

WAKE UP, INDIA

A PLEA FOR SOCIAL REFORM

BY

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THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

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Adyar, Madras, India

To
THE MOTHERLAND

FOREWORD

THESE lectures were delivered in Madras in October and November, 1913, to mark the beginning of an earnest concerted movement for the uplifting of India. Religious reform has been brought about, very largely by the efforts of the Theosophical Society and various religious bodies. Much has been done for educational reform. The Indian National Congress and its adherents have laboured splendidly for political reform. A comparatively small body, composed partly of Freethinkers and partly of Theosophists, have worked with much self-sacrifice in the field of social reform.

These lectures are intended especially to help the last, whose work is the hardest and the most thankless of all. The details of a new organisation for social reform will be found at the end of this volume, and it is intended to supplement, not to supplant, the societies already in the field. In the Order of Service of the T. S. there are several Indian Leagues which have been toiling for years for one or other of the reforms dealt with in these lectures, and much quiet and useful work has been done by them. The present movement is but an enlarged continuation of that work, and is intended to make it more public and more effective.

May the Guardian of India bless this effort inspired by Him.

ANNIE BESANT

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FOREIGN TRAVEL

Why Indians should go Abroad

AT the first meeting, on October 10th, the Chair was taken by the Hon. Sir S. Subramania Aiyer, K. C. I. E., LL. D., late Acting Chief Justice of the High Court, Madras, who placed before the meeting the following paper, parts only of which were read at the time. The views of so eminent a man are too valuable to be lost, and we print the whole paper here.

The Chairman said :

The learned lecturer requires no introduction on my part this afternoon. I need hardly say, that the course of lectures, which she has undertaken to deliver this season, is one more proof of her deep interest in the well-being of the people of this country, which has become her own by adoption. The lectures themselves will deal with questions of vital importance to the Community at large and, they, of course, will be discussed and presented with her well-known power and ability. I feel assured that her advice will receive that attention which it merits, and it is to be

hoped it will lead also to practical action by the community concerned.

According to custom, I should at this stage refrain from making further remarks and request the lecturer to address you. But, for reasons with which I need not detain you, I shall, in compliance with the wishes of the lecturer herself, add what I have to say now, instead of at the conclusion. Considering that the subject to be discussed to-day is one which has been long before the public, and the pros and cons with reference to it are fairly well-known, it is obvious that no disadvantage would attend the course I am adopting.

The nature of the topic, coupled with the fact that the discourse thereon is to be by a lady eminent for learning and eloquence, recalls to my mind one of the aphorisms composed centuries ago for school children by the poetess Auvai, whose fame as a moralist and teacher is undying in the Tamil country. The aphorism, rendered into English, would run: "Even by voyages over the wavy ocean gather wealth." No doubt, this teacher was a Dravidian, but it is by no means to be taken that between her view on the point and that of the Ārya Dharma in relation to it there is any difference. For, as you all know, the special vocation of the Vaishya is commerce, and commerce with sea-voyages prohibited would, to put it mildly, be devoid of good sense as it would greatly hamper the due exercise of the said vocation of the Vaishya.

The Vaishya being a Dvija and as such entitled to Upa-
 nayana and the other Vaidik Sacraments, to use the Gā-
 yatrī and to study the Veda, it is impossible for any one
 reasonably to contend that sea-voyage was prohibited
 with reference to any of the other classes of Dvijas
 even, if they should find it necessary to undertake it.
 To hold otherwise would be as untenable as to say that
 a Vaishya ought not to take to arms or a Kṣhatṭriya to
 study. To suppose that it was intended to tie down each
 class to the specific course of life, which its members,
 according to mere theory, were generally to follow,
 would be entirely to miss the spirit of Indo-Āryan
 institutions, and utterly to ignore the state of things
 that existed in actual practice in Society in all times,
 as shown by every branch of Samskr̥t Literature,
 as well as by other sources of evidence, equally, if
 not more, trustworthy. How then, it may be asked,
 did the discountenancing of sea-voyage with reference
 to Brāhmaṇas come into favour. Its origin is not
 difficult to discover.

Now, as you know, in bygone times Brāhmaṇas,
 generally speaking, devoted themselves almost ex-
 clusively to a life of study. The full course of study
 prescribed involved many years of labour, and they
 who thus applied themselves to such student career,
 preferred, and had to prefer, a life free from the cares
 and anxieties incident to the carrying on of business,
 and acquisition of wealth. Moreover, the conditions
 of Society, in those early times, went far to facilitate

the growth of such a student-body, which had not to work for its bread otherwise than by imparting instruction and taking part in public religious sacrifices and private religious ceremonials. No doubt, this kind of life involved non-possession of any considerable amount of riches on the part of those who devoted themselves to it. But they were not exposed to want, inasmuch as provision for their maintenance was always made by the rulers of the country and the sections of the community that were able to make it. The innumerable land grants to Brāhmaṇa families made by Rājās and others, as testified to by countless inscriptions and copper-plates still extant, prove this, if proof were required. Though, in some rare instances, eminence in learning was rewarded with unbounded liberality, as in the case of the founder of the present Rāj of Durbhanga, yet, Brāhmaṇas as a class in former times had, as I have said, to be satisfied with little property, so long as they preferred a life of study and the ease and freedom from worry which it carried with it. In fact, among them desirelessness for riches constituted one of the highest characteristics of a learned and wise man. This appears, among other things, from what fell from Sir Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar when, as Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University, he, on one occasion, advised the graduates to devote themselves to learning for its own sake. In commending to their attention this advice, (which, I need hardly

say, could not have been more aptly and forcibly supported than by the speaker's own splendid example) the Vice-Chancellor took occasion to explain how the Samskr̥t term *Shiṣhta* came to connote "the learned, the wise". That explanation, speaking from memory, was that the connotation had its origin in the circumstance that all that the self-denying men of learning of that time possessed by way of property was but a potful of grain. Now, there may be a question as to whether, as Lord Rosebury thinks, there is a necessary relation between want, on the one hand, and on the other, the unfolding and manifestation of genius and talent in the world of letters; but, there can be no doubt, when poverty and contentedness are found in association with high thinking and noble living, that such a rare combination wins for those in whom it exists, universal respect, nay, reverence. No wonder, therefore, that the exemplary lives of those men, which suggested the new meaning of the term alluded to above, exercised so profound an influence on the succeeding generations for centuries as to make complete devotion to a literary life most attractive to them. However beneficial such devotion may have been in the past, it is impossible to doubt that, as time went on, it resulted in rendering the members of that community practically unfit for other than easy-going, intellectual and sedentary pursuits. • Exertion, even by way of travel on land, except for pilgrimages,

became distasteful to them. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that, apart from the usual inconveniences which all persons must experience during prolonged stay on board ship, those conditions which unavoidably precluded, during such stay, the due observance of the rites and ceremonies that had become to Brāhmaṇas inseparable from their daily life and of the restrictions as to the preparation of food, etc., they had imposed upon themselves, operated as peculiar obstacles in their case. And they thus contributed to sea-voyages being viewed in regard to this class as involving a serious violation of caste rules and customs. But, as all of us must admit, it has now become absolutely necessary that these rules and customs should be greatly relaxed. Hence, of course, the undeniable fact that they are at the present day more often honoured in the breach than in the observance by vast numbers alike among the young and the old who are, by their very circumstances, compelled so to act. Nor is such non-observance rightly to be condemned. For, "Time is the greatest Innovator" as Bacon has said. And I dare say even students know that long before the days of Bacon, the Jain grammarian, Pavaṇandī, in this part of India itself, had in his classical treatise given expression to the same thought in the laconic words which may be rendered thus: "To drop the old and to betake to the new, no dereliction; because of time." May I add that the sooner we realise that

the relaxations I am advocating are inevitable, the better for us. To my mind, there is no greater source of unhappiness than to shut one's eyes to the inexorable truth, that changelessness is impossible in human affairs, as in everything else.

Be this as it may, and apart from the *a priori* view already suggested by me on the point, the question whether there is any real direct authority in the Shāstra prohibiting sea-voyage to Brāhmaṇas has, I believe, been examined by competent persons more than once and a negative conclusion arrived at. The latest instance within my knowledge is the decision come to at the Pariṣhaḍ held in the Tanjore District not long ago, and the adjudication then was that those who had travelled to Burma and returned after considerable stay there had been guilty of nothing that would justify expulsion from caste or other penalty. The opinion of the President on the occasion, which was altogether unaffected by any leaning ascribable to English education, contains a clear statement of reasons which should prove convincing to unbiassed minds. It thus seems to me that it is high time that obstacles to sea-voyage on the part of the community should absolutely cease, and that we should adjust ourselves to modern conditions, which imperatively demand a complete change of attitude and procedure on our part in the matter. For, let us remember, the practice of grants for the maintenance of the literary class came to an end with the advent of

the British rule. I believe not even a foot of land has ever since been assigned by our present Government to any one anywhere in India for such a purpose. It is scarcely necessary to say that a change of policy in the matter is neither desirable nor likely. And the fact that the pension announced after the Coronation Durbar to a Mahāmahopādhyāya is the by no means excessive sum of Rs. 8-5-4 *per mensem* must be proof positive to one who is imaginative enough to be sceptical on the point. Again, the employment of Brāhmaṇas in the public service on a scale which once existed generally is neither just nor possible. It is well-known that vigilance is exercised towards preventing that class getting more than its share of patronage at the hands of the authorities. And there is also a belief that confidential circulars have occasionally gone forth from the Secretariat in relation to this delicate matter. Whether there is good foundation for this belief I do not know. But it is an open secret that the Provincial Civil Service examination was abolished after many years' experience on the sole ground that the successful competitor with one single exception was always a Brāhmaṇa. That such abolition was a mistake is certain. For, undoubtedly, the only effect of it was to shut out the ablest of our highly educated men from entering the Service, even at the rate of one per year, by that door which, taking things as they are, is the least open to objection, and bringing to the Service the

strength and efficiency which their predecessors did. This should be clear to those also who would venture to question the above statement, if they would but think for a moment of the very successful careers of some of those who were among the earliest to come in by this now much disliked door of open competition ; as, for example, the present Dewān of Travancore, the permanent Collector of Nellore, the gentleman acting for him there, and the present Revenue Officer to the Corporation. My object, however, in alluding to this question is not to discuss the policy of the authorities in the matter, but only to show how strong the feeling is against even the semblance of the predominance of the Brāhmaṇa element in the higher ranks of the public Service in a quarter which should be the last to proscribe capacity on the mere ground of caste. No reflecting man can therefore fail to see that our interest lies in sending out our young men to foreign countries for the education and training so essential to them and to the country at large. Not only the few who wish to compete for the higher appointments in the various branches of the Service, but also large number of others who wish to obtain training as experts in industries, must go out of India for many many years to come. Without such training, thousands of young men in the future will have no useful careers to follow, or proper opportunity to promote the industrial advance of their Motherland. Considerations even more cogent than those I

have urged, must occur to all of you. For example, suppose the present Indian Member of Council, after his term expires here, is offered a seat in the Council of the Secretary of State or in the Judicial Committee, that he accepts the offer and returns after rendering distinguished service there, I ask whether, on his landing on our shores, we are to meet him with complimentary addresses on one side and social ostracism on the other? Surely, stupidity and injustice can go no further. I must now, however, stop, as time forbids my claiming your attention longer. I would only add that a silent change *is* taking place in the attitude of the class concerned, and it rests to some extent with the young men who go out to Europe, America or Japan for education and training, to facilitate the attainment of the end in view by abstaining from contracting habits not only undesirable in themselves, but also repugnant to their families and their people generally. For the contracting of such habits must necessarily minimise their influence and circumscribe their usefulness as members of the community. The restraint suggested undoubtedly is their obvious duty in the matter. And I earnestly hope that it will not be overlooked by them.

