts of our Shastras, forced to become mothers, to the great detriment of the health of mother and offspring, which means to the great deterioration of the race itself.

8. Under these circumstances I hail the proposed amendment in the Penal Code as legislation in the right direction, in the direction not only of justice but of humanity to a large class of the community who by the singularity of their position cannot protect themselves, indeed, can never think of protecting themselves; a class who, while they are the victims of a most pernicious custom, are not only not allowed to see through their

miserable condition, but strangely enough are made to believe that their lot is the happiest that could be imagined, ordained by religion as the goal to heaven.

9. It is true that to constitute intercourse between husband and wife rape under any circumstances looks like an absurdity and an anomaly, subversive of the very sacred character of marriage itself, at least jars upon common sense and æsthetics. And it would certainly be better if the object aimed at by the proposed amendment, could be attained by direct legislation raising the minimum age of marriage. But as that seems to be impossible just at present, there is no other alternative than the amendment proposed. We have courted the anomaly by bringing ourselves to our present condition by a perversion of the highest dictates of our truly holy religion.

10. It is a matter of extreme regret that the question has at last to be settled by legislative interference, and not by "the good sense of our community," to which I had appealed twenty years ago. The "good sense" displayed by those of my countrymen who are against the Bill has been such as to drive every well-wisher of his country to the uttermost depths of despair as to the possibility of any good coming out of that "good sense." As genuine Hindus mindful of true religion, I had expected that my countrymen should have taken this opportunity to pray for the raising of the minimum marriageable age, and thus win the honor and credit of removing an anomaly from the Penal Code. Instead of this, is it not heart-rending to see how they are wasting and perverting their ingenuity to bolster up rotten texts to show to the world that the Hindus for centuries, in the exercise of marital rights and under the sanction of so-called religion, have been committing the gravest and the most brutal outrages on immature female children! and that they must have this accursed custom continued and perpetuated, or their religion is in danger, and their way to heaven obstructed! I have been compelled to speak thus of the opposition, because in my opinion it is impossible to imagine a more silly, shameless and suicidal argument than that of *Garbhadan*, that is being advanced by them. It is a silly argument, because the function of menstruation being of a periodical

character, it is impossible to say from the first shows of blood that it is indicative of menstruation at all, or at least of normal menstruation. It is a shameless argument, because even assuming that the first show of blood is indicative of the commencement of normal menstruation, it is impossible (for reasons better imagined) in the majority of cases to enforce the Shastraic injunction (admitting, which I do not, that the injunction *is* Shastraic) without actual force, that is, without rape in the literal sense of the term. The argument is suicidal, because in attempting to vindicate our religion, by its perverse interpretations and forced inferences it paints that religion in the most hideous colors. And what am I to say to those of my professional brethren who have not hesitated to lend the weight and the influence of their name and their authority in this unrighteous cause? It is much to be deplored that they have not paid more regard to their Science. It is a sad spectacle they have presented to the scientific world, that with all their attainments in physiology and the allied sciences they do not see any evil consequences from the union of child-wives with child or adult husbands, that they expect mature offspring from immature parents!

11. This is my opinion on the principle of the Bill. I am not a lawyer competent to make any suggestions as to its penal provisions. This much, however, I am bound to say that as, except for the peculiar circumstances of the country, the enactment which constitutes intercourse between husband and wife rape, is an anomaly, the punishment, unless the intercourse is attended with personal injuries, should be much lighter than in the case of ordinary rape; it should, in my humble opinion, in no case be imprisonment. In other words, it should be so provided that the punishment should never be such as to be calculated to embitter the future relationship of the married couples.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
MAHENDRA LAL SIRCAR.

BAIDYANATH,
4th March, 1891.

Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar on the Earliest Marriageable Age.

(*Reprinted from the "Calcutta Journal of Medicine," July*, 1871).

In private conversation and public discourse young Bengal has been assiduous in showing off his enlightenment by lamenting over the evils which teem in his unfortunate country. Of these evils that which has furnished material for the loudest talk is early marriage. As usual with young Bengal, we have had hitherto talk and nothing more. The monster custom, which has enervated our race so that, from having been one of the strongest, we are now the weakest in the world, has defied mere talk. Young Bengal, no doubt because of his half-heartedness, has failed in making any impression upon it, and would seem to have dropped the subject in despair.

Under these circumstances we cannot but be thankful to Babu Keshub Chunder Sen for reviving the subject and attempting to deal with it with his characteristic energy. The way in which he has proceeded with it strikes us as the very best, because it is the most prudent, we had almost said, truly scientific way. The question, strictly speaking, is not primarily religious but physiological. Its religious bearings must be determined by the verdict of physiology. This Babu Keshub Chunder Sen has well understood, and accordingly the first thing he has done has been to address a circular letter to several medical gentlemen of Calcutta, requesting them to give their opinion on the conditions and development of puberty as observed in native females, and on the earliest marriageable age consistent with the well-being of mother and child and society. We publish under our *Gleanings* the circular letter along with the replies thereto of the medical gentlemen addressed, and we would express our opinion, that whatever might be the out-come of the agitation, there cannot be the slightest doubt that it will hereafter be looked upon as the first practical turn which was given to this most important subject. The opinions themselves form a most valuable contribution to the literature of the subject and deserve a permanent record.

We are sorry to find that the agitation has met with opposition from quarters from which at least we did not expect it.

The only ground of the opposition that we can discover is that the agitation has emanated from Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. Some of those very young men, who were hitherto loud, nay, boisterous in decrying the evil of early marriage, are now found in the ranks of the opposition laughing at and ridiculing the very inquiry itself. We do not here allude to the opposition by the so-called Adi Brâhmos to the Brâhmo Marriage Bill as prayed for by the so-called progressive Brâhmos. We allude to the silent and therefore more effective scoffing of neutral parties, who pretend to be more educated and enlightened than any of their countrymen. We medical men have nothing to do with sects and sectarianism. We gave our opinion on this momentous subject on true physiological grounds, irrespective of the manner in which they were likely to be received by particular sects or individuals. And it is really irritating to see that such a broad question, affecting the weal and the welfare of the whole Hindu race, should have been viewed by any from any other than the most philanthropic standpoint.

It is beyond our province to say whether legislative interference in such social matters is likely to be beneficial or not. We for ourselves hate coercive legislation. And we would leave such questions to be decided by the good sense of the community. All that we want is that the pernicious restraint, which is being exercised by a monstrous custom and a falsely-interpreted religion, be removed.

The advantages of early marriage as urged by its advocates are :—

1. That the marriage being accomplished before puberty is established, all possibility of sexual immorality is prevented; and

2. Facility being offered by it to sexual intercourse just when it ought to begin, that is, with the commencement of puberty, the intention of nature in the union of the sexes, namely, reproduction, is fulfilled, so that there would be no possibility of loss to the world from failure of a single birth.

These views seem to have derived no inconsiderable strength from the dicta of some crack-brained Rishis. Thus Vashist'ha says—

पितुर्गेहे च या कन्या रजः पश्यत्यसंस्कृता ।
भ्रूणहत्यापितुस्तस्याः सा कन्या वृषली स्मृता ॥

The father commits the sin of fœticide, if his daughter, while yet unmarried, menstruates in his house. Such a virgin is called a vrishali (a term of reproach).

And Pait'hinashi goes so far as to declare that,

यावन्नोद्भिद्येतेस्तनौ तावदेवदेया। अथ ऋतुमती भवति दाता प्रतिग्रहीता च नरकमाप्नोति पितृपितामहप्रपितामहाश्च विष्ठायां जायन्ते । तस्मान्नाग्निकादातव्या ॥ ३३ ॥

Before her breasts appear, a girl should be given in marriage. Both he who gives in marriage, and he who receives, a damsel after the appearance of her menses, sink to hell; and the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather of each are again born in ordure. Therefore should a girl be married at an age when she can go about naked.

The objections urged, therefore, by the advocates of early marriage against the abolition of the custom, are (1) that it will tend to increase sexual immorality, and (2) cause a negative loss to the world in the shape of failure of birth. Hence parents that neglect to marry their children before puberty, are considered to be liable to the sin of murder of unborn human beings that might otherwise have been born!

The first objection must be acknowledged to have some force. The intercourse of the sexes is a physiological necessity, and it may be said that if delayed too long after the attainment of puberty, it may become a fertile source of sexual immorality. Our own statistics, it may be urged, point to twelve as the average age at which the menstruation and therefore puberty commences in this country, and therefore it may be argued, the age of marriage should not be fixed higher than this. To this we reply, that it is not early marriage by itself that we regret so much as early pubescence. Our object is, as indeed it should be that of all true philanthropists, to endeavour to prevent the development of early pubescence, which leads to such lamentable deterioration of race. And as we have shown, we believe, conclusively, that early pubescence is the result of

early marriage. We contend that by striking at the root of the latter we can succeed in preventing the development of the former. So that the dread of the increase of sexual immorality consequent upon the abolition of early marriage, is altogether groundless.

This dread is groundless for other reasons. The development of the sexual instinct, in the human subject, is not immediately consequent upon the development of the physical signs of puberty. That development is, to a great extent, dependent upon moral training or education, and may be delayed or hastened for a considerable time after or before the menstrual function declares itself. We have seen children, who have been born and bred in scenes of sexual immorality, manifest the instinct at an age long anterior to the first menstruation, and we have seen grown up females, who have been born of parents jealous of their children's morals, remain unconscious of it long after the attainment of physical puberty. So that the objection to the abolition of child-marriages, if earnestly made, would look very little creditable to our social and domestic economy—would in fact show the rotten state of the moral foundation of our society. And this very fact would point to the imperative necessity of the radical reform for which we are contending. Early marriages have led to precocious offsprings, and this state of things must be done away with at once and without hesitation. And in fact, parents ought to be ashamed of themselves if they prove unequal to the task of watching over the morals of their children. Unless they can do that, they are unworthy the name of parents, and should not have made themselves so—an argument in itself powerful in favor of the measure now being discussed.

The second objection is merely sentimental, if not altogether puerile, and would seem to have been based, if at all, upon a mere superficial knowledge of physiology. A deeper acquaintance with it will succeed in removing it altogether. It is true that at each menstrual period there is chance of conception, but it is equally true, as was pointed out so early as in the days of Susruta, that the product of conception at an age, when the mother herself has not attained her full development,

is not likely to be a normal human being. The object of Nature, in the union of the sexes, is no doubt the production of offspring for the perpetuation of the species. But in order that the species may be truly perpetuated, it is necessary that the offspring should be healthy. And whatever therefore interferes with the production of healthy offspring must be looked upon as frustrating the intention of Nature, and therefore cannot be regarded as the dictate of sound religion. On the contrary, in our humble opinion, it should be condemned not only as unscientific, but because of that, as irreligious likewise.

The only other objection that can be entertained is that the contemplated abolition of early marriage being against a time-honored custom, ingrained in the mind of the Hindu community as having all the authority of religion, however false the connection between them may now be shown to be, will be attended with serious social inconveniences, which it will not be possible even for enlightened and educated men to endure. It is not possible to effect a sudden change in the fabric and organisation of any society, far less of Hindu society. We admit the force of the objection, and we are therefore afraid of the consequences of legislative interference, should the legislature consent to interfere. But we do not see any ground of its not interfering when the interference is for a particular section of the community and prayed for by that section.

We would deem it a misfortune to the country, if the agitation, inaugurated by Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, be allowed to subside without its producing the desired effect upon the mind of the community, if the note of warning unanimously given by some of the leading medical gentlemen of Calcutta be unheeded. We know the disastrous effect the custom has produced in the shape of deterioration of race, and it will be culpable perversity on our part, if informed of the remedy we fail to apply it, through prejudice or pride. The generations, that are being born under the present system of things in the eye of modern science and even of our own ancient Ayurveda, are no better than abortions and premature births. What can be expected of such human beings, ushered into the world under such unfavorable circumstances? How can they be expected

to compete in the hard struggle for existence, not to say, for intellectual and moral superiority? Why talk any longer of education? What can education do with such subjects? Education is merely a directing power. But the energies and the forces must already exist in order that the directing power may succeed in leading them to healthy results.

Our orthodox community, if they are consistent, ought to yield and adopt the contemplated reform. They ought no longer to rest on doubtful and suspicious texts, when the verdict of common sense and physiology is backed by such high authorities as Manu and Dhanwantari. In religious matters the authority of Manu is unanimously acknowledged to be above all. Why then should Vashist'ha and Pait'hinasi have the preference? If our orthodox community really have at heart the extinction of the Hindu race, they could not have invented a surer way of accomplishing their object than what they have done in following the custom of child-marriages. But if they wish that the once glorious Hindu race should re-assert its place in the family of nations, should contribute to the progress and well-being of the whole human race, then they ought to see by the light of science that the custom of early marriage is suicidal in the extreme. We therefore appeal to the patriotism and the philanthropy of our orthodox community. We appeal to their veneration for their sastras. And we hope that they have not become dead to all the high and holy instincts of human nature. We hope they may yet shake off the shackles of prejudice and superstition which have been lying heavy upon them and preventing them from lifting up their heads in the atmosphere of intellect and morals.

MARRIAGEABLE AGE OF NATIVE GIRLS.

Circular letter of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen to certain Medical Men.

To

Dr. Norman Chevers, M.D.
Dr. J. Fayrer, M.D., C.S.I.
Dr. J. Ewart, M.D.
Dr. S. G. Chuckerbutty, M.D.

Dr. D. B. Smith, M.D.
Dr. T. E. Charles, M.D.
Dr. Chunder Coomar Dey, M.D.
Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, M.D.
Tumeez Khan, Khan Bahadur.

INDIAN REFORM ASSOCIATION,
1*st April*, 1871.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honor to solicit the favor of your opinions on a subject of great importance to the Native community in India. There is no doubt that the custom of premature marriage, as it prevails in this country, is injurious to the moral, social and physical interests of the people, and is one of the main obstacles in the way of their advancement. Owing to the spread of education and enlightened ideas the evils arising from this institution are beginning to be perceived, and there is a growing desire to remedy them. Those, however, who are alive to the importance of this reform, feel great difficulty in determining the marriageable age of Native girls. It seems necessary, therefore, that competent medical authorities should be consulted in the matter, and their judgment made known for the guidance of the Native community. I beg therefore respectfully to request, you will be pleased, after a careful consideration of the facts that have come to your knowledge, and of the climate and other influences which govern the physical development of women in tropical countries, to state what you consider to be the age of puberty of Native girls and their minimum marriageable age.

Trusting you will kindly forgive the liberty I have taken in thus addressing you,

I have the honor to be,
Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

Replies to the above Letter.

[FROM DR. S. G. CHUCKERBUTTY.]

14, *Chowringhee Road, 1st April*, 1871.

In reply to your letter of this date, I beg to say that the usual sign of puberty in a girl is the commencement of menstruation which occurs as a general rule in all countries between the ages of thirteen and fourteen, though in some cases it may come on earlier or later. The best standard for comparison will be the Native Christian girls on the one hand and European girls on the other, for in respect of marriage they adopt the same rule. I am not aware that there is any practical difference between these two classes of girls as to the age of puberty. The Hindu and Mahomedan girls, from the custom of early marriage, attain to *forced* puberty at an earlier age. This should therefore never influence our opinion as to what is the proper age for puberty under normal circumstances.

But although menstruation may occur at 14 and fruitful marriages may take place at that age, the minimum age according to English law for marriage is 16 with the consent of parents, and a girl is not ordinarily supposed to be capable of being independent till she is 21 years old.

There are various reasons for this practice, the principal object of which is to give a girl sufficient time for education, moral training, and ripe judgment.

In the case of Native Christian girls the same practice is observed with benefit, and I fail to see why any other practice should be adopted in the case of other classes of Native girls. It is a vicious motive that as soon as a girl menstruates she must be married. It is not done in any civilised country, nor should it be done here. The practice of abstinence which the deferment of marriage imposes on a girl is more beneficial to mankind than its reverse, *i.e.*, early marriage.

S. G. CHUCKERBUTTY, M.D.

[FROM DR. FAYRER.]

3*rd April*, 1871.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 1st April, 1871, and in reply to say, that I have much

pleasure in giving you my opinion on the important subject concerning which you seek information.

I consider that the minimum age at which Native girls should be married is 16 years, and I believe it would be well, as a general rule, that marriage should be deferred to a later period, say to 18 or 20 years of age.

The fact of a girl having attained the period of puberty does not by any means imply that, though *capable*, she is *fit* for marriage. Physiological science, common sense and observation all teach that an immature mother is likely to produce weak and imperfect offspring. Before the parent gives birth to a child she should herself have attained her full growth and a much more complete development and vigour than can be looked for in female children of 10 to 14 years of age. I am told that in Bengal marriages do frequently take place at these very early periods of life.

I am speaking of the subject now only in its physical aspect; of the other disadvantages, moral, social and domestic, I need say nothing.

They are so obvious that they must forcibly present themselves to the notice of all the highly educated, thoughtful and intellectual natives of Bengal, among whom, it is to me a marvel that such a pernicious practice should have so long been permitted to obtain.

You have my most cordial sympathy in a movement which, if carried out, will do more physically to regenerate and morally to advance your countrymen and women than almost any other that your zeal for their improvement could promote.

J. FAYRER, M.D.

[FROM DR. J. EWART.]

5th April, 1871.

I am of opinion that the minimum age at which Hindu women should be encouraged to marry, would be after and not before the sixteenth year. But the race would be improved still more by postponing the marriage of women till the eighteenth or nineteenth year of age.

JOSEPH EWART.

[FROM DR. CHUNDER COOMAR DEY.]

152, *Amherst Street*, 6*th April*, 1871.

In the absence of all statistics, it is hard to say precisely when our girls arrive at puberty, but my impression is that they generally do so between 11½ and 13 years.

Their minimum marriageable age is, I believe, 14 years.

CHUNDER COOMAR DEY.

[FROM DR. CHEVERS.]

Medical College, 8*th April*, 1871.

The question conveyed in your circular of the 1st instant regarding the age of puberty of native girls, and their minimum marriageable age, is certainly one of great practical importance, and you will see that I have thus regarded it in my work on Medical Jurisprudence in India. The general opinion among Physiologists is that, all collateral circumstances except those of climate being equal, all women would reach puberty at about the same age. If, however, there does prevail in India an idea that a crime equal to that of child-murder is incurred whenever menstruation occurs previous to marriage, it becomes difficult to obtain statistics showing the range of ages at which *naturally* Indian women would attain puberty. It would perhaps, be well to obtain some statistics of the ages at which puberty was reached by some hundreds of carefully brought up widows of *child*-husbands.

This has never been attempted, I believe, and such a table would be valuable to science and of valid aid to the excellent purpose which you have in view. The Mahomedan law has frequent allusions to the principle that puberty sanctions marriage, and, doubtless, Bengal would make a great step in advance, if parents would admit and act upon the rule that marriage allowed before the establishment of puberty, even should that change be delayed until the 17th or 18th year, is contrary to the law of nature. Still this is not enough. It stands to reason that a wife ought to be a person whom the least observant would declare to be a "woman" and not an

immature "child." Therefore, if safe child-bearing and healthy offspring are to be regarded as being among the first objects of marriage, this rite ought seldom to be allowed before the 18th year, the 16th year being the minimum age in exceptional cases. I shall be happy to communicate with you further on this subject, especially should you be able to obtain the statistics which I have suggested.

NORMAN CHEVERS.

[FROM DR. D. B. SMITH.]

I was much obliged to you for your note of the 15th and for the 4 copies of the printed Circular which you were good enough to send me.

With regard to the subject of "Too early marriage," I believe it to be one of great importance socially and politically. Unfortunately it is almost as difficult as it is important, inasmuch as its consideration brings us face to face with deep problems in physiology and political economy.

It is no easy matter to get at the *facts* upon which arguments should alone hinge in such a matter.

Thousands will no doubt confidently assert that the practice is pernicious to the last degree, whose judgment is based on mere hearsay, and who have never taken the trouble to go into the enquiry carefully. I am afraid that trustworthy scientific observations and statistics as to the exact age of puberty are very scanty in India. Again the minimum marriageable age is not easy of determination.

How is it to be decided? I am myself inclined to think that it should (as far as physiology is concerned) somewhat closely correspond with the complete development and solidification of the bony skeleton. The exact period at which this occurs in India requires careful enquiry. Few men (so far as I know) have paid special scientific attention to it, and yet such opinions only are of any real value.

The early betrothal system and the bringing together of persons of immature age must be bad, as involving a disturbance of imperceptibly gradual sexual development and as

lighting up, what in medical physiology might be called, an unnatural 'Erythism.' I should be glad indeed to be familiar with and to understand all the exact social and religious grounds upon which the practice has been adopted and followed in India, and to read the arguments by which they can best be met.

It appears to me that any attack made against an institution might possibly do more harm than good, unless it is very well thought out, determined and overpowering, and unless it rests upon masses of incontrovertible facts and investigations of a precise scientific character.

With these, I dare say, some good might be done, particularly if a number of leading and thinking men would bring forward some arguments.

The great difficulty appears to me to collect facts of real value. I confess that at present I am personally not in possession of many such facts.

But the subject is one which interests me greatly, and I shall be only too glad if in any way it lies in my power to further the objects of the Circular, or to assist you in the rectification of what is, I believe, one of the physical and social evils which tend to sap the vigor of Indian communities.

I shall be very glad if you will keep me acquainted with any thing that is being done in this matter.

D. B. SMITH.

[FROM DR. T. E. CHARLES.]

Calcutta, 4th May, 1871.

The question asked about the precise age at which girls arrive at puberty in Bengal is one which it is not possible to answer by fixing any given date as that at which puberty commences. Neither in this nor in any other country can puberty be said to arrive at a given date, as whatever date is taken, though it may truly represent an age at which many girls menstruate, must necessarily fail to include the cases of those who menstruate a year earlier or later, and constitute

a class so numerous as perhaps to include as large a number as the one to whom the date chosen is applicable.

Sushruta fixes the date of menstruation in India at "after the 12th year." The inquiries of Baboo Modusudun Goopto led him to believe that menstruation usually began after the 12th year, or at the beginning of the 13th year. I regret that I have not collected any statistics on the subject, and can only record my impression from all I have seen that both of the above authorities have fixed the date a few months earlier than I would feel inclined to do. If I were forced to name any single date, I would state that the *end of the 13th year* would more correctly represent the state of the case as now met with in Calcutta. I would have it clearly understood however that such is only an impression, and does not deserve that implicit confidence should be placed on it. I have heard of very numerous instances of menstruation occurring during the twelfth year, and many during the eleventh. Before this date menstruation is not rare, but still deserves to be regarded as exceptional, much in the same light, in fact, as similar cases are looked on in colder climates. I have heard of many girls not menstruating till long after the completion of the thirteenth year. Instances delayed till the completion of the fifteenth year are of such frequent occurrence that I never regard them as exceptional. Instances of menstruation delayed till the 16th, 17th, and 18th year are met with. Goodeve tabulated six such cases out of ninety instances, and a seven which had not begun to menstruate at 20.*

I would beg to be allowed strongly to insist on the fact, that the beginning of menstruation should not be taken to represent the marriageable age. It is true that taking generally, this may be said to be the sign that a girl has arrived at the age at which she may conceive. It is an undoubted fact, however, that out of many girls living in the married state at the time that menstruation begins, very few do conceive for many months or even years after that function has become established. I believe that though this event may be taken to represent *commencing* puberty, a girl ought not to be taken as having arrived at puberty till various changes in her organisation, which take

place gradually and occupy a considerable period, have been fully completed. I have no data on which to determine how long these changes occupy, and therefore cannot assign any date after the first menstruation, as the one at which puberty should be considered as completed.

It is also of great importance that the fact should be kept prominently in view, that there is a broad distinction between the age at which it is possible for a child to conceive and that at which it is prudent in a medical point of view that she should be allowed to become a mother. I have seen many mothers in India of fourteen, instances of early maternity are not rare; but when I meet with a mother under fourteen, I look upon her as an exception, though Baboo Modusudun Goopto has tabulated five such cases out of thirty-seven women among whom he made enquiry. Though I have seen so many mothers at fourteen as to look on the occurrence of maternity at that age as the rule rather than the exception, I uniformly regard such instances of early child-bearing as a misfortune. I am fully convinced that the evils attendant on child-bearing at such an early period are much greater than when the bodily frame of the mother has arrived at more perfect maturity, and consider that every endeavour should be made to prevent children becoming mothers at fourteen. Constitutions shattered by early child-bearing cannot be made to appeal so strongly to the intellect of others who have not been witnesses of the extensive mischief caused, as figures calculated on a death rate. I should think it possible that by examining the death rate of young mothers, some very valuable statistical data could be secured. Till some such exact information becomes available, I may quote the fact that in France "twice as many wives under twenty die in the year, as die out of the same number of the unmarried," and state my belief that probably the injurious effect of early child-bearing would be more apparent from Indian statistics. To fix a minimum marriageable age is so purely an arbitrary proceeding, that I prefer to adopt the age of 14 years, as proposed in the Bill, and making a few remarks on it, to attempting to assume another as a more fit limit. In a medical point of view alone the limit of 14 years, though pro-

bably sufficiently low if only a few were expected to take advantage of it, I consider to be much too low when it is believed that the great majority of those about to marry will avail themselves of the earliest lawful opportunity of doing so. It would be improper to style a girl of fourteen as a child, but we would be equally far wrong in regarding her as a woman. She is in a transition stage, and while she is only developing into a womanhood, she is in a position as regards child-bearing which is very far from perfect. The practical effect of this limit will be to ensure that the young mothers will just be removed from the period of childhood, which I consider to be a very great desideratum, but it will not place them within the safe period of adult age. At present I believe the majority of the women become mothers while they may be said to be children, and the proposed change will just bring them into that age in which they may with propriety be regarded as adolescent. Child-bearing in the early stages of adolescence, I regard only as little less injurious than during childhood; and any regulation which would ensure that most young mothers would have completed their fifteenth year is one calculated to do a great amount of good though stopping very far short of what might be done. I am distinctly of opinion that a resolute stand should be made for the full age at present proposed, and would regard the relaxation of even a month or two as positive loss. Taking into consideration the present state of Native feeling on the subject, I have refrained from dwelling at length on the injurious effects of women bearing children even during adolescence. When the present step has been attended with success, and the mind of the community has been accustomed to the change, it will then be time to try and effect further improvement. I do not know whether it would be just to expect the law to give assistance in the matter to a much further extent, but the leaders of thought and those whose influence extends to guiding social customs should from the beginning strive to give the fullest prevalence to the idea that though the law sanctions the age of fourteen as the minimum age for marriage, medical considerations unite with all others in deprecating such early unions. If the object be steadily kept in view and frequently dwelt on, a most important change will

undoubtedly be effected on public opinion, and when implication in such an early marriage comes to be regarded as a breach of good breeding, as it undoubtedly is among Western nations, the gain to the nation will be immense. Even among orthodox Hindu families, I am told that various causes have led to a postponement of the very early age at which marriages used to take place. I am told that half a century ago, a strong feeling existed that marriage should take place at the age of eight, while about fifteen years ago, the age of eleven was deemed sufficiently young. Of late years a gradual improvement seems noticeable, as large numbers of girls do not marry till they are 12, and marriages delayed till 13 are by no means very rare. Even should the religious belief of the Hindu render it obligatory on him to give his daughter in marriage before menstruation begins, as far as I know there is no obligation which necessitates his allowing his daughter to remain with her husband till she has arrived at such an age that child-bearing will not prove exceptionally injurious to her system. I cannot shut my eyes to many difficulties which are in the way of even slow progress, but most of them can, I conceive, be got over, and as they do not depend on any medical question, I do not enter into this view of the subject. Two points, however, constituting grave and formidable impediment have come prominently before me while making enquiries to enable me to offer an opinion on the question. One lies in a wide-spread belief that the climate leads to early menstruation, which points to early marriage, and the other a similarly extended opinion that the climate causes an early development of sexual passion. There is just sufficient truth in both these statements to render it impossible to give them a full and unreserved denial, and yet so little truth in them as to render the arguments based on them entirely valueless. Menstruation in Calcutta is undoubtedly earlier than it is in London, though the difference in this respect between the two places is not so great as is usually believed. The climate and other surroundings of young girls may have some influence in leading to this result, but the great cause which induces early menstruation is undoubtedly early marriage. The girl is forced into menstruating prematurely

by the abnormal conditions under which marriage places her.

Horse breeders are well aware of this physiological law, and owners of racing studs habitually take advantage of this natural law when it suits their purpose by confining an entire pony under the same roof, though separated from the mare by partition, when they desire that her ovaries should be forced prematurely into that condition which is analogous to the state they are in during menstruation in the human species.