Mrs. Besant said :

FRIENDS :

Let me say, in opening this course of lectures, that I hope during its delivery to lay before you some of

the burning questions which are moving Indian society to-day. There are some questions, it is true, with which only Hindūs by birth as well as by faith should deal, questions of the purification of your priesthood, questions of the improvement of places of pilgrimage, questions relating to alterations in domestic or in temple ceremonies; those can only be dealt with by the people who by birth, heredity, and training have a right to deal with that which, to them, is supremely sacred, things with which a stranger's touch can scarce come into contact without pain perhaps to some cherished feelings. But there are other questions affecting the status of India before the world at large, questions which are concerned with her place in the great self-governing Empire of the future, questions which concern her prosperity, her rising in the scale of nations, the gradual growth of self-government and the grievances from which her people suffer—those are questions which may well be dealt with by one who, like myself, has given twenty years of earthly life to the Indian Nation, and who brings not only an Indian heart but western knowledge to deal with the problems which arise because of clashing civilisations. And so, I am going to try to plunge into the question of Social Reform, which, as you know, is by no means new to me; for in our Central Hindū College in Benares we have one rule—which I would have you all follow wherever you have influence in Schools where boys are trained—we

forbid admission there to any married boy ; we take a pledge from every parent and guardian that he will not marry his son while still he is within the age of pupilage in the School. And if that were done by all of you who have influence, the curse of early marriage would pass away from India and no longer undermine the health of her sons.

Now, in the subjects with which I am going to deal, there is no order in their presentment. In fact, if I were to be quite honest with you, I should say that I suited my Chairmen's convenience with regard to the order of presentation. I could not have any one else in the chair for the first lecture except Sir Subramania Aiyar, and he thought he preferred Foreign Travel. So Foreign Travel comes first. With regard to the other subjects, they were also arranged in order with reference to the engagements and duties of those who are good enough to take the chair for me on those occasions. So please do not look for any logical succession of subjects, because you will not find it. Take them as they come ; think over them, as I hope you will, when you go away ; and, above all, remember that to cheer in a hall reforms which outside the hall you are not brave enough to carry out is not the way in which India will rise to her place among the nations ; for never by a nation of those who are not brave and heroic can the high peak of national glory be ascended, nor the power of India in the whole world be made known.

Foreign Travel then is our subject to-night. With regard to this and also with regard to all these lectures, there is one line of policy that I propose to follow. I do not know whether all of you will approve of it; but, after all, friends, that does not very much matter, for it is better that we should not all think exactly alike—otherwise the world would never go on. I am going to take the line with which you are familiar, of trying rather to persuade than to denounce, of trying to link on the present proposals to the history of the past in India; because I hold that the greatness of a nation and its sequential growth can only be reached when one generation is linked to another, and when slowly and gradually out of the growth of one time the growth of another succeeds. If you plant a bulb in the ground, it is within that bulb that the next season's bulb will be formed, growing out of sight and underneath the surface of the ground; but if you take up the bulb and throw the old bulb away, there will be no new bulb in the coming season and no fresh flower to manifest the beauty of the plant. And so I am going to try to show you, if I may, that you were much more liberal in the past than you are to-day; that you are bound in fetters made by later generations and not by the wisest of the ancient Seers; that it is your more modern Shāstras, it is your more modern legislators—shall I call them?—who have woven round your limbs many of the cords and chains which prevent the progress of India to-day. There

are many things which are now said to be unorthodox and wrong, which were orthodox ten thousand years ago, although they be heresy to-day ; and it is as well, if you want to win some of the elders to you, not to throw all the past aside, but rather to build upon its strong foundation the edifice of your future growth. For you cannot do without the old men, any more than they can do without you ; yours the duty of progress, theirs the duty of counsel ; and while I always claim for the young that every generation must solve its own problems in its own way, still it is well in a task so difficult as this if the more liberal of the elders can be induced to walk along with you, as they perhaps may do if you succeed in showing them that you are not merely putting forward western ideals, but are only wiping off the dust of ages which has settled on ancient thought. And so I shall begin by urging upon you that foreign travel in the past was a commonplace of Indian life, that you are not, as you may proudly think, striking out a new line when you start off for a western country and think yourself splendidly heroic because you cross the "black water". Your forefathers did it long before you. It is only in that unfortunate interregnum in Indian life, corresponding, to some extent, with the later Middle Ages of Europe, with the invading times of the Christian Era, it is only during that darker time that you have lost your old liberty and have given up that which many of your Shāstras justify.

Now, what is the authority of the Shāstras? Hindūs, save very few, will admit that in the Vedas the highest authority resides. That perhaps is the only point on which all Hindūs of every sect are thoroughly united with regard to authority. Then you come to a number of Purānas and histories, and so on to a number of later Smṛtis which have such weight in keeping up orthodoxy to-day. On that I would suggest to you two lines of thought; first, that every Smṛti, I should even go so far as to say, every Shruṭi, must pass through the fire of thought and criticism in India as similar books have passed through the fire of criticism in the West. If anybody says to one of you: "The Bible says so and so," your answer at once is: "What about historical criticism? what about the higher criticism? Are you sure that what you say is authentic, and that there are not many interpolations to be found therein, that many errors may not have crept in?" Why should any particular set of books be kept sacred while all the other Scriptures of the world have to justify themselves in the face of scholarship, in the face of knowledge? Real Scriptures do not suffer by it essentially; only the dross is burnt away and the pure gold remains. And I, who reverence the Veda, I would throw it into the furnace of criticism without any fear or doubt, knowing that the fire can only burn the rubbish and that the gold will shine out the purer after that fire is put out. And I say, before you bow your heads to a

Smṛti, find out about its date, find out about its author, find out why it claims authority. For times change; one age succeeds another and every Smṛti is written for a certain age. None of them would have been useful before its time, nor is useful after it. Of one thing you may be absolutely sure: that the will of Īshvara for His world is evolution; for it to grow generation after generation, to climb higher and higher up the mountain of knowledge and of spirituality, to go forward on the road of progress and not always to be marking time. What is Right and what is Wrong? Right is to go with the will of Īshvara in evolution, and Wrong is to go against that will. That is a definition that you will find holds good always; the right thing for an age is that which conduces to progress, to the evolution of a higher humanity, to the shining out of the God within man, to the improvement of nature, ever climbing onwards towards a perfection infinite in its scope; wrong is that which would impose upon the present the fetters of the past, which would make of teaching a barrier across the road of progress instead of a milestone which shows how far the world has travelled when that particular form of teaching was given. Oh! trust the God within you, and do not let others force you to go against the dictates which are spoken out from that ever-unfolding God, who bids you lead your country upwards and onwards, not looking back always to the past but from the past

gaining courage for the future, and learning to avoid its errors while you take advantage of its wisdom.

Now what about the older books? It is quite clear that when the Vedas, or during the times when the Vedas were written, sea-voyage, which is necessary for foreign travel, was by no means forbidden. On the contrary, you find some descriptions of it which, after considerable experience in sea-voyage, I admit do not recommend themselves to me as clearly apparently as they did to the ancient Seer who wrote. I am quoting from the *Rgveda*, I, cxvi, 3; Vasishtha is the speaker, and any one of you who has travelled on the sea can decide whether you agree or not with his description. Vasishtha says: "When I and Varuna went on a ship into the middle of the ocean, we rolled and swayed from side to side on the surface of the waving waters, as if we were on a joyous swing." I cannot say that that has been my experience. I also have been often on the surface of the waving waters. I have travelled with a good many Indians to England, and I have not found that they lived up to the ancient Seer in the delight which is to be found by swinging about on the waves; for that swinging has a most melancholy result for the majority of us, and is certainly not looked back to with any joy. It is clear that Vasishtha did look upon it with great delight. He did it with great pleasure. He says also—*Rgveda*, VII, lxxxviii, 3—that he moved over the waters with

other vessels, and then he repeats his symbol, saying that they were joyously swinging in that beautiful swing, this side and that side, of the waves. So that, clearly at that time they were going on the sea. Many other quotations on this matter have been collected together, very usefully, by a learned Paṇḍit of Allahabad, Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. Gaṅgā Nāth Jhā, a liberal Paṇḍit—not a very common phenomenon perhaps—a Paṇḍit of profound learning; and he has used that learning to justify foreign travel for Hindūs by showing how it was carried on in the past. You will find it, if you want to look into it thoroughly, in the judgment in the Benares Caste case, where Bābu Govinda Dās Sāhab and his brother, Bābu Bhagavān Dās Sāhab, who had taken food with a cousin of theirs who had returned after travelling in England, were outcasted with their families, and where an attempt was made by the bringing of a libel suit to break this fetter on the limbs of the Agarwallas of Benares.¹ The suit was successful, but none the less all the people are still out of caste. In some ways, perhaps, in Northern India or in parts of it, at least in Benares, the orthodox power is very strong; so that the three men we have had back there after travelling abroad have actually been outcasted, and everybody who eats with them also suffers the same social penalty. It has been pointed out, however, truly

¹ *Foreign Travel and Hindū Shāstras.* (Leader Press, Allahabad, Re 1.)

enough, that a man may go and eat in some Pārsī or European hotel, if only nobody knows about it, and he will not be outcasted. Only if he is brave enough to go abroad, and make things easy for those who come after him, then on him will fall the rod of caste excommunication. He cannot marry his daughters; he cannot marry his sons; no ceremonies can go on in his house; all the ordinary samskāras of the Hindū are for him things of the past; and it needs courage to face such a condition, although the numbers of England-returned men are growing year by year. It is therefore that this battle must go on, usefully, to some extent at least, as one hopes, for the education of public opinion.

But it is not only from such ancient Seers that we may learn that people were able to travel for pleasure in the past. We find Manu who is, I suppose, at least orthodox, laying down the rule regarding the rates of interest to be paid on certain different kinds of goods (viii, 157), and it is said: "Whatever rate men fix, who are experts in sea-voyages and able to calculate the profit according to the place, the time and the objects (carried), that has legal force in such cases with respect to the payment." You may find, if you turn to Yāgñavalkya¹ that there are also directions given as to the fixing of interest, and so on, to be paid in connection with sea-voyage and goods brought by merchants to India and from India; and

¹ Vyavahāra Adhyāya, 38.

you find special Shrāddhas arranged in order to gain success in sea-voyages ; one very curious point that you have is, that if you have killed a Brāhmaṇa you can expiate the sin by going on a sea-voyage. I have a lurking fear that the man who went on such a sea-voyage was meant to drop over-board and not to come back again. There are various texts which rather suggest that it was a kind of polite suicide ; and as it was not thought quite right, supposing he was a Brāhmaṇa who killed another Brāhmaṇa, to bring him under the criminal law, they said : "Go on a sea-voyage," and let him drop out on the way. And there are some stories about people who did go out and did drop out on the way, and it seems to have been one of the legitimate forms of suicide. You know there are certain forms which are legitimate according to some of the Shāstras, and the going on a sea-voyage and not returning appears to have been one of the approved forms.

Then we find that customs differed very much. The northern people went on sea-voyages very much more than the southern people. And here again you can see the wisdom of these ancient Sages, for you find that in the northern country a Brāhmaṇa might sell wool, and as blankets were made of wool, a Brāhmaṇa of the North might sell blankets ; but a Brāhmaṇa of the South might not sell blankets. I might suggest that people were not so anxious to buy blankets in the South perhaps as in the North, the weather here

being exceedingly warm; and I mean by this to suggest to you the idea that many of these rules were very local, and were made to meet the difficulties of the time; for when you find that the selling of blankets in the South is forbidden while in the North it is allowed, it suggests a certain discrimination in the marking out of trades.¹ In the list of the things the northern Brāhmaṇas might do, I find, is “going in company to sea”; and looking a little more into that, you see it was the custom for a number of ships to go together, probably in order that they might help each other in the dangers of the sea. Over and over again you come across a passage of a company of merchants on a sea-voyage going abroad and taking their goods with them. So that if you want to argue it from the standpoint of the Shāstras—some of you may and some of you may not—there are plenty of authorities available to show you that, in the early days, sea-voyages, especially among the Vaishyas, were common, and that there were no restrictions put and no Prāyaschittam performed.

Looking at the question now from the standpoint of the historical past of India as well as from that of religious books, what do you find? You find right through the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* that there were plenty of goods exchanged between India

¹ “The selling of blankets, etc., may be practised by the Brāhmaṇas of northern India only.” M. M. Dr. Gaṅganāth Jhā, p. 39, *loc. cit.*

and foreign lands. You find tributes coming from foreign lands to Indian Kings. You find exports of Indian treasures going into foreign lands; and if I may make an excursion for a moment into the Jewish Bible, there is one rather curious point that turns up in the days of Solomon the King—and he lived a long time ago. There is the text in *I Kings*, x, 22, which says that some navies came once in three years from Tharshish, and they brought apes, and peacocks and ivory, as well as gold and silver. You may say that does not prove much. Wait a minute. There are no names in Hebrew for apes, no names in Hebrew for ivory—which is also translated as elephant tusks—no name in Hebrew for peacocks. Still you may say, we have not got very far. But when I go on to tell you that the names in the Hebrew Bible for apes and ivory and peacocks are names derived from the names used for these on the Malabar coast of India, you may realise that you have there a rather ingenious proof of the way in which India sent out her products, and the Jews took the same names for them because they had no names of their own. Being inquisitive I asked: “Where is Tharshish?” and that is a very difficult question to answer. Some people say it is any foreign land. Others say it is somewhere along the western side of the Mediterranean. It seems to me quite likely that it may have been so, for all sea-borne goods from India would have had to come round the Cape of Good Hope through the Pillars

of Hercules and so on to Palestine, and for ages all sea-borne goods from India were brought in ships along that road. There was no other way, and you remember quite well that when Columbus started out, his hope was to reach India by sailing westward instead of eastward as others had done before. Sailing westwards looking for India he discovered America, and you have also the name of some islands, the "West Indies". Why is the name of Indies given to islands so far away from here, but because it was thought that they were on the way to India, and to be outlying portions of India itself?

Let us go into this a little more closely, and we find from ordinary history that there is plenty of evidence of the enormous trade carried on by Indian sailors, carried in Indian ships, taken over to the West to the great enrichment of western countries.¹ What of

¹ Prof. Radhakumud Mukerji, in *Indian Shipping*, has spoken of India as "one of the foremost maritime countries. She had colonies in Pegu, in Cambodia, in Java, in Sumatra, in Borneo, and even in the countries of the further East as far as Japan. She had trading settlements in Southern China, in the Malayalam Peninsula, in Arabia, and in all the chief cities of Persia, and all over the East Coast of Africa. She cultivated trade relations not only with the countries of Asia, but also with the whole of the then known world, including the countries under the dominion of the Roman Empire, and both the East and the West became the theatre of Indian commercial activity, and gave scope to her naval energy and throbbing international life." (*Op. cit.*, p.4.) The learned author also reproduces from the sculptures of the Borobudur Temple a picture of a ship, manned by Indians, on their way to colonise Java. In 75 A.D. the Hindūs traversed the Bay of Bengal, crossed the Indian Ocean, reached Java, planted a colony, and spread over the country, establishing trade with India. There are records of India's relations with Rome, individual Indians, and even Indian embassies, going thither. "From the looms of

the enormous trade that you find with its mart at Venice? what of the great trade where goods were landed at Lisbon? what of such goods as spices sent to Holland from India? and what of the indigo trade which, in the 13th century, was one of the staple trades from India to Europe? You find records of that in the history of the plant, in the history of commerce and of trade.¹ Or take, if you will, such statements as you may read in ordinary books like the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, and you find the chief trade of India has always been with countries lying in the West; in the early times much traffic naturally passed by the land, great caravans passing through Persia, passing through Arabia into Egypt; then there was a route between the Caspian or the Black Sea and the Indus, and then "traffic by sea between the Persian Gulf and India and even China".² So that you find these routes open by sea as well as by land, in order that the commerce of India might spread over the West. I need not tell you what it would be if, in

Dacca went forth those wonderful tissues that adorned the noblest beauties of the Court of Augustus Cæsar, bearing in the Eternal City the same designation sixteen centuries ago as that by which cotton is still known in India." *Notes on India*, by Dr. Buist.

¹ See *Imperial Gazetteer*, iii, 69, 70 and 290.

² "An anonymous writer of the first century A. D. has described the trade in some detail, and from his work we learn that India exported spices, precious stones, and large quantities of muslin and other cotton goods. In return India took gold, silver, brass or copper, tin, lead, coral and cloth. The value of this trade must have been considerable, for Pliny complains that the annual drain of specie from Europe to India was never less than 55,000,000 sestertii (£458,000)." *Ibid*, iii, 257, 258.

modern India, you so arranged your handicrafts, or trades, or machine industries, that you might again bring back those days of wealth and prosperity when Indian exports were enormous in their volume, and when the lands of the West were competitors for the home-grown products here. I ask you to remember the time—it was either in the reign of Elizabeth or Charles II—I am not quite sure which—when Indian ships sailed up the Thames and were admired for the strength of their build and for the beauty of their lines.¹ I might remind you of the later record by an Englishman in the middle of the 18th century, the well-known writer Phillimore, who spoke of the wealth of India as so vast that “the droppings of her soil fed distant regions”. That was so, when these fetters were not round you; that was so, when you were free to move where you would on land and sea alike. And if you want India to be prosperous again, if you desire that her trade should grow, that her commerce should once more fill the ships that go over the ocean, then rise up and break these fetters that are round your limbs and be free men to go where you will, not serfs who are bound to the soil never to leave it.

¹ “The correct forms of ships—only elaborated within the past ten years by the science of Europe—have been familiar to India for ten centuries; and the vessels which carried peacocks to Ophir for King Solomon were probably the same as the fishing craft of the present day, which furnish the models the American and English clipper and yacht-builders are aspiring after.” *Notes on India*, by Dr. Buist (about 1854).

Let us look a little further. Let us consider how the refusing to take food with England-returned men is likely to work. Many have gone abroad. You talk of traders who are settled in South Africa, and who are suffering so terribly to-day. Does any one here mean to tell me that if these heroic Indians who are going to jail for the honour of the Motherland should come back to India, you would refuse to take food from them who are the honour and glory of your nation at the present time? You colonised in the past; the countries all round India show it. Go to Java; you will find in Java the stories of the *Mahābhārata* very little changed; you will find images of Shri Kṛṣṇa and many illustrations of His life, and of the lives of the Pāṇdavas and other well-known Indian heroes; clearly these were taken there by colonising Indians, in the days when India made Empires outside her own borders, because her men were strong and virile, and did not fear to cross the surrounding seas. In many parts of the world you find these traces of India, Indian customs, Indian thoughts, Indian ways of living, and they were all made by your forefathers who had no fear of ocean travel, but who went whithersoever they desired, whether for pleasure, or for profit, or for instruction.

And so again I find another very curious point in connection with this constant intercourse of India with other nations. You have in comparatively modern days the Devanāgarī script; I am not talking

of the language itself, but of the script in which it is written to-day. Those of you who have studied at all know that that script has undergone many changes. You know for instance that many of the edicts of the Emperor Ashoka were written in a script not identical with that of the modern Devanāgari, and as it is traced back and back, by means of inscriptions chiefly, you find it underwent very many changes, until you come up to two peculiar forms of the script, one called the Brahmī and the other called the Karoshti, and that these are, I would rather say at least the latter of them is, drawn from the Semitic type of writing. I say "rather one of them," for although western scholars derive the Brahmi also in that way, I would rather suggest to you that you should not take their sayings entirely without corroborations and investigations; for they always naturally like to trace everything to the West, as you naturally like to trace everything back to India; and so it is well that you should study before you decide. It is certainly interesting to find this strange likeness between the Semitic script and a very ancient form of Devanāgari, showing close communication between nation and nation; for no nation can in any way affect the writing of another, unless there has been close and long communication between the two.

You may take this very much further; the more you study, the more definitely will it appear that the restrictions on foreign travel are modern and not

ancient. Let me turn, however, from that historical side to the more practical side as it affects us to-day ; and let me remind you that under the changing conditions of the modern world it is not possible—even if it were right, which it is not—that one nation should be kept apart from another, walled round by a fence of division, cut off very largely from the rest of humanity by restrictions which weigh on no other people in the world. Never will there be friendship and amity among nations until they mingle freely with each other. The less a person knows of his neighbour the less he likes him. We have a story in England—there are villages in which a stranger is seldom seen ; the villagers live in their own little narrow circle ; they know their own mothers and fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers, cousins, uncles, and all the rest of them ; they look with profound suspicion on any stranger, even though he be an Englishman, who comes into the village—and so the story runs that two miners were standing in the village street, and one said to the other, seeing a stranger approaching : “ Bill, ’ ere ’ s a stranger, let ’ s ’ eave ’ arf a brick at him.” I do not think you find that spirit over here. You do not heave half a brick quite so readily, perhaps, as do the rougher people in the West. But when you do not know a man of another race, you are a little apt to look askance at him ; you do not understand his ways ; you prefer your own ways to his. Always there is some national

antipathy or suspicion growing out of different customs, different languages, different traditions, different ways of looking at the same thing. How are you to get rid of all that except by mingling with people of other nations, learning to see with their eyes, learning to hear with their ears, until at last, as you learn more and more of their ways of thinking and feeling, you find a whole world of new conceptions, a whole world of beauty, of splendour, of new thought, new imagination, opening out before your dazzled eyes through the eyes of nations other than your own. And it does not lessen your love for your own people; it does not make you indifferent to the ways of your own race; but it makes you friendly instead of hostile. War will never disappear, until the intermingled nations have learnt to know and therefore to love one another; for knowledge is always the way to affection, and the more we know a man, the less harshly we feel towards him, the more drawn we are by the Spirit in him that is ourselves.