I believe, in the young widow and in the girl kept separate from her husband, menstruation occurs uniformly later than in those living in a state of marriage. I am also of opinion that the universality of early marriage has had a decided effect in determining the earlier appearance of menstruation, as it is well known that instances of early and late menstruation show themselves regularly in special families and the age at which menstruation occurs may be regarded as in a great measure hereditary. A very large number of the instances of menstruation met with before the thirteenth year, is capable of very easy explanation on the supposition of early marriage having caused their premature appearance. If marriage became generally delayed till menstruation had been fully established, I am quite sure that after a series of generations, menstruation would come on habitually at a later and later period and much more closely approach to a Western standard.

On the subject of the early development of sexual passion I write with great reluctance, and only write at all because I consider by not referring to the question, it will do more harm than by allowing it to enter into this discussion.

I have long believed that the young Hindu female is usually totally devoid of all sexual feeling, and special enquiries on the point made during the present investigation have completely confirmed me in this opinion. Believing the allegation to be without foundation, I consider the fear of seduction grounded on it to be needless, and am convinced that such a misfortune befalling on any Bengalee girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age would depend on a train of events in which sexual passion would hold as unimportant a place as it would do under similar

circumstances in Spitzbergen or the Northern shore of Baffin's Bay.

T. EDMONSTON CHARLES.

[FROM DR. M. L. SIRCAR.]

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your circular letter dated the 1st April, 1871, and I have to apologize for the delay in replying to it.

The subject mooted in your letter has been to me, for a long time past and especially since I have taken to the profession to which I have the honour to belong—and as I believe it cannot but be to those of my countrymen who look upon life beyond the mere surface of its pleasures and woes, who have acquainted themselves with the laws of its genesis, development, maturity and decline,—one of the deepest concern and anxiety. And I must express to you my heart-felt thanks, as all true well wishers of our country ought, for the initiative you have taken in the matter.

Early marriage, in my humble opinion, is the greatest evil of our country. It has stood, so to say, at the very springs of the life of the nation, and prevented the normal expanse of which it is capable. And I am inclined to date the fall and degeneracy of my country from the day Angirâ uttered the fatal words, and those words became law, or custom which is stronger and more mischievous than law itself :—

अष्टवर्षा भवेद् गौरी नववर्षा तु रोहिणी ।
दशमे कन्यका प्रोक्ता अत ऊर्ध्वं रजस्वला ॥
तस्मात् संवत्सरे प्राप्ते दशमे कन्यका बुधैः ।
प्रदातव्या प्रयत्नेन न दोषः कालदोषतः ॥

The girl of eight years is Gauri (i.e., of the same elevated character and purity as Gauri or Parvati, the goddess Durga); of nine, Rohini (one of the wives of the moon); of ten (a simple) virgin; of above that age, a woman who has menstruated. Hence the learned should give their daughters in marriage whenever they attain the age of ten, and they will not be liable to the fault of not marrying their daughters in due time.

I do not know how such an absurd opinion came to be tolerated and received as the rule of marriage. I believe it was the natural off-shoot of the morbid jealousy which was slowly taking possession of the Hindu mind and of which the final expression we have now in our own time. I hope the day has dawned for better things.

Manu would seem to fix the earliest marriageable age of girls at twelve or eight :—

त्रिंशद्वर्षो वहेत् कन्यां हृद्यां द्वादशवार्षिकीम् ।
अष्टवर्षाऽष्टवर्षां वा धर्मे सीदति सत्वरः ॥

A man aged thirty years may marry a girl of twelve, (if he find one) dear to his heart ; a man of twenty-four years, a damsel of eight. If he marries earlier (than twenty-four) he loses virtue.

We ought to remember that by this text Manu simply limits the minimum marriageable age of the male and the female. He does by no means prohibit later marriages. On the contrary, he strictly prohibits the marriage of a man of thirty with a girl of less than twelve, and so on. He does not say a man of thirty may not marry a girl of a higher age than twelve. All that he says is that the youngest girl that a man of thirty can marry is one of twelve years. This is evident from his laying down, in the same text, that a man of twenty-four may marry a girl of eight. The spirit of this text would be better understood if we take it along with another in which he says :—

काममामरणात्तिष्ठेद् गृहे कन्यर्तुमत्यपि ।
नचैवैनां प्रयच्छेत्तु गुणहीनाय कर्हिचित् ॥

The girl, though menstruant, should rather stay at (her father's) home till her death, than be given away in marriage to one devoid of all excellent qualities.

Now certainly this is a very positive injunction, and why should our community overlook or disregard it ? Manu's authority is acknowledged by all to be higher than that of Angirá. Why then should the latter have the preference in a matter of such vital importance, and in which we have, as we shall see, corroboratory evidence of our *Ayurveda* ?

We have not, it seems, any means of ascertaining what was the earliest marriageable age in the Vedic times, at least I have not had opportunities of satisfying myself on the subject. I therefore naturally turned to our ancient medical writings to see if the Hindu medical philosophers of old also sanctioned the unphysiological custom of early marriage. This search has cost me some time, and this is the reason, Sir, of the delay in replying to your letter. As far as I have been able to ascertain, we have no mention of the age of first menstruation nor of the earliest marriageable age in Charaka Sanhità, perhaps the oldest work extant of Hindu medicine. But in Susruta, a work of equal celebrity and almost equal antiquity, we have distinct mention of the age when menstruation usually commences and of the age when it ceases.

रसादेव स्त्रियारक्तं रजःसञ्ज्ञं प्रवर्त्तते।
तद्वर्षाद्द्वादशाद्ब्रह्मन्याति पञ्चाशतः क्षयम्॥

The menstrual blood of females is also elaborated from the chyle. It begins to flow after the age of twelve years, and ceases to do so after that of fifty.

And more, we are told the age before which the female ought not to conceive :—

ऊनषोडशवर्षायामप्राप्तः पञ्चाविंशतिम्।
यद्याधत्ते पुमान् गर्भं कुक्षिस्थः स विपद्यते।
जातो वा न चिरं जीवेज्जीवेद्वादुर्ब्बलेन्द्रियः।
तस्मादत्यन्तबालायां गर्भाधानं न कारयेत्॥

If the male before the age of twenty-five impregnates the female of less than sixteen years old, the product of conception will either die in the womb; or if it is born it will not be long-lived, and even if it lives long, it will be weak in all its organs. Hence the female should not be made to conceive at too early an age.

Here there is no ambiguity. The opinion expressed, as to what should be the minimum age of child-bearing, is decided. And this age is certainly higher than what Angirá's dictum, if followed, is calculated to make it, and what is now actually seen. In fact, the passage looks very like a protest against the

evil of early marriage which had probably already begun to be felt at the time the treatise was composed.

As in the discussion of this subject, the question of the age of first menstruation naturally comes to mind, and as it is commonly believed that this is the age which nature has indicated as the time when the opposite sexes should be united in holy marriage, I have been at some pains in collecting statistics on the subject. The inquiry is attended with great difficulty, which you, Sir, as a Hindu, can easily understand. However, as my informants are all educated men and felt interested in the inquiry, on their testimony I can vouch for the accuracy of the facts which I have collected and which I now submit to you.

No.	*y*	*m*	*No.*	*y*	*m*	*No.*	*y*	*m*	*No.*	*y*	*m*
1.	8	9	25.	10	11	49.	11	6	73.	12	2
2.	8	10	26.	11	0	50.	11	6	74.	12	2
3.	9	0	27.	11	0	51.	11	8	75.	12	2
4.	9	0	28.	11	0	52.	11	9	76.	12	3
5.	9	2	29.	11	0	53.	11	9	77.	12	3
6.	9	5	30.	11	0	54.	11	9	78.	12	3
7.	9	5	31.	11	0	55.	11	10	79.	12	3
8.	9	5	32.	11	1	56.	11	10	80.	12	3
9.	9	5	33.	11	2	57.	11	10	81.	12	3
10.	9	5	34.	11	3	58.	11	10	82.	12	3
11.	9	10	35.	11	3	59.	12	0	83.	12	3
12.	9	10	36.	11	3	60.	12	0	84.	12	4
13.	10	0	37.	11	3	61.	12	0	85.	12	5
14.	10	0	38.	11	3	62.	12	0	86.	12	5
15.	10	2	39.	11	3	63.	12	0	87.	12	5
16.	10	2	40.	11	3	64.	12	0	88.	12	5
17.	10	3	41.	11	3	65.	12	0	89.	12	6
18.	10	6	42.	11	4	66.	12	0	90.	12	6
19.	10	6	43.	11	5	67.	12	0	91.	12	6
20.	10	6	44.	11	5	68.	12	1	92.	12	6
21.	10	6	45.	11	6	69.	12	1	93.	12	6
22.	10	7	46.	11	6	70.	12	1	94.	12	7
23.	10	10	47.	11	6	71.	12	1	95.	12	7
24.	10	10	48.	11	6	72.	12	11	96.	12	7

No.	y	m	No.	y	m	No.	y	m	No.	y	m
97.	12	8	108.	13	0	119.	13	9	130.	14	2
98.	12	8	109.	13	0	120.	13	9	131.	14	3
99.	12	8	110.	13	1	121.	14	0	132.	14	10
100.	12	10	111.	13	2	122.	14	0	133.	15	0
101.	12	10	112.	13	2	123.	14	0	134.	15	0
102.	12	10	113.	13	2	124.	14	0	135.	15	4
103.	12	11	114.	13	3	125.	14	0	136.	17	5
104.	13	0	115.	13	5	126.	14	0	137.	18	0
105.	13	0	116.	13	6	127.	14	0	138.	19	0
106.	13	0	117.	13	7	128.	14	1			
107.	13	0	118.	13	8	129.	14	2			

Besides the above 138 cases in which the ages of first menstruation are given precisely to the year and month, I have been furnished with additional 46 cases in which the ages have been given precisely as to the year only. Thus in four, the menstruation had commenced after the age of 9 years, in nine after 10, in thirteen after 11, in twenty-four after 12, in five after 13, in six after 14, and in three after 15. So that, altogether, we have 2 cases of first menstruation after the age of 8 years, 14 after 9, 22 after 10, 46 after 12, 22 after 13, 18 after 14, 6 after 15, 2 after 17; in 1 after 18. The following negative facts, which were furnished to me, are worth mentioning, namely, in one girl above 13, in four above 14, in one above 19, and in one above 40, the function has not yet appeared. The last two cases are no doubt quite exceptional, depending upon some undetected abnormality. On an average of all the cases the function begins after the age of 11 years and 9 months; on an average of the cases in which the age is precisely given, the age in which it commences is twelve years and one month, which may be looked upon as corroboratory of that laid down in Susruta, if we take Susruta's age as the average. But if we take the age laid down in Susruta as the minimum, which is more likely from the language employed, then we must come to the conclusion that the minimum age of menstruation has, since the days of Susruta, become much lower, a fact which demands serious consideration.

As to whether climate, the degree of latitude, the position

on the surface of the earth, the nature of the soil, and other surroundings have or have not any influence upon the menstrual function, its first appearance, its subsequent regularity, and its final decline, is a question which may be still regarded as open to discussion. I do not think facts have been collected with sufficiently scrupulous accuracy, and other circumstances, social and domestic, have been allowed due weight in the balance of causation, to warrant any positive conclusion on the point. A superficial view of available facts would seem to incline the mind to the belief that climate does influence the menstrual function, delaying its first appearance in the cold and hastening the period in tropical countries. After carefully weighing all the circumstances which might have a possible influence on the function, I am led to believe that if climate has any influence, it is trifling, not to say infinitesimal. There is no doubt, as our table will show that the age of first menstruation here in Calcutta (I do not say Bengal advisedly) is earlier than in London, but I am more inclined to attribute this difference to the difference of social and domestic economy that obtains in the respective places. I have not said Bengal, because I have positive testimony that there is a striking difference between the ages of first menstruation in town and country. The earliest ages that I have quoted of early menstruation were in some of the rich families in Calcutta. And I have no doubt in my mind that high and luxurious living and early seeing and knowing of child-husbands and child-wives, favored by the anxiety of fond parents to see their little ones become fathers and mothers, are the chief causes of the forced puberty which we so much regret in our female no less than in our male children.

It is but fair to say that this evil of early marriage has reached its climax only in the present day; especially in lower Bengal, and more especially in Calcutta. The evil was till recently in Bengal, as it is still in the North-West, counteracted to some extent by a quasi-custom, by which the fulfilling of the actual rites of marriage, the actual seeing and knowing of child-husbands and child-wives, is prevented till after some maturity had been attained by both. With the

progress of enlightenment this rigid grandmother's discipline has begun to be disregarded, and we have now true physiological marriage almost immediately after the ceremonial one is over. It is therefore high time that we should endeavour, by the light of common sense and science, to set matters right by fixing the minimum marriageable age of our girls, consistent with the normal development of the offspring and the preservation of the health of the mother.

The advocates of early marriage urge that the custom is nothing else than the expression of a stubborn necessity which has arisen from the fact of early pubescence in this country. I think, however, we are warranted, by what has been already adduced, in concluding that early marriages have been the cause of early pubescence. The primary object of marriage is no doubt the production of healthy offspring, and physiologically speaking it ought not to be consummated before the ages when the offspring is not calculated to be long-lived or healthy. The commencement of the menstrual function is no doubt an index to the *commencement* of puberty. But it is a grave mistake to suppose that the female, who has just begun to menstruate, is capable of giving birth to healthy children. The teeth are no doubt intended for the mastication of solid food, but it would be a grievous error to think that the child, the moment he begins to cut his teeth, will be able to live upon solid food. Our anxiety, on the contrary, should be that the delicate masticatory organs are not injured or broken by giving the child too hard food. So when we see a girl is beginning to have the monthly flow, we should not only anxiously watch its course and regularity, but should also watch the other collateral developments of womanhood to be able to determine the better the time when she can become a mother, safely to herself and to her offspring. For it should be borne in mind that while early maternity results in giving birth to short-lived or unhealthy children, it at the same time seriously compromises the health of the mother also. I can speak positively on the subject from personal experience. A host of complaints from which our females suffer life-long, or to which they fall early victims, arise from early pubescene and early maternity.

This view of the state of things imperatively demands that, for the sake of our daughters and sisters, who are to become mothers, and for the sake of generations, yet unborn, but upon whose proper development and healthy growth, the future well-being of the country depends, the earliest marriageable age of our females should be fixed at a higher point than what obtains in our country. If the old grandmother's discipline, alluded to above, could be made to prevail, there would be no harm in fixing that age at 14 or even 12, but as that is well-nigh impossible, or perhaps would not be perfectly right and consistent with the progress of the times, I should fix it at 16.

MAHENDRA LAL SIRCAR.

[FROM MAULAVI TUMEEZ KHAN, KHAN BAHADUR.]

I really regret much that, owing to a variety of causes, I was not able before this to reply to your letter, regarding my opinion on the subject of the marriageable age of Native girls of Hindoostan and Bengal.

I might premise, that my personal experience strengthens the belief that a tropical region exerts an immense influence in inducing a rapid development of parts in both the animal and vegetable organisation. A natural consequence of this is the earlier appearance of indubitable proofs of puberty amongst the girls of India in general, than is the case with persons of similar ages, but natives of different temperature of climate.

Habits of life and usages of society are not without their influence on age. A girl, who is born and bred up in different, and perhaps, luxurious circumstances, will reach the age of puberty earlier than what is likely to be the case in others, situated in opposite and adverse circumstances.

A Mahomedan girl, according to her law-givers, is considered to be "Moo-ra-hek-kaeo," *i.e.*, aptæ vivibas, when she is "qureeb-ool-lia-loogh," *i.e.*, approaching the age of pubescence.

Experience and the laws both tend to establish the fact that in the tropical climates, this age is attained between the tenth and the thirteenth year. Although a girl may become marriageable at the age, but dictates of observation, commonsense, and

lastly biological laws, cannot but lead us to the conclusion, that a female cannot be sufficiently mature for the fulfilment of the serious duties of a wife, much less for those of a mother, at the extremely tender and early age; and that where forced to do so, her delicate and hitherto immature organisation becomes rapidly impaired both in health and vigour, and thus before she is actually young, she gets old and decrepit. This exerts its baneful influences on her progeny. Speaking in a scientific and humane point of view, I might safely pronounce that in considering the proper age of marriage for a Native girl of India, *we should not look* to the time when the signs of puberty show themselves generally, but make it a point *that under no circumstances is a girl to be allowed to get married before she has attained the full age of sixteen years at the least;* nor can there be entertained any doubt that were the consummation of marital rites deferred somewhat longer, it will tend to the improvement of the individual and the progeny too.

TUMEEZ KHAN.

[FROM DR. D. B. SMITH.]

(*Second Letter.*)

With reference to my former letter, dated 17th April, regarding the marriageable age of Native girls, I again address you, with the object of stating that I entirely agree with those high medical authorities who have recently laid before the Indian Reform Association the opinion that, as a rule, girls in this country marry much too early; that before completion of her sixteenth year a girl is physiologically immature; and that it would, in general, be very advantageous if marriages were deferred even for two or three years later than this.

Before the age specified (sixteen), a female cannot be said to be fully developed—either physically or mentally. Some parts of her osseous structure, which are essential to the reproductive function, are not yet consolidated. The first appearance of those means to be regarded as coincident with the most fitting time for marriage; they merely indicate the development of procreative power and a possible capacity for conception

although, it is to be observed, that a female may conceive before she has ever menstruated, and also that *infants* have even been known to menstruate.

The stomach digests, the brain elaborates thought, the voice gives utterance to such thought long anterior to the time at which these functions are performed with full force and in physiological perfection, and a similar law of Nature applies to the sexual system of the female. She may present the initiative signs of womanhood without its being at all desirable that she should at once become a mother. When a girl reaches the "pubescent" or "nubile" age, she may be said to have acquired the "*Vis Generandi*," but it is a few years after this that she arrives at what the Romans called her *Pubertas Plena* which is, physiologically, the most appropriate period for marriage.

I am aware that certain physicians and learned writers have expressed a different opinion on this point. Montesquieu enunciated the *dictum* that "women in hot climates are marriageable at eight, nine or ten years of age,"—adding (what, under the assumed circumstances, is certainly much more near the truth) that "they are old at twenty." "The age of marriage," says Mr. Sale, "or of maturity, is reckoned to be fifteen —a decision supported by a tradition of the Prophet, although Abu Hanifah thinks eighteen the proper age." (Prichard's Natural History of Man, Vol. II., p. 655). Some physiologists believe that the catamenial function does not occur earlier in hot than in cold climates. Mr. Roberton, whose writings on this subject are well known, is a learned exponent of this view of the case. Allusion to his investigations may be found in Todd's "*Cyclopædia of Anatomy and Physiology*"—*Art*—"*Generation*," Vol. II., p. 442.

The experience of Haller, Boerhave, Denman, Barns, Dewees and others were in support of a contrary opinion. There can, I think, be but little doubt that temperature, mode of life, moral and physical education, *do* produce decided variations in relation to puberty. The late Professor Traill, Editor of the *Eighth Edition* of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, states that Fodere observed a difference in this respect between the inhabitants of the warm, maritime part of Provence and the elevated

valleys of Entraunes and St. Etienne, and that he himself (Traill) had remarked a similar difference in Spain between the children in the plains of Andalusia and among the mountains of Cataluna. (*Outlines of Medical Jurisprudence*, p. 18).

Dr. Tilt compiled from the works of various authors a Table of the Periods of first menstruation of 12,037 women, in hot, temperate and cold climates. The following are, briefly, the results arrived at :—

	No. of Observations.	Mean age.
Hot Climates ...	666 ...	... 13·19
Temperate ...	7,237 ...	... 14·94
Cold	4,134 ...	... 16·41

Grand mean of all countries = 14·85

The table referred to is to be found in Dr. Tilt's Work on *Diseases of Women, 2nd edition*, p. 35.

Menstruation has been found to be accelerated, amongst the Manchester Cotton-spinners, by continual exposure to a high artificial temperature. The effects of high temperature in hastening development, and organic functions generally, were well demonstrated by Reaumur's experiments on *Pupæ*, and by Mr. Higginbottom's researches on the metamorphosis of the tadpole into the frog (Phil. Trans. 1850, p. 431, and Proceedings of the Royal Society, Vol. XI., p. 532).

Those who desire to study fully the subject of Puberty, in all its bearings, should consult the writings of Bischoff, Raciborski, Coste, Pouchet, Bierre de Boismont, Whitehead, Arthur Farre, Allen Thomson, Roberton, Mayer ("*Des Rapports Conjugaux*"), Meigs, &c., and different standard Treatises on Medical Jurisprudence, as those of Beck, Orfila, Casper, Chevers, Taylor, &c.

Allowing that it would be unphilosophical to endeavour absolutely to fix any purely arbitrary date for marriage in any country, I myself believe that a Bengal female, after the age of sixteen, may marry and bear healthy offspring ; whilst the same individual, at an earlier age, would be very liable to beget children feeble in every sense of the term.

I think we may even go so far as to say that too early marriage is inevitably bad, and radically destructive of national

vigor. Not so, it must be confessed, thought Voltaire's friend, of whom he writes as follows, in his *Dictionaire Philosophique* (Tome *Sixieme*, p. 131) :—" Un grand politique Italien, qui d'ailleurs etait fort savant dans les langues Orientales, chose tres rare chez nos politiques, medisait dans ma jeuness : *Caro figlio*, souvenez quo les Juifs n'ont jamais en qu'une bonne institution,—celle d'avoir la virginite en horreur."

The reason why the ancient Jews thus attached a certain stigma to virginity, is ably explained, both on political and religious grounds, by Mr. Leckie, in his " *History of European Morals*," Vol. I., p. 112. The same learned author (at p. 118) indicates why it is that the views of priests and political economists are somewhat at variance on this subject ; the former believing that " the postponement of marriages, through prudential motives, by any large body of men, is the fertile mother of sin, whilst the latter opposes early marriage on the ground that " it is an essential condition of material well-being that the standard of comfort should not be depressed."

I am inclined to believe that very early marriages in this country are mentally degrading as they are physiologically objectionable. It would be altogether unbecoming and out of place for me to enter into the subject of the moral objections to early marriage ; the more so as it is almost self-evident that the artificial forcing of physical instincts, and the consequent unnatural stimulation of sexual passion, cannot be regarded as a mere error of judgment. It certainly involves a degree of depravity the consideration of which may, however, safely be left to the " intuitive moralist."

The medico-legal bearings of this subject are most important, and they fall much more within the province of the physician. Only a few days ago, a girl aged *eleven* years was brought to me, suffering from advanced Secondary Syphilis, which had been directly contracted by the pitiable child, —her parents being both healthy. The girl was in tears, and endeavoured to conceal the truth ; whilst the mother declared her daughter to be *virgo intacta*,—but it was not so.

I earnestly hope that the thinking and good men by whom Native society is more or less led, may, in time, succeed in

bringing about some change towards abolishing the prevailing custom of child-marriage in this country. The subject deserves most earnest consideration; and it is one, the importance of which should continually be impressed on the minds of the people by all those leaders of thought who speak with authority amongst their countrymen and who may have it, more or less, in their power to regulate prevailing opinions or to modify the social usages of the country. It may, I think, without any exaggeration or cynicism, be said that the present system of early marriage in Bengal panders to passion and sensuality, violates the requirements of nature, lowers the general standard of public health, lessens the average value of life taken greatly from the general interests of existing society, and allows a present race to deteriorate both to its own disadvantage and to the detriment of future generations. The results of reform in this direction would undoubtedly be of great importance. As I said in my former letter, however, the medical arguments against early marriage ought to be much more precise and cogent than any that have yet been adduced. Physiological observations on the subject have neither been extended nor have they been recorded with enough of care. The importance of a broad social question of this kind ought, in great measure, to be determined, and the scientific arguments relating to it grounded, on a fixed and sound philosophical basis, for I believe the saying to be a true one that no mere theory will ever throw down ancestral traditions.

Mr. F. G. P. Neison, in the Preface to his valuable "*Contributions to Vital Statistics*," indicates, as "an immense field which still remains uncultivated," even in England, the investigation of the following questions:

"The influence of age at marriage on the fruitfulness of the marriage. The influence of age at marriage on the mortality of children born therefrom. The influence of age at marriage on the sex at issue, and also on the relative mortality of the first, second and third born, as well as on each subsequent birth in consecutive order."

I observe that the Editor of the *Indian Medical Gazette* has, in his last issue, commented somewhat derisively (one might

almost say—"with plentiful lack of politeness") on the present movement of the Indian Reform Association, regarding the marriageable age of Native girls. This is to be regretted, even although the home-thrusts are playful.

"It seems to us that if the educated and enlightened Native gentlemen referred to by our reformers were anxious for the solution of a problem of this kind, they would hardly seek for advice on the subject from medical practitioners; evidently questions of this description must and always will be settled by the dictates of society, guided by common sense, rather than by physicians and philosophers. We all know the answer of the 'wise man' quoted by Bacon when asked when a man should marry—'a young man not yet, and elder men not at all,' and we doubt not the members of the Indian Reform Association have received some such prudent answer from the professional men they have consulted regarding the marriageable age of their daughters."

Such is the sententious ruling of the *Medical Gazette*. I can only hope that "our reformers" may survive such admonition and censure, and that they may live to prove that they are truly in earnest in this matter.

With all due respect for the opinions of the *Medical Gazette*, I presume to think that the members of the Indian Reform Association may very well be pardoned for asking—(in connection with such a subject as that of early or late marriage)—"What are the teachings of Physiology?"—seeing that true facts and sound principles last for ever, whilst individual opinions and conventional customs are liable at any hour to change. It even appears to me natural and reasonable that they should have put this question to professional men whose special business it is to investigate such subjects,—men who have sometimes very flatteringly no doubt been called "*Ministri et interpretes Naturæ*,"—whose duty and privilege it is to raise, by every possible means, the general standard of health and happiness, and who may, therefore, without any offence be appealed to in questions affecting the science of population, and the popular bearings of medical knowledge.

Although this letter is already too long, I cannot refrain

from adding to it a quotation from the lectures of a learned American Professor (Dr. Meigs of Philadelphia) whose writings on the subject of Puberty are most interesting and philosophical, *Apropos* of the wisdom or otherwise of consulting medical practitioners on social subjects, he writes :—

"Physicians are the health officers of society. I would that they as a body were awake to the importance of so guiding the public mind on all topics connected with the conservation of health, as to exert the whole influence of the profession, a great influence, in impressing upon the public mind, clear and sound notions in regard to those hygienic uses and appliances which the public either know not or overlook, perhaps in the hurry and cares and embarrassments of the business and occupations of the world.

"A physician ought to exert the intellectual power which by his position in society he is presumed to possess in protecting society against the evils of ignorance on hygienic subjects. Forty thousand medical men in the United States should not always allow their day and generation to pass away without leaving some signs of progress, and effecting some amelioration of the condition of society, beyond the mere restorative results of their therapeutical prescription."

There is assuredly some work of the same kind for medical men to do in India; and it would, in my opinion, be hard to instance any subject upon which they could more usefully bring their experiences and wisdom to bear, than upon that which relates to the discouragement of child-marriages amongst the Natives of Bengal.

DAVID B. SMITH, M. D.

—*Indian Mirror*, 23rd and 26th June, and 17th, 19th and 21st July, 1871.

[FROM DR. NOBIN KRISHNA BOSE.]

I am in receipt of your printed letter of the 1st instant relative to the prevalence of early and premature marriage in the country, and I feel myself highly flattered that you should think my opinion on the subject of value enough to be at the trouble to ask for it.

I have always regarded the custom to be among the principal causes of our physical deterioration as a race, and also as a powerful impediment in the way of intellectual advancement and social reform. You will find these views fully set forth in a paper on the importance of physiological knowledge with reference to marriage, education, &c., which I had the honor to read before the Bethune Society in 1855, and which was afterwards published in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette* of that year.

I do not think that climate exerts that degree of influence in modifying the age of puberty in different parts of the world which has been generally ascribed to it. Some difference it will produce, no doubt, but this, on examination, will be found to range within very narrow limits. On studying the age of marriage in different countries at different periods of time, it has appeared to me, on the other hand, that early wedlock has always been the result of ignorance and of general degraded condition of the female sex, and hence at one time it was not unknown even in the latitudes of England and Russia. And the mischief lies in this, *viz.*, that when the practice becomes a marked one, it tends to perpetuate itself by producing precocious maturity among the children in accordance with the organic laws which govern the hereditary transmission of physical and mental qualities.

In this country the custom under notice has prevailed for centuries and generations, and it is not at all to be wondered at, therefore, that our boys and girls should attain to puberty at an earlier period of life than under a healthier system of matrimonial connections they would have done. This is a fact, however, which, in fixing the minimum marriageable age of our girls, should not be entirely overlooked, calculated though it be to give rise to some diversity of opinion on the subject. In determining the age in question, more regard is to be had only to the period of life when, by its anatomical development, the female system is fitted to enter upon the functions and duties of maternity without injury to itself or the physical deterioration of the offspring begotten by it. I should say that our girls should not be married before they have attained, at least, the eighteenth year of their age. Before this period it would not

bear, with impunity the drain which maternity must establish in it. But considering the modifying influence of the long prevalence of early marriage to which advertance has been made above, it may be doubted, perhaps, whether it would, all things considered, be advisable to fix so high a standard at once. An evil, by long duration, becomes as it were a part and parcel of the system to which it belongs, and cannot be rooted out all at once, without risk and danger to the system itself. In practically dealing with the subject in hand, therefore, it may be necessary perhaps to lower somewhat the above standard of eighteen ; and this done, I should, for the present, fix the minimum marriageable age of our females at fifteen, and this the more particularly, as from a social point of view, this standard has a greater chance of being abided by in practice than the higher one of eighteen.

I have only to add that it has given me the greatest pleasure to find that you have taken up this subject in such an earnest and practical manner, and I sincerely hope that your effort may be crowned with success. My only regret is that in my present insular position—at a distance from all centres of social and mental activity—it is not in my power to co-operate with you in the way I would have wished, but still if you think I can be of any help in forwarding the object you have in view, my services are at your command.

NOBIN KRISHNA BOSE.

Khundwa, 18th July 1871.

[FROM DR. ATMARAM PANDURUNG.]

I received during the first week a copy of the printed circular letter you have addressed to several eminent medical gentlemen at Calcutta, and I am glad, you have thus given me an opportunity of expressing my views on the matter it refers to. I believe the girls of this country arrive at puberty at the average age of from 13 to 15 years, and in this as in every thing else, they differ but slightly from girls in other countries. In some cases puberty is known to come on as early as 10 years, and in others, so late as 17 or 18 years. In some rare instances the

catamenia occur regularly every month from infancy. This difference amongst girls is partly caused by some peculiarity in their individual constitution, but in a large majority of cases chiefly or entirely by social influence—the influence of habits of thought and action which society has on its each individual member. You will then find in all countries in the world, girls living in cities, and especially in very crowded parts of it, and in the lowest strata of society, arrive at puberty at a much earlier age than those living in the agricultural or rural districts and in the upper strata in whom high moral feelings prevail. The custom of premature marriage thereby acting injuriously upon the morals of the people among whom it prevails, has an undoubted tendency to bring on early puberty, and this is strangely mistaken for climate influence. *Climate has no influence in the matter.* The history of our own people in former years, when this pernicious custom had no existence, will bear me out fully, so that I need not have to point other classes or tribes in this country or other countries, savage and civilized, where the custom of early marriage does not exist, to support the assertion that climate has no influence on the coming on of puberty.

As to your second question, what is to be considered as the minimum marriageable age of girls in this country, it is rather difficult to give a satisfactory reply. If the question had been simply what is considered to be the proper age at which girls ought to marry, the proper answer would be, without any hesitation, 20 years, and there are sound anatomical and statistical reasons. When girls marry at that age, all the ends and aims of marriage are gained with the best of results. There is then less amount of sterility, and also less number of deaths of mothers at their delivery, &c. But it is impossible for any medical gentleman to answer your question in the form you have put it. What one can say is, that puberty is not the best criterion of proper marriageable age, for it is not the period at which development of parts concerned in gestation and delivery is completed ; nor is then the mind well adapted for the requirements of the mother in taking proper care of her delicate and tender offspring.

It behoves well-informed and educated people in this country that they should both individually and collectively exert themselves most strenuously to do away with this most pernicious custom of premature marriage by deferring the marriage of their sisters and daughters to as near the age of 20 years as they can, for they would thereby undoubtedly raise the moral, social and physical condition of the people at large. It is their bounden duty to do it, and they must do it.

ATMARAM PANDURUNG.

Bombay, 24th July 1871.

[FROM DR. A. V. WHITE.]

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, on the 17th instant, of your letter, dated April 1st, asking me to state what I consider to be the age of puberty of Native girls and their minimum marriageable age, and in reply to offer the following observations.

From inquiries I have made on this subject, I have long since come to the conclusion, that there is a considerable difference, with regard to the period at which menstruation first makes its appearance, between English and Indian girls. Among English girls menstruation occurs more frequently at 15 years than at any other age, while among Indian girls, in the large majority of cases, I believe, it occurs at 13 or even less. The cause of this difference of two years is not so much, in my opinion, the effect of climate, as a difference in the constitution of the two races.

Early marriages, as they obtain in this country, have the effect of prematurely rousing the ovaries into a state of activity, and early menstruation is the result; but this early menstruation is unaccompanied with the other signs of development or advancing puberty, such as the special growth of the reproductive organs, in conjunction with the general development of the frame and of the mental faculties. This pernicious custom has so long prevailed that it has now become the constitutional habit of Indian girls to menstruate early; and this habit, I believe, is transmitted from mother to daughter. If Indian girls

were not to marry until 16 or 18, I believe that in a few generations this habit would be broken, and a marked improvement in this respect would be observed.

Cases of early menstruation at 10 and 11 years are by no means of very rare occurrence in temperate climates, but they are found among girls who have been brought up in indolence, luxury, or among those employed in our large manufactories, where the influences in operation tend to foster precociousness, and indeed place them in very similar conditions, physically and morally, to those of Indian girls.

Menstruation is no doubt the most important sign of puberty, but when it shows itself early, it is only the sign of commencing puberty, and, in the absence of the other indications, by no means implies that a girl is fitted for marriage and child-bearing. It is not until puberty has been fully established that the minimum marriageable age has been reached, and this rarely occurs, in my opinion, among Native girls before the 15th or 16th year, but if marriages were delayed until the 18th year, the frame would be more thoroughly developed ; the danger of child-bearing would be lessened and healthier offspring would be secured.

A. V. WHITE,
Professor of Midwifery,
Grant Medical College.

Bombay, July 29th, 1871.

The Hon. Mr. Justice K. T. Telang on "Must Social Reform precede Political Reform in India?"

The Hon'ble Mr. Kasinath Trimbak Telang, M.A., LL.B., C.I.E., delivered the following speech before the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, on the 22nd February 1886 :—

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—In opening the address which I have undertaken to deliver this evening, I am afraid I must begin with a word of apology for the imperfections which I am certain must be found in it. And as I am not in a position to plead the excuse of having been asked to deliver the address

by any one other than myself, I must say a few words in explanation of my appearance before you this evening. Well, as one of the Secretaries of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, it is part of my duty to see that the Society's session does not remain quite barren of essays and lectures. But in consequence of circumstances which need not now be dwelt on, although this session of the Society began as far back as October last, no essays have in fact been read or lectures delivered as yet before the Society. And when I endeavoured to make arrangements to avert any reflection upon us in consequence of this circumstance, and began to ask friends to prepare lectures and addresses, it occurred to me that the fairest course would be for me to begin by putting my own shoulders to the wheel. And accordingly it was only at the beginning of last week, that I determined to prepare myself for the address which I am now about to deliver. The subject of that address, however, is not altogether new to me. It attracted my attention many months ago, when I was writing a letter to my friend Mr. B. M. Malabari in reference to his notes on "Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood." When I was writing that letter, Sir Auckland Colvin's communication to Mr. Malabari had just been published in the newspapers. And the view had been expressed in it, that we ought to turn our attention to social reform, in preference to the endeavours we were making to teach our English rulers what their duties were in the government of the country. In my letter to Mr. Malabari, I ventured briefly but emphatically to express my dissent from this view of Sir A. Colvin. And in support of my opinion, I quoted a passage from Mr. Herbert Spencer's essay on Manners and Fashions. My letter has been published in the newspapers, and I need not now go into details regarding its contents. Since then attention has been again drawn to the point, by the letter recently written on the subject of Hindu Social reform by one whose authority is deservedly esteemed and highly respected by us all in Bombay. But as the subject is one of undoubtedly great and vital importance, it is desirable to consider it on grounds of reason, and independently of the authority even of Mr. Herbert Spencer or Mr. Wordsworth.

And first, when we are asked to give precedence to social over political reform, it is necessary to consider whether there is such a sharp line of demarcation between social and political matters as must be drawn in order to give effect to this demand. I confess I think such a line cannot be logically drawn. The division is one which in many respects is one of convenience only. And even those matters which are mainly and to a great extent social have most important political aspects, and *vice versâ*. Take education. It is an agency of vital importance alike for political and social purposes. Or again, take the removal of the prohibition against a voyage to England. The social importance of this is obvious. But the political value of it also is equally manifest, especially now when we have just welcomed the Indian Delegates back to their own country. Take again the question in reference to which this controversy has been raised. The question of infant marriage is a social one. But the modes suggested for remedying the evil raise great political issues, touching the province of legislation, and the true functions and limits of State activity. Therefore it is clear, that these political and social questions are so intertwined one with the other, that a hard and fast line cannot in practice be drawn between them. And consequently, even if the preference suggested could be justified in theory, it would not be feasible to enforce it in practice.

But now, assuming that it is practicable to work on the basis of such a preference being given to social over political reform, let us inquire on what ground of reason such a preference can be laid down. I have endeavoured to follow the whole controversy as it has been going on for some time past. And I have come across only two reasons in favour of the preference thus suggested. First it is said, that slavery at home is incompatible with political liberty. Now, when understood in its true sense, I have no quarrel with this principle. I am prepared to concede, and indeed I hold the doctrine myself very strongly, that the true spirit of political liberty must be only skin-deep, if so much, in the man who can actively maintain or even passively tolerate slavery within his own household. But I apprehend, that for the application of this principle, you must

have a conscious tyranny on the one side and a slavery that is felt to be slavery on the other. Without this consciousness on both sides, I hold that the principle would be incorrect. Now, how does the matter stand in the case before us? Have we in truth got to deal with a case of conscious tyranny and felt slavery? I say, certainly not. I say, that so far as we have tyranny and slavery in the case, we have only a case of the tyranny of the past, the present being bound in slavery to it. It is not, as it is often represented, a case of male tyrants and female slaves to any notable extent. We are all—men and women, widows and widowers, children and adults—slaves, if that is the proper expression, to ancient custom. Remember this further. As regards all those burning questions, which just now trouble us in connexion with social reform; as regards enforced widowhood, infant marriage, voyages to England, and so forth; the persons who are supposed to be our slaves are really in many respects our masters. You talk of the duty which lies upon us of breaking the shackles off their feet, but they will have none of this breaking off of the shackles. To a great extent they do not feel the shackles, and they decline to let us break them. They protest against that interference with and desecration of their ancient and venerable traditions, which, from their point of view, is involved in this course of enfranchisement. Therefore I hold, that the phrase "household slavery," as used in this controversy, is an entire misnomer. It is these so-called slaves within our households, who form our great difficulty. And under these circumstances, I venture to say, that the sort of "household slavery" that in truth prevails among us, is by no means incompatible with political liberty. The position in fact is this. Here we have what may, for convenience, be treated as two spheres for our reforming activities. There is slavery in the one sphere, and there is slavery in the other, and we are endeavouring to shake off the slavery in the one sphere as well as in the other. I can see no reasonable objection to this course. That course is a perfectly legitimate one, and as Mr. Herbert Spencer has pointed out, it is also shown to be the natural one by scientific observation.

Let us now go on to the next reason alleged in favour of the precedence claimed for social over political reform. It is said that a nation socially low cannot be politically great, that history shows no instance of such a condition. Now if this means that political and social progress go on together, that the spirit of progress working in the political sphere always manifests itself in greater or less vigour in the social sphere, I at once admit it. The passage from Mr. Spencer's essay, which I quoted in my letter to Mr. Malabari, and which merely sums up the result of a full discussion marked by all Mr. Spencer's acumen and comprehensive grasp, shows that very clearly. But this is a very different thing indeed from the proposition involved in the present argument. It is not enough, as thus understood, to justify the preference demanded. For that purpose, it is necessary to prove, that in a social condition that is at any given period unsatisfactory, political greatness is unattainable, and political progress not to be achieved. To *this* proposition, I confess, I cannot see that history affords any support. And I hold, indeed, that the lessons to be deduced from history run exactly counter to this. Look at that brilliant episode in the history of India which is connected with the names of Sivaji, and the subsequent Maratha rulers—an episode on which our memories still love to dwell. I have been recently reading several of the *Bakhars* or chronicles of those times which have been published. And judging from them, I cannot find that the social condition of that period was very much superior to the social condition that is now prevailing. We had then infant marriage and enforced widowhood; we had imperfect female education; we had also the practice of Sati, though that never was a very wide-spread practice. Confining our attention to the subjects involved in the practical controversy now going on, and to subjects kindred to it, it is plain, I think, that the palm of superiority cannot be awarded to the period covered by the achievements of the great Maratha power. Yet there can be no doubt, that politically those achievements were very brilliant, and that they implied great political progress, at least within the limits of their principal home. If we go back to

a still earlier period, we have evidence in the writings of that famous Chinese traveller, Hiouen-Tsang who came to this country in the seventh century A.D., of a prosperous political condition, while the facts of the social condition do not indicate any very great superiority over what prevails now. The caste system was then in force. And we have it expressly and distinctly stated by Hiouen-Tsang, that in those days widow-marriage was not practised. There you have one mark of "household slavery" certainly, yet the political condition of the provinces in Northern India ruled by Harshavardhana, or of our own part of the country, then governed by the great Pulakesi, was by no means a bad one. But it may be said that our materials for a correct picture of those times are not satisfactory, and that it will not be quite safe to draw such inferences from our imperfect materials. I do not wish to impugn this view. I must admit certainly that the materials are not quite satisfactory. And therefore I will ask you for a little while to join with me in considering the lessons to be derived from the history of a country, whose history we can ascertain from much more satisfactory materials—a history, too, which we are sometimes charged with knowing better than we know the history of our own country. Let us look at the history of the country which we believe, and are happy in believing, to be at the very top of the political ladder to-day; let us look at the history of England in the seventeenth century A.D., the materials for which are easily accessible, and have been digested for us by such classic historians as Hallam, for instance, and Lord Macaulay. The political history of England in the seventeenth century is pretty familiar to us. The beginning of the century synchronises with the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in whose time, after a pretty long period of enjoyment by the Crown of almost uncontrolled power, the rights and privileges of the people had begun to be asserted. I pass over the reign of James I. and come to that of Charles I. Here you have the achievements of that brilliant galaxy of political workers, containing Hampden, the Five Members, the great men of the Long Parliament. You have then the battles of the first English Revolution, as it has

sometimes been called, winding up with the proceedings of the tribunal over which Bradshaw presided, and the final catastrophe of the execution of King Charles I. A republican might object to the phrase catastrophe, but as there was a destruction of the life of one of God's creatures, it is, I hope, allowable to speak of the event as a catastrophe. Well, we pass on then to the protectorate of Cromwell, a tangible embodiment of the assertion of popular power against the Crown. Then we come after the Restoration to the well known Habeas Corpus Act. And after the short and inglorious reign of James II, we come to the great Revolution of 1688. Then we have the Declaration of Rights and Bill of Rights, till finally we reach the Act of Settlement at the very close of the seventeenth century. It would not be easy, I should say, to find out in history many parallels to the course of political progress indicated by the events I have now alluded to—a course which not merely improved the condition of England at the time, but has been followed up by greater or less progress of a similarly salutary character since, and is being still so followed up in our own day. Listen to the words of the judicial Hallam in regard to the political position achieved by England at the close of the seventeenth century. "The Act of Settlement," he says, "is the seal of our constitutional laws, the complement of the Revolution itself, and the Bill of Rights the last great statute which restrains the power of the Crown, and manifests in any conspicuous degree, a jealousy of Parliament in behalf of its own and the subjects' privileges. The battle had been fought and gained. The voice of petition, complaint, or remonstrance, is seldom to be traced in the Journals. The Crown in return desists altogether not merely from the threatening or objugatory tone of the Stuarts, but from that dissatisfaction sometimes apparent in the language of William; and the vessel seems riding in smooth water, moved by other impulses and liable perhaps to other dangers than those of the ocean wave and tempest." So much for the political condition. And now let us see what was the social condition of England, at the time when her people were achieving these glorious political successes. The materials are collected ready to our hands in an

elaborate chapter, the third or fourth, of Lord Macaulay's History of England—on the condition of England in 1685. Those who wish to examine the question for themselves must read that chapter in the original. I cannot go now into all the topics there expatiated on. The condition of the working classes, and the agriculturists, the state of the means of communication, the extraordinary extent to which children were overworked for the benefit, in the result, of the adult population, the looseness and obscenity of general conversation, these are all dwelt on in the interesting pages of Macaulay. I will not say more about them. I will only draw attention particularly to two points. The first relates to the state of female education. Macaulay gives as an instance of the miserable state of female education, and merely as an instance of what was only too common at the time, the ignorance of such a person as Queen Mary, the wife of William III.—her ignorance of her own vernacular, the classical languages being, of course, out of the question. The ignorance is shown in a sentence endorsed by Queen Mary herself on a copy of a book, a Bible, I think, presented to her. The English is such as a boy in our sixth standard classes could easily improve. I have copied out the words here, and I will read them to you. "This book," so runs the endorsement, "was given the King and I at our crownation." That is one point. Another, also noted by Macaulay, is that husbands "of decent station," as Macaulay is careful to note, were not ashamed, in those days, of cruelly beating their wives. Well, as I said before, I need not go into further details. These are enough to demonstrate, that at the politically glorious epoch we are now surveying, the social condition of England in regard to the relations of the sexes, was by no means of a highly creditable character. Look again at the England of to-day. Politically, she continues to be as great, and as prosperous, and as energetic in advancement, as ever. How is she socially? I have noted down here a point or two in regard to this, which is worthy of consideration. But I wish to say a word of warning before I refer to these points themselves. On this as well as on the last point, I refer only to existing social evils. This is necessary for the argument. But I must

not be understood as supposing for one instant, that these evils afford a satisfactory picture of the social condition of England, taken as a whole, whether in the seventeenth century or at the present day. I have not the privilege of a personal knowledge of the social condition of England even at the present day. But from all I have read and seen here; from all I have heard from those of our friends who have had the inestimable privilege of seeing with their own eyes England and English social life, especially from what I have heard from our distinguished friends who have only just returned; and among them, too, especially my excellent friend Mr. Ramasawmi Mudaliar of Madras who has publicly spoken on this subject; from all this, I have formed a conclusion, which I have no hesitation in plainly avowing, that in my judgment the social condition of England is, in many important respects, immensely superior to that of any of the sections of our Indian community. I hope this open avowal will prevent any misunderstanding of my meaning in what I have said on this subject, and also in what I am going to say. Of the detailed points, then, that I have noted, I pass over one which I had intended to refer to, but which, on second thoughts, I consider to be so liable to misapprehension that it had better be omitted. And I will refer first to the question of women's rights. That was a question on which, as we all know, the late John Stuart Mill felt, thought, and wrote, very strongly. But what has been the result of it? His very eloquent treatise on the Subjection of Women has not yet had any appreciable result, as regards the practical enforcement of its doctrines, while Mr. Mill himself was, in his lifetime, ridiculed for his out-of-the-way views. Great is truth and it prevails, says the Latin proverb, and our own Sanskrit maxim is to the same effect—Truth alone is victorious, not untruth. But for the present the truth enunciated by Mill is not in the ascendant. Again, it was only the other day, in this very Hall, that we were informed how the relations of the working classes and the aristocratic party in England were constituted, and how the former felt a genuine and fervent sympathy with the wants and wishes of the Indian population, because they felt that in their own country and by their own people, they were

treated in much the same way as we are here. Does that indicate a satisfactory social condition? Or again, let me refer to the telegram received only this afternoon, about a grand Socialist meeting of 20,000 people in Hyde Park. One of the Socialist orators there declared, that there would be bloodshed, unless social reform—by which I understand him to mean a reform in the relations of the different classes of society,—was granted. Can we say, that that is altogether as it should be? There is one more point that I would wish to refer to here, especially because it affords an even closer parallel to our condition than those to which I have now alluded. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is at present prohibited in England. The movement for the removal of this prohibition is not one of yesterday. It is an old one, and has gone on for many years. On the last occasion that it was solemnly discussed, the reform was obstructed, and successfully obstructed, by those who correspond in English society to our priesthood. There you have the case of a social reform, which comes as near as possible to the social reforms required among us—reforms, that is to say, of social regulations intertwined closely with religious, or what are regarded as religious, ordinances. How, then, does the whole matter stand? In this England of ours, this England, where political reform is advancing by leaps and bounds, where political affairs attract such attention as is shown by the commotion of the General Election just closed—in this England, there are still social evils, huge and serious social evils, awaiting remedy. To them attention is not directed with anything like the force and energy bestowed on political affairs—even until bloodshed is threatened. Where, then, is the lesson of history which we are asked to deduce and act upon? Once more I say, that my remarks must not be understood as implying for a moment, that I am comparing our social condition with that of England. I am doing nothing of the sort. I am only pointing the lesson taught by the contemporary history of England—that political progress can be achieved, and is being achieved before our eyes, where social evils still remain unremedied, and where they receive but a comparatively small fraction of the attention and reforming energy of the people.

And now having dealt with the only two arguments that I have come across in support of the theory that social reform must precede political reform, I must pass on to the next branch of my observations. But before I do so, I wish to say one word. A good deal more might be said on this question of the true lesson taught by history. But having said what I have said, I think it is unnecessary to further labour the point, as the view I have taken is that which is implied in the practical advice given by Mr. Wordsworth, whose authority—especially on questions like this one, concerning the philosophy of history—may safely be pronounced to be unequalled in Bombay.

Well, then, having dealt with and shown what I conceive to be the fallacy of the arguments urged in support of the affirmative of the question which forms the subject of this evening's discourse, I will now proceed to state the arguments which appear to me to support the negative answer to that question. And first, it seems to me to be plainly a maxim of prudence and common sense, that reform ought to go, as I may say, along the line of least resistance. Secure first the reforms which you can secure with the least difficulty, and then turn your energies in the direction of those reforms where more difficulty has to be encountered. You will thus obtain all that vigour which the spirit of reform must derive from success, and thus carry out the whole work of progress with greater promptitude than if you go to work the other way. This is the principle we actually act upon within the sphere of political activity itself. How, then, can we be justly twitted for applying the same principle as between the two spheres of political and social activity? Now if this principle is correct, it leads manifestly to the conclusion that more energy ought just now to be devoted to political than to social reform. Remember, I am not asking that our reforming energies should be confined to the political sphere. Far from it. I entirely repudiate that principle. And I don't think you could carry it out if you would. As pointed out in the quotation from Mr. Spencer's essay given in my letter to Mr. Malabari—I must ask to be excused for referring to that letter so frequently—as there pointed out, the spirit which impels to political reform must

needs burst forth in other directions also, more or less frequently, with greater or less force. I have not the remotest idea of laying an embargo on its outgoings in those directions. But this I do say, that political reform is entitled to a greater share of our energies than social, under the circumstances we have got to deal with. Every one of us cannot devote himself to every one of the numerous reforms which are wanted. Extraordinary natural gifts may enable one person, like, for instance, my friend Mr. Ranade, to devote himself successfully to many modes of activity at one and the same time. But this is not possible to us all. Therefore in dividing our energies, if we have to divide them, between political and social reform, I hold that the greater portion of our energy legitimately can, and therefore ought to be devoted to the former. And now mark how the result I allege follows from the application of the line-of-least-resistance principle. What are the forces opposed to us, if I may use that compendious expression? On the one side, we have a government by a progressive nation, which is the benign mother of free nations—a nation which, by its constituted authorities, has solemnly and repeatedly declared, and in some measure practically shown the sincerity of its declarations, that it is ready to admit us to full political rights, when we show that we deserve them and shall use them well. On the other side, we have an ancient nation, subject to strong prejudices; not in anything like full sympathy with the new conditions now existing in the country; attached, perhaps "not wisely but too well," to its own religious notions with which the proposed social reforms are closely, intimately, and at numberless points, intertwined; loving all its own genuine hoary traditions—and some of its very modern ones also which it supposes to be hoary—yet often failing to understand the true meaning and significance of both classes of traditions. As between these two groups of what I have called, only for convenience of phrase, opposing forces, can there be any reasonable doubt how the line of least resistance runs? If we compare the Government and the Hindu population to two forts facing the army of reform, can there be any doubt that the wisest course

for that army is to turn its energies first towards the fort represented by the Government, where we have numerous and powerful friends among the garrison, and which is held against us only in order to test first whether we shall be able to properly use any larger powers that may be conceded to us there? As to the other fort, the case is as far as possible from being one of *veni, vidi, vici*. The soldiers of the old garrison are not in the least ready to "give up," and in some respects we have yet got even to forge, and to learn to wield, the weapons by which we have to fight them.

Again, in politics, argument goes a great way; in social reform, it goes for very little, seeing that feeling and tradition are involved in it to a very large extent indeed. In politics, even such a thinker as Sir Fitzjames Stephen is content to resort to reason. He says, that if the people of India want free institutions, without wire-pulling from English Radicals, let them by all means have such institutions. Sir Fitzjames Stephen's objection is only to the concession of such institutions, when they are not asked for in India, only to prove a pet theory of English politicians. In presence of such champions of the existing order of things, logic is an instrument of power. But where feeling and tradition are the authorities appealed to, logic is almost impotent. You must then make up your minds—still to use logic, of course, but only as a subordinate agency—and you must rely more on a long, patient, toilsome, process of diverting the feelings, or to express it differently, making the soil unfit for the growth of these misplaced sentiments and misunderstood traditions, in the same way as, according to a great scientific teacher, science does not attack the weed of superstition directly, but renders the mental soil unfit for its cultivation. You cannot say, you ought not to say here, "cut this down, why cumbereth it the ground." You must improve here, you must infuse new vitality and new vigour into the old growth. In one word, to go back once again to our old political phraseology, we have here got, like Disraeli, to educate our party, which always must be, and in this case must particularly be, a lengthy and laborious operation.

Once more. In political matters we can all unite at once,

Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis, the people of Eastern India, Southern India, Western India, Northern India,—all can unite, and not only can do so in theory, they have actually done so in fact, as demonstrated at the National Congress held last Christmas. What is the secret of this? The answer is obvious. The evils, or supposed evils, are common; the remedies, not being in any way mixed up with any very powerful traditions, are also the same; and all intelligent Indian opinion is necessarily unanimous. In regard to social matters, the conditions are all altered. The evils, for one thing, are not identical. The surrounding conditions are excessively various. The force of traditions and old memories is not equal all round. And the remedies, therefore, that suggest themselves to different minds are almost of necessity different. It is plain, then, that the advantages to secure which we can all unite ought to be tried for first, so that we may obtain the benefit of the fraternal feeling which must be generated by such co-operation. If political reform is thus secured by the concerted action of all the educated classes in India, that must, and inevitably will, tell favourably on the advancement of social reform. Reading Mr. Cotton's book on *New India* the other day, I came across a passage germane to this topic, which I have copied out here and shall read to you. "Bereft of political independence," says he, "their ideas of collective action cannot have that impress of sound logic and morality which collective action alone can impart to them. A considerable degree of unity in thought and action has lately been established in political matters, and it may be hoped, therefore, that there will shortly be a similar manifestation in regard to moral and social questions." What Mr. Cotton says here is not only perfectly true, but I venture to think it is somewhat understated. In regard to moral and social questions, in the same way as with regard to political ones, there is a great deal more unity already established than he supposes. The difference there, too—as regards the goal to be reached—is but slight. The real difference is—and that I admit is at present very wide—as to the roads for reaching the goal. Some believe in legislation, some in State aid, and some are inclined to trust to the development

from within of the energy of the community. Such and other important differences exist in the modes suggested for effecting reforms. But about the substantive reforms themselves, there is but little—I don't deny that there is a little—difference of views. But the general unity is not thereby marred. And the want of unity in details here referred to is due to various circumstances like those already indicated, and must gradually cease to exist.

One of our Anglo-Vernacular newspapers recently asked how the progress of political reform was expected to tell on the advance of social reform. I say, we have just indicated one mode in which this operation will take place. In political matters, we are learning—and learning more easily than we should do in any other department of activity—the lesson, that we must act in concert, that to this end we must give and take, and sink smaller differences for the one common purpose. This, and lessons like this, when we are thoroughly imbued with them, will form the best possible equipment for the work of social reform that lies before us. We must act together, we must disarm opposition, we must conciliate those opposed to us. Such are the modes of action which we are learning in the course of our political activity. These we shall have to apply in the performance of our duty in the social sphere. Let us remember further, that with political independence, to a certain extent, goes a great capacity for social advancement. This is not a mere empty speculation. It is a theory in support of which historical testimony can be adduced. Sir H. Maine has pointed out in regard to the Hindu Law as administered by our Indian courts, that it has now assumed a stiffness, rigidity, and inflexibility, which formed no feature of the system before British rule. In the days of the Peshva *regime* again—a *regime* which many among us are apt to look upon as very anti-liberal and narrow—there was a liberalising process going on, which, if I may be permitted to use that figure, must make one's mouth water in these days. The story of Parashuram Bhau Patvardhan is a familiar one. That brave soldier-statesman had almost made up his mind to get a favourite daughter, who had become a widow in youth, remarried. He had to abandon

that intention, it is true, but still the very fact that such an idea should have entered his mind, and should have been placed by him before those by whom he was surrounded, and that these latter should have deprecated it in the very mild manner that they seem to have done—these are facts worthy of being pondered over. Coupling them with such facts as I see in the *Bakhars*, regarding the behaviour of the Peshvas with Jivba Dada, the entertainment of Mussulmans and Hindus at dinner together on occasion of the marriage of Savai Madhavrav Peshva, the marriage of the Peshva Balaji Bajirao with a daughter of a Desastha family, I confess I am inclined strongly to draw the inference, which I have held for a long time, that if Peshva rule had continued a little longer, several of the social reforms which are now giving us and the British Government so much trouble would have been secured with immensely greater ease.