And so it was always part of the training of a young man in England, in the higher social classes, after he had gone through the University, to make what was called "the grand tour," that was, to travel from one country to another, to spend a year, or two or three, going about from one country to another, thus becoming a citizen of the world as well as a citizen of his own land. And this was thought so important that it was not confined to

the wealthy and the highly placed. You will find among the guilds of artisans, especially perhaps in Germany, that, after the apprentice was through his time and was a craftsman, he was sent off for what was called his *wander-jahr*, his year of wandering about, to make acquaintance with other peoples, to see what they had to teach him, perhaps in his own craft, perhaps in general knowledge. So valuable was it ever thought by the wise that young men should know other countries than their own, and thus enlarge their sympathies and widen their understanding, that they might gradually become men who were able to deal with the men of other nations and so to take part in the guidance of the vessel of the State. I shall need at the close to return to that thought for a moment, in its special bearing on modern India.

But let us look at our student population, as they desire to go abroad and rightly so desire. First of all you have to remember that nothing you can do here in India opens to your young men the highest posts in their own country. It is sad that it should be so, but so it is. Take as brilliant a degree as you will in any Indian University, train yourself to the highest point of training at any one of the great cities in which Universities are founded, does that open up to you, the Indian student—covered perhaps with medals, having won many a scholarship, the pride of your family—does it open up to you the posts that are open to any one who can pass certain examinations

in England? Can your brilliant Calcutta man go into the Indian Civil Service? Can he pass into the Imperial Educational Service? Can he pass into the higher ranks of the Medical Service? Can he be a barrister—whatever the advantage that particular title may give him? I was told the other day that he is not always very successful, and that barristers sometimes have to hang round, taking very small fees; on the other hand, I also heard the other day from a young friend, that as soon as he got back to the Indian town from which he came, there were six murder cases in the neighbourhood, every one of which was given to him! So the views as to the advantages of the barrister are open to question. But there is nothing open to question in regard to the Indian Civil Service. There is no way into that except by the examination in England. There is no doubt about the Imperial Educational Service. There is no way open to that save a degree in an English University. There is no doubt about the Medical Service. A man cannot reach the highest grades there unless he has been trained in the medical methods of the West as carried on in England, Scotland or elsewhere. What use then to have the best educational equipment here, unless you change the rules which shut you out after you are educated, after you have succeeded? Surely this means a great deal to you young men. You find that, after succeeding here, you must go into the Provincial

Educational Service; but your pay there is much lower, your social position is also lower. You have to work much harder for much less money. You cannot go amongst the *Sāhab-Lōg*, as the phrase goes in the north, as you could do if you were in the Imperial Service. Now that is not just. There was once a promise that every post should be open alike to Indians and English. Why these barriers in the way of young Indians, ambitious and longing to succeed? Mr. Gokhale, whom you all honour, spoke the other day on the necessity of having a perfect educational equipment for India. Certainly that is necessary; but it will be very disappointing if, when you get it, you find that, unless you go to England, you will still be shut out from all the leading positions in your own country. There is where the sting comes; that unless you travel you cannot serve your own country in the higher posts, while if you do travel you may find yourselves outcasted on your return. It matters less and less every year, for the outcastes are forming a caste of their own; and as that caste contains the brightest brains and the bravest hearts, I do not think this difficulty will last very much longer.

But there is another point to consider as to the students.

Friends, the Indian students in England are by no means as happy, as much at ease, as much at home, as they ought to be. I have personally had much to

do with them, for they, if they are lonely and unhappy, very often come to me for advice, for counsel, for help; and we Theosophists have had for many years a hostel in London to which any Indian lad could go straight the moment he landed on a strange shore, and find there a home for a time—as much home as anything can be outside India. Efforts are being made, I know, for I have seen a good deal of them, on the part of Government, with an official advisor, Mr. Arnold, who is very good, who would do anything he could, and with somebody else whose name I forget, the agent at Oxford. I happened to be over in England two years ago to arrange about some boys going to Oxford. I went, as in duty bound, to Mr. Arnold. He was most sympathetic. No one could have been nicer and kinder. He gave me an introduction to the Oxford gentleman, whose name I forget. Down I went to Oxford with my three boys from India, and tried to find out when their names could be put down at Oxford. I was told: “Oh! it is too difficult; it is quite impossible. You cannot get in anywhere. Indians are not very popular just now. They are not very welcome. It is no good your trying, Mrs. Besant.” “All right,” I said, and went away. I went to see some of my own friends, one or two brilliant Oxford men, and said: “I have three boys here; I want them entered in Oxford. All these official people are no good for this. They are tied up by red

tape, and they cannot do this and cannot do that, and I want an introduction." I obtained an introduction, went down to Oxford again and saw an Oxford tutor, and had two boys' names entered. Miss Arundale, the aunt of George Arundale, the late Principal of the Central Hindū College, succeeded in entering the third boy, the son of Bābu Bhagavān Dās Sāhab, at Cambridge. But she had to go down herself to Cambridge, to call upon the men whom she knew in Cambridge, before she was able to have him entered in Trinity College. It can be done, but it is done by the exertion of private interest, and practically only a few are admitted into the older Universities.

Now I know some complaints are made : it is said that Indian students form a clique by themselves, that they do not mix freely with the English undergraduates but make a class apart. That may be true. I should say the fault lies with the English undergraduates who are in their own homes, in their own University, among their own people, knowing their surroundings, and these are Indian boys, strangers, foreigners, shy and at a loss. I do not want to put very much blame anywhere ; but I do want to say that our young Indian brethren there are having a hard time of it. Just to give you one illustration. A high official asked all the Indian students at Cambridge to a garden party. It was a nice and kindly thing to do, apparently. They all went joyously to the party. They had the Indian idea of hospitality,

that when you ask a man to your house you must make him happy. Instead of that they found that they were called together to be scolded. I knew, as I heard of it, the bitterness that was in the hearts of these Indian boys. I cannot tell you what the effect of that on the Indian boys was. I happened to be intimate with some of them, and one of them spoke out the bitterness that had come up in the young hearts of the lads, when they were asked to a friendly party and then told that they were "troublesome," "useless," "giving a great deal of unnecessary and tiresome annoyance" to the authorities. These things do more harm than you can realise by talking of it here. "Oh!" it is said, "some of these young men talk very wildly." That is true; they do. But why? because when they first breathe the air of England, the new wine of liberty there gets into their young heads, and drives them half wild for a while. But they do not talk a bit more wildly than English undergraduates do sometimes; only the one is treated as boyish extravagance and the other is talked about as seditious wickedness and a desire to rebel. What is the remedy? The remedy is not to restrict free speech in England, but to give them more liberty in their own country, and they will not be intoxicated with the freedom of England. "But," it is said, "there was one assassination." True. There have been many more over here. Sad, terrible, that so it should be; and yet we know that when in other

countries such terrible things have happened, it has always been said: "Look for the cause, and try to remove the cause." That was why Lord Minto, in the midst of the very worst time of unrest, would not hold his hand from the reforms that he was bringing; for he said the reforms would strike at the root of the mischief, and only criminals would remain afterwards when the legitimate aspirations of the people for the time were satisfied. There is the view of the Statesman; repression is the view of the panic-monger. We have in England such papers as the *London Times* with its enormous influence, which it uses to stir up cruel thoughts and harsh suggestions against the Indian people, which abuses the Indian Press, cries out for more measures of repression, and the rest. That is the fatal path which leads to ruin, whereas the other path, the path of Lord Minto, leads ultimately to satisfaction and to peace.

And so I say: Be patient with our Indian boys in England, if at first they talk foolishly; if they do not realise that they are talking, as I admit, a great deal of nonsense, as I am afraid all boys talk from time to time. Boyish vapourings ought not to be treated like deliberate statements of grown-up men; and while, of course, I hold to the full that where you have absolute crime it should be discovered and stopped, I also say that where you find legitimate grievances unredressed, that is the soil on which violence flourishes, and if the grievances

were all removed these crimes would find their end.

Let us then try, with regard to students in England, to make for them there more home-like surroundings than they have. Do not send them too young; do not send school-boys. They become denationalised. Mark India—India's hall-mark—on them before you send them abroad, and then they will come back enriched from the West and not impoverished as too often they do to-day. Then make in that western land such homes for them as we have made; follow out the plan we are following there, of getting well-to-do English people to invite these boys to their houses, to ask them down from Saturday to Monday, to treat them as friends, and give them the best that England has to give. For if these boys are thrown out, as they are, amongst fifth-rate and sixth-rate people in miserable lodgings, among vulgar and ill-educated folk, how can you expect them to come back polished gentlemen? They sometimes pick up the manners of the stable in England, and then come back and show them off here to their disgusted elders. That is not their fault. It is the fault of those elders who have cast out these young ones into a foreign land, careless of what happened to them there. Before you send young men over there explain to them the difference between the essential and the unessential in their religion. Explain to them, for instance, that if they go abroad they must

take water from anybody, and what does it matter, if the man is clean. It is better to take water from a clean Pariah than from a dirty Brāhmaṇa. I lay stress on the cleanness and the dirt. When you go abroad, you have to take water from anybody and anywhere. Do not make that a matter of serious concern and think it a sin if they do it. They ought not to touch strong drink. It is bad for them physically and morally, and one of the great troubles in England is that so many of them drink. The young men of the Inns of Court are apt to drink as a matter of habit, and that is utterly bad for them, far worse for them than for Englishmen; for English heredity strengthens the body against the poison of alcohol, whereas the pure Indian heredity leaves them to be poisoned at once. If you want to know how true that is, go and look at Rājputāna, where so many of the Chiefs took to the drinking of alcohol. You will find the gadis are occupied by boys or very young men, for the men have died away before middle age under the abominable curse of drink. Teach them to remain vegetarians. They can do it quite easily. Tell them they may mingle with everybody, that they may drink and eat with anybody of their own social rank. Pure heart, chastity, truth, nobility, these are the things that matter; and if you will tell them not to think that all morality vanishes because they have to take water from a Mlechchha, then you will have not much to guard them against. They are too apt to

think that all the rules of morality are gone when caste restrictions are broken, because they have never been taught to distinguish between the unessential and the essential. It is easy to teach them these things before they are sent to England.