And now I come to the last of the points I wish to address myself to this evening. I do so the more readily now, because I am afraid I have trespassed already too long on your attention. The remark of Sir A. Colvin which I alluded to at the beginning of this address, assumed that as a matter of fact we were devoting an extravagant proportion of our time and energy to the subject of political reform, and neglecting almost entirely —so it appears to me to have assumed—the subject of social reform. I cannot admit this to be the fact at all, I can well understand, how such an incorrect impression should arise among those whose acquaintance with what is going on in Indian Society is from the outside, and derived from newspapers and other similar sources. In the case of political reform, it is of the very essence of the thing that a great deal should be done through the agency of newspapers. Nobody, I am sure, will suspect me of undervaluing the utility of the press in all works of reform. But I must own, that I do not think social questions are very much the worse for not being talked about so much through the newspapers as political questions. For see how different the two cases are in regard to this point. In regard to politics, the efforts made so far have, as a general but not by any means as a universal rule, addressed themselves to

those who come within the circle of the influence of the press. For one thing, the officers of Government have to be kept informed in regard to what is thought, felt, or desired by the people. One of the best means of effecting this is afforded by newspapers. Again, superior officers of the British Government have often to be informed of the doings of their subordinates, and informed in such a way as to enforce attention. The newspaper press is a most potent instrument for use in such cases. But in the case of social evils, the party to be educated is to a great extent beyond the ambit of the newspaper's influence. It does not often get into the way of the newspaper, and it is too thick-skinned to be touched to the quick on that side. The mode of operation, accordingly, must here be necessarily different, although, of course, even here the newspaper is of use as an indirect means of education by way of "filtration"; and also as a means of communication with those sections of the old party that come nearest to the new; and further as a means of communication between the various sections or members of the new party itself. However, although reforming activity in the social sphere is thus usually less noisy than in the other sphere, it is not, therefore, any the less real. But before I go into details here, I am free to admit at once that the success we have achieved is excessively slight. But if I admit this, I wish to ask, whether any one is prepared to say that the success we have achieved in the political sphere is so very large after all, even with more favourable conditions? Admitting that we are miles and miles away from the goal in social reform, I hold that we are as yet equally far in political. We have made and are making preparations in both, and in both we have made a similar amount of progress. Let us glance at the facts. Female education is one of our principal items, as it is one of our principal means, of social reform. We have made some progress there. I am myself a great believer in the efficacy of female education, especially in connexion with general social reform of all descriptions. And, therefore, I need scarcely say that what we have done is small enough in all conscience. But we have done something. Our Parsi friends, with my venerable friend now in the chair as one of

their great leaders, have made progress which puts us to shame. But though we are lagging behind, we too are doing something, as I need scarcely tell the members of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. The girls at the Society's Schools have been for some time increasing in numbers. And recently we have added an Anglo-Vernacular Department to our schools, which, beginning with 12 girls in the first year, and containing 22 in the second, now opens its third year with as many as 60 girls. Again I say this is small enough, as no one can feel more strongly than I do. But it is, I will venture to say, perceptible progress. Then there is also the other great section of the Indian community—the Mahomedan. That section has generally been regarded as averse to improvement—especially of the modern sort. But the important movement started by my excellent friend Mr. Badruddin Tyabji and his colleagues, has by its great success shown that the Mahomedan community, too, is socially moving forward. However, to return to other points connected with the social state of the Hindu community. The question of widow marriage has certainly advanced a great deal beyond the stage at which it was, say twenty years ago. The bonds of caste are getting looser, our friends are going to England with less difficulty, and more frequently, than before. [A Voice—What about infant marriage?] A friend there asks about the position of the infant marriage question. Well, even here we are not so bad as we were within the narrow span even of my own experience. The age of marriage is slowly rising. I admit again it is rising very slowly indeed, and the point it has now reached is low enough. Still there is no retrogression certainly, and there is some progress, however slight. And all these facts being such as I have pointed out, I venture to repeat, that we cannot fairly be censured for giving too exclusive attention to political at the expense of social reform.

And now, after all this discussion, I venture to reiterate the opinion which I stated many months ago, that it is not possible to sever political from social reform altogether; that the two must go hand in hand, although the march may not in the case of both be with absolutely equal celerity. I say, we

must and ought to devote the greater portion of our energy to political reform, but so as still to keep alive a warm sympathy for social reform. To one like myself, who believes to a great extent in the philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer, this conclusion is not only a correct one, but almost the only one possible. But even to those who may not accept that philosophy, but who will look beneath the surface of things, to them, too, this conclusion must commend itself. Let us then all devote the bulk of our energies to political reform. Let us keep alive our sympathies with social reform and those who undertake them, and let us all help them to the extent of our powers. At all events, for God's sake, let us not set ourselves in antagonism to social reform. In this way only shall we best discharge the whole of the duty which lies upon us, the duty of reform in social as well as political matters. For I must repeat, that in my judgment they are both duties and must both be fairly attended to and discharged according to our circumstances and opportunities.

The Hon'ble Mr. N. G. Chandavarkar on Social Reform.

The following is the full text of the speech delivered by the Honourable Mr. N. G. Chandavarkar, B.A., LL.B., as President of the Fourth Anniversary Meeting of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association on 28th November 1896 :—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I am giving but a very inadequate expression to my feelings at this moment when I say that it has given me unbounded pleasure to visit this capital of Southern India and to meet in this hall and on this occasion so many of the friends, sympathisers and active supporters of the cause of Hindu social reform. This is an occasion which I cannot very easily forget, and though I must acknowledge my inability to do full justice to the task which the members of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association have entrusted to me, yet I entertain the hope that the combined sympathies of so many ladies and gentlemen that I see before me for the cause which both you and myself have greatly at heart and the willing confidence with which I have been called to this chair, will

have an inspiring effect upon me and enable me to justify, to some extent at least, that confidence. It looks rather odd that a stranger like me in Madras should be selected for the honor that you have done me by asking me to preside at this meeting. But, after all, I am willing to own that my situation cannot be very odd on account of my being a stranger to Madras, when I remember that this is not the first time when you have selected a gentleman from the sister Presidency to preside at an anniversary meeting of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association. One far more deserving of your confidence—one who has, by his pure and exemplary life, no less than by his scholarly attainments and moral courage, won universal respect and entitled himself to be regarded as a leading social reformer—I refer to Dr. Bhandarkar—honored this chair at your anniversary meeting held at the end of December 1894 and addressed you on the subject of Hindu social reform in words which, I dare say, have made indelible impression on the minds of all who heard him. But though I happen to be a stranger to this Presidency in the sense that I received my education in Bombay and have made that city my home, yet I may fairly claim not to be an entire stranger amongst you for the reason that I not only come from a district which at one time formed part of this Presidency but from a community which even now is linked with both Madras and Bombay, and derives its influences from, and owes its enlightened spirit to, the one Presidency as much as to the other. It is this feeling which partly encouraged me to accept, without any hesitation, your kind invitation to me to visit this city and to do myself the honor of presiding at your deliberations here. But that is not the only feeling which encouraged me to so readily accept the invitation. For some years now—they may be a very few years, not more than six or seven, but nevertheless they are years which, in my humble opinion, mark a very important epoch in the popular progress of the city, if not of the whole of the Presidency, of Madras—for some years now, I have watched with considerable interest and sympathy, the earnest efforts of some of my friends here to create public opinion in favor of social reform and to awaken the conscience of the country in

general to the social wants and needs of that great and ancient community to which we belong—I mean, the Hindus. These friends of ours, who have identified themselves with the cause and have been striving for its progress—who by precept and example have shown and are showing that they are in earnest—have awakened an interest in the cause which is not confined either to this city or this Presidency alone. For one thing, the *Indian Social Reformer* has, during these seven years of its existence, won its way into the hearts of many a sympathiser of social reform, and no better acknowledgment of the service it has been rendering could be made than in the words of three such eminent Hindus as the late Mr. Justice Telang, the late Honorable Rao Bahadur K. L. Nulkar, and the late Mr. N. M. Permanand, who were among its most careful readers and its most sincere admirers. They followed its criticisms with great interest and more than once remarked to me that the conductors of the *Indian Social Reformer* spotted out our social defects with a keenness of insight and intelligence of criticism which was admirable, regretting at the same time that in no other part of the country was there a paper similarly devoted to the cause of social reform. For another thing, the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association, whose fourth anniversary meeting we have met to celebrate this evening, shows that there are, amongst you here, men who, convinced of the necessity of organising the forces of social reform, have banded themselves together for the purpose of trying, as far as they can, to realise in their own lives, individually and collectively, that higher and richer ideal which social reform, rightly understood, holds out before us as the true embodiment of social as well as individual existence. It is to the call of such ardent and sincere champions of social progress that I have deemed it my humble duty to respond; not because I claim to have done anything worth the name of a social reformer to deserve the high honor you have done me by selecting me as your Chairman, but because I feel proud to stand by the side of those here, with whose thoughts and actions I am in hearty sympathy.

THE NEED OF SOCIAL REFORM ORGANIZATIONS.

And I do not know, I cannot indeed conceive, of a duty

higher, nobler and more imperative in these days than that of co-operating as far as one can co-operate, with an organization such as the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association. If the cry of the social reformer has been a cry in the wilderness—if the cause of social reform has not been able to make appreciable progress, the cause is to be sought mainly in the fact that its advocates have not shown sufficiently that spirit of organization and association without which no great reform can be effected and no change for the better brought about in either the ideas, or the ideals, or the conduct, of any class of people. We live in times when, more than in any other, the necessity is felt of men sharing common opinions on great questions affecting the public welfare combining together and working by means of such combinations for the fulfilment of their ideals and the realization of their objects. But the value of such combined activities has not yet been felt in all its force in regard to this great work of Hindu social reform in many places, and it is on that account more than any other that the cause suffers. Those of us who feel the need of reform in the social customs and institutions of our people, who wish to do all we can to bring about that reform, have need to bear in mind the very wise remark of Goethe that "the individual can accomplish nothing unless he co-operates with the many at the right time"; we have to lay to heart the shrewd observation of a social philosopher, who says that "the insight of any one individual is, in general, but a half-light, and requires to be complemented by combination with the light of others." The Madras Hindu Social Reform Association supplies, therefore, a need of the time, and its claim to the sympathy and support of every well-wisher of the country rests on the ground that, feeling the value and necessity of organised effort in the promotion of social reform, it has pledged itself to carry on its mission *in the first place* by means of lectures and tracts, and *in the second place* by means of personal example and aid to those who take practical steps. The two great influences among mankind, says Carlyle, are *light* and *lightning*—that is, the force of insight on the one hand and the force of practical effectiveness on the other. By means of lectures and tracts you avail yourselves of

the force of *light*—bring out not only the light of knowledge that is in you, but you give it to others and thus help to diffuse a knowledge of our social defects and evils among the people. But what is more commendable in the programme of your Association is that it does not rest content with mere talk but seeks to give practical effect to that talk by means of *action*, which is what Carlyle meant when he spoke of the *lightning* as one of the two great factors in the progress of mankind. The great charge is often made against social reformers that many or most of them are insincere and have not the courage of their convictions. It is not for me to say whether and how far this charge is true, and if it is true, whether it is not a weakness shared by the advocates of social reform in common with the rest of their educated countrymen. But it is important to note, at this moment, the stage at which the attitude of our educated countrymen has now arrived. There was a time when educated Hindus did not hesitate to express freely and publicly their opinion in favour of the various measures of social reform. Twenty years ago, no one feared to say, if he felt it, that infant marriage was harmful, widow re-marriages were desirable, and caste distinctions were mischievous. It was a period when no one cared whether those who held those opinions were in consistency bound to act up to them. But that period was soon followed by another, when the voice of conscience began slowly to assert itself. During the preceding period, the question was, *what do I think?* The question during this second period was, *If I think a particular measure of reform good and necessary, why do I think only and not act?* It is during this second period that many of our educated countrymen were made alive to the truth that the expression of a certain opinion in favour of social reform carries with it a certain amount of personal responsibility and that there must be some consistency between our words and our deeds. And we have now arrived at the third stage when educated Hindus stand divided into two camps—firstly, those who give expression to their convictions and are prepared to act up to them, and secondly, those who hesitate to give public expression to their conviction in favour of social reform lest what they say should

be dragged to light and the inconsistency between their opinions and actions exposed some day. Those who belong to the former class are undoubtedly fewer in numbers; while those belonging to the latter may again be divided into two classes—those who refuse to say publicly what they think on social reform and think it prudent to hold their tongues, and those who deem it on the whole expedient to run with the multitude and declare themselves as opponents of social reform. My friend, Prof. Karve of the Fergusson College, who has been collecting opinions in favour of widow re-marriage in order to find out how many of the educated Hindus are prepared to support that reform theoretically and how many are prepared to give it practical support, told me some time ago that a very large number refused to declare openly their opinions on the question, though in private they sympathised with it.

This may be a matter of regret, but we need not be sorry that we have arrived at this last stage, when the necessity of suiting word to action and presenting to the public a life of consistency is making itself felt more than at any of the previous stages through which the course of social reform has run. Your Madras Hindu Social Reform Association is a sign of the times and may fairly be taken as an index of the wholesome change which is taking place in the minds of many of our educated countrymen. No one, I notice, can become a member of the Association unless he is prepared to pledge himself to carry out certain reforms; and by bringing about widow-marriages, endeavouring to create public opinion against what are called *nautch* parties, and, in other ways, you have shown that you are in earnest and determined to fight the battle of reform with courage, consistency, and calmness.

I know that there are not wanting critics who are ready to detect flaws in your programme and say a number of things against your methods of work. It is an old story oft-repeated that you are too hasty and rash, and are by your agitations and activities, your lectures and tracts and newspaper criticisms, doing more harm than good to the cause of social reform, and by creating a prejudice against it, you are retarding it while you think you are endeavouring to promote it. There is noth-

ing new in this sort of hostile criticism, it is the kind of criticism to which reform of all kind, not merely social, has been treated in all ages and in all countries. Whether the measures of social reform which you have proposed and the methods of work which you have adopted are hasty and rash and calculated to injure the cause of social progress among the Hindus, is a subject with which I shall attempt to deal in the course of this address a little later on. But there is one criticism of which I may be allowed to take note just now, and it is this, that it is to be seen whether the activity and enthusiasm, which have animated the members of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association so far, will endure for a long time to come or evaporate after a certain number of years. Sustained and united action and patient toil in the midst of difficulties, are, we are told, not the virtues for which the Hindu is specially noted; and it is doubted whether an organization of the kind you have started will be able to hold on and last for more than a few years to come. The only answer which we can make to this criticism is that it is not for us either to pry into or to answer for the future, for it depends on a variety of circumstances, most, if not all, of which are beyond human calculation. It is enough for us to answer for the present and to work in the present, in the spirit of faith and hope; remembering that the future rarely fails when those who work for a good cause are animated by that spirit.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF SOCIAL REFORM.

But there are those amongst us who tell us that this problem of Hindu social reform is of so highly complicated a character and surrounded with such innumerable and insuperable difficulties that, in attempting its solution, we have proposed to ourselves not only a tremendous but a hopeless task. This *hobgoblin* argument perpetually reminds us that the Hindu society is not one society but many societies, each having its own customs, traditions and manners and each marked by its own peculiar stages of growth; and that an organization such as the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association is attempting the impossible when, by drawing together a small number of Hindus of different

castes, representing different social customs, it is, through them, seeking the social regeneration of the whole and unwieldy mass of Hindu society. This, we are told, is not the first age or time in the history of that society when men have tried the Herculean task of effecting a reform in its social customs and institutions ; there have been periods in that ancient history when men greater than those who now pose as social reformers, girded their loins to reform either the institution of marriage or the institution of caste ; and, in spite of it all, Hindu society has gone on in its old ways, and caste and infant marriage and enforced widowhood have continued to rule our social destinies. I remember a friend of mine, who was disposed by a variety of circumstances to take a very pessimistic view of the future of Hindu society quoting to me the saying of the ancient Greeks that it is impossible to constitute a State of more than a few thousand citizens and telling me that the very bulk of our numbers, added to the variety of language, custom, and tradition, was our greatest difficulty. Next to this, we are often asked by our pessimistic friends to take particular account of what is said to be the peculiar habit of the Hindu mind—the habit of "innate laziness" or "inborn apathy," which make most of us indisposed to get out of old and established grooves even when we feel convinced that a change is either desirable or necessary. This peculiar habit of mind is now observable in the fact that while there are many educated men who feel the need of social reform—while nearly all would say that our social customs require to be changed—there are very few who would think it *their* duty to put their shoulders to the wheel and take their part in the furtherance of the cause of social reform. "What is everybody's business is nobody's business." "Each of us," to express it in the language of an English writer, "is apt to think that the world could get on well enough without his particular piece of service." We are ready to say that social reform is necessary. Even more ready to criticise a Ranade or a Bhandarkar for not doing this or doing that as a social reformer ; but it never occurs to us that if we feel that social reform is good, it is our duty also not to shirk our responsibility but in proportion to our abilities and opportunities to bear our share of

the work that has to be performed in bringing about that reform. Then, again, we are told to take a warning and give up our cause, because our pessimists draw our pointed attention to what they call "the spirit of Hindu revivalism" which, in spite of educational and other reforming agencies that have been in our midst working together, has come over the country and seems to be the animating force at the present day. The wave of Hindu orthodoxy is said to be passing over the whole face of Hindu society and throwing back the cause of social progress by years, if not centuries. These and such other signs of the time are held forth not unfrequently as making the situation of social reform one of despair.

But, is there really any reason to be frightened away by these difficulties and to despair? Hindu society is, no doubt, a very unwieldy structure, and is divided into numerous castes. But is it on that account hopeless to expect it to assimilate gradually the ideas of social reform? Though it is divided into castes and sub-sections of castes, innumerable, with peculiarities of custom and tradition distinguishing them from one another, yet it ought not to be forgotten that all these castes and sub-sections rest on a common foundation; they have a sort of inter-dependence and exert mutual influence on one another. The customs and institutions with which the social reformer proposes to deal are common to the higher classes of the Hindu society from whom the lower classes take their standard, and if Hindus of different castes band themselves together for the common object of social reform, it is because they have discerned the fact that one of the difficulties of that reform in any caste is the fear that, if it throws away an ancient custom or gives up an ancient institution, it may lose its prestige in the eyes of the other castes that, together with it, constitute Hindu society. The social reformer has to work, so to say, on the conscience of that society in general; he has to criticise the common foundations on which the social customs and institutions that he seeks to improve rest, and it is in that way that he can hope to awaken the spirit of reform and progress. The part, in the shape of caste and its sub-sections, has grown out of the whole in the shape of Hindu society; and the part will not move

out of its alloted sphere in that society unless the general is also agitated and moved. Hence the necessity and value of social reform organizations, composed of members drawn from different castes; they engage the interest and serve to make a breach in the old-fashioned ideas of all castes. When, again, we are told to take a warning and give up our cause, because even the life-long and devoted efforts of men greater than those now working for social reform ended in failure, and that Hindu society, in spite of the more earnest prophets of social reform in the past continues what it was and has been, the warning means nothing less than a total denial to the Hindus of the power of assimilating new ideas. I am not prepared to admit either the truth or force of this total denial. It is usual to speak of "the hoary and venerable age of the Hindu society"; and amidst all its vicissitudes, are we to suppose that it has been able to survive and stand the shock of ages without the power of assimilation, or rather, which is the same thing expressed in different language, without the power of adjusting itself to its environment? "The immobility of the East," "the stolid conservatism of the Hindu," are fine phrases that have passed into proverbs; they have, like all phrases that have become proverbs, a grain of truth in them, but not the whole truth and let us not be enslaved by them. If we try to get inside the notions conveyed by these phrases, we shall find that Hindu society has not been so stolidly impervious to new ideas and new influence as we often suppose it to have been. To tell us that great saints and sages like Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, Basawa, and Buddha, failed with all their mighty influences to rid that society of some of its evil customs, is to remind us that what has happened in the past in the case of a people, will also happen whether now or in future—that, in other words, history is apt to repeat itself. But, as pointed out by Mr. John Morley, historical analogies are more often imperfect and misleading than true. When we say that history repeats itself and predict that, because events took a certain course in the case of a certain people in some by-gone period, they are likely to take the same course now or hereafter, we forget that each period has its own distinctive features, is

dominated by its own peculiar influences, which make the problem of that period its own. Historical generalisations are not without their value. They train the mind to read human nature, and teach us the stages through which human development has passed. But we must, at the same time, bear in mind the warning of a well-known social philosopher that "historical generalisations are apt to hurt the mind in somewhat the same way as glasses hurt the eye. They accustom us to look at things in a particular way, and make it difficult for us to see them in any other way." The social reformer of the present age has no reason to be disheartened by the failures of the past or deterred by the despondent tones in which the history of some ancient movements speak, because he has to deal with the problem of social reform amidst influences which, he may fairly and without any exaggeration say, are peculiarly his own.

CONDITIONS OF HOPE.

It is worth while drawing pointed attention to one or two at least of these *influences*, for on them our hopes of the future as to the social salvation of the Hindus rests and by them the social reformer has every reason to feel inspired and encouraged. When I speak of these influences, I do not wish to confine your attention to such things as our schools, our Universities, and other educational institutions, of which it is usual to say that they are slowly emancipating the intellect of the country and preparing the way for reform and progress in all directions. They are undoubtedly among the great mental levers of the age. But there are other, though more silent yet none the less potent, influences which are working together for our good *in this age*. All of us here have not, I dare say, forgotten the old controversy as to the relative merits of social and political reform, which was raised some years ago, in the form of the much agitated question—*Should social reform precede political reform?*—and on which the late Mr. Justice Telang discoursed at the beginning of the year 1886 with much ability and eloquence. It is a controversy of which we do not hear much now-a-days, probably because we have come to

perceive the sober truth, attested by the experience of every civilized nation that *progress* has no arbitrary laws and that there can be no rank of precedence among the different lines or departments of reform. There are times when religion takes hold of the popular mind and concentrates its attention and energies upon questions affecting its spiritual well-being. There are periods when material progress becomes the rage of the day; and periods when political advancement becomes the ruling passion. It may not be easy to say how and when and why these will precede or succeed one another, but the truth is there that, as pithily put by Mr. John Mackenzie, in his work on "Social Philosophy," "there have been times at which the most pressing problem has rather been an individual one—as, for instance, what must I do to be saved? There have also been times at which the most pressing problem has been political rather than social; and there have been times at which the most important problem has had regard to the discovery of abstract truths or to the advance of material prosperity." But it should not be supposed on that account that the spirit or rather the elements of one kind of reform are totally wanting or absent in any given period, because the predominating spirit then is the spirit of some one of the other kinds of reform. That, however, is not the point I wish to emphasise in asking you to note the favorable influences of the present age amidst which the social reformer is called to do his work. My point rather is that all activities, be they political, material, religious, or social, have a mutually interacting influence. The desire for progress in one direction does tell and must tell, though slowly and imperceptibly, by creating a desire for progress in the other directions as well. To put it in the language used by Mr. Montague in his book called "The Limits of Individual Liberty," "serious opinion on any subject modifies opinion on all great subjects." The system of Copernicus affected religious thought in Europe; and in our own days we see that Darwin's theory of evolution is affecting both religious and political thought there. We no doubt lament at times that the majority of our educated countrymen are for political advancement and indifferent to social reform;

that while the number of those who attend the National Congress is very large and the number of those who do not attend it but sympathise with it even larger, the number of those who attend the Social Conference is very much smaller. We sometimes in a spirit of impatience complain that our political activities rather mar than favor the cause of social progress. And in proof of it ask ourselves to note the attempt to exclude the meetings of the Social Conference from the camp of the National Congress. But let us not be misled by such a merely superficial aspect of things. It is said that the growth of the political sentiment—the desire for political advancement—by bringing together men from all parts of the country, giving them a common ground of hopes and aspirations, enabling them to speak from a common platform, is indirectly infusing into them a common spirit of nationality, drawing them, indirectly and slowly no doubt but for all that steadily, out of the narrower sphere of caste and opening before them a wider and higher view of humanity. There is some force and truth in that observation; but even without going so far as that, I think, we may safely say this, that it is not merely the blessings of peace and order which the British administration under which we live, has brought in its train, that we have to be thankful for; but, what we have to value even more than those blessings which we highly prize, is the spirit of enquiry and of individuality which the genius of that administration has a tendency to foster in those brought within its dominion. It is said by some writers on socialism in Europe, that the predominance of the social problem in that continent at the present moment is due, to the increasing preponderance of democratic influences in the modern State. Whether that is a correct representation or not, it is not wide of the mark to say that the Anglo-Saxon character favours individual independence and teaches men to think and feel seriously that they are citizens of a State. When men learn that, a feeling of individual responsibility and dignity is created, and once that feeling is created, it cannot stop there and crop itself up in the sphere of politics alone. It must gradually lead them to perceive that they are not merely citizens of a State, but also members of a

society, and just as they ought to aspire for advancement in the one they must also aspire for advancement in the other. Thus it is that the ground is prepared for the social reformer in our times in a way of which I am not aware any preceding age in the history of the Hindus prepared it. The political spirit of the West, which we are slowly imbibing and which is manifesting itself in a variety of ways, must act on the social spirit also. Though the rank of the social reformers is thinner than the rank of the politicians, who can gainsay this, that since the time the National Congress is said to have awakened our political conscience, the social problem has been thrusting itself forward, disturbing many a caste, and awakening our social conscience also? The fact is that when the politician talks of our rights, our nationality and our claim to be ruled justly and equitably—when he says that the times have changed and with them political institutions and laws must change, the social reformer is able to put his own claim forward and bring to his aid the *progressive* spirit generated by a desire for political advancement. Conscience awakened in one direction rarely fails to be awakened in other directions also. I remember when some years ago some one remarked in a newspaper that the educated native of India was more ready to trouble the Secretary of State than to trouble his mother-in-law, Sir William Wedderburn replied that that was so because it was much easier to beard the high official who presides over the India Office than the mother-in-law who presides over the Hindu home. But the Hindu mother-in-law has since begun to feel that she is not without her share of the bearding too. By the majority of almost every caste in which there is intelligence, it is now conceded that times are changing and must change socially; we may differ as to ways and means, but the number of those who say that there should be no social progress and that we must rest where we are and have been, is getting smaller than it was even ten years ago. In the formation of this opinion, I humbly think that what I have called the genius of the British administration and the political activities which are the outcome of it, must, as they do, imperceptibly bear their share; and that is a force, the influence of which, I say, is pecu-

liar to the present times. Nor should we lose sight of another peculiar influence of the present age, which is spoken of as "facility of movement," of which it has been well said by a writer, that it is "a great means of forming new connections" and of integrating society on an improved basis after first disintegrating it. It is not merely the railways and steamers that have helped us to move away from one place to another and exchange ideas and draw new light, but the whole world has, so to say, opened to us to an unprecedented extent. We have been caste-ridden; but a wider world unknown to caste is trying to ride us now. We are sought to be influenced, not merely by the particular society in which we are born or the particular religion in which we have been bred up, but also by the West and the East. We leave our homes either in search of employment or for trade, and imbibe new ideas, contract new sympathies, and learn to form new connections. A new and wider kind of sympathy is being generated than that to which the confined atmosphere of caste in the old days accustomed our ancestors.

I have mentioned but two of the peculiar influences of the present age as calculated to favor the cause of social progress and there are others which will perhaps easily suggest themselves to you. I shall not attempt to dogmatise on the subject by predicting that these peculiar influences are sure to lead to the social reforms we advocate; no one can safely prophesy the future. But all I wish to maintain is that we have no reason to be led away by the historical analogies of those, who say that because the social problem did not succeed in the hands of men more gifted than those now working for it, in bygone periods, it is bound to fail now and hereafter also. The social reform of the present day has no doubt the old difficulties still existing, to contend against; and those difficulties seem insurmountable; but the old problem is presented to him now in a new garb; while old difficulties exist, new instruments are at his disposal; and if he works with patience and courage there is no reason why he should despair.