I said I would return to the point of the value of foreign travel to India. What are you looking for in the future, friends? always to remain as you are, largely aliens in your own country? or are you thinking of the time to which the late reforms are pointing, that gradually you will rise step by step, that gradually you will exercise real authority in your own land, nay, that after a time there will not only be a Parliament of India in which Indians will sit, but an Imperial Council gathered round the person of the King in which self-governing India will have her representatives, as much as any other constituent part of this vast world-wide Empire. You know that my belief is that England and India are necessary the one to the other, and that the worst injury that any one can do to either is to tear these two lands apart. But union in the future will have to go on the lines of mutual respect, of liberty, of recognition of the place of Indians in India. Everything is going towards the formation of a Parliament in each land. They have them in every self-governing part of the Empire, and now suggestions are being made that England and Scotland and Ireland shall each have its own Parliament, or Parliaments, and that there

shall be one great Central Council, wherein the whole of the great Empire shall be represented. For many long years I have believed that this was coming, but I see now that it has unexpectedly come within the range of practical politics. Therefore my interest in it is very largely over! But I hold it up to you as an ideal to be kept before the eyes of educated India: that you will have the village Pañchayat; that you will have then the District Council, or the Municipal body; that you will have your Provincial bodies; that you will have your National body, representing India as a whole—not an unauthoritative Congress but a Parliament of India, where her people's will can be carried out in the future; then, crowning the whole, with all these Parliaments in all the many States that own our King-Emperor—whom may God long preserve—a Council of the wisest of every nation gathered round him, a Council of the noblest of every people, a Council marked out by the character, the honour, the learning of its members; and India shall send her sons, as Canada and Australia and New Zealand and South Africa shall send theirs—the great Council of the Empire, ruling the whole under George V as King.

That is what is coming; but to do that work you must go abroad, you must learn the ways of other nations, you must understand the traditions of other peoples. You will be dealing with international politics, and how are you going to deal with this, if

you are shut up in your own country and know nothing of the ways and manners and customs of the other peoples with whom you will have to deal? You will have to train the diplomats of the days to come. You will have to train the ambassadors of future times. You have, out of your own children, to train public men who can, in the presence of the King himself, say: "This is what India desires, for the welfare of the whole of the Empire." You cannot do that without foreign travel, and it is in view of that splendid future which lies before you, if you will grow up to it and train yourselves for the responsibility as well as for the glory, that I urge this matter. For that future is what lies behind the whole question of foreign travel, and I commend it to your careful thinking as one of the things which is to be made popular in India.

CHILD-MARRIAGE AND ITS RESULTS

THE meeting of October 17th was presided over by the Hon. Dewān Bahādur Justice T. Sadasiva Aiyar, Judge of the High Court, Madras ; the learned Judge said :

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

I have been a social Reformer from when I came to Madras to appear for my degree Examination. That was very long ago, when I was only seventeen years old. I at once fell under the influence of that great and genuinely religious man, the late Dewān Bahādur R. Raghunatha Rao. There were some intellectual giants in those days among Madrasīs, like Raghunatha Rao, Chentsal Rao of the Revenue Board, Ranganatha Sastri of the Small Cause Court, and others who took great interest in Social Reform.

The lecturer will very fully go into the question of the evils of child-marriage viewed from the physiological, educational, national, worldly and religious standpoints, and from the standpoint of rational morality also, and will very completely establish that its evils have become so far-reaching that it should be

ended at once by all patriotic Indians. I have no doubt of this from what I have known of her views from when she landed in Tuticorin about twenty years ago. I was among those who were privileged to hear her very first lecture in Tinnevelly, on her first landing on the sacred soil of India, and I was then the District Munsif of Srivaikuntam in the Tinnevelly District. I do not wish to spoil the effect of her splendid lecture by going over the same ground as chairman.

As one who believes in the Hindū Religion, I have always felt it my duty to base Social Reform on the Shāstras, and I will say a few words only on that aspect of the question. The Lord Govinda has said: "He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the Shāstras, followeth the promptings of desire, attaineth not to perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest goal. Therefore let the Shāstra be thy authority, in determining what ought to be done, or what ought not to be done. Knowing what hath been declared by the ordinances of the Shāstra, thou oughtest to work in this world." But what is the Shāstram? The Shāstras consist of the works and the saying of the Lord's Avatāras when He incarnated as a Teacher, and of the works of the R̥shis who knew super-physical and divine Truths, not by mere book-learning, but by the spiritual insight vouchsafed to them by the grace of God, and by the grace of their Gurus, who had themselves acquired that insight by the Diksha Upadēsham of their own Gurus in

unbroken succession. When the Lord gave out the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, it became the *Gītā Shāstra* and the highest *Shāstra*. The previous *Shāstras*—the language of which had become antiquated and misunderstood, and which had become encrusted with forgeries and mutilated by omissions of important portions, either through the effect of time or by the machinations of priestcraft—lost much of their importance. Other *Shāstras* (the *sayings* of great Saints and Sages who had communion with God and who spoke in the vernaculars) have also been added from time to time to Indian Sacred Literature. Those are and ought to be the highest authorities on all religious, moral and social questions for Hindūs, and as these questions are intertwined inseparably with all human activities, every Hindū ought to follow the *Shāstras*. *Shāstram* is (according to its *root meaning*) something which trains and commands; which says: “Thou shalt,” and “Thou shalt not,” and hence individual conscience is also *Shāstram*.

Physical truths are founded on superphysical, and therefore even our actions in physical life ought to be based on rules laid down by those who had superphysical knowledge also along with physical knowledge. The rationalistic man, who knows only physical sciences, is very often an unsafe guide. Not that reason has no place in religious knowledge. On the other hand, the *Shāstras* say that it is only by using your reason, cultivated by the study of secular

knowledge contained in the Vedāṅgas, it is only by your use of that reasoning faculty in reverent but bold and critical questioning of the Shāstras, that the true meaning of the Vedas and the reason of the Vaidik precepts can be more and more clearly understood by you, till you become fit for the Dīkṣha Upadeśha which will make you see the superphysical truths face to face, and the lower physical truths without any glamour or error. Physical truths are reflections on a lower plane of superphysical truths. Physical laws, therefore, cannot really, or except temporarily, conflict with the higher superphysical laws, nor could superphysical laws contradict physical laws which are the offspring of the former.

As the *Bhagavad-Gītā* says :

All the Vedas are as useful to an enlightened Brāhmaṇa, as is a tank in a place covered all over with water.

When you feel doubts about the meaning of the Shāstras, couched in antiquated or apparently contradictory language, the *Taiṭṭirīya Upaniṣhaṭ* says :

Go to an assembly of godly men who are deeply versed in both secular and superphysical knowledge, who have no axes of their own to grind, and who are anxious to find out Truth and Righteousness, and whatever they lay down as the true meaning of the Shāstra, accept that meaning as Shāstra.

As I said, there is a stage when the outer Shāstraic works become no longer necessary for your guidance, because the light of the Shāstras has entered your heart, and you *cannot* thereafter see wrongly.

Scriptural instructions bring us to God. Scriptural injunctions and instructions are necessary till we reach the stage of seeing superphysical truths face to face. As the Christian Scripture says: "The Law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ;" but after Christ enters our heart, His light guides us more surely and certainly than the scriptural law.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I sincerely assure you that I have not become a R̥ṣhi yet, and in all probability many of my Hindū audience in the Hall have not become R̥ṣhis yet, and I may require to endure the pleasures, sorrows and mental exertions of several more human births before, by the Lord's grace, I can become a R̥ṣhi and see the Lord face to face. So I study the Shāṣṭras, and try to guide myself thereby.

On the question of early marriage the directions of the Shāṣṭras are as follows, according to the late Dewān Bahāḍur Raghunatha Rao, whose views are (in my opinion) fully supported by the authorities.

(a) Marriage is not at all compulsory either for males or females, and is entirely optional, provided that the senses are controlled;

(b) No male should marry before he completes his studies, which he should do only in his twenty-fourth year, except in the case of very exceptional super-human men;

(c) The father's or guardian's right of gift of a girl in marriage prevails only till the girl commences her

sixteenth year, and that right begins only after she attains the eighth year of her age ;

(d) Gift is *not* marriage, and the marriage itself is a sacramental contract which can be legally performed and completed between the bridegroom and bride only after the bride completes her fifteenth year. Gift is absolutely unnecessary and unmeaning after the bride completes her fifteenth year and attains majority according to the Hindū Law. It is, however, advisable for the bride to obtain the consent and blessings of the authors of her being when she enters into the marital relation. Sacramental marriage after the free choice by the bride who has completed her fifteenth year, and by the bridegroom not less than twenty-four years, of each other and with the consent and blessings of the parents of the bride (as in the case of the marriages of Sāviṭrī and Devahūṭi) is the best and most approved form. Marriage should take place after the puberty of the bride and should legally take place only then, though conditional gift by the father might take place before ;

(e) Till consummation, the bride and bridegroom do not become united in Goṭra, Piṇḍa and Sūṭaka, and hence, there is no real widowhood of the bride if the bridegroom happens to die before consummation, any more than if the bridegroom dies just after mere mental or oral gift of the bride by her father ;

(f) Re-marriage after real widowhood and real widowerhood is lawful, but is not a high form of marriage.

I believe that the views of the learned lecturer will not be inconsistent with these dictates of the Shāstras. Of course, through the separative nature of the intellect, it must happen that in a very few minor details, unimportant differences, probably more verbal than substantial, necessarily exist even between the views of myself and of Dewān Bahādur Raghunatha Rao on this social question. But I have studied the Shāstras a little and, as I said in the beginning, I have read and heard the views of the learned lecturer during the past twenty years. I believe her views to be substantially in accordance with the Shāstras. I would therefore recommend them to my Hindū Brothers and Sisters on the ground that, by following them, they would be obeying the Apta Vākyas of the Shāstras instead of the unmeaning grumblings of the Demon of dying custom, or the conclusions liable to error of those who merely argue on the basis of reason.

I call on Mrs. Besant to deliver her lecture.

Mrs. Besant said :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS :

My argument to-day will divide itself naturally into certain parts, which I will just name before beginning, so that you may follow step by step that which I desire to place before you. I am going to submit to you that in the early days of the Indian people, that period which is called the Vaidik Age, you have the highest ideal of Hindū marriage ; that then you have a period during which marriage was

very much degraded, owing to certain causes which we shall consider, the time during which some of the Smṛtis were written, Smṛtis which I shall submit are in contradiction to the highest teaching of the Vedas; that the ideal Hindū marriage to-day should be judged by the Marriage Ritual with its Vaidik mantras, and that any unprejudiced study of these proves to demonstration that they were intended to be spoken by a husband, by a wife, both of whom had attained a really marriageable age, and that they become absurd, if not blasphemous, when the bride is a mere child, intended to return to her father's house and utterly unfit to enter into the married condition. Then I shall pass on from that to urge upon you—I do not know that all of you will agree with me here—that where any supposed sacred writing comes into conflict with the law of God as written in Nature itself, then the writing must give way to the natural law, and the voice of God in Nature must be followed rather than the assumption of that voice in writings obviously subject to interpolations, to forgery, and to the other changes that all writings go through in the course of ages. I shall submit that it is absolutely necessary for the welfare of India as a nation that she shall break through the later custom of the marriage of the child, and go back to the more dignified, the more healthy, the better conditions of the elder times.

Those who think much of authority can rest without doubt on the most ancient Scriptures of the Hindūs.