A certain amount of pessimism does no doubt at times come over us in sight of the so-called and sudden revival of

Hindu orthodoxy throughout the country. In almost every newspaper we read, in almost every meeting we attend, in almost every lecture we hear and in a variety of ways that it is unnecessary to particularise, we note this sign of the time, as some people term it, and conclude that the cause of social reform has but a poor outlook when it finds itself confronted by the wave of Hindu revivalism which is passing over the face of the whole country. But I do not know if my friends here will take me to be a man of an unduly and excessively sanguine temperament, if I express my sincere view that this sudden revival of orthodox Hinduism has really no abiding element of danger to the cause of reform and is just one of those things we should expect in the case of people situated as we Hindus just now are. "Progress" it has been well said, "has many receding waves" and whether in the case of political or social reform, we shall, like every other people, be found sometimes moving onwards and at other times seem to be going backwards, but on the whole advancing. That is the law of all progress. In his Essay on Sir James Mackintosh's "History of the French Revolution," Macaulay speaks of the history of progress in England as "a history of actions and re-actions" and compares "the motion of the public mind" in England with "that of the sea when the tide is rising." "Each successive wave rushes forward, breaks, and rolls back; but the great flood is steadily coming in. A person who looked on the waters only for a moment might fancy that they were retiring. A person who looked on them only for five minutes might fancy that they were rushing capriciously to and fro. But when he keeps his eye on them for a quarter of an hour, and sees one sea-mark disappear after another, it is impossible for him to doubt of the general direction in which the ocean is moved." The present is merely a reaction against the notion that the Hindu had nothing good or noble to show, that his religion and his society are a bundle of superstitions. We have now found that like other people we must be proud of ourselves, our country, our religion, our society, and our everything. We feel offended when we are told that we must go to other *revelations* than our own in search of religious truth; when we are remind-

ed that we must adopt foreign customs if we are to become great like foreigners. This feeling of pride and patriotism is the outcome of many causes to but a few of which I have here referred. This feeling of pride and patriotism is perhaps natural under the circumstances, but whether natural or not, and though the present manifestations of it are of the reactionary spirit, yet they have no element of permanence or vitality in them. The complaint is that it is the educated classes who are showing and fostering that spirit by taking a leading and active part in movements professing to plead and encourage the cause of Hindu orthodoxy; but the spirit which is at the bottom of these movements is more *mechanical* than *spiritual*, because it is born of the feeling of pride and patriotism and the feeling of self-assertion to which I have just alluded and not of any real belief in either the dogmas or the institutions of Hinduism on the part of those who are its leaders and promoters. I am doing no injustice to such of my educated countrymen as are now leading and promoting these movements. I have no doubt that they sincerely believe that we Hindus ought not to allow our religion and society to be disparaged and that the only way to unite the discordant elements of Hindu society is to work upon those elements by means of the dogmas it believes and the institutions it worships; and there is this apology for them that they are passing through a state of development through which all progressive countries have had to pass before attaining higher and richer forms of life. In his Essay on "The Signs of the Times" published in the year 1829, Carlyle dealt with a somewhat similar phase of social life through which English society was then passing and denounced in no measured terms what he called the entirely mechanical spirit of the age, with belief in outward institutions corresponding to no inward impetus or conviction represented by "spiritual dynamics" in man. Such mechanical conformity to external forms without any vital belief in the principles embodied in those forms is only a mark of the present transition state of Hindu society. We are now passing through a period which is certainly not one of *dogmatism;* but one of scepticism and criticism. The great French writer, De Tocqueville, has pointed out

the peculiarities of such a period in his observation that "in times of general scepticism every one clings to his own persuasion... not so much because he is assured of its excellence, as because he is not convinced of the superiority of any other. In the present age, men are not very ready to die in defence of their opinions, but they are rarely inclined to change them; and there are fewer martyrs as well as fewer apostates." Our customs and our institutions are now brought into contact with new customs and new institutions; we have opened to us not only the lore of the East but also of the West; the spirit of the age is to ask the why and the wherefore in the case of everything we are asked to accept or reject; and in this chaotic condition when nothing is settled and nearly everything is undergoing a process of disturbance, it is only to be expected that before the old light fades away and the new light begins to shine, the old light will show a sudden blaze before it dies. Our society is now like the man, who fears when he is disturbed in the position to which he has fondly clung for better or for worse for years and asked to move into another position. In the face of the new forces which it has to meet, it feels that the process of its disintegration has commenced and is afraid lest the disintegration completed should totally ruin it. It feels that the powers above it—the powers of authority, tradition, and custom—which have hitherto held it together are growing weaker day by day, and that the powers within us—the powers of "self-reverence, self-knowledge, and self-control" are not yet grown strong to protect us from social wreckage—and, therefore, it tries in the midst of this sharp conflict between the old and the new to hold as fast as it can to the old. Through this state of transition every society has passed; and we cannot be exceptions to the general law. There ought to be nothing, therefore, in the sudden revival of Hinduism to discourage the social reformer, provided he is neither idle nor impatient, but works in a spirit neither of pessimism nor optimism, but "in a spirit of cautious Meliorism," strong and unshaken in his faith in the results of patient labour, "unhasting and unresting."

Though a state of transition such as that through which our Hindu society is passing is inevitable under the present con-

ditions and though, like all states of transition, it cannot last long, we should not delude ourselves with the belief that a period of mere scepticism and criticism with mechanical conformity to outward institutions without any inward impetus or conviction must necessarily and unconditionally give way to a better period in the long run. When society is being disintegrated and showing all the signs of disintegration, no hope of a fresher and better integration of it can be held unless there are found even in the midst of the forces that disturb and disintegrate it, what Carlyle calls "organic filaments"—*i.e.*, forces which promise to bring the disturbed elements together and reunite the different and dispersing elements of society on a better and higher principle of life. It is in the formation, and rather to speak more appropriately in the development of these "organic filaments" that the work and value of the social reformer lies; while the forces around us are slowly loosening our faith in the old, snapping the bonds of custom, tradition, and superstition and threatening to lead society into chaos, the social reformer has to bring those very forces to his aid and show the way to the formation of a new faith, a new ideal, and a new bond, which shall enable society to enter into a higher and richer form of life instead of being disorganized.

There are two and only two ways in which we can assist in the formation and development of those "organic filaments." It is usual to speak of the age in which we live as "an age of light and literature," an age of books, pamphlets, lectures, and above all newspapers. Now, there is no doubt that sometimes our very light becomes our very darkness. As some one has said, "literature may prove a Babel instead of a diapason" and "even light from heaven may be used to lead astray." For one newspaper or book or pamphlet or lecture pleading before the people the cause of social reform and trying to enlist popular sympathy on its side, there may be hundreds, as there are hundreds opposing the cause and pandering to the grosser instincts of the people, and striving to catch popular applause and sympathy by championing the cause of custom and superstition. But those who take so gloomy a view of the help that may be given to the cause of social reform by "the diffusion of litera-

ture and culture among the masses" ought to remember that it is not solely because there is such a Babel of tongues that social reform lags behind but rather because our efforts to diffuse that literature and culture by means of books, pamphlets and lectures have not been sufficiently active, systematic, and sustained. I do not mean to suggest this as a special reflection on those who feel for social reform and desire to promote it. If any one feels disposed to take advantage of the remarks I have made and make it a point of attack on social reformers, I should remind him that not merely social but all other kinds of reform and activity are sharing the same weakness. But it is only natural that the literature in favor of social reform is in the minority while the literature opposed to it is in the majority. That, again, has been the case in all ages and in all civilized countries in the case of all reforms during their initiatory stage. Even one newspaper well conducted, even a handful of reformers well balanced, can do a great deal and have been able to advance the cause. For instance, your *Indian Social Reformer* has, I know, many critics that are ready to rebuke it for some unpleasant things it says; but I know it also that the critics and many more are led by it to many a searching of the heart; and while it is supposed now and then to sting, it also helps to arouse "the still, small voice" within many a mind that would strangle it for telling unpleasant truth and exposing its weakness. Has not the *Reformer* since it came into existence not only been able to formulate the obscured opinions of many on social reform, but also led to reformed marriages? But why dwell long on the necessity of diffusing the light of social reform by means of pamphlets and lectures and newspapers, when there is hardly any one so disposed to dispute that necessity? The question, however, deserves some special notice because of another question which is intimately connected with it and on which a good deal has been of late said in the discussions on social reform. There are those who maintain that the cause of that reform must be placed on what is called the *Shastric* basis and that we must appeal to the *religious* instincts of the masses. The view is that we must plead for those reforms not on the grounds of natural justice but on the grounds of *Shastric* injunctions. In his

Republic, Plato has mentioned this as one of the means of human improvement and he speaks of the method as "noble falsehood." In his book called "The Promotion of General Happiness," Prof. Macmillan of Elphinstone College, Bombay, hints at it as a valuable method of reform when he says that "religion is much more teachable than morality to large masses of men." And dealing with this question, Mr. Mackenzie in his work on "Social Philosophy" remarks that "at a certain stage, both religion and morality can hardly be taught except in the form of myth. The Begriff must appear in the form of the Vorstellung, reason in the form of emotion." Seeing that religion has so large a hold on the human mind, larger than anything else, and that we, Hindus, have been essentially a religious people, there is some force in the view that we must approach their minds and their hearts by means of the *Shastras* by which they profess to be guided. But the *Shastras* themselves are not agreed upon many points. Those of us who are familiar with Canarese know the proverb which says :

which, translated into English, means that the *Shastras make the din of the market place*, and another proverb which says :

which means that *the Puranas* are all chaos and confusion. This very circumstance, however, ought to be our help in the promotion of reform. If the Hindu Shastras are wide and comprehensive enough to include any measure of reform, the social reformer ought not to omit to derive support from them and base his cause on them so far as he can base it. But our very *Shastras* have given us a free hand in changing with the times, by agreeing upon one point more than upon anything else—that is, by pronouncing without any hesitation that *custom or usage can supersede the injunctions of the Shastras.* The whole history of the Hindu society has been a history of tumultuous departure, whenever the departure was rendered necessary or expedient, from the laws laid down in the *Shastras.* Every custom marks the beginning of such a departure ; and if the Shastras themselves say that we can make new customs, I do not see why the social reformer should confine himself to the *Shastras* alone. By all means let us not make light of our sacred books ; like the Christian nations of modern Europe, who

owe much to the Bible and cannot, therefore, do away entirely with the influences they have derived from it, we Hindus cannot free ourselves from the influences we have derived from our *Shastras*. The *Shastras* have been more liberal than we care to be, by giving us a free hand to deviate from them when necessary. It is this fact which the social reformer must incessantly din into the ears of the masses; the *Shastras* are a valuable means of showing that our history has been a history of change. As Dr. Bhandarkar pointed out to you in his address from this place two years ago, there was a period when our women were not only educated but learned, when infant marriages did not prevail, widow marriages were not unusual, and caste distinctions did not exist in the aggravated and absurd form in which they exist now. That period was followed by another and we have gone on changing. We made no doubt *bad customs* but we made customs nevertheless and got the *Shastras* to adapt themselves to those customs. Let us now reverse the process and try to make good customs, and call to our aid the *Shastras* when and where we can, and appeal to the liberty of making customs which they have given us where their injunctions are against us.

But mere lectures and newspapers and discussions can never be expected to advance the cause of social reform. The ideas and ideals of that reform will and must remain merely speculative truths and abstract propositions so long as they are confined to debates, writings, and speeches and as long as they are not put to the test of practice. To convert men to the mode of life you recommend them, you must not only give them the impetus of "light" but also the impetus of "warmth." In his highly thoughtful *Journal*, Amiel reminds us that "the *philosophist* party of the last century" was "able to dissolve anything by reason and reasoning but unable to construct any thing," for, says he, "construction rests upon feeling, instinct, and will." And therefore he advises those who seek to reform their people to amend them not by reasoning but by example, to "be what you wish others to become. Let your self and not your words preach for you." The object of all reform is to enable its principles to become the practical maxims of life—to make them so

many "habits"; but, as pointed out by Mr. Montague in his "Limits of Individual Liberty" to which I have once before referred, before the principles gain sufficient strength, they must be something more than an abstract purity, for when you merely canvass the principles too long, you make people doubt them and disregard them, you only breed moral scepticism, since to mere logical discussion people owe very little. "Men," says Tennyson, "since they are not gods, must rise on stepping stones of their dead selves." Hence it is that *example* and *action* more than mere *preaching* and *theory* are so essential to the success of any reform—particularly, social reform. It is the more potent of the two "organic filaments" which go to constitute society on a reformed basis.

But when we speak of the necessity and value of *example* and *action*, we are met with the objection that it is all very fine and very easy to talk in that way and to tell men that they should do as they say and give practical effect to their convictions on social reform. But we are all not born to be heroes and martyrs. We have families to care for; worldly interests to follow; and a society in the shape of our caste to mix with, if we are to get on in the world. Of what use is it to hold before us an almost impossible ideal of conduct and effort, the realisation of which in practice only leads to our ex-communication and persecutions? This is the stock argument of the day and the line of thought manifested by it accounts for "the innate laziness" or "inborn apathy" which I said was one of the difficulties social reform in particular had to contend against. But who has ever been able to improve himself or to improve his fellows by lying on a bed of roses? There is no royal road to reform. A certain amount of risk must attend every great effort and enterprise, and the greater the effort and the enterprise, the greater the risk. Where because of the fear of persecution and excommunication, men allow their higher self to sink into the lower, the cause of reform must suffer. But after all, we are living in times when persecution and excommunication are gradually losing some of their terrors. Society under the press of a variety of circumstances is becoming more tolerant; and excommunication is not, and can no longer be

the dreadful thing it was in former times. But there is a notion widely prevalent that the best way of reforming your society lies in falling in with it and not trying to realise your ideal in your own life. It is supposed that an excommunicated man, by formally ceasing to be a member of his caste, ceases to exercise any influence over it, and thereby frustrates his own object. Now, we have heard this argument a number of times from a number of men, but we have not heard of a single reform of importance effected by those who affect to improve their caste by giving way to its prejudices instead of boldly and firmly standing up for their own views and convictions. Of reformers of this kind, Mr. John Morley has very appropriately spoken in his work on "Compromise" as men who are led away by a spirit of "illegitimate compromise," which in effect makes them say to their society:—"I cannot persuade you to accept my truth; therefore, I will pretend to accept your falsehood." And the notion that because a man who firmly stands up for his own convictions is excommunicated, he ceases to exercise any influence over his caste and retards the cause of reform, is amply borne out to be erroneous by all the movements of history. It is said that when the Roman Senate ordained that "the History of Creomutius Cordo" should be burnt, a Roman stood forth, saying, *Cast me also into the flames for I know that history by heart.* Moralising on this, the great Italian patriot, Mazzini observes:—"You may kill men, you cannot kill a great idea." Adopting that line of thought, we may also well say:—"You may excommunicate a man for realising his own ideas of reform in his own life; but you cannot kill either the ideas he represents or the moral influence of the life he leads. It is all very fine to talk of reforming your people by not separating yourself from them. No reformer wishes to be separate from his people; but because the people separate from him by proclaiming the ban of excommunication against him, it is not to be supposed that the separation causes a destruction of his personality and the influence of his example. It would be tiring your patience to illustrate what I say by referring to examples from history and proving that societies have made progress because men have appeared amongst them

who realised the spirit of it in their own lives, withstood calumny and persecution and lived and died for it. It is enough to ask those who talk of reforming their society by moving *with* it, to explain how it was that "a few poor slaves and outcaste Hebrews" were able to hold their own and make conversions of people around them to their faith "while Rome displayed its greatness even in death;" how Luther, far less intellectually gifted than his more learned contemporary Erasmus, was able to influence religious thought and conduct in Europe, though he was an excommunicated man. In fact, the whole history of reform had been the history of men who moved ahead of their society, and, is well summed up by Prof. Muirhead, who says:—"The opponents of useful reforms are drawn from the same class as at the same time blindly resisted the establishment of the form or institution to which they themselves blindly cling. Those who build the sepulchres of the prophets and garnish the tombs of the righteous are the children of those who slew them."

Reform is effected then when those who feel its need and are convinced of its utility, preach it not merely by the force of precept but also by the force of example. We hear a good deal about the necessity of moving with the times; and I noticed only in a recent number of the *Indian Social Reformer* a letter from a Saraswat gentleman—Mr. Bijur Shankar Narain Rao—giving expression to that view by saying that "no one will deny that while we must advance with the times, we must also not go far ahead of the times." I am willing to concede that "we must not go far ahead of the times," for, as pointed out by one of the historians of the present age, the late Prof. Freeman, when you go too far ahead, there is the danger of those who you wish should follow, losing sight of you. Reform, like all growth intended to be lifegiving and sustaining, must be gradual. But, as the same historian points out, you must be ahead or else there can be no progress. The phrase "moving with the times" is meaningless. Time is no agent; it is *men* and not time that are the moving springs of society. Society has naturally a tendency to cast its members in the iron mould of custom and superstition; and it is only those who are educated

who can give it the propelling force. To move with it is to move in the old ways; it is only by moving ahead of it and showing it the way onwards that you can get it to move on. If men who have been to England, had before going there taken the opinions of either the whole or the majority of their caste, would they have been able to make the venture and cross the *Kalapani?* The majority would have for a certainty declared themselves in that case against the step, denounced it as rash and irreligious, and threatened to excommunicate. But it is because the men that did go went without stopping to enquire what the caste would say or do—because one set the example, another followed, and a third did the same—that a change has come about in the sense of many castes, and even the feeling now growing that England-returned men should be re-admitted after *Prayaschitta,* is due to the fact that these men went a little ahead of their fellows instead of what is vaguely talked of as "moving with the times." There are rarely in history instances of any society moving towards a reform, unless that reform was initiated by its more daring spirits who were spirited and courageous enough to go ahead of it and thus inspired into its more timid members some of their own impulse and courage. And the same view is expressed by Mr. John Frier Hibben in his article on "Automatism in Morality," published in the number of the *International Journal of Ethics* for the month of July 1895. He says:—"Progress has often been due to a thorough revolution of existing social conditions and customs, and this in turn has been gradually achieved through the insistence of the prophet of individualism, whose voice has been raised against the trammels of public opinion and the chains of custom. It is impossible to eliminate the individual factor. If it had been possible, we should see greater uniformity than we find."

When we say that, though we should not go too far ahead, yet we must go ahead, we are brought to the question, *what is going ahead?* Are any of the measures of social reform which we advocate so rash and hasty that they propose nothing but a leap in the dark or a sudden revolution in Hindu society? Our critics assume a number of things when they criticise us

and base on those assumptions their conclusion that we wish to run headlong into reforms and move too fast. But a careful consideration of the measures of reform we propose ought to satisfy an unbiassed mind that our *programme* is moderation itself.

Female Education,

for instance, is the first item of reform on our list. We say that it is our first duty to educate our daughters or other female wards. I do not suppose that there is any one who will seriously maintain that there is anything *radical* or *revolutionary* in this idea about the necessity and importance of female education. But we are told that it is no use talking of that education without or before deciding the kind and character of education that our women must receive. Should they be educated in the Vernaculars or in English? Now, I do not care whether you educate your women in the Vernaculars or in English, though I consider it absolutely necessary that no one, whether man or woman, should be ignorant of his own Vernacular, provided the education they are given is one which fits them to be the guardian angels of their homes—provided, that is, we enable them to be not only good housewives but also good companions of life. There are branches of knowledge which must improve the minds of women as much as they improve the minds of men; but the biographies of great women, whether of India or of foreign countries, the art of domestic economy and housekeeping, ought to form the special features of female education. Let us leave aside the pedantry that makes this question of female education a matter of academic discussion and busies itself, like the schoolmen of old, in idle speculations and subtle disputations. Let us be more practical by insisting upon this, above all, that whatever else may be necessary or not for women, this we deem absolutely necessary that they should know their own vernacular, that they should know all that can be learnt about housekeeping, and sewing, and the essential truths and the holier and higher and more ancient traditions of the Hindu religion and society and not merely the corruptions into which the vicissitudes of later ages have cast it. If we can teach them more, so much the better for us. But if we cannot soar

higher than that, let us soar so high at least; and see that the work, thus fixed, is done thoroughly. I am entirely with those who hold that such education as we impart to women must not unfit them for the duties and obligations which they have to fulfil as the presiding deities of our homes. There is no fear that our women will neglect those duties because they are educated; they are already good housewives within the circumscribed sphere of knowledge in which society has kept them; but our object is to enlarge that sphere by enabling them to perform those duties more efficiently. Then, on the question of

MARRIAGE REFORM,

what do we propose and pledge ourselves to? It is undoubtedly our object to get rid of the baneful practice of infant marriages and see that the future progeny is not a progeny born of babies. But since the reform in this direction as in all directions must advance by stages, we propose to refrain from marrying our daughters or other female wards before they are eleven years of age in the case of those with whom marriage before puberty is obligatory and in the case of others before puberty. The eleventh year is fixed provisionally as the limit below which no one should celebrate his daughter's or other female ward's marriage. To some it may seem too low a limit; I myself think it might have safely been put at 12; but whether 11 or 12, it is well to begin at some limit and raise it gradually. Is there anything radical in this? Some perhaps may feel inclined to ask—what is the reform you effect by taking such a low limit? My answer is that by fixing upon a limit and determining not to go below it, you take a step forward at a time when the practice is to marry girls when they are 8 or 10. If our limit is 11 to-day, we shall be encouraged to raise it to 12 and onwards. What, again, do we urge in favour of

WIDOW REMARRIAGE,

which is also one of the reforms which we deem essential? We have no quarrel with the sentiment which leads either a woman who having lost her husband or a man who having lost

his wife determines to consecrate her or his life to a life of celibacy out of respect for the memory of the dear departed. Such a sentiment has everything in it to evoke our admiration; and among the many virtues which have raised our beloved Sovereign, Queen-Empress Victoria, immensely in our estimation and taught us to regard her as a model Queen, is the life of noble widowhood which she has been leading since the death of the Prince Consort. But let us not corrupt such a sentiment by sacrificing at its altar, girls who lose their husbands at tender ages, while we allow even men near their graves to marry. I have heard many an orthodox man and many an orthodox woman deplore this accursed custom of enforced widowhood. The sentiment in favour of it has not indeed taken practical shape to a large extent; but it is steadily, though very slowly growing. The object of the reform is only to remove the obstacle enforced by custom, not to compel every widow to marry, but to allow a feeling to grow in society that it is permissive to a widow to marry if she chooses. And what is our programme about

CASTE?

In his address delivered at the anniversary meeting of this Association two years ago, Dr. Bhandarkar said:—"Caste has become so inverate in Hindu society that the endeavour to do so (to obliterate all distinctions at once) will only result in the formation of new castes. But the end must steadily be kept in view. We must remember that caste is the greatest monster we have to kill." There, again, recognising the insuperable difficulty, and the necessity of moving gradually by stages, we propose, to begin with, the amalgamation of sub-castes so far as inter-dining is concerned.

One more question remains and that is about the re-admission into caste of what are called England-returned men. There is no special reference to it in the published programme of the objects and measures of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association and I should have, if I consulted my own wishes and inclinations, let that question alone without saying a word about it here for the very good and obvious reason that that question more than any other question of social reform has been solving itself and proving too strong for even caste or other pre-

judices. Our interests, our aspirations, our hopes of the future are bound up with England and, whether you will or no, to England Hindus have gone and to England Hindus will go. The tide is too strong for even the united forces of caste, superstition and priesthood and it is as idle to think or even dream of checking that tide as it was idle on the part of Mrs. Partington to stop the waters of the Atlantic by means of her broom. In several higher castes that I know of in Western India, many have got quietly back into their caste without any fuss or hubbub. And even in those castes which are now losing their heads over the question and making a good deal of fuss over it, I feel certain that the force of the times is such that a few years hence their future generations will laugh and wonder at the excitement which their ancestors of the present generation have managed to get up over this question. There are those who maintain that England-returned men ought not to be taken back into caste without the performance of "Prayaschit," and there are others who hold that England-returned men ought not to be re-admitted into caste at all, because a trip to England necessarily involves a violation of the essential rules of caste on the part of those who undertake it by compelling them to eat forbidden food and get contaminated by contact with the *Mlechchas*. Now, my answer to those who take the *prayaschitta* view of this question is this. If *prayaschitta* is penance for a sin committed, there can be on principle no moral objection to those England-returned men doing that penance, if they *sincerely* think that they committed a sin in going to England and pledge themselves not to do forbidden things here and act accordingly. But of what use is a *prayaschitta* if instead of leading to sincere penitence and preventing the commission, it only becomes a promoter and abetter of sin. It has already led many a caste to commit sins, because people think that they can even in penance plan sins anew. I have heard many say :—"I shall violate a caste rule and then take *prayaschitta*." I do not think that those of us who are sincerely anxious for the welfare and progress of Hindu society—who think that *morality* is a greater cementing bond of society than anything else—ought to be parties to a theory which teaches men that

they have a license to sin freely, for every time they sin they can do penance and pass for sinless men. And a *prayaschitta* has already become a license, so to say, for many a sin and many a flagrant departure from the path of virtue. My second objection to *prayaschitta* in the case of England-returned men is, that I do not consider that a trip to England is sinful. This, indeed, is conceded by many who hold to the *prayaschitta* theory. They say that *prayaschitta* is only a formality, and, there should be no scruple about it. But no reform ought to be promoted, unless we teach people, both by precept and example that it is a reform which is not only essential but also consistent with the principles of morality. The *shastras* are invoked in support of the theory that going to England is sinful; but the *shastras* knew nothing of England when they were written or "revealed" and all that the *shastras* say is that it is a sin to cross the sea. But what caste has escaped this sin of crossing the sea in these days without going to England? When our opponents, however, find themselves driven into a corner by this argument, they take shelter behind the plausible contention that a trip to England contaminates those who undertake it by bringing them in contact with *Mlechchas* and compelling them, through sheer necessity, to partake of forbidden food. But they forget that they play with edged tools when they use this sort of argument. The contamination of contact with the *Mlechchas* and the partaking of forbidden food, commenced in the case of many a caste in this very country long before any one thought of going to England. If men that go to England partake of forbidden food through necessity, what are we to say of those in many castes that partake of it on the sly and for mere pleasure and to gratify their appetite and taste? One would not like to say much on this delicate subject, but the time is coming, and has come for honest men, to speak freely. If the truth were told, we should have to say, in the language used by Queen Sheba: "The half has not been told." But it is said that the sin of such men is not detected, whereas the "sin" of England-returned men is found out. Then are we to understand that while we talk of God and the holy bonds of society, society is to be guided by

and its members held together on the degrading, vicious and ungodly principle, so eloquently denounced by the late Cardinal Newman as the worst of moral cankers that must ultimately lead to social decay and ruin, "that it is not the commission but the detection of sin" that is to be the social standard of sinfulness? Let men beware that they are playing fast and loose with their responsibilities as members of society and unconsciously bringing about its extinction by becoming parties to a doctrine that is so demoralising. Let them read, mark inwardly, and digest the thrilling words in which Dr. Martineau has pointed out that even in so vast an empire as that of ancient Rome "the most compact and gigantic machinery of society" fell to pieces and "perished like a Mammoth," because the sanctities of life were disbelieved even in the nursery; no binding sentiment restrained the greediness of appetite and the licentiousness of self-will; the very passions with whose submission alone society can begin, broke loose again—attended by a brood of artificial and parasitic vices that spread the dissolute confusion." It is not England-returned men that are breaking loose the moral bonds of our society; the plague-spot is elsewhere and because it requires a microscope to detect its bacilli, let it not be supposed that society is safe. It is the spirit of organised hypocrisy, which sanctions the commission of any sin, provided it is done on the sly, and which the members of every caste tacitly tolerate, that is laying the axe at the root, not only of virtue, but all social union of the true type. It is said that the real difficulty to social reform comes from the stated opposition of our gurus,—those who preside over castes as their spiritual and social heads and dictators. However much or little we may differ from the gurus, I do not think we are justified in laying the blame upon them so much or so entirely as many are disposed to do. The institution of gurus is a holy and venerable institution, which, I have no doubt, has done much good in the past, and we should not be blind to the fact that our gurus exercised in the past a vast spiritual and moral influence over the Hindu community,—and that enabled that community to keep alive the light of virtue even in the midst of its vicissitudes. I am not one of those who think that

an institution which has done so well in the past ought to be lightly dealt with. "But," as pointed out by Mr. Lecky in his address on "History" delivered at the Birmingham Midland Institute a few years ago, "sometimes with changed beliefs and changed conditions, institutions lose all their original vitality," and the only condition of their survival and continuance is "that true characteristic of vitality—the power of adapting themselves to changed conditions and new utilities," *i. e.*, of adapting themselves to new wants. This institution of gurus can only survive subject to that condition. Lastly, I notice with particular pleasure that both in your programme and in your lectures and in your newspaper, you, the members of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association, lay stress upon

A LIFE OF PURITY.