Those who care less for it will be more moved by the arguments on the law of Nature and the future of the Indian people. For I shall submit to you that the future of India as a nation depends on the abolition of child-marriage amongst the people; that as long as that persists, there are certain inevitable consequences of lowered vitality, of the spread of nervous diseases, of premature old age, all of which you can see going on in the India of to-day, standing in the way of her taking her place among the physically stronger nations of the world. I shall submit to you that great as is the spirituality still of the Indian Nation, great as are the intellectual powers that you find among the leaders of her people, neither the spirituality nor the intellectuality can save India from ruin, if the bodies of India are permeated with disease, and if old age creeps upon her men and her women when they ought to be in the prime of their strength, in the zenith of their powers. It is nothing less than the life of India as a Nation for which I shall plead to you, and I shall try to put before you arguments in order that your minds may be convinced, and also to appeal to that emotion of duty and of patriotism without which India cannot have a future, without which, great as she is, she is doomed to tread the downward path.

Such, roughly, then is the outline of what I will have to say. You will see it goes over a great deal of ground, but none the less I think I can compress it

sufficiently to put before you arguments which will at least induce you to think. If I induce you to think I hold that my work as a lecturer is done; for a lecturer ought not to do the study for the hearer, much less to give out cut-and-dried opinions which the hearer is expected to adopt. The lecturer's work is to stimulate thought, rather than to do the thinking. The lecturer's work is to win the hearers to study, rather than to give out cut-and-dried opinions. And so I shall take my favourite position as a lecturer, of acting as a signpost to show you the road along which your own feet must carry you, to induce you to think; for if you think, the cause for which I plead is won.

Now to my own mind, as to the mind probably of many of you, there is nowhere in the whole world, nowhere in any religion, a nobler, a more beautiful, a more perfect ideal of marriage than you can find in the early writings of the Hindū people. Nowhere, even in our modern day, will you find wives more absolutely devoted; nowhere will you find mothers inspired with a greater gift of self-sacrifice. It has been written that woman is the Goddess of the home; woman is the Light of the home; and even in modern India, deprived of education and untrained in wisdom, the knowledge that ought to be her birthright, India may place many of her women alongside the women of any other nation, and they will still bear the palm for grace, for beauty, for delicacy, for devotion

and for self-sacrifice. Even in our day to have such women as you have, and to handicap them as you do, to have brains so bright and to give them no chance of education, to have bodies so fair and to ruin them by imposing motherhood on them while still they ought to be at school—that is the shame of modern India which it is the duty of her sons to remove.

Now what was woman in the elder times? And remember that these times are the times of your greatest literature, the times from which the Upaniṣhats come down, the time when the great Darshanas were thought out, the times, later, of splendid historical writing, of epic poetry, and still later of drama. You must look back to that for the splendour of literary achievement as well as for the beauty of lofty spirituality. What was the position of women in those elder Indian days? They were the equals of men, trained and cultivated and educated to the highest point. In your modern days you say the woman must not hear, must not read, the Veda; but in those days women wrote some of the Vaidik hymns, and men to-day chant them, although the wife and the daughter must not hear what the mothers of the race have written. And it is not only that some hymns of the Veda were written by women, but you find in those elder days records of great women who had studied Brahma-Vidya just as men had studied. In those days two possibilities were open to the Hindū woman. She might enter, as the vast majority entered, the

household life as wife and mother; but she might also study Brahma-Vidya, and become the Brahma-vādinī, as much as the man could become the knower of Brahman. You have not forgotten such women as Gārgi, able to meet in argument Yājñavalkya, and to silence him by the depth of her learning, by her insight into the knowledge of Brahman. You have not forgotten Maitreyī who, after the household life was over, asked her husband for the knowledge of Brahman, and that knowledge was poured out to her. In those days the woman was not compelled to marry, but might—as the man did—if she would, follow that high path of knowledge which leads to liberation. It was in those days that the mantras were written which still you use in your marriage ritual, and in those days, as you may learn from history, Hindūs had not dropped to the later level, where the girl was shut out from knowledge, where the thread ceremony was not performed for her, where no sacrifices might be offered by her, where the Samskāras were kept away from her, and only marriage was admitted. I do not ask you to take what would now be called so revolutionary a view, although it be really an ancient one, on my own word. I turn to the writings of Hariṭa, to his *Dharma Shāstra*, and I find that he lays down: “All sacramental rites for women should be conducted with the Vaidik texts. Among women there is a twofold distinction; those who study the Veda and those who

marry at once"—the very distinction that I have been putting. "As to the students of the Veda, Upanayanam, service to the sacred fire, Vaidik study at home, eating of the food obtained by begging—these are enjoined and the cessation (of these vows) on attaining the age of puberty. In the case of the rest (these vows are) not essential, or cease immediately."¹ And so also you may find, confirming this same view, that it is written: "In a former age Upanayana was allowed to girls, and also the study of the Vedas and the utterance of the Gāyaṭrī. Let the father, or the father's brother, or her own brother, teach the girl and none else."² I am pleading then for the restoration to women in India of this inheritance which once was theirs. I am asking for them their ancient place, the place which was theirs in the days when India was greatest; for these two things are closely joined together, the education, the training, the development of the women and the greatness of the nation. When these women were the Indian mothers, Heroes and Ṛṣhis were born of them. From your modern women, how few Heroes, and no Ṛṣhis! Cause and effect—in your power to change.

And this higher status went on for a comparatively long time. You find women like Kunṭi—we say about

¹ *Loc. cit.* xxi, 20—23. Quoted in A. Mahādeva Shāstri's *Vedic Law of Marriage*, p. 28.

² Quoted from Yama, *ibid.* p. 38.

5000 years ago (3000 B. C.), but Orientalists in the West will put the date at a later period, some 1500 or 1000 years before Christ—and Kuntī was a mother of heroes. You remember how she said when she heard that the day of the battle was approaching: “This is the day for which a Kṣhaṭṭriya woman bears her sons. Go forth and fight.” It recalls the Japanese woman, held up as an example of patriotism so often, who when she was found weeping, her sons having perished in the war, and sympathy for their death was proffered, turned round and said: “I am not weeping because my sons are dead. I am weeping that I have no more sons to give to the service of the country.” Such a woman was Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇdavas, and she was not alone. You remember how Gāṇḍhārī, the mother on the other side, the mother of the obstinate Duryoḍhana, was brought down into the Council of the Kings and Chiefs, when they were discussing the question of peace and war, and how Gāṇḍhārī, as the mother of Duryoḍhana, was asked to plead to him in that open Court, surrounded by Kings and Chiefs and statesmen, discussing a great political question, and to try whether she, the woman, could avail by her argument and her pleading to check her son in the path of ruin into which he was rushing. Is it to the Indian mother that you would appeal to-day if one of your sons, headstrong and unwise, was rushing along the road to political ruin, or would you be obliged to say with shame:

“She knows nothing of these public questions. Woman has no business in politics or with the welfare of the country” ? You cannot appeal to her because you keep her ignorant, and the ignorant woman, however loving, has but little power in the councils of men.

We come, however, to another age from this age of the Vedas and the early stories, when the woman entered into marriage at a fitting age, able to realise that into which she was passing. Sometimes, as you know, among the Kṣhatriya women especially, there was the choosing of her own bridegroom at the Svayamvara.¹ But come to a later age, the age of the Smṛtis. I have very often quoted Manu, when I have been trying to win the orthodox. I quote Him now for the Brahmacharya of the boy student. I am not going to quote him for the women. I am quite sure that the great Vaivasvata Manu, the Lord, never laid down a number of the rules that you now find in the *Institutes of Manu*, that govern the marriage of children ; and my reason for regarding those as interpolations of a later age is the very sensible one, that, as you find in a Christian Scripture : “ A fountain cannot send forth at the same place both sweet water and bitter.” There are verses in Manu dealing with women so exquisite, that I cannot believe that the same writer spoke some of the words we find in *Manusmṛti*, which have such influence on the

¹ Damayantī, Draupadī, and many others will be recalled.

marriage of children to-day. I shall refer to them in a moment, but even worse than Manu are some of the Gr̥hya Sūtras where you find the age laid down; where, say in *Parāsharasmṛti*, you find certain definite laws laid down about the age of the marriageable girl. I am going to ask you to disregard those Smṛtis, though I know the rightly honoured Ragunatha Rao defended them by explaining them away into conformity with the Vaidik law. Although I have read both sides of the argument, I am not able to follow him in that; and when I find in some of these that the marriageable age is laid down at 8 for a girl, as it is in Parāshara, and when I find that Manu Himself—as it is said; I do not believe He ever said it—says that the man of 24, having kept Brahmacharya until his studentship is over, should marry a girl of 8, and that the student of 30 should marry a girl of 12; then I come up against those laws of Nature which to me are more sacred than any writing, however ancient, than any words, however they claim inspiration, and whether it be written or not—and I am obliged to confess it is so written in the Smṛtis—that a girl may be given in marriage at 8 and at the latest at 10, then I can only say of these Hindū books, as I have said of the books of other faiths, that God's law in Nature is higher than the written word of man, however it is claimed to be inspired, and that when it comes to a contest between the two then it is the law that cannot be

forged that should be followed—that law of Nature which is supremely and undeniably the law of God.

But I am glad to note that the law of Nature here goes hand-in-hand with the earlier writings, endorses the Vaidik teaching, is strengthened by an appeal to the mantras of the marriage ritual, to which now, for a moment, I turn. To you, probably, these mantras are so familiar that they may have largely lost their force. You can hardly read them as they are read by one who comes freshly to them; for I know how custom blunts, and how habit gradually wears away the sharp edges of a statement. I find, for instance, when I turn to these—I am quoting at the moment from A. Mahadeva Shāstri's *Vedic Law of Marriage*; the same mantras of course will be found anywhere. Some of them I am taking from Raghunatha Rao,¹ some of them from Mahadeva Shāstri. It matters not; the Samskr̥t is the same, only very slightly is the wording altered. I go to the first day of marriage. I listen to the bridegroom. I listen to the answer of the bride. And I find that one of the first things is where the bridegroom holds out his hand, and, taking the hand of the bride, he says to her: "I seize thy hand to have a fine progeny, that thou mayst live with me, thy lord, till thou shalt attain decay."² I find him then, in offering one of the marriage oblations, saying: "This maiden

¹ *The Aryan Marriage*. The references are taken from these two books.

² *Taitt. Eka.*, I, iii, 3.

about to pass away from her parents to the husband's home, has ended her vow of maidenhood."¹ I look a little further, and I find the bride is addressed: "Go to the house, that thou mayst be the lady of the house. As mistress (of the house) thou shalt direct the sacrificial rites."² I pause on that for a moment, to ask those who say that an unmarried girl may not perform sacrifices, how, they think, she has learned the details which will enable her to direct the sacrificial rites in the husband's house to which she is going? How is she not only to take part in, but to guide, the sacrifice after marriage if she comes to it untrained, uninstructed, taking up an entirely new duty? What is the meaning of another statement, "this maiden worshipped Agni," if she had never been allowed to offer sacrifice in the home of her girlhood? And if I turn to 'the seven steps,' those steps that I suppose most of you have taken with your bride round the marriage fire, if I turn to them, what do I find the husband saying as those steps that make the marriage bond are taken by bridegroom and by bride? The words are beautiful, addressed to a bride who understands them. What would they mean addressed to a child of 8 or 9 or 10? "Become thou now my partner as thou hast paced all the seven steps with me. Partners we have become, as we have together paced all the seven steps. Thy partnership

¹ *Taitt. Eka*, I, iv, 4.