That, indeed, ought to be, as indeed you have made it, the key-note of the social reform movement. All reform must begin with the reform of the individual and the reform of the individual begins when he lives a life of openness and virtue and makes that the basis of all progress, both individual and social. We complain that Hindu orthodoxy has a deep-seated prejudice against social reform; but once convince it that you are men of moral excellence, that you lead and insist upon others leading lives of rectitude, and that all your plans and proposals of reform centre round that as the cardinal principle of your faith, you cannot fail to attract its attention, engage its sympathies and at last secure its support. Men now may make light of and ridicule your attempt to denounce and put down what are called *nautch* parties; they may laugh at you and take you for visionaries; but be sure enthusiasm in the cause of morality has unrivalled charm and power which does not fail sooner or safer to assert itself. Our work of social reform must suffer so long as we do not preach and practise the gospel of a godly life; with that life as the animating principle of our movements, we may prove more than a match to all prejudice and opposition. I believe there is a great deal of truth in what my distinguished friend, the Hon'ble Mr. Pherozsha M. Mehta said at a meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council, when in reply to a member of that Council who pooh-poohed the ladies and

gentlemen in England that have been leading the agitation of purity as mad enthusiasts, he reminded the Council that it is such mad enthusiasts who have, as the pages of English history show, awakened the moral conscience of England and contributed to its progress. The sentiment has taken root in Hindu society that, however good a principle may be, it should not be practised, if it is opposed to public sentiment; and hence it is that wherever a reform is proposed, we are met with the Sanskrit verse, which says :—* * * *i. e.*, although (a thing) is pure, it should not be done or observed because it is opposed to public sentiment. The sentiment embodied in this verse accounts for all ills and evils; it has proved hostile to all reform and progress. We have to strive hard to knock that sentiment on the head; and our lives should, therefore, be so arranged as to enable us to be living protests against lawless modes of living.

I know that the work before us is gigantic, and our difficulties innumerable. Our hearts faint when we see that there is a Himalaya of prejudice, ignorance, and opposition to be got over before we can hope to win and say our work is, or is about to be, accomplished. But if we have our conditions of difficulty, we are also not without our conditions of hope. We have put our hands to the plough, and it is not for us to look back; and we need not look back and despond, if we only bear in mind that, small as our numbers are, uninfluential as people say, as we may be, it is not, as Mazzini in his vigorous language points out, the number but the unity of forces that enables a good cause to win and prosper. Nor should we be impatient of results. It is enough for us, it should be enough for us, if we are able to say that we have not remained idle or inactive, but have done something, even if that something be very little, to carry the work of social reform a little further than we found it and helped our successors to carry it further still. We do not wish to make light of the past, nor do we desire to touch ancient institutions in either a spirit of irreverence or thoughtlessness. It is because we think that social growth is continuous, and that not only "perfect truth," but "perfect development" is "beyond the reach of any one generation" that we hold fast to the principle that each generation ought to endea-

vour to leave society better than it found it by raising its ideals of life and conduct; and if we go on with our work, making an irreproachable life the basis of it, we may be able to say that we have not worked in vain.

Mr. G. Subramania Iyer on "The Principles of Social Reform."

The following is the full text of the address delivered by Mr. G. Subramania Iyer, B.A., at the Fifth Anniversary Meeting of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association, held in December 1897 :—

THE STAGE OF DISCUSSION IS NOT PASSED.

People, who are not very zealous about social reform, are apt to think that, at this anniversary as well as at our other meetings, we are enacting only a useless show and that every form of activity on behalf of Social Reform except practical action is vain. Practical action is no doubt greatly wanted, but I do not think in this great question the stage of discussion is passed. Not only is the stage of discussion not passed, but there has not been a fraction of the amount of discussion which the great importance of the question demands. Where are the societies, meetings, discussions, pamphlets and books, which are accessories of great reform movements? It is obvious that before the community can accept change, it should be educated. The public mind should be opened to the enormity of the evils that hinder progress; wrong notions should be corrected; prejudices should be overcome; opposition should be baffled, and above all public feeling should be roused. In fact it is not opposition, reasonable or unreasonable, so much as apathy, that is the worst enemy of Reform. Action on a large scale is not possible without a long period of agitation. It must be confessed that the agitation on behalf of Hindu Social Reform has not been vigorous or powerful. At best it has been feeble and spasmodic, and while I shall be the last person to speak disparagingly of the efforts of Reformers of whose difficulties others can have no adequate idea, I must state that what progress has been made in the expansion of reform ideas

and in the weakening of the opposition, is due more to the general progress of intelligence among the people than to the direct efforts of the Reform party. But it is necessary that public intelligence should be directed on wise lines and advancement made less slowly than at present. All discussion is therefore to be welcomed, and every one that talks or writes of reform topics, unless he be a scoffer, should be regarded with sympathy.

THE POLICY OF LEAVE ALONE.

Some people say, why not leave alone. We are happy enough without your reforms—at all events as happy as social institutions can make a people happy. Such changes as are necessary, time will effect without the fussy and mischievous tinkering of so-called reformers. This view is too narrow-minded and altogether wrong. We, reformers, do not mind abuse. We are getting callous to it, our skin being too thick for such missiles. But people who are averse to active efforts for change and would depend on time as the only agency of reform have read history to no purpose. No nation tried this policy of let alone and reaped a more disastrous harvest than we Hindus have done. Have we not for over ten centuries let things alone—let history make itself; and what is the consequence? Political subjection, social prostration, poverty, disease. This is the consequence.

NO RIGHT TO VEGETATE.

Indeed, it cannot be otherwise. No community—any more than an individual—has a right to vegetate. If it does, deterioration must set in. Our sages propose a condition of absolute quietude for individuals. Starvation of the external as well as the internal senses, their severance from their respective objective relations, self-contemplation, quietude, and nirvana—these are the successive stages in the evolution of the individual in a single birth or in a series of births. I do not know if similar stages of evolution are proposed for communities as well. At all events, no community has yet reached that higher plane where nirvana is the goal. Nor do we, Hindus of modern days, aspire for it. We cherish an aspiration to rise to the same level of material and moral condition as other nations. We feel humiliated at our poverty, at our helplessness, at our

defeats, and at the slight and contumely heaped on us by people who do not sympathise with us and whose interests are in conflict with ours. We must then recognize the same law of life that other nations, now dominating the destiny of the world, pursue with success. In fact there is no other law of life. Ceaseless activity, perpetual struggle, rivalry, defeat or success —this is the law. We, Hindus, can no more escape it than we can escape any other law of nature. We may depend upon it,—we shall be shown no mercy. We should either struggle forward or pursue a track of continuous decadence.

HAVE WE THEN DECAYED?

The decadence of a community does not necessarily mean its decadence in numbers. So far as numbers go, thanks to the custom of early and compulsory marriage, we have undergone no decay at all. The contact of a more vigorous and manly race has proved fatal to many an aboriginal race in the world. The ancient Peruvians, the Aztecs and the Caribs were exterminated by the more hardy races of Europe; and in Australia, in Africa and in America the aboriginal races are meeting with the same fate. But in the ceaseless vicissitudes of our history in the past, we have preserved our identity; and not only have we preserved our identity but have even preserved some of the more marked features of our distinct civilization. We have certainly multiplied in numbers. The innate vitality of the race has enabled it to resist the fate that overtook some ancient races and are overtaking the Pacific Islanders, the Maoris, and the Negroes in Africa and America. Still, the degeneration is perceptible along many a vein in the national character. We have preserved many of the softer and more passive elements of character—but have degenerated in the rougher, the more active, and the more manly elements. We are the same patient, peace-loving, orderly, industrious, simple and spiritual people that we were centuries ago. We preserve the same tenderness to animal life, the same sense of family obligations, the same regard for personal purity, the same metaphysical cast of mind. But patriotism, love of enterprise, co-operative faculty, adventure, energy, aspiration, devotion to duty and such like qualities, we have lost, if we ever possessed them. In

fact, as the author of *Social Evolution* would put it, we have lost the qualities which contribute to "Social efficiency."

"SOCIAL EFFICIENCY."

Speaking of the prosperity of nations and the causes of it Mr. Lecky says: "Its foundation is laid in pure domestic life, in commercial integrity, in a high standard of moral worth and of public spirit, in simple habits, in courage, uprightness, and a certain soundness and moderation of judgment, which springs quite as much from character as from intellect. If you would form a wise judgment of the future of a nation, observe carefully whether these qualities are increasing or decaying. Observe specially what qualities count for most in public life. Is character becoming of greater or less importance? Are the men who obtain the highest posts in the nation, men of whom in private life and irrespective of party, competent judges speak with genuine respect? Are they of sincere convictions, consistent lives, indisputable integrity? . . . . It is by observing this moral current that you can best cast the horoscope of a nation." It is this moral current which, according as it is clear, healthy and vigorous, or the reverse, determines the position of a nation in the world. The happiness of man, under modern conditions, depends far more upon what may be called his social qualities—qualities, that is to say, which enable him to act in co-operation with a large number of men—than upon his qualities as an isolated individual. The individual will no doubt continue to wield influence on his neighbours, but the progress of the community no longer depends to the same extent as it did in ancient times, on the towering genius of an individual, be he a ruler, a statesman or a general. It depends on the collective activity of a large number moving together at a time. The power of organization is therefore so important in these days as a factor of progress. It is these qualities that contribute to social efficiency that really constitutes in modern times the superiority or inferiority of race. Says Mr. Benjamin Kidd: "Nor even of the possession of high intellectual capacity, can science give us any warrant for speaking of one race as superior to another. The evolution which man is undergoing is over and above everything else, a social evolution. There is,

therefore, but one absolute test of superiority. It is only the race possessing in the highest degree the qualities contributing to social efficiency that can be recognized as having any claim to superiority. But these qualities are not as a rule of the brilliant order, nor such as strike the imagination. Occupying a high place amongst them are such characteristics as strength and energy of character, humanity, probity and integrity, and simple minded devotion to conceptions of duty in such circumstances as may arise."

THE CLUE TO REFORM ACTIVITY.

It is this test as to the condition of a nation that should supply the clue to true reform activity. Whatever institution, custom, belief or notion retards the development of this social efficiency, should be modified, or discouraged, and others more subservient to this end should be gradually evolved. If we consider the programme of our work having regard to this test, we will see its importance and its wisdom. A baby-born race and a race whose children are brought up by illiterate mothers cannot develop much of the qualities which I have alluded to. We search in vain in such a race for the qualities of courage, of enterprise, of adventure, and of a fearless facing of responsibilities instead of shirking them or flying away from them. Nor can a people who treat their women as if they were intended for no higher duties than the personal service of their husbands, and who heartlessly consign their unfortunate widows to a lot of perpetual privation, shew much of chivalry, generosity, sympathy with the weak, self-sacrifice, and dignity of family life. Nor, again, is it possible that a people divided as the Hindus are into castes with all the narrow feelings and antipathies that they nurse, learn qualities so essentially social as patriotism, fellow-feeling, a sense of the equality of all men, and sacrifice for others. "Caste is the greatest monster we have to kill," said Dr. Bhandarkar speaking in this city three years ago; and indeed it is. More than all other evils of our social system, it has contributed to the crushing of the high moral feeling, of the ethical nature of the Hindu, and of that divine instinct—the sense of man's duty to man irrespective of birth or rank. Take again the foolish custom of looking upon

foreign travel as a violation of religious duty. I do not know that any conceivable state of Hindu Society in the past could have furnished reasons for the necessity of such prohibition. But there can be no doubt that this self-inflicted isolation was the cause of serious deterioration in the character of the people. They became ignorant and conceited, and while they lost one strong incentive to sustained advancement in the arts of civilisation which a free intercourse with foreign countries should have supplied, they lost all knowledge of the outside world, believed that their own country and their own people constituted God's universe, flattered themselves that everything worth knowing they already knew, and that human race could not advance further than the stage they had themselves reached. It is no longer possible for the people of India to remain in this state of isolation. They will have new blood infused into them by a free intercourse with the active races of other parts of the world. This silly prohibition is so opposed to the needs of modern times that an increasing number of Hindus, disregarding this prohibition, visit foreign countries for purposes of education and commerce. The well-known terrors of excommunication are no longer able to stop the flowing tide bursting through this old and time-worn barrier. No healthy social progress is possible without every facility being provided for foreign travel. Fancy what the condition of England would be if a prohibition were placed on her best men leaving their native country! What will even Japan be under such prohibition? The conclusion is therefore obvious that the social customs and prejudices which we are engaged in combating are inimical to the growth of those qualities that I have alluded to as constituting important factors in "Social efficiency."

OUR DIFFICULTIES ARE SPECIAL AND MORE FORMIDABLE.

We are fully sensible of the stupendous difficulties besetting endeavours to sweep away abuses centuries old, to change customs that are interwoven into the very life of the people, and to adapt ancient institutions to modern requirements. These difficulties are special in this country and are more formidable than elsewhere. Because the changes we desire and we strive to

bring about are not like the gradual, natural and organic transformation of an existing institution to suit a fresh want. In Western countries social changes mean more or less improvements on existing bases; the spirit of the nation, of the institutions and of the ends desired, remains the same through successive developments. Each new step marks the continued evolution of Society, helped and directed by the forces it spontaneously developes. But in India, we have more or less to pour new wine into old bottles. The ideals of thinking Hindus in these days are not those that moved our ancestors, of whose conceptions of human well-being, the institutions, customs, &c., that we have inherited are the embodiment. Our modern ideals are more or less derived from the experience of Western countries and the forces that make them living and keep them in operation are also more or less foreign. We want to become a nation like Western nations; we want to be wealthy like them; active, enterprising, free, and moral like them; and our aspirations, it may be safely said, have comparatively little in common with those lawgivers and reformers of old whom we hold answerable for the social features confronting us at the present moment. Many of these features are hostile to these aspirations. Still, we cannot pull down the Hindu social edifice as the tower of the Connemara Library was pulled down the other day, and erect another to suit exactly our new purposes. The process involves a good deal of destructive work, however slowly and cautiously effected. It must be a good deal more than mere adaptation. What process of adaptation for instance, can make the joint family system, degradation of women, and caste, suit modern ends? They must be adapted and adapted until they cease to exist. Changes must be more abrupt, the transition more violent, the old and the new more dissimilar, in this country, than has been the experience in more fortunate countries.

THE PENALTY SHOULD BE PAID.

The Hindu community should pay the penalty of its past neglect. For centuries it has been away from the path of true progress. The peculiar social system of the Hindus worked well enough so long as they were an independent and self-contained

community. But it had within itself seeds of decay, because it was not a self-working system adapting itself to fresh environments as they arose. It was not designed to promote solidarity and a uniform progress of the whole. The spiritual aspiration that dominated the thought and the whole altruistic activity of the higher classes was antagonistic to all material interests and obscured the paramount need of strengthening the social organization in view to security from external danger as well as to internal well-being. The high level of material prosperity which the nation was able to reach on account of favourable physical conditions, soon resulted in effeminacy of character—a result which came about all the more easily by the aversion of the people to material advantages naturally induced by their spiritual ideals. Buddhism went to strengthen this aversion, and by admitting all castes into its spiritual fold, extended it to the whole population. The military defence of the country against external or internal dangers was of course neglected, our ancestors being evidently, under the belief that outside India there were no people capable of invading her and establishing a foreign rule subversive of their own religion and civilization. Arts and industries were despised, no social status being accorded to the classes following them. Women were deposed from the position which they had previously occupied, and came to be looked upon as mere instruments of men's pleasure. All education which was not spiritual or ecclesiastical was-ruled mischievous. The nation became effeminate, priest-ridden, disorganized, stagnant, and utterly unfit for self-defence. When once the tide of foreign invasion began to flow into the country, the degradation was complete and during nearly a thousand years, the best efforts of its most valiant champions, such as they were, were directed towards keeping the nation up somehow, preserving the prized inheritance of old, in religion, literature and traditions, and towards feeding the people with a hope of a better time, in a future cycle of the world's evolution. During this long period, no original achievement in any sphere of human activity, not even in the intellectual sphere, can be traced to the Hindus. While we were thus in a stagnant condition, other nations of the world made

wonderful progress, and some of them in particular, who were steeped in barbarism at a time when the Hindus were in the pinnacle of glory, have become masters of the world including our own dear motherland. The world has been progressing rapidly, while we were in a trance, and now being roused once more into consciousness by the quickening contact of the West, we find ourselves amidst strange surroundings, which threaten our fresh born consciousness with extinction if we do not accept and assimilate them. The civilization we have managed to preserve through a series of unparalleled vicissitudes, is antiquated and unsuited to modern conditions, and however reluctant we may be to tear ourselves from the past and however difficult the process may be, we must recognise it to be inevitable. We can only do our best to make the transition from the old order to the new as smooth as possible, although, as I have said, it cannot be as smooth as it can be in other countries.

CASTE AS THE BASIS OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM MUST BE CHANGED.

The Hindu Society is founded on caste, which by its extreme conservatism, by its jealousy of foreigners and by its careful preservation of the purity of blood, has preserved the identity of the nation in spite of the large infusion of foreign elements in its composition. We recognise the service that this institution has done to the people in the past. But conditions have changed and caste too will have to change its spirit if not its form also. The caste basis of society is essentially one of inequality as determined by certain artificial significance of birth and of barriers arbitrarily created to limit the sphere of human faculties. Whatever meaning there might have been in this inequality and restriction in the original conception, it can have no rational meaning whatever in these days. Modern world will not acknowledge special claims of individuals to special means of spiritual salvation. The Pariah as well as the Brahmin will be allowed to seek his own means of salvation. Any application of coercion will only end in the individual or community coerced seeking relief by entering other social systems where greater liberty is promised. Nor is there in our country in these days any temporal authority, as there was in former times, to apply coercion to enforce obedience to a social polity, at once irrational

and degrading according to prevailing conceptions. If equality then must be conceded to all classes in spiritual concerns, it must be conceded in matters temporal too. We can no longer lay down arbitrarily that certain occupations are open to a certain caste and others to other castes. Each person's aptitude and opportunity are the only determining factors in the choice of occupation. The great principle of social relation in these days is a perfect equality of footing to all. The history of the modern world is mostly the history of the struggle against a monopoly of power and prestige in certain classes ; the privileged classes having been deprived of their privileges, the masses are emancipated and elevated, bringing together all members of the community on a footing of equality and removing all obstacles placed by society or the State before individuals in the rivalry of life. Thanks to the *Pax Britannica*, the tyranny of caste is being broken down, and theoretically at all events the Pariah and the Brahmin can compete together in life with equal freedom. No Indian is now handicapped for the accident of his birth.

THE POWER OF CUSTOM AS A STANDARD OF CONDUCT SHOULD BE WEAKENED.

Caste, as the basis of society, and custom as the regulating force of its activity, are not a healthy combination. It is wonderful how amongst us custom has usurped the place of reason, sentiment, and religion itself, as a standard of right and wrong. In our social relations it is recognised as a dominant motive of action. In every society custom is no doubt more or less powerful. In the name of fashion, of public opinion, or of social convention, it plays the tyrant. The Englishman is a slave of it in certain spheres of action as the Hindu ; but the Hindu is a more craven slave than any other civilised race. The difference is one of degree, but in this world all differences between right and wrong, good and bad, or between opposites of any kind, are ultimately of degree. At all events they are practically so. When therefore a conservative Hindu justifies or defends the intolerable tyranny of custom by referring to a similar state in other countries, his reasoning is specious. Nobody says English society or any other society is perfect, and reformers there too are irritated at the obstruction of custom. It is indeed en-

titled to regard in certain comparatively unimportant spheres of conduct. In dress, in forms of civility, in mere ceremonies, and in conventions generally, the sway of custom is innocuous. Beyond these limits that sway should not be allowed to trespass. On the other hand, when its influence intrudes into relations which underlie the elevation and refinement of human nature and when it obstructs the healthy play of sentiment or the application of reason, it becomes mischievous. I shall illustrate what I mean. The Hindus have their own dress, their own forms of courtesy, their own domestic and social ceremonies. Whether these are altered or whether they remain the same, matters little. The power of custom in these and kindred matters is tolerable. But when it claims control over actions concerning the health and happiness of individuals and of the well-being of the community as a whole, it transcends its limits and should be checked. In the great question of the re-marriage of widows, for instance, our people admit the hardship of life-long widowhood and they also admit the scriptural sanction for re-marriage. They admit too the expediency, from a worldly point of view, of reform. Parents are not callous to the claims of their widowed child on their affection; the widow's suffering, her privation, her disfigurement and her unhappy lot generally, often break their heart. Instances of parents who take their unfortunate child's lot so much to heart that they themselves vow life-long abstinence, are not unknown. They feel that the young widow might be misled, and after their own lives, she will be utterly helpless. Yet, all these considerations, pressing so strongly in favour of the one step that will make themselves and their child happy, are set aside, merely because CUSTOM is opposed to it. Religion is not against it, morality is not against it, nor expediency, nor even the general feeling of the caste. But Custom overrides all, and holds both reason and sentiment captive. Similarly in regard to marriage, it is Custom that limits the field of choice to the caste to which the boy or the girl may belong. The Shastras recognize only four castes, but these four have now become forty thousand, a caste, in some instances, consisting of but a few families. Yet the alliance must be formed within the limits of that caste, and

the result is, marriage at an excessively tender age and at a ruinous cost. These two evils would be greatly avoided if marital relations were allowed within a wider field. As a fact, however, a Hindu parent will rather marry his young daughter to an invalid, to a very old man, to a man without any means of livelihood, than marry her to a boy of a different caste whatever may be his recommendations. Many a young girl and many a young boy are made unhappy all their life in consequence of this restriction. Yet the only justification of this restriction is CUSTOM. There is nothing else prohibiting alliance within a wider area than a single caste. Again, ask our countrymen the reason for the restrictions on the liberty of our women. Ask them why the woman should not move about as freely as the man, why she should not go about with a pair of shoes and an umbrella, why she should not drive out with her husband, why she should not extend her knowledge and refine her manners by mixing in society, why she should not, in fact, do so many other things, which, without offending the orthodox sense of propriety, she might do to understand better the world and human nature and make herself more intelligent and more self-reliant. The reason they will give is CUSTOM. The less advanced the state of Society is, the more extensive and more powerful is the sway of this tyrant. In a primitive state, custom not only regulates social conduct, but controls industry also. It fixes the wages, it limits the market, and determines generally the relation between capital and labour. Modern conditions have almost taken away this latter power from CUSTOM, but they have been powerless to depose it as a ruling moral force.

CASTE SHOULD BE REPLACED BY EQUALITY AND CUSTOM BY REASON AND SYMPATHY.

Caste, then, as the basis of social status should be replaced by equality of footing to all, and custom as a motive of action should be replaced by reason and sympathy. I have already said that so far as the State can help in the establishment of this equality of footing, it is secure to all classes of people. But there are a thousand corners and turns into which the influence of the State does not penetrate and where social deal-

ings are subject to the caprice of public opinion and individual feeling. In the eye of the law, the Pariah and the Brâhmin are, no doubt, on a footing of equality, but the law cannot reach the trifles as well as the important transactions of life, and it is quite open to the landlord, the money-lender and the high caste man, to oppress the Pariah in countless ways. Caste breeds pride and selfishness, and the man of the higher caste thinks it his privilege to despise the man of the lower caste. Every endeavour should be made to break down this *spirit*, although the less essential and the more extraneous forms of caste may linger. The position of CUSTOM being taken by reason and sympathy, or rather by sympathy tempered by reason, our social relations will be less stereotyped, and more in accord with the fresh knowledge and experience we acquire every day in consequence of a freer and quicker intercourse among the communities of the world. Sympathy is the first impulse to action, while its form in practical effect is determined by reason. Then the incongruity we perceive, in the light of modern knowledge, between the ideal and the existing state, will press on us with greater force until the desired transition from the old and less rational, to the new and the more rational order, takes place. Mr. Lecky well observes: "An impartial examination of great transitions of opinion will show that they have usually been effected not by the force of direct arguments, not by such reasons as those which are alleged by controversialists and recorded in creeds, but by a sense of the incongruity or discordance of the old doctrines with other parts of our knowledge." It is the duty of all interested in our social well-being to bring home to the popular mind with an ever-increasing pressure this sense of incongruity, which will then raise a general revolt against the sovereignty of the ruling twins—caste and custom.

ELEVATION OF WOMEN.

If the victory of the social feeling over self-love is the key to the regeneration of social existence, if a moral transformation must precede any real advance, and if a pressing sense of incongruity must bring on transition, then this victory, this transformation and this pressure should be manifest in the

family before they can assert themselves outside. The claim of woman to a higher status should be recognised. It is self-love, narrow sympathy, and a low standard of conduct that constitute the cause of the subordination of woman to man. The Hindu conception of society, though fairly cognizant of the respect due to woman, does not provide for the growth of her status into equality with man. Even in Europe the equality of the two sexes is a modern idea, though there is a far nearer approach to it there than in this country. Our joint family system is not favourable to that undisputed sovereignty which she has a right to wield in the home, and even the freedom which is hers theoretically is considerably curtailed. There is no doubt that in ancient and medieval periods the Hindu woman enjoyed both at home and outside a higher status and greater freedom than she does at present. The deterioration is chiefly the result of the backward notions which our Mahomedan rulers brought with them, and to the decay of the Hindu character itself. The Mahomedan rule has to answer for many faults in our social arrangements at present, and among them the selfish and ungenerous view taken of the rights of the other sex is not the least deplorable. Buddhism too contributed materially, I believe, to this result. I do not propose to go here into a historical enquiry of the causes of the present degraded condition of our women, but I may observe that in the more sympathetic and rational views we, Social Reformers—hold on the position of women, we mostly reproduce, to suit modern ideals, the conception of our forefathers. We hold that the true test of civilization is the position of women, and the incongruity between our pretensions outside our home and our practice within it, should gradually lead to a greater harmony between our two lives.

THE HINDU WOMAN WILL LOSE MUCH OF HER DOMESTICITY.

Much as the family is the sphere where the virtues of womanhood have their chief scope, there is no reason why woman any more than man should be dead to all the interests of the world at large. From the experience of European countries it is evident that there is almost an unlimited scope for the benevolent exercise of the peculiar charm and grace

with which feminine nature is endowed. What women do in the Western countries as teachers, nurses, and generally as ministering angels to the poor and suffering, through a hundred means and organizations, that the Indian woman too, can do. As the civilization of our country breaks away from its old moorings and proceeds along Western lines, the Hindu woman will cease to be confined, in her interests as well as movements, within the walls of the home, but will live outside as well as within the house. Imagine what influence the joint family system has on the position of women. It is the feelings and ties that this system generates that procure to the woman some male guardian in all her conditions and stages of life. But if this joint family system declines—which it must as the result of non-agricultural occupations becoming more common—she will have to depend on herself and lose her extraneous support to an increasing extent. She will of necessity learn self-reliance and will be driven to support herself. In proportion as this happens she will lose her domesticity. Towards the same result will tend the influence of Western training which is opposed to the seclusion of woman, so that we may predict a serious and radical change in her future position.

HINDU WOMEN SHOULD BE AWAKENED TO THE WIDER INTEREST OF THEIR COUNTRY.

I entirely agree with Mrs. Benson, the lady to whose sympathy and active interest in our social questions we are so deeply indebted, in her opinion that the Indian as well as English women want to be "awakened to an intelligent interest in the social problems concerning them and their children, and to the wider interests of their country." This is a high ideal, and in order that the Hindu woman may perform the part which it should assign to her, she should be armed with the necessary education. How do you expect ignorant mothers to know their duties to their children, realize their awful responsibility not only for the good breeding of their children, but also, through their children, for the well-being of the country at large, and to perform these duties satisfactorily? Recently, a medical authority pointed out that because Indian mothers do not know how to feed their infants, a little more

than one-half of all the infants born survive to enter on a second year of life. Herself miserably ill-fed and hurried into the solemn responsibilities of maternity while yet a child, the mother has not to feed her baby the food which nature provides in her; and resorting without knowledge to methods of artificial feeding, she kills the child out of her very tenderness! How in a hundred other ways the ignorance of the child-mother renders her unfit to discharge her solemn duties and to bring up children morally and physically healthy, you are all as aware as myself. Outside the home, there are a hundred ways in which an educated woman can serve her country. The great work of the education of her sex will alone occupy thousands, and what can be more honourable or patriotic than the work of emancipating them from their condition of ignorance which attenuates their faculties and dims their charm? As nurses and physicians, and as inspirers, if not leaders, of every movement aiming at the increase of human happiness or the alleviation of human suffering, they can most worthily fulfil their nature. The ignorance and degradation to which women are subjected by the tyranny of man involve an incalculable waste of beneficent human force which God could not have intended to be so wasted.

WOMEN SHOULD RECEIVE THE HIGHEST AND MOST LIBERAL EDUCATION POSSIBLE.

In order that woman may rise to the full sublimity of her nature, it is obviously absurd to train her in an elementary and in a thoroughly inefficient and milk-and-water system of education, which is all that we have in our country and which many people think is quite enough. My own opinion is that their education should be as high, as scientific and as invigorating as the education of men. We recently heard a high authority saying that female education should proceed in this country on conservative national lines. What these conservative national lines are, it is difficult to say. But it is obvious that in this great question—as in most others—regard should be had more to the requirements of the future than to the facts of the past. You do not expect the educated Hindu of the future to be the same as his educated ancestor of the medieval times

was. As the India of the twentieth century will not be the same as the India of Asoka's or Vikramaditya's time, and as the social conditions and the responsibilities of the citizen will differ from those which were known in the times past, so the training and culture of our future generations will have to differ from those of our ancestors. The educated Hindu woman, any more than the educated Hindu man, cannot possibly adhere to the so-called conservative national lines. The calls on her energy, her sense of duty, and her social virtues will necessarily differ and her education should be liberal and invigorating enough to enable her to meet the changed conditions. Nor is the stress which timid people lay on national continuity so necessary. There is no fear, in these days, of Robespierres of social revolution. There can be no sanguinary convulsions or forcible sweeping away of old institutions such as characterised social transitions in times past. Persuasion and not force is the instrument of change, and though entirely new ideals and thoughts and convictions may come to prevail, the actual transition must be the slow process of peaceful persuasion by example as well as by precept. This transition may be quicker or slower according to the besetting conditions, but it can be no other than peaceful.

THE PARAMOUNT OBJECT IS TO DEVELOP SOCIAL QUALITIES.

Let me go back to my central idea which I want you to keep before your mind while you listen to me, the idea, that is, that social efficiency or social feeling or altruism, as opposed to self-love or egotism, is the true test of the progress of a community. If this standard is to determine the education of Indian women, you will understand how the kind of education advocated in some quarters falls grievously short of the level that has to be reached. I say nothing against the desire—with which I most cordially sympathise—to preserve and not to weaken by a wrong training in schools the peculiar graces of Hindu feminine nature. But I must say that excessive stress on this is apt to become mere cant. These graces, as well as the qualities that are not reckoned *graces*, are the result, so far as they do not arise from the physical and climatic condition of the country, of the habits and activities of life. A well-born Hindu woman,

for instance, will not walk briskly in the street, will not laugh or talk aloud, and will not show off her dress or ornaments. These qualities of modesty impart to our women a peculiar charm. But it is quite possible that altered conditions of life may modify these and other peculiarities, as a similar modification is already taking place in the case of our educated men. The modesty which marked the bearing and demeanour of the late Sir T. Muthusamy Iyer and for which he used to get a good deal of praise, is not the most prominent trait in the character of the younger generation, and in other attributes too which used to be associated with Hindu character, a quiet and perceptible change is taking place; and for that reason we do not mean to demand a change in the educational system and a reversion to the system which trained the mind and formed the character of our ancestors. Similarly, the education of our daughters should not be determined by these comparatively subordinate considerations. The paramount object is to develop social qualities, and whatever education will conduce to this end, that on the whole should be accepted as the best education. Ramayanam, Mahabharatam and Srimat Bhaghavatam afford excellent training in a way, but they cannot be the mental nourishment which God and Nature have provided for the human race for all time and under all conditions. Fancy the education of the Teutonic race being placed altogether on the basis of the New Testament or the History of the Saints!

PATRIOTISM AS A PHASE OF SOCIAL FEELING.

I have said that "social efficiency" is the test of progress and that the community that has not developed a sufficient measure of altruism, social feeling or a preference of the common weal over selfish desires, lacks the vitality essential to sustain its progress. In a word, wherever a sense of national life is absent, there the fatal germs of decay are at work. No other illustration of this principle is wanted than the history of our own race. Another illustration is furnished by the downfall of the Roman Empire—an empire whose rise and fall seem to be an endless reservoir from which illustrations for principles of social progress are drawn. The Roman Empire fell to pieces,

says the author of "National Life and Character," "not because its administrators were always inefficient, or its armies weak, or its finances and mechanical resources inferior to those of the nations which overpowered it, but because there was really no sense of national life in the community." The author adds: "Unless the general feeling in a people 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." Not that there was no organization which demanded and received the homage of the Hindus; but this organization was not the State or the community as a whole; but it was the caste; and the caste feeling together with the system of village communities confined the sympathy and activity of the people within extremely narrow limits. They never allowed a national feeling to grow. In fact, the very conception of a Nation, a State, a Commonwealth, was wanting.

THE MOMENTUM MUST COME FROM THE EXAMPLE OF INDIVIDUALS.

Thus, according as such of our social institutions and customs as hinder the growth of what I have called, (borrowing the expression from Mr. Benjamin Kidd—the author of "Social Evolution"), "Social Efficiency"—in other words a spirit of altruism, social feeling, or a sense of national life, are modified or adapted, according as an equality of footing is made secure to all classes in the competition for life, according as the women of the country are educated and enjoy freedom of thought and movement, and according as the people are permeated with this sense of national life, social progress would be made under favourable conditions. But the ground may be cleared, the conditions may be favourable, the fulcrum and the lever may be sound and in their proper place, yet the momentum to lift the lever up may be wanting. And this momentum must come from the example of individuals—individuals such as those that have from time to time in the past history of the race moulded its destiny. Statesmen, poets, men of science, inventors of mechanical contrivances—all these no doubt contribute to progress, but they can help progress and turn its

direction in its advance, but cannot impart the initial moving force, which comes from those great men who by the power of their lofty character and sublime deeds and the burning enthusiasm they impart to masses of men, sweep away abuse and falsehood, stamp out superstitions, open new paths and establish fresh ideals for the elevation and advancement of the human race.

A HIGH AVERAGE OF SOCIAL FEELING HELPS THESE GREAT MEN.

But this initial moving force may come from humble individuals and operate within a limited sphere as well as from those rare geniuses or heroes whose spirit sweeps over a whole country or continent. As Mr. John Morley says, "what we see every day with increasing clearness is that not only the well-being of the many, but the chances of exceptional genius, moral or intellectual, in the gifted few, are highest in a society where the average interest, curiosity, capacity, are all highest." The humblest individual can therefore come to the help of the genius and can contribute to the gradual raising of the average standard of national sense in the community. The humblest of us can by diligently using our own minds and diligently seeking to extend our own opportunities to others, help to swell the common tide, on the force and the set of whose currents depends the prosperous voyaging of humanity.

TWO POWERFUL AGENCIES—THE STATE AND THE CHURCH.

Two powerful agencies that have done a great deal to advance social well-being in other countries are not available to our cause in this country, namely, the State and the Church. Here the State represents an alien power, which is not well-informed on Hindu Social questions and which lacks that propelling force which the wielders of that power would come under if they were of the people, and if they shared directly in the consequences of our social evils and in the adverse feeling and sense of incongruity they create. Where the ruling power is in the hands of our countrymen such as it is in Native Principalities, you see how it has been possible to move in the direction of reform; and if only the British rulers of India would

realize their responsibilities as Hindu statesmen do, and if they are less timid in facing orthodox opposition, a great accession of strength would accrue to forces of reform. In regard to the Church also, we are at a great disadvantage. There is nothing amongst us corresponding to the great and powerful institution called the Church in Christian countries. Our forefathers never thought of giving to their religion the strength of an organized institution, and I must say that the Hindu religion, in its present degradation and weakness, has paid a frightful penalty for this neglect. Our Mathathipathies and priests are themselves corrupt and sunk in ignorance and superstition. If anything, they constitute a force hostile to rational and healthy reform. Fancy the great Sankarachari Swami of Sringeri, disregarding the secession of disciples from whom he derives his temporal affluence and spiritual status, placing himself at the head of the party of reform and while denouncing the evils grossly revolting to humanity and common sense, openly advocating the changes that a true insight into the present and future needs of the country and a genuine and enlightened patriotism demand; how easily, then, will the devoted band of reformers crush opposition and win victories! But this is not to be. Cannot the Reformers instal Swami Vivekananda or some spiritual hero like him into a reform Sankarachari as there was a second Pope for sometime in Europe!

Appendix.

Summary of Resolutions passed at the various Sessions of the Indian National Social Conference.

[When the Indian National Congress was founded at Bombay in 1885, it was felt by the leaders of the movement and some of our English and other friends that the national movement should not be exclusively political, but that side by side with the consideration of political questions, questions affecting our social economy should also be discussed and that the best endeavours should be put forth for ameliorating the existing condition of our society. With this view, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao and Mr. Justice (then Rao Bahadur) M. G. Ranade delivered addresses on Social Reform on the occasion of the meeting of the First Congress at Bombay. In 1886, at Calcutta, nothing unfortunately was done. Discussion, however, was going on among the leaders of the Congress movement and other leaders of educated Indian thought and opinion whether the Congress itself as such should concern itself with social questions or whether a separate movement should be started for the discussion of social questions. There were several very weighty considerations, dwelt upon by Messrs. Dadabhai Naoroji, Budruddin Tyabji and W. C. Bonnerjee in their Presidential Addresses at the Second, Third and Eighth Congresses, why the Congress should not directly concern itself with the discussion of social subjects. So it was at last resolved after mature deliberation by, among others, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, Mr. Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Mr. Norendro Nath Sen and Mr. Janakinath Ghosal, that a separate movement called the Indian National Social Conference, should be started for the consideration of subjects relating to our social economy. Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao may be styled the father of this movement and Mr. Ranade its wet-nurse. Madras had the honour of being the birth-place of the Conference, for the First Indian National Social Conference was held at Madras in December 1887, with no less a man than the late Rajah Sir T. Madhavarao, K.C.S.I., the premier Indian statesman of this century, as the President. The work done at this First Conference, however, was not much. "Among other important resolutions it was agreed by the members then present, that this meeting recognised the necessity of holding Annual National Conferences in different parts of India for considering and adopting measures necessary for the improvement of the status of our society, and of our social usages; that steps should be taken to organise and establish Provincial Sub-Committees of the Conference; that among other

social subjects which the Conference might take up, those relating to the disabilities attendant on distant sea-voyages, the ruinous expenses of marriage, the limitations of age below which marriages should not take place, the remarriages of youthful widows, the evils of the re-marriages of old men with young girls, the forms and evidences of marriages, and inter-marriages between sub-divisions of the same caste—should form the subjects for discussion and determination; that the fundamental principles, implied in the pledge of the membership of each of the Sub-Committees, should be binding upon the members under the penalties agreed upon by the members of such Sub-Committees; and that these principles should be carried out and enforced as regards the members who might agree to be bound by such penalties, (1) by the Sub-Committees themselves, or (2) through their spiritual heads, whenever it was possible to do so, or (3) through Civil Courts, or failing all, (4) by application to Government for enabling the Committees to enforce the rules in respect of their own pledged members." Rajah Sir T. Madhavarao, K.C.S.I., was elected President, Rao Bahadur M. G. Ranade, C.I.E., Vice-President, and Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, General Secretary of the Conference. From that time the Conference has been held every year in the Congress *pandal*, except when the Congress met at Poona in 1895. In that year some reactionaries succeeded in dislodging the Conference from its proper *habitat*, the Congress *pandal*. But since 1896 again, the Conference has been held in the Congress *pandal* itself. Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao of Madras is the General Secretary of the Conference; and the Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade, C.I.E., of Bombay, Babu Norendro Nath Sen of Calcutta, Rai Bahadur Lala Baij Nath of the N.-W. P. and Oudh, Professor Lala Ruchiram of the Punjab, and Mr. Dayaram Gidumal of Sindh, are the Joint General Secretaries. Thirteen sessions of the Conference had been held; and the fourteenth met at Lahore last year.

The following will show the places where the Conference met and the names of the Presidents of the Conference:—

No.	Year.	Place of Meeting.	Name of President.
1	1887	Madras	Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao, K. C. S. I.
2	1888	Allahabad	Rai Bahadur A. Sabhapathi Mudaliar.
3	1889	Bombay	Mr. Justice K. T. Telang, C. I. E.
4	1890	Calcutta	Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, LL.D., C.I.E.
5	1891	Nagpur	Mr. Ganesh Sri Krishna Khaparde.
6	1892	Allahabad	Rai Bahadur Ram Kali Chaudhuri.
7	1893	Lahore	Dewan Narendra Nath.
8	1894	Madras	Sir S. Subramania Iyer, K. C. I. E.
9	1895	Poona	Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, PH. D., C.I.E.
10	1896	Calcutta	Babu Norendro Nath Sen.
11	1897	Amraoti	Rao Bahadur W. M. Kolhatkar.
12	1898	Madras	Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam Pantulu.
13	1899	Lucknow	Rai Bahadur Lala Baij Nath.

The following subjects were discussed at the Conference :—

Affiliation of Social Reform Associations to the Social Conference, Methods of Social Reform, Recommendations for carrying out the aims and objects of the Conference, Age of Consent, Registration of Social Reform Associations, Widow Marriage Act, Disfigurement of Child Widows, Child Marriage, Work of Social Reform Associations, Restitution of Conjugal Rights, Sea Voyages, Ill-assorted Marriages, Social Reform Fund, *Sulka* or exacting money in consideration of the gift of girls in marriage, Polygamy and Kulinism, Relations between Hindus and Mahomedans, Curtailment of Expenses on marriage and other ceremonials, Female Education, Fusion of Sub-castes, Organising Social Reform Associations, Anti-Nautch and Purity Movement, Temperance, Intercourse with Foreign-travelled Men, Amendment of Act XXI of 1850, Siapa System, Re-marriage of Widows, Purity of Private Life of Public Men, Re-admission of Converts to Hindu Society, Religious Endowments, Religious and Moral Education, Elevation of Low Castes, Charity, Gains of Learning, Contagious Diseases Act, Consent of Widows and unmarried Girls between the ages of 12 and 16 to personal dishonour at the hands of strangers, Working of the Mysore Marriage Law, Infant Marriage Bills, Malabar Marriage Law, Badala or Exchange Marriage, Physique of Boys.]

We give below one resolution on each of the above subjects, the same being in our opinion the best-worded and most comprehensive of all resolutions that were adopted at the several sessions of the Conference.

1. That the various Social Reform Associations, Sabhas and Caste Unions, which may already be existing or may hereafter be formed in any part of India, be asked to affiliate themselves to, and cooperate with this Conference, so far as their aims and objects are in common with the latter, to send it copies of their proceedings and reports, and to nominate delegates to take part in its annual meetings. *(Res. III, Second Conference, Allahabad,* 1888.)

2. That this Conference recommends the following methods of operation, leaving it to each provincial or local association, to adapt them to its own local circumstances :—(*a*) Formation of a social reform fund. *(b)* Employment of preachers. *(c)* Periodical lectures on social reform. *(d)* Formation of local or caste associations. *(e)* Publication and distribution of social reform literature, both in English and the Vernacular. *(f)* Registration of Associations under Sec. 26 of the Companies' Act VI of 1882. *(g)* Pledges by members against marrying their male or female relations below a certain age, as well as for educating all their female relations to the best of their ability, and in case of breach to pay a prescribed penalty. *(Res. IV, Second Conference, Allahabad,* 1888).

3. That this Conference makes the following recommendations for carrying out its aims and objects, leaving it to each local association to adopt such of them, as may be suited to its circumstances :—(1) Reduction of birth, marriage, death and other expenses, and prescription of scales for persons of various means, as well as for presents made by a bride's family to that of a bridegroom. (2)

The gradual raising of the marriageable age to the standard fixed by the Rajput chiefs. (3) The remarriage of child-widows. (4) Removal of social disabilities attending sea-voyages to foreign countries. (5) Prevention of disfigurement of child-widows prevailing in certain parts of India. (6) Intermarriage between those sections of a caste which dine together. (*Res. V, Second Conference, Allahabad,* 1888.)

4. That in the opinion of this Conference, the distinction made by the Penal Code, between the general age of consent (12 years) laid down in Section 90 and the special age prescribed in Clause 5 and the exception in Section 375, is both unnecessary and indefensible, and that with a view to prevent early completion of marriages, which leads to the impairment of physical health of both husband and wife, and to the growth of a weakly progeny, cohabitation before the wife is 12 years old should be punishable as a criminal offence, and that every effort should be made by awakening public conscience to the grave dangers incurred to postpone the completion of marriage till the age of 14 at least, as being in accordance with the dictates of our ancient medical works and modern science, and countenanced by the approved sentiment and practice of the country that every member, joining any of the Social Reform Associations connected will this Conference should be asked to pledge himself, not to complete in his own case or in the case of his children, who are minors, any marriages before the bride completes her 14th year (*Res. I, Third Conference, Bombay,* 1889.)

5. That the Conference considers it expedient that Act XXI of 1860, under which benevolent and educational Associations can be registered, should be made applicable to Social Reform Associations; that Section 26 of Act VI of 1882, under which Associations not formed for profit can be licensed by Local Governments and registered, should be so amended as to empower such Governments to exempt such Associations from any obligation imposed by the Act upon Mercantile Companies; that under the same Act no fees should be exacted from Associations registered under Act XXI of 1860; and that the General Secretary of the Conference be empowered to send a representation based on this Resolution to the Government of India in the Legislative Department for their consideration. (*Res. VIII, Sixth Conference, Allahabad,* 1892.)

[The General Secretary made a representation to Government accordingly. For particulars, *vide* Res. IX. of the 7th Conference and Res. III of the 8th Conference.]

6. That the experience of the last 10 years' working of the Widow Marriage Act of 1856 has, in the opinion of the Conference, established the fact that the Act fails to secure to the remarrying widow the full enjoyment of her rights in the following respects:— First, that such widow is made to forfeit her life-interest in her husband's immoveable property for doing a lawful act when such forfeiture would not have resulted if she had misconducted herself; secondly, that even in respect of *Stridhan* proper, over which her power of disposal is absolute, there is a general impression that she loses proprietary rights over her moveables in favour of her husband's relations, who otherwise could not have interfered with her

free disposal of the same ; thirdly, in many cases, she and her second husband are not only ex-communicated but the right of worship in public temples has been denied to them, and no relief has been given to them in the Civil Courts ; fourthly, in some parts of the country, she is subjected to disfigurement before she has arrived at the age of majority without any freedom being given to her to exercise her choice. In all these respects the law of 1856 has proved inoperative to protect her, and the Conference is of opinion that steps should be taken by the Social Reform Associations who favour such reform to adopt remedies to relax the stringency of caste usages, and to secure a reconsideration of the principles of the Act with a view to remedy its defects (*Res. VII, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti,* 1897.)

7. That the disfigurement of child-widows, before they attain the age of 18 and even after that age, without the consent of the widow recorded in writing before a Panch and a Magistrate be discouraged, and caste organizations be formed to arrange for social penalties to be inflicted on those who aid in disfiguring child-widows without their consent. (*Res. VII, Sixth Conference, Allahabad,* 1892.)

8. That this Conference is of opinion that the well-being of the community demands that the practice of child-marriage be discouraged by public sentiment, and that within the sphere of the various castes and communities, strenuous efforts be made to postpone the celebration of marriage rites till 12 in the case of girls and 18 in the case of boys, and the consummation of the marriage till after they attain the age of 14 and 20, respectively, and that the members of the various Social Reform Associations in the country should pledge themselves to see that these limits of age are realised in actual practice, and public opinion educated to advance these limits still higher. (*Res. II, Fourth Conference, Calcutta,* 1890.)

9. That this Conference has heard with satisfaction the account of the work done in the promotion of social reform by the various independent and affiliated Associations, established in different parts of the country and it trusts that the good work that has been done during the past year will be continued with the same earnestness during the coming year. (*Res. I, Fourth Conference, Calcutta,* 1890.)

10. That the Conference is of opinion that imprisonment in the case of the execution of decrees for the restitution of conjugal rights, even as a last resort, should be abolished. (*Res. V, Fifth Conference, Nagpur,* 1891.)

11. That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is not desirable to excommunicate persons who undertake distant sea-voyages and that Social Reform Associations be requested to exert themselves to secure the retention by such persons of the social status enjoyed by them in their castes. (*Res. V, Fourth Conference, Calcutta,* 1890.)

12. That in the opinion of the Conference the practice of men of more than fifty years of age marrying young girls below twelve is opposed to the spirit of the Shastras, and is extremely prejudicial to the interests of the community, and that the power of adoption given by the law leaves no excuse for such ill-assorted marriages,

and the Conference therefore affirms the necessity of actively discouraging all marriages where the difference of age between the parties exceeds thirty years. (*Res. VI, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti*, 1897.)

13. For securing more effective co-operation of Social Reform Associations in the work of the Conference, and for advising and guiding local efforts, it is desirable in the opinion of the Conference, that Provincial Branch Committees be established in each Province, with special funds of their own to be devoted to the purpose of employing preachers and publishing tracts, collecting information regarding existing social customs and the evils arising therefrom, etc., and that representative Committees should be formed to undertake the work in the course of this year. The Province of the Punjab should take the lead in giving effect to this Resolution. (*Res. X, Seventh Conference, Lahore*, 1893.)

14. Having regard to the conflicting decisions of Indian Courts regarding the validity of the custom of receiving money in consideration of giving a girl in marriage, and to the widespread prevalence of the custom, and being convinced that such a custom is against the spirit of Hindu Law, and is immoral and injurious to the interests of society, this Conference recommends all Social Reform Associations to join together in one effort to denounce and discourage the said custom, and ensure that in case moneys are received by the father or guardian of the girl, the same shall be held as a trust in the interests of the girl, and the trust duly enforced. (*Res. I, Fifth Conference, Nagpur*, 1891.)

15. That the Conference strongly denounces the abuse of the institution of marriage practised in certain parts of India and among certain classes where men marry more than one wife without any adequate cause such as is recognised by ancient law texts, and recommends that all Social Reform Associations should discourage this practice of polygamy as at once degrading and pernicious in its consequences, that steps should be taken to enforce that no such second marriage takes place without an adequate provision being made for the discarded wife and children if any; the associations should pledge their members not to encourage such marriages by their presence and support; and that wherever Kulinism prevails, the Reform Associations in those provinces should make every effort to educate public opinion in regard to the evil consequences resulting therefrom and promote inter-marriage independently of the artificial distinctions of Mels, Garhs, and Parjaya. (*Res. IX, Tenth Conference, Calcutta*, 1896.)

16. The Conference regards with the deepest regret the many religious disputes between the lower classes of Hindus and Mahomedans, which have occurred in several parts of the country, and led to serious riots and loss of life. Such disputes are fraught with great danger to the intimate social relations which should bind the two communities together. The Conference is of opinion that if Punchayets were established with the sanction of the authorities, and included the leading representatives of the two communities, and if

these Punchayets exerted themselves to remove by anticipation all grounds for misunderstanding, their efforts will be attended with success. The Conference accordingly recommends that these mixed Punchayets should be nominated by the local authorities and should include the leading members of the two communities, the rules framed by them with the cognizance of the authorities, should be carried out and enforced, and the Punchayet leaders should freely exert themselves to help the authorities in restoring peace and order and reconciling both the parties to live amicably together. (*Res. VI, Fifth Conference, Nagpur*, 1891.)

[The suggestion for the formation of Punchayets was accepted by the Government of the N.-W.P. and Oudh and Punchayets were established. They worked very well. For particulars, *vide* Res. IV of the 7th Conference and Res. IX of the 8th Conference.]

17. That in the opinion of this Conference, it is necessary to curtail marriage and ceremonial expenses, and the Conference recommends each community to lay down fixed scales of such expenses, and provide measures for the enforcement of their rules. (*Res. I, Sixth Conference, Allahabad*, 1892.)

18. That in the opinion of the Conference the permanent progress of our society is not possible without a further spread of female education and that the best way is (1) to proceed on national lines by employing in female schools, female teachers of good character and descended from respectable Hindu families, (2) to establish training schools to secure a sufficient number of qualified female teachers, (3) to open home classes for grown up ladies who cannot attend regular schools with extra female teachers to visit and help, at stated intervals, such ladies as read at their homes, (4) to employ a Pundita versed in Sanskrit to read passages from Puranas, and impart religious and moral instruction to ladies, (5) to take steps to publish text books suited to the requirements of female schools, and (6) to impart instruction in needle works, hygiene, culinary art, domestic economy, and training of children in secondary schools. (*Res. I, Tenth Conference, Calcutta*, 1896.)

19. The Conference re-affirms the necessity of further steps being taken by societies for social reform in all parts of the country to remove all hindrances in the way of inter-dining of members of the different sub-sections of the same caste, and to promote inter-marriages between persons who can dine together under existing rules. (*Res. X, Eighth Conference, Madras*, 1894.)

20. That this Conference earnestly urges upon all interested in social reform the absolute necessity of organising Social Reform Committees in all districts, or at least one such Committee in each Province, on the principle of self-sacrifice, and employing at least one full time worker for the purpose of educating public opinion on the subject of social reform. (*Res. X, Sixth Conference, Allahabad*, 1892.)

21. The Conference records its satisfaction that the Anti-nautch movement has found such general support in all parts of India, and

it recommends the various Social Reform Associations in the country to persevere in their adoption of this self-denying ordinance, and to supplement it by pledging their members to adhere to the cardinal principle of observing on all occasions, as a religious duty, purity of thought, speech and action, so as to purge our society generally of the evils of low and immoral surroundings. (*Res. III, Ninth Conference, Poona*, 1895).

22. That the Conference notes with pleasure that, thanks to the noble efforts made by Mr. Caine, Mr. Evans and his native fellow workers, considerable success has attended the efforts of the Kayastha Temperance Society and similar other caste organizations for the promotion of total abstinence, and it feels more than ever the necessity of active co-operation between the Temperance movements in India and those in England and America. The vice of intemperance is not of ancient growth here and is still confined to minorities: and it is in the opinion of the Conference necessary that the majority of total abstainers should exert themselves to popularise their views and should have the power of enforcing them by some adoption of the principle of local option which cannot be secured without the co-operation of the English and American Temperance Societies. (*Res. III, Tenth Conference, Calcutta*, 1896.)

23. The Conference notes with satisfaction that there now exists no difficulty in the admission of foreign travelled people among the Khatri and Sikh communities of the Punjab, and that the admission of similar people in Guzerath and Southern India has been secured during the present year on more easy conditions than were possible some years ago. The Conference recommends these examples to the Kayastha community in the North-West Provinces, where more difficulty has been experienced, and to the Brahmins and other high castes in all parts of the country, among whom the prejudice against foreign travel by sea is still strong. The earnest co-operation of the caste and ecclesiastical leaders must be enlisted in this work, as the final success of all our political, industrial and social activities rests on this movement. (*Res. V, Ninth Conference, Poona*, 1895.)

24. That in view of the conflict of the preamble of Act XXI of 1850 with its operative section as construed by the several High Courts and the unsettlement of family peace in consequence of such rulings, the Conference is of opinion that as the Act was not intended to affect or alter the Mahomedan or Hindu family or personal law, the Government of India be moved to take into its consideration the necessity of amending the Act, so as to limit the operation of the word, 'rights,' used in Sec. 1 of the Act to 'rights of property' only, and not to marital and guardianship rights. (*Res. VIII, Seventh Conference, Lahore*, 1893.)

25. That the Conference is of opinion that the Siapa system of loud mourning and beating of the chest which prevails in Sind, the Punjab, the North-West Provinces, and Guzerath is a very objectionable and unreasonable practice, and entails great misery on the mourners, and it recommends that Social Reform Associations in

those parts of the country should take early steps to discontinue this practice. (*Res. XI, Seventh Conference, Lahore*, 1893.)

26. That, in the opinion of the Conference, it is desirable not to discourage the remarriage of child-widows, when their parents or guardians wish to give them in marriage according to the Hindu Shastras. (*Res. X, Tenth Conference, Calcutta*, 1896.)

27. That, in the opinion of the Conference, it is a matter of satisfaction to find that the educated classes require that private life and morals of public men should be as pure and self-denying as the proper discharge of their public duties demand, and the Conference recommends that every member of societies for social reform should endeavour as far as possible to realise the ideal professed by him in his private life. (*Res. XI, Eighth Conference, Madras*, 1894.)

28. The Conference records its satisfaction that some two hundred converts to other faiths were received back into Hindu Society in the Punjab this year, and that stray instances of such readmission have taken place in other provinces also. Hindu Society cannot afford to be exclusive on this point without danger to its existence, and the Conference recommends the Social Reform Associations to interest themselves in the subject, with a view to facilitate such readmissions in all instances where it is sincerely sought. (*Res. XI, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti*, 1897.)