² *Rgveda*, X, lxxxv, 26.

³ *Taitt. Eka*, I, v, 7.

have I gained. Apart from thee now, I cannot live. Apart from me, do thou not live. We shall live together; we shall will together; we each shall be an object of love to the other; we shall be a source of joy each unto the other; with mutual goodwill shall we live together, sharing alike all foods and powers combined. I join thy mind, thy actions, thy senses with mine Being what thou art, come thou now unto me, O sweet and pure, for the bringing forth of sons, wealth and progeny.”¹ How can those words sound addressed to a child of 8 who is going back to her father’s house, not to live with the husband as here he says: “I cannot live without thee; do not thou live without me.” These mantras were composed at a time when bridegroom and bride left the place of marriage together, and together entered into the home over which thereafter she was to rule as Queen. How do these words sound when they are said to a little girl of 8, and when you know the kind of life a child-bride has with the elder women, if she visits the husband’s house. “Be thou a loving Queen to the father-in-law, a loving Queen to the mother-in-law”—it is hardly the modern Indian position of the wife and the mother-in-law—“a loving Queen to the sisters-in-law, a loving Queen to the brothers-in-law.”² And then it is said, after she has been placed over the whole household, all others to

¹ *Taitt. Eka.*, I, iii, 14.

² *Rgveda*, X, lxxxv, 46.

be beneath her sway: "May thy joy increase here through offspring. Be thou ever awake here in this house for thy duty as householder. With this, thy husband, do thou join thy body, and as thou advancest in age thou shalt teach the sacrificial law."¹ You have repeated these mantras. You have addressed your child-wives in these inappropriate terms. Thus is the great sacrament of matrimony made a mockery of in the Hindūism where it has been holiest, where all that it connotes has made the old homes of India. These words of love, of welcome, of comradeship, the bridegroom and bride who cannot live apart, who go to their house with the household fire, ready to enter into the sacred life of man and wife, how piteous they sound, what a mockery of reality, when the child goes back again to the father's home, and the husband returns to the school, to the college, at whichever he chances to be at the time.

Now how did this change come about? I have been looking up the last Census, partly because I wanted to have the exact figures, partly also because I wanted to see what a Government document of this sort had to say on this question of early marriage, and I cannot pretend that I have gained very much illumination from the remarks that here are made. But the figures are invaluable. Those I will give you in a moment. The writer on the Civil Condition of the people speaks about early marriage, and he says:

¹ *Rgveda*, X, lxxxv, 27.

“To the statement that premature marriage is in vogue among Hindūs because the Shāstras enjoin it, no great attention need be paid.” And he does put forward one argument that is worth attending to, that as a rule it is rather the custom that makes the writing, than the writing that makes the custom. I think that there is something in that, although not quite so far as he pushes it. What I am more concerned with are the reasons that he gives for the prevalence of early marriage and the amount of support it gains from the Smṛtis. “Whatever may or may not be the present degeneration, there can be little doubt that the Āryan forbear of the present dāy Brahmin stood for a civilisation and morality infinitely higher than that of the Dravidian hordes, with which, even as a leader, he had to associate himself”—and that is a point that must not be forgotten, whether you are dealing with marriage, or whether you are dealing with the caste system. In the early days the Āryans were a small minority, and to keep their blood pure, to save themselves from being lost in the hordes of the aborigines, various lines of action were necessarily adopted. But then he goes on to say: “The premature marryings of the early Āryan we may then ascribe to two influences. First to his desire to safeguard the purity of his race and morality of his daughter, by securing for her a husband within her own community at the earliest possible moment; secondly, to an imitation, albeit one

unconscious and one much modified, of the promiscuous cohabitation which he saw about him." That I think is absolutely absurd. It cannot for one moment be pretended as one of the reasons for early marriage that the Āryans, among a people where marriage practically did not exist, imitated promiscuity. Conquest, yes, to preserve the child and give her a second protector if the father should be slain. And if you try to trace the coming of early marriage to its real source, after India became very largely a prey to foreign invasions, if you take the times of tumult and war that followed Kurukṣhetra, then I think you may find in that a very natural explanation of the earlier marriage, that the father, in a time of war and tumult, desired to gain for his daughter another protector, one to whom she would have a right to turn if the father's home were broken up or raided. There is a reasonable cause, a historical cause, which you may recognise, and one that does seem to a large extent to make early marriage at one time well-nigh a necessity.

But I would submit to you that one great reason of early marriage was the gradual lowering of the status of Hindū women, and also the gradual decrease of her education. As she lost her position of social and civic equality, as her education became more neglected and her faculties were not trained, inevitably she sank to a lower position, and was no longer looked upon as the equal of the man she

married. Then, inevitably also, the earlier marriage of the girl brought about the earlier marriage of the boy. Accepting Manu as laying down the rule for girls' marriage as from 8 to 12, inevitably the boys' age was lowered and the period of Brahmacharya was shortened. For, after all, a man of four-and-twenty cannot, as a rule, be expected to marry a girl of 8. She would be a plaything not a wife, a toy not a comrade. I do indeed know of pitiful cases, in which men long past middle age have married little children like this. But I look on them as one of the outrages that you find from time to time in every country, and not the natural spontaneous turning of the man to the woman, when both are young, which is the sanction of marriage and is for the welfare of the State. I submit then that the real causes behind early marriage are the lowering of the status of women, the lessening of women's education, and only thirdly the disorder and tumult coming from repeated foreign invasions, which made it well-nigh necessary to secure for the young girl some protection outside the paternal home. It is well to recognise historical causes, for then we can see what the remedies are to be. Let us, for a moment, pause on the melancholy figures which I take from this last Census Report dealing only with the Presidency of Madras. If I had to deal with that of Bengal my figures would be far more terrible, although they are in truth terrible enough here. I have picked them out here for

convenience (the lecturer took up a paper), but I have the book here, so that no possibility of challenge may arise. I find among Hindūs in the Madras Presidency, 673 widows below the age of 5; 31 of those have not yet attained one year of mortal life. I find between the ages of 5 and 10, 4,072 widows. I find between the ages of 10 and 15, 18,323 widows, making a total in this Presidency alone of 23,068 widows below the age of 15. When I look at all other religions I find that others also sin along this line, but none to the same extent, I grieve to say. In the whole Presidency, of all religions, there are 738 widows below the age of 5, 4,332 between 5 and 10, 19,377 between 10 and 15; so that out of the 24,447 widows—below 15—23,068 are Hindūs.¹ You love Hindūism; but this means the death of Hindūism wherever it is found. Go up north among the Punjabis and Sikhs. They do not marry their girls for the most part until they reach 16 and 17 years of age. With what result? That there are no virgin widows, the most pitiful class of Indians, that the men are strong, tall, vigorous. Can that be said, most of all, of Bengal, where child-marriage is at its worst, infant-marriage at its most terrible? Taking the Bengalis, as a rule, what do you find? Small men; brilliant in intellect, I grant; the brain is the last thing to go. But in body you can generally

¹ It will be noted that these are girl-children who are widowed and does not include child-wives. The proportion is much greater than is due to the numerical predominance of Hindūs.

pick out a Bengali, because he is so small. They have courage enough, but they are weak, physically weak, and India wants strong men for the work of the future.

Does it strike you how little grip the Indian has on life? how he dies, where another man would fight through? I am coming to that in a moment, but I want to ask you, if you will, to call up for an instant before your mind's eye these 24,000 child-widows in your own Presidency; widows when they ought to be at school; over 600 of these little girls under the age of five. You know what widowhood means. I do not exaggerate it as it is often exaggerated, in order to injure Hindūism, by those who know nothing of a Hindū home. I know many a home of my friends where a child-widow is to be found. She is not a drudge; she is not a slave; she is not miserable; she knows not her fate. The people around are kind; they are tender; they are loving; but if there is any festival, the child-widow must go into an inner room, and she must not with her presence bring ill-luck to the festival. Is there a marriage in the house? a thing that all the women enjoy so much. She must be sent away, that her ill-omened eyes may not fall on the bride; for she has been a bride, and she is now a little widow. Oh! think of these little ones, my brothers, some of them, perchance your own children; think of the life which is before them; think of the loneliness of the woman who never knows the touch

of a child, who never hears the baby lips syllable the word "mother," shut out from the wifehood and the motherhood which are the ideals of the Indian women, told she should lead an ascetic life, she who knows nothing of the world. Does it not move you, these babies condemned by wicked custom to perpetual virginity amongst you? You are husbands, you are fathers. These children draw their lives from you, and you have given them in marriage when they should be playing with their dolls, and you have brought down upon them the curse of widowhood, ere yet they were fit to mate. "Oh!" you say, "it is their karma"; cowardly excuse for thoughtlessness and indifference. What is karma? Karma is the result that grows out of causes in the past, and is modified by causes in the present. You see a child fall down. The child has fallen down in obedience to the law of gravitation. Does that prevent you from picking it up again? It ought to do so, according to your view of karma. After all what is there so sacred about karma that you may not interfere with it if you can. It is only a law of Nature. Every law of Nature is inviolable, but by knowledge we can master them, and turn them to our own purposes. My voice speaking in this Hall to-day is a kârmic cause; it may touch the heart of some father here who is thinking of giving his little child in marriage. It may work on that good man's heart as a kârmic cause, and he will say: "I will not

give this baby-girl in marriage. I will refuse to throw her into the possibility of a life of misery." Is it against karma? Not a bit of it; it is within karma—a new cause. You might as well think that you cannot walk upstairs because the law of gravitation tends to draw all things towards the centre of the earth. Karma can be conquered, as every one of you would know, if you read your own writings instead of talking nonsense about them. What did Bhīṣhma, the great master of dharma say? "Exertion is greater than destiny." For destiny is only made up of exertions in the past, and one exertion to-day may just weigh down one scale of balanced karmic causes, and alter the whole future karmic causes of the one who knows. Believe me, we are not helpless in the hands of Nature. We are only helpless so long as we are ignorant, and when we understand the laws of Nature, they become our slaves. If you determine to marry your children—the virgin-widows you have made—marry them, and then you will see that karma does not interfere with the proceeding. So much nonsense is talked about karma. If you broke your leg falling down-stairs you would not like me to say: "Oh, it is his karma. Leave him there." You would say: "What a brutal woman is she who talks to me of brotherhood." Exactly. If I understand karma, I know that what I *can* do righteously I *may* do; for a law of Nature is only a sequence of events, and if I can change it I have a

perfect right to change it. Why worship laws of Nature? Observe them, that you may avoid suffering and bring about happiness. Learn from them, but do not think that you are still slaves when knowledge has made you free, and do not take shelter under your own selfishness as an excuse for your indifference to the sufferings of these children. Do not say: "It is their karma and I cannot help it." Try to help it, and you will soon find that you can.¹