29. The Conference understands that the principle of the Bill introduced by the Hon'ble Mr. Anandacharlu in His Excellency the Viceroy's Council is to subject the trustees, without any violent disturbance of existing arrangements to an effective moral control of the respectable worshippers of the shrines in the neighbourhood. As such the Conference accepts the principle of the Bill, and would suggest that the trustees or managers of all public endowments should be bound by law to publish full accounts of the management, and that the Temple Boards as suggested below should have the power of suspending defaulting trustees or managers for suspected misconduct, leaving to these latter freedom to clear themselves by a suit in the Civil Court, instead of, as now, requiring worshippers to bring such suits. In the opinion of the Conference, if these measures were adopted, there would be no practical necessity of creating new Central and District and Taluq Boards. The existing Local Fund District Boards and the Jurors' and Assessors' list, would furnish a constituency, out of which the new Temple Boards might be selected according to the respective creeds to which the shrine belongs. (*Res. IV, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti*, 1897.)

30. That in the opinion of the Conference it is desirable that steps should be taken to provide for religious and moral education in Government schools out of school hours, and in private schools during school hours, so as to counteract, to some extent, the evil complained of about the present Western education which is too secular in character. (*Res. VIII, Tenth Conference, Calcutta*, 1896.)

31. That in the opinion of the Conference the education and the social amelioration of the Pariahs and other out-castes in all parts

of India is a duty which rests on all those who have the permanent good of their country at heart and every effort should be made to raise these classes to a position where by education and industry they may rise above the disadvantages of their condition. (*Res., XI, Tenth Conference, Calcutta,* 1896.)

32. That in the opinion of the Conference the increase of population and the growing poverty of the country make it incumbent to regulate with discrimination the existing system of public charity so as to diminish the incentives to idleness and pauperism, without at the same time creating indifference to cases of real distress; and the Conference would recommend all Social Reform Associations which interest themselves in the working of charity and benevolence to concentrate the resources available for this purpose, and disburse them under proper control to those who stand in real need of such help, and for such purposes as are likely to wean people from idleness. (*Res. III, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti,* 1897.)

33. In reference to the Gains of Learning Bill, introduced in the Madras Legislative Council by the Honourable Mr. Bhashyam Iyengar, the Conference is of opinion that the existing state of the law on the subject is both uncertain and unsatisfactory, and that a declaratory Act, giving a wider recognition to the rights of the earning members of a family over acquisitions made by them without the use of family funds, except so far at these funds have provided them with subsistence and education benefiting their position in life, is very desirable in the interests of the social emancipation of those who are members of the Hindu Joint Family System. The Conference further suggests that a compromise which would divide such acquisitions into two equal shares, one part remaining available as joint property for division, as at present, among the members of the family, and the other being treated as separate self-acquired property, would tend to remove many of the objections urged against the Bill and retain the solidarity of interest without producing any mischiefs in the way of checking the spirit of enterprise which leads to such self-acquisition. (*Res. XIII, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti,* 1897.)

34. The Conference notices with regret that, notwithstanding the official condemnation pronounced upon the system once prevalent of regulating the prevention of contagious diseases in large towns and cantonments, the Government of India has sanctioned a relaxation of the policy adopted by it, and has thus surrendered the principle on which such condemnation was based. The natural penalties of indulgence in vice are the only deterrents against such habits, and to remove these natural restraints saps at the root of all real growth of virtue, The Conference therefore recommends that all Social Reform Associations should, in the interests of female purity, make common cause in this matter with the agitation going on in England. (*Res. XV, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti,* 1897.)

35. That as the law at present stands, there is apparently no protection to a widow or an unmarried girl above twelve or below sixteen who is a consenting party to an act of personal dishonour

at the hands of strangers. In the opinion of the Conference the consent of such a girl between twelve and sixteen should, as in the case of kidnapping, be held to be inoperative to protect the man who violates her honour. (*Res. XVI, Eleventh Conference, Amraoti*, 1897.)

36. The Conference learns with satisfaction that the Marriage Regulations in Mysore have been worked by the Mysore Durbar with judicious mildness and with great regard for the feelings of the people concerned, as shown by the small number of prosecutions and convictions. The success which has attended this legislation will, the Conference hopes, encourage other States to follow the example of Mysore. (*Res. III, Twelfth Conference, Madras*, 1898.)

37. The Conference learns with regret that the Government of India has refused to sanction the introduction of the Infant Marriage Prevention Bills in the Legislative Council of Madras, on the ground that in its opinion the measures proposed were in advance of public opinion. As both the Marriage Bills were drafted on the lines of the Mysore Marriage Regulations and fixed the minimum limits below the ages which are now observed by most of the classes of people, the Conference hopes that, if the fact were properly placed before the Government, it would be satisfied that the Bills were not open to the objections taken to them. The Conference, therefore, recommends that early steps should be taken by the Associations to memorialise Government with a view that it may be persuaded to appoint a commission of enquiry to ascertain the advance made by public opinion on this subject and to advise Government on the action it should take in this matter. (*Res. IV, Twelfth Conference, Madras*, 1898.)

38. This Conference notes with great satisfaction that although Registrations of Marriages under the Malabar Marriage Law, have not been as numerous as anticipated at first, yet this legislation has been attended with the happiest results, inducing a healthy change in the sentiments of the people on the question and that the people of Malabar subject to their own customary Law have shown a decided tendency to assimilate their usages to those of the other Hindu communities. In the opinion of the Conference time has now come, when the discretion to allow Marriages to be registered at any time might be regulated and that further facilities be afforded for such registration by the appointment of Village Officers to act as Marriage Registrars under the directions and control of the existing official Registrars. (*Res. VI, Twelfth Conference, Madras*, 1898.)

39. The practice of arranging marriages on the Badala or Golawat (exchange) system prevailing in certain castes in the N.-W. P. and Oudh is, in the opinion of the Conference, fraught with the degradation of the marriage tie to the same extent as that of the sale of girls in marriage, and as such, should be discouraged by all means, by gradually enlarging the circle of sub-castes eligible for the choice of marriage alliances. (*Res. XII, Thirteenth Conference, Lucknow*, 1899.)

40. The Conference notes with satisfaction that in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, the Educational Department has given special attention to physical education and encourages annual tournaments and the giving of prizes to the boys of the Primary and Secondary Schools, as also of Colleges, with a view to improve the physique of boys. Such tournaments and prizes, as also the establishment of Boarding Schools, and the promotion of Brahmacharya are, in the opinion of the Conference the only available means for improving the physical stamina of the younger generation, and as such, should engage the attention of the Reform Associations. (*Res. XIII, Thirteenth Conference, Lucknow*, 1899.)



ADDENDA.

The Inaugural Address

OF THE

HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE M. G. RANADE.

Fourteenth Conference—Lahore—1900.

Vashistha and Vishwamitra.

About this time last year I had occasion, at the inauguration of the Conference held at Lucknow, to dilate on a text of Nanak, in which he proclaimed himself to be neither a Hindu nor a Mahomedan. To-day, I find myself in the extreme North-West corner of India, in the land of the five rivers, the original home of the Aryan settlers, who composed the Vedic hymns, and performed the great sacrifices. We are met to-day in the land of the Rishis, where Vashistha and Vishwamittra lived and flourished at a time when the caste institution had not taken its root in our Indian soil, when men and women enjoyed freedom and equality, asceticism had not over-shadowed the land, and life and its sweets were enjoyed in a spirit of joyous satisfaction. Punjab during its eventful history has well deserved the compliment that it is the land of the Rishis. The question then naturally arises, who were these Rishis? What was the condition of society when they lived? What thoughts stirred them and what actions ennobled their lives and their struggles? For most of us, long habit has rendered it impossible to imagine a state of society, where men were not split up into petty divisons of caste with its artificial barriers, limiting men's activities and narrowing their sympathies. It is a revelation to many of us to be taken back to two or three thousand years ago, to a state of society when class divisions such as Brahmins and Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudrâs were unknown or not well established, and the only distinction

recognized in practice was between the Aryans and non-Aryans To illustrate the gulf which separates our own times from the days when the Rishis flourished, we need only mention the fact that the daughter of the King of Vidarbha was given in marriage to Agastya. Another Raja, by name Lomapâda, gave his daughter in marriage to one Rishyashringa. The king Trinabindu also thus gave his daughter to Pulasti, and Bhagíratha gave his daughter to Koutsa Rishi. The king Shâryati's daughter was given in marriage to Chyavanya Rishi. Instances where the Brahmins gave their daughters in marriage to kings were also not uncommon. Thus Shukracharyá's daughter Devayani was given in marriage to Yayáti and Kritwi to Aunha, Independently of marriage alliances, stories are told where Rishis, who were born in royal houses or were Rajarshis, became by their sanctity and devotion entitled to be called Brahmarshis. One Priyamedha was so elevated, and Shini, Garga, and Traiyaruni were also so promoted to the status of Brahmarshis. Also Mudgala and Gritsamada, who were before kings, became thus Brahmins. The Brahmins on their side felt no scruple in learning the Dhanurveda or archery. Agasti Muni, as is well known, was skilled in Dhanurveda and conquered the non-Aryan king Ilvala and the Kalakeyas, who were pirates on the sea-coast. Agniveshya was also noted for his skill in archery and he was the teacher of Dronacharya, himself a great Brahmin commander in the wars of the Mahabharata. His son Ashwatthama and his brother-in-law Kripa were similarly renowned. Instances where Brahmins caused the ruin of the kings of the day by their curses are, no doubt, more frequent than those where kings cursed the Brahmins and brought about their ruin. As illustrations of the first class, we may mention stories about King Nahusha and Ven Raja. Nahusha, as is well known, had by reason of his superior merits become the occupant of Indra's throne, but he made the Brahmins carry him in a palanquin; and Agastya Muni resented the ill-teatment and cursed him which led to his downfall. King Ven was similarly dethroned. Similarly Vashistha's curse against Sahasrárjuna enabled Parashurama to lop off his numerous hands. Vashistha is also mentioned as having cursed Raja Kalmashpada, and

Raja Trishanku became Chandala in consequence of the curse. On the other hand Vashistha himself did not escape unharmed. There is besides the story of Ambarisha, who was persecuted by Durvasa and in the result Durvasa had to entreat Ambarisha to grant him pardon and withdraw the Sudarshana which perpetually followed him and gave him no rest. As regards the women, numerous stories are told of their remaining unmarried throughout their lives and of their engaging themselves in the pursuit of devotional exercises or in the study of philosophy. The story of Amba, who remained unmarried all her life, is well known. She wanted to marry with Shalva, but he would not take her and she would not accept the choice made by Bhishma for her. The daughter of Kunigarga also remained unmarried during life. Gargivachaknavi, Vadavapratitheyi and Sulabhamaitreyi—all these are historical names of women who passed their lives in celebacy and engaged in discussions on philosophic subjects in the court of Janaka.

Perhaps the most instructive of these ancient stories is that which is connected with the rivalry of Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. Both these names occur in the Vedic hymns, and though their rivalry is noticeable even in these early hymns, they furnish no authority for the legend which gathered round their names in the period which succeeded the composition of the hymns. Vashistha is a great exponent of Brahmin orthodoxy. The legends seek to make out that Vishvamitra was not by right a Brahmarshi. He was only a Rajarshi and aspired to be a Brahmarshi. Vashistha would not support him in this ambition and that accounted for their strife. Throughout the story Vishvamitra represents the view of those who try to admit the non-Aryans into the Aryan community and seek to elevate them. The story of Trishanku, for instance, notwithstanding its exaggeration, has a moral of its own. Vashistha had without justice condemned Trishanku to be a Chándál simply because he aspired to go to heaven by the force of his merits. Vishvamitra took up his cause and performed the Yagnya, because Trishanku had saved his wife and children during a great famine. The result was that Trishanku was accepted in heaven notwithstanding the curse of Vashistha. The story of Shunashepa,

who was the son of a Brahmin and was purchased as sacrificial victim to be offered to Varuna in the place of the king's son, who was first promised, is also full of the same liberality on the part of Vishvamitra, who saved the Brahmin's life by his mediation. The result of the conflict between Vasishtha and Vishvamitra was a complete victory on the part of the latter, for Vashishta admitted Vishvamitra's claim to be a Brahmarshi. Vashishtha's line was continued by his grandson Parashara. Krishnadwaipayana, Vaishampayana, Yajnyavalkya, Shukra Muni, and Jaimini all belonged to the orthodox side. Vishwamitra's family was connected by alliances with that of Bhrigu, Jamadagni and Parashar. The great Rishis who colonised Southern India were undoubtedly Agastya and Atri who with their wives Lopamudra and Anusuya occupy a prominent place in the story of the Ramayana. King Rama stopped in their Ashram, and Valmiki's description of these Ashrams presents a picture of these holy settlements, which does not lose its charm even at the present day. These settlements were the pioneers of civilization in Southern India. There were similar establishments in other parts of India on the borders of the civilized kingdoms. The Rishi, with his wife and his numerous pupils, kept herds of cows, cultivated the land, and founded colonies or cities and helped the Rajas from the North to establish their power in the South. Jamadagni's story of the conflict with Kartavirya and the subsequent wars between Parasharam and the sons of Kartavirya no doubt refer to such expansion of power. King Rama himself was helped by Agasti in the final struggle with King Ravana. Parashuram is said to have similarly carried on a war with the Rakshasas which was put an end to by the meditation of Vasistha. The early Rishis were great both in peace and in war. In this respect the Rajarshis were as great as the Brahmarshis. Rasabhadeo, for instance, had one hundred sons, of whom nine devoted themselves to meditation and philosophy and eighty-one followed the karma-marga, and the remaining ten ruled over kingdoms. King Janaka was great as a sovereign ruler and greater still as a saint. Vamadeo was noted for his piety, devotion and knowledge which came to him

in his mother's womb. The Brahmin Rishi Balaki was taught higher philosophy by Ajatshatru, the Raja of Kashi. It may be seen that there was no monopoly of learning in those early times and Rajas and Brahmins sat at the feet of each other to learn wisdom. There was in fact no permanent division of functions between the two orders, and therefore they were somewhat like the temporal and spiritual lords we know of in England. They could interchange places and did in fact so interchange them in numerous instances.

This brief account of the time when the Rishis flourished in this country naturally leads to the inquiry as to how it was that in course of time Brahmin Rishis came practically to monopolise the title and deny it to the Rajas. The story of Vasistha and Vishwamitra furnishes some clue to a solution of this difficulty. The great names of Agyastya and Atri, Vasistha and Jamadagni, Bhrigu and Bharadwaja, Parashar and Vamdeo, Vaishampayana and Yagnyavalkya, Valmiki and Vyas, Kapil Muni and Shuka Muni naturally carried influence with all classes of people. The Rajarshis were not much known for their authorship, and when these old families succumbed to foreign conquerors in the early period of the Christian era, the new Rajput or Jat conquerors had no hold on the popular mind, and the Brahmins retained or increassed their hold on the affections of the people. The Puranic literature which had its birth about this time confirmed this superiority of the Brahmins and the result was that the term Rishi came to be applied only to Brahmins as being the only literary or cultured class of the time. Their predominance continued unchecked except so far as the Vaishnava movement came to the relief of the non-Brahmin classes. The Vaishnava movement has struck its deepest root in the Punjab, where the ten Gurus from Nanak to Guru Govind Sing have effected a change, the like of which no other part of India can exhibit. The Granth Sahib has taken the place of the old Vedas and Puranas and the Gurus and their descendants occupy the place of the Brahmins. Since the establishment of the British rule new forces have been in operation and the road is now again open by which the best men of all classes might aspire as in the past to be the true Rishis of the

land. A movement which has been recently started in the Punjab may be accepted as a sign that you have begun to realize the full significance of the need of creating a class of teachers who may well be trusted to take the place of the Gurus of old. The chief point, however, that is to be constidered in this connection is who should be these Gurus of the future. It is with this view that I have endeavoured to place before you a brief account of the true Gurus of the past, namely the Rishis who were both Brahmarshis and Rajarshis, only distinguished from one another by their individual inclinations and abilities. We must keep that ideal before us if we mean to prove ourselves the worthy descendants of our earliest ancestors. Of course the teachings and the methods and the subjects taught in these days must be made to suit our new exigencies and environments, but the spirit animating the teachings must be the same as that which led the first settlers to cross the Vindhya Range, and establish their colonies in the South. By reviving our ancient traditions in this matter we may hope in the near future to instil into the minds of our young generations lessons of devotion to learning, diversity of studies and personal loyalty to the teacher without which no system of school or college education can ever bear any fruit. This, however, is not all. In addition to these lessons, our new teachers must know how to introduce their pupils to a correct appreciation of the forces which are at work in the wider world outside and which, in spite of temporary checks or seeming reverses, represent all that is best in human efforts for the elevation and happiness of man. Our teachers must enable their pupils to realize the dignity of man as man, and to apply the necessary correctives to tendencies towards exclusiveness, which have grown in us with the growth of ages. They must see that our thoughts, our speech, our actions are inspired by a deep love of humanity, and that our conduct and our worship are freed where necessary from the bondage of custom and made to conform as far as possible to the surer standard of our conscience. We must at the same time be careful that this class of teachers does not form a new order of monks. Much good, I am free to admit, has been done in the past and is being done in these days, in this as well as other

countries by those who take the vow of lifelong celebacy and who consecrate their lives to the service of man and the greater glory of our Maker. But it may be doubted how far such men are able to relaize life in all its fulness and in all its varied relations, and I think our best examples in this respect are furnished by Agastya with his wife Lopamudra, Atri with his wife Anusuya, and Vasistha with his wife Arundhati among the ancient Rishis, and in our own times by men like Dr. Bhandarkar on our side, Diwan Bahadur Raghunatha Row in Madras, the late Keshab Chander Sen and Babu Pratap Chandra Mozumdar and Pandit Shivanath Shastri in Bengal, and Lala Hansa Raj and Lala Munshi Ram in your own province. A race that can ensure a continuance of such teachers can, in my opinion, never fail, and with the teachings of such men to guide and instruct and inspire us, I, for one, am confident that the time will be hastened when we may be vouchsafed a sight of the Promised Land.

Diwan Sant Ram's Presidential Address—Lahore—1900.

Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to thank you most sincerely for the very great honour you have conferred upon me in electing me to preside over the deliberations of this great assembly. I feel most keenly my unworthiness to occupy a position which has been filled by such distinguished reformers and scholars as Sir T. Madhava Row, Dr. Bhandarkar and others, and if I have, not without hesitation, accepted the most responsible duty of conducting the proceedings of to-day, it is only in the hope that my presence here will, in some small measure, further the cause of one much needed reform for which the Conference has been labouring since its very inception, and with which I am also humbly associated.

We in the Punjab are fortunate, that the path of social reform is much smoother here than in other parts of India. Many important reforms which have engaged the earnest attention of

the leaders of the Hindu community in other provinces and which are as far as ever from being carried out, have come to us easily, naturally and without much effort. The sea-voyage question, for instance, which has proved such a stumbling block elsewhere in the way of the legitimate aspirations of many an educated Indian, has lost any significance it ever had here. Again, the caste restrictions, though bad enough in the Punjab, do not possess the same rigidity as they do in the rest of India. We have, therefore, good reason to be thankful for the many encouraging circumstances which make our work in the direction of social reform comparatively easier of achievement. Ladies and gentlemen, I need hardly tell you that we owe these and other advantages to the labours of many noble reformers who have worked so earnestly in the past for the good of the millions of this land. In particular, let us, on this important occasion, turn with grateful hearts to the founders of the great Sikh religion. We feel sure that the spirits of the great Baba Nanak and Guru Govind Singh are looking with approbation on the aims and objects of this great assembly. Their blessings and prayers are with us in our efforts. With their great work the best interests of our country are identified. The conviction is more and more gaining ground in the minds of the thinking portion of the people of India that the remedy of the many evils which are eating into the very vitals of our society lies in our own hands, and that if we but make up our minds, and earnestly and honestly set about it, the salvation of India cannot be long delayed.

It is cheering to note that the forces at work over the length and breadth of India are all in the direction of a clearer recognition of our many national evils and a bolder attitude to combat them. The many reform associations, dealing with specific evils which are spread like a net-work over the country, point unmistakably to the tendencies of modern India. Indian society is at the present moment in a state of transition. There is social unrest everywhere. Even the most orthodox communities are not free from the signs of this new ferment which is surely, though imperceptibly, leavening the whole mass of our society.

Here in the Punjab, for instance, as you must have noticed from the summary of the reports presented to you the other day, all the castes and their sub-sections are busy (each in its own way) in carrying out important reforms within their own circle. The work done by these associations taken together is such as to encourage us in the midst of our trials and difficulties. As illustrating the *modus operandi* and the nature and extent of achievement of these sectional organizations, I may be permitted to refer briefly to the work of one or two Khatri Sabhas culminating in the grand Khatri Conference, which was held within this week and at a place not very far from here. One of the most important of the Khatri associations is the Sarin Sabha. The first Sarin Sabha in the Punjab was established at Lahore in the year 1882. After five years' regular and earnest work, the Sabha found itself strong enough to invite members of their own community from other large towns of the Province to a Conference, which was held at Lahore in 1887. In the following year, another and more successful Conference was held in the same place. This was quickly followed by the third Conference which was held at Hoshiarpur in 1889. In 1892 the fourth Conference was held at Amritsar and in 1895, the fifth and last Conference was held at Hoshiarpur again. Ladies and gentlemen, it is not easy for me to tell you how much these Conferences have done to advance the cause of social reform in the Sarin section of the Punjab Khatris. Wine and the inevitable nautch-girls have been banished from their marriage parties, unequal matches have not only been condemned, but are made punishable by the Baradari, the marriageable age of girls has been raised, the expenses incurred on festive occasions have been curtailed and regulated, and a healthy opinion on many other social questions has been created and fostered.

But if I refer to the Sarin Sabhas and Sarin Conferences, I do so, as I have already said, merely to indicate the character and the influence of caste associations in general. There are many other equally important associations which are engaged in exactly the same kind of work as the Sarin Sabha has been doing. There is hardly a town of any importance in the Punjab which does not boast of at least one or two caste associations, the most

influential of them being, besides the Sarin Sabhas, the Bunjahi Khatri Sabhas, the Agarwal Sabhas, the Kayasth Sabhas and the Arorbans Sabhas. Of the many happy signs of the time, perhaps not the least encouraging is the fact that the new ideas are slowly but surely filtering down to the hitherto impervious strata of rigid conservatism and orthodoxy, and that even the Gaur Brahmans of the sacred land of Kurukshetra have begun to feel their silent influence.

Of the professedly religious societies, the Singh Sabhas, the Arya Samajes and the Brahmo Samajes are doing a great deal to push on the cause of social reform in this Province, and I am glad to notice that during the present year the Singh Sabhas and the Arya Samajes have been particularly active in elevating the social status of certain lower castes of Hindus.

While speaking of these Sabhas and Samajes, I must draw your kind attention for a moment to the very useful work which they have been doing in advancing the cause of female education. In particular, the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya of Jullundur deserves special mention as a leading institution of its kind in this Province. Perhaps the most important feature of the Vidyalaya is the special class for widows and grown-up ladies, some of whom have come from considerable distances and are living in the Boarding House attached to the School. I am also glad to note that arrangements have lately been completed for the teaching of Elementary Science and Drawing, and that it is compulsory for all the scholars to take part in the games for which ample provision has been made. During the present year, there were about 125 girls on the rolls with an average daily attendance of 80 scholars.

Another important private institution working in the cause of education, moral, religious, physical, and technical is the Dayanada Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore. It is the leading institution of its kind and it is hardly necessary for me to dwell at length upon the benefits which it has conferred upon the general Hindu community.

I must also say a few words about the good work which has been done by the several temperance and purity associations

working in the Punjab. Of these, I may be permitted to single out two for a passing reference. The Temperance Association at Amritsar is the most active Association in this Province. It has started several lines of work. It has a paid preacher who visits different stations and gives lectures on the evils of drink. It was the first in this country to make use of the stage for exposing the evils of intemperance. It has composed and put on the stage several Temperance plays which have, I believe, produced wholesome effect on the minds of our young men. It has published and distributed, free of charge, thousands of copies of Temperance tracts. This is the only Temperance Association in India which was represented at the World's Temperance Congress lately held in London, and it is a matter of pride to us that its representative was no other than Diwan Narindra Nath, M.A., the worthy President of this Conference at its first sitting in this city. This Association has done a vast amount of good work in the Temperance cause, and I hope that its example will be largely followed by similar societies in other parts of the Province. One suggestion only I would like to make to the Temperance workers, not only in the Punjab but also in other parts of the country. I think much is being done to put the educated classes on their guard against the temptations and evils of strong drink. But, I fear, little or nothing has been attempted to reform the lower classes of our population which are so much addicted to this vice.

The Punjab Purity Association is the other Society about which I should like to say a few words. It combines philanthropic and charitable work with the advocacy of the cause of Temperance and Purity. It maintains a charitable dispensary, which is attended by about a hundred patients every day. In the days of trouble which we have just passed, it has been supporting a number of widows with funds specially collected for the purpose. It rendered conspicuous service to the poor homeless Bikaneris who sought refuge in this Province during the last famine. An important institution organized by the Association is the Pawitra Holi, an annual gathering which is held with the object of purging the Holi festival of its obscenity and impurity.

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without referring briefly to a subject in which I have taken a deep and personal interest; I mean the re-marriage of child widows. I can assure you that it was not without much earnest thought and inquiry that I took the somewhat bold step, about five years ago, of giving my widowed daughter in marriage to a young gentlemen of my own caste. I ascertained the views of the most learned Pandits of Benares, Allahabad and other places, and I need hardly say that all the sacred authorities that were consulted—Manu, Parasara, Vashishta, Yajnavalkya and others—sanctioned the re-marriage of child widows. I was further supported in my action by the fact that such an exalted personage as Maharaja Ram Chandra brought about the re-marriage of two widows, *viz.*, Tara and Mandodari.

Thus you will see that the Shastras are in favour of this reform, and the enlightened sentiment of the Hindu community supports it. In this connection I have very great pleasure to announce that since the re-marriage of my daughter, 50 other similar widows have been married in accordance with the Shastras, some of them belonging to families of such high positions as those of Rai Bahadur Sardar Gopal Singh of Gurjanwala, Lala Rattan Chand Beri of Lahore, and Lala Kishan Chand of Dera Ismail Khan.

The question is often asked what has the Conference done during the past fourteen years of its existence. Year after year, it has assembled in some centre of education and enlightenment, has passed resolutions and dispersed. It is said that the resolutions are not binding upon anybody, not even upon those who support them. Ladies and gentlemen, it is true that there has been wanting that living connection between the central organization and the various Reform Associations in the country, and that a great deal still remains to be done to make such a connection vital and binding. Yet, this is but a partial view of the question. The work of the Conference lies in other and not less important directions. The Social Conference is the only institution in India which brings to a focus the enlightened opinion and the aspirations of our educated countrymen on

social matters. It is difficult to over-estimate the silent influence that it exerts in educating public opinion. Every year the Social Conference issues and distributes broadcast a large mass of literature on social reform questions. The reports of the Conference are reviewed by the Press of the country, both English and Vernacular, and the resolutions adopted at these annual gatherings are read by thousands and tens of thousands of intelligent people, over the length and breadth of India.

Besides, year by year, the constitution of the Conference is becoming more perfect and the area of its sympathy more extended. Round its flag are gathered together all the devoted workers in the cause of social reform, and their voices cannot but be cheering to all those who labour in the same field.

And yet it is but the small beginning of a movement which is destined to exert a mighty influence upon the future social structure of the great nation which is slowly evolving itself in this ancient land. I believe it is a movement with a great future before it. Hitherto it has confined itself to a review of the principal achievements of the year in matters of social reform and the adoption of resolutions indicating the lines on which the reform work should in future be carried on. I think it is time that the movement take a more practical turn. A great deal yet remains to be done, in disseminating social reform literature, in preaching reform ideas to the masses, in carrying the gospel of reform to every nook and corner of this vast land. For this we will require five or six powerful provincial associations working in concert with and under the guidance of the central organization. I am sure there are devoted men enough in each province for carrying on the movement with steady zeal throughout the year.

I am glad to learn that the local Committee of the Conference has resolved to introduce the system of taking pledges for carrying out in actual practice some of the ideas which we have been preaching for so many years. I hope a sufficiently large number of persons will come forward to take these pledges and thus show, by their example, that they are really in earnest about the work which they have been so loudly advocating.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must always bear in mind that all good things are hard to achieve. In a large national many people must be prepared to go through the difficulties and trials which have always beset the path of pioneers. To this great and sacred work of being pioneers, the Social Conference calls upon you. The difficulties are both great and numerous, but the interests of an entire nation depend upon your decision and action.

Providence has been pleased to send us in this century many heroic men who have tried their utmost to raise the social and moral condition of our countrymen. A country which has produced such illustrious reformers as Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshub Chandra Sen, and Dayananda Saraswati need not despair of its future. Standing, as we do, on the threshold of the twentieth century, let us carry on their work with faith and devotion, let us nourish with all our care the tree which they have lovingly planted. And may the new century, which soon dawns upon us, bring the light of true life with it. May the old era of injustice and social tyranny and unbrotherliness pass away and the new era of peace, progress and love begin in our midst!