Turn from all that, and let us look now at the results of child-marriage. In the first place, it means a terrible death-rate for these immature mothers. No woman is fit physiologically to bear a child until the organs of motherhood have reached maturity, and they do not reach it, even in this country, until the girl is 16, that is, has entered her 17th year. There is no question about that. That is a question of fact, a fact in Nature. I do not say that she cannot bear a child. I know she can. But it is an outrage on Nature that she should do so. I had a letter the other day from a friend of mine. A girl relative of his had been married at 12. She became a mother next

¹ As said above, a law of Nature is inviolable. If then a law of Nature—"Premature motherhood produces a weakened progeny"—is known to you, and it brings suffering, you say: "I do not desire a weakened progeny, therefore I will avoid premature motherhood for my daughters." Karma is a law of Nature: "Effect follows cause." But Karma does not say: "You must marry your daughter prematurely." Her past may lead towards that, by making her your child, you, who are slave of a bad custom. But if you choose to refuse to follow the custom, you can do so. Nature's laws are not commands. They are statements of inviolable sequences.

year at 13. When childbirth was upon her, she lay for four days in agony with the unborn child, in an agony that none know save those who have gone through the gateway of motherhood. At last it became so intolerable to those who watched her, that they put her under chloroform. For ten hours she lay under chloroform; then the child was born dead, the mother died. A girl of 13 was sent through that agony. Oh! all of you know it as well as I. You must know it better than I know—the troubles, sufferings of these children, who are mothers at 13, 14 and 15. You know how many of them die; you know how many of the children born are weakly; you know how many of the children are still-born; and yet you go on marrying your girl-children. Nay, the mothers do it. That is the strangest thing. The mothers, who have gone through the agony, doom their girls to the same anguish; it is from custom; not from want of love but from want of thought—the pressure of an evil custom, of a bad tradition. Not easy to break, friends, I know it. I know that while there are few here who do not agree with me in theory, there are also few who will dare to face the social difficulty that comes by keeping a girl unmarried until she is physiologically fit to be married. It is a hard, cruel, bitter, struggle, but a man must go through it. Is it not better that you should suffer, than that your little girls should suffer? Is it not better that a few people should frown at

you, that a few women should refuse to meet your wife, rather than that the children who cling round your knees in their babyhood and call you father, should be doomed by you to an agony you think not of, because custom has blinded your eyes and made your hearts indifferent?

It may be that if you do not care for the girl-children, you may care for yourselves. Let me now appeal to the selfishness which is in most men, I am afraid. It is not the highest appeal. It is a wretched appeal to make, but it may be effective. Your boys go to School and to College, and a tremendous strain is put upon them by the system of education and the examinations through which they have to pass. If at the same time they are becoming fathers, you are putting on those boyish shoulders more than their physical health can stand. What is the result? the spread of nervous diseases through the whole of educated India. How many of your men of 30 are thoroughly healthy, healthy in their nervous system, healthy in their digestion, healthy in the circulation of the blood? How many of them are dyspeptic? Most of them. How many of them suffer from diabetes and other nervous diseases? You know it is the great curse of intellectual India at the present time. How many of them suffer from premature old age? Why, I was told the other day—I think it was an exaggeration—that after an Indian is 40 he cannot take in a new idea. It was going rather

too far, but there is some truth in the statement. When a man is 50 he is really getting on in life. When he is 60 he is quite old. He ought not to be old at 60. Sixty is the age physiologically at which the brain is at its best, its strongest, its most vigorous. But when you come to that age, you think of retiring and going to meditation, to seek liberation. Those men of 60 should be the men who are wanted, and should be useful from their experience. When I look round on all your associations, I see that they nearly all have old men at the head who should guide them well; but the associations go to sleep, because the old men lack vigour. When this course of lectures was proposed, I had to hunt all over Madras to find out the Madras Reform Association. At last, with great difficulty, I found it, and when I did, it had been asleep for four years, and I had to say to the Secretary: "The sleeping body will do for me. I will wake it up," and so we put the name on the cards. Now we want young men for their vigour and enthusiasm. You live too fast because of your early marriage. Old men ought to be advisers and councillors of the young, but they are too sleepy because they are really about 90 when they are only 60 in years. They are worn out; they have become quite old. Look at Gladstone; look at the great men of the western world; and you will find that they are at the strongest intellectually when you are turning aside from all public life. The great reason of that

is this early marriage, which is gradually, slowly but surely, undermining the health of the educated classes, in whom the hope of India must lie for all progress in the future. You have no business to get old in the way you do. Why, at 50 you are most of you older than I am—and I am 66—because you disregard the laws of Nature, because you are born of children instead of women, because you exhaust your strength when you ought to be keeping it in order that the body may grow vigorous and strong; but if you do not care for the women and children, care at least for yourselves and your country's future. Do not get fossilised, while still you ought to be in the prime of manhood.

You can only do what should be done by stopping the birth of children from children, and leaving motherhood till the woman has grown and has the right and the duty of child-bearing. But how to stop it? First, make up your minds and do not pretend you cannot. Then, wherever you have influence in a School, persuade the authorities of the School to refuse admission to the married boy. Why do not you do that? There are a great many missionary Schools here. They have done fine work in education. I find them in England complaining about child-marriage, and I find them in India welcoming married boys to their Schools. That is not straight. If they object to child-marriage, they should do their best to stop it. Why should Theosophists be the

only people in India to say that they will not have a married boy in School, and to take a pledge from every father that he will not marry his boy until he has left School? We have done it. Why can't you do it? We did it at the Central Hindū College. I am introducing it in all Schools under the Theosophical Educational Trust. Why should not the Christian Missionaries do it? They do not marry their own children so young; and why should they encourage Hindūs to do it in India, and blame them for it in England? Set your faces against it, as you can. Courage, yes; self-sacrifice, yes; without courage and self-sacrifice, my friends, no Indian Nation. The way is clear; you may do it wisely. The one thing we want to do now is to draw the people together who are willing to keep their girls unmarried until they have reached the age of 16 and are entering the 17th year, and then to let them know each other in the different parts of India, and let them arrange that their children shall marry when they have come to the rightful age of marriage. For that is your difficulty, I know, that you find that you cannot marry your daughter unless while she is a child. You can get over it by arranging with those who are like-minded, who will pledge themselves not to marry their girls before a certain age; and then inter-marriage might take place. Whether within your caste or not that is a different question, but, if you will, within the caste. That is what some people are doing. One of my

Benares friends found a husband for his girl in another city, against the custom of his caste, because he would otherwise have had to marry her as a child. A little common sense, a little co-operation, a little working together for a great end, and you can save your country from this curse of early marriage.

And I ask you not to go away from here, as so many will do whatever I say, and walk along in just the same road, meet your friend, perhaps, in the High Court to-morrow, and say: "I have a son of 16; you have a daughter of 10. Don't you think we might marry them?" That is what is killing India; talk, without action; words, without the courage to live up to them; and I hope that out of this meeting a few will be found, if only a few, who will take courage and work for India's good. One point I would ask you to think over is one I do not understand, but plenty of you are lawyers. It is said that some change must be made in the marriage laws before marriage is sure to be legal, if it be contracted after the age of 12, possibly after the age of 10. If that be so, you have Legislative Councils. Some of you are in them. Make in these Councils the proposal to change the law on this point—if it be the law. I mention it simply because I have seen it stated by a very good lawyer that this is the Hindū Law, and, if so, the sooner you change it the better. And you have the power to do it if you will; take your courage in both hands; make up your minds

that you will not doom your children to the misery of early motherhood and your grandsons to an enfeebled physical body. Think of your bodies, if you will not think of your minds, if you will not think of your country. Even from that motive, stop the early marriage. Oh ! if you are, as I believe you are, more responsive to the higher ideal than to the lower ideal ; if you care more for your country than you do for your own comfort ; if you care for the India of the future, the India of which you and I are dreaming ; remember that that India cannot be made by bodies that are nervous wrecks, by men who grow old before their time ; and for India's sake save the girls and the boys and let them marry in full age, restoring Āryan marriage, man and woman joining hands in love and honour. That is the marriage I plead with you to restore, and I believe you will, because you come of a noble stock.

OUR DUTY TO THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

THE lecture of October 24th found Mr. Justice B. Tyabji in the Chair. He made a short speech, saying that he had the greatest pleasure in presiding and the chief part of that pleasure was due to the fact that Mrs. Besant was going to address the meeting on a subject of much importance. He felt that he was peculiarly fitted to be the President, as he thought that the President on such an occasion should be one completely ignorant of the subject, one whose words should be such as to make the hearer impatient to hear the lecturer. He thought he was perfectly competent to make them all entirely impatient before he sat down. He should be very glad, if he could, to produce such an effect, so that the words of the speaker might be imprinted with more force upon their minds. But there were one or two things which he wished to say. He thought that there were no problems of such importance as Social Reform problems. Social Reform, he thought, would help more than anything towards the advancement of India. One of those social problems was that they should try to uplift

the backward portion of the people, those individuals who were placed, either by circumstances, or the selfishness of others, or through some other reason, so that they could not take their share in the work that was to be done by the whole of the people of India. He thought that the subject on which Mrs. Besant was going to speak was of the greatest interest and importance. Amongst social questions he thought one of the very greatest importance was the position and the activities of the women of India. And it was for that purpose, when they heard a person like Mrs. Besant, who exemplifies in her own character and her own work what women could do, that they were particularly interested and instructed in those matters of social importance. He believed that the position of women was of the first importance in the great work of Social Reform. When they realised that, they could quite understand how greatly he believed in the influence of women in the advancement of India; whether they considered it from the point of view of family life, or whether they considered it from the point of view of the man himself, they would realise that they were only half capable of doing their best unless the ladies joined them. This was why he considered the question of female education of the greatest importance. It was impossible for them to lead a purely intellectual life entirely divorced from all home life. They could not live a life of merely mechanical thinking men. It was for that

reason that he thought the influence of women on men was of the greatest importance.

He called on Mrs. Besant to address the audience.

Mrs. Besant said :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS :

No one except Mr. Justice Tyabji himself would think of charging him with ignorance on social topics. We know this by what we have read of his work and of his interest. It is not so very long ago that I caught the learned Justice at a meeting, moving the report of the Depressed Classes Mission. So that clearly we cannot allow him to shelter himself under any pretended ignorance of the special point with which I am going to deal this evening. I thoroughly agree with what has been said as to the importance of women's work in India, and you will notice that with regard to this great question of education no less than three of the present course of lectures deal with that subject; this is necessarily included in any question of the elevation of the depressed classes; there is one distinctly on the Education of Indian Girls, and a third on the Education of the Masses. I have separated them in this way because each type of education has its own peculiar demands, its own peculiar place; but so vital is education for the uplifting of India, so hopeless is every subject unless education be pressed, that it does seem well in dealing with Social Reform to give to that fundamental subject so much room in our programme.

Now this evening my subject is, as you know, our Duty to the Depressed Classes, and I want to preface what I have to say with one word, if you will permit it, not certainly in the defence of any neglect in India, but the statement that India is not to be blamed alone when this question of depressed classes is considered. There is not one single nation that calls itself civilised which is not faced with the problem with which you are face to face to-day, and I therefore desire to preface what I have to say with this statement; for quite naturally, nay, quite laudably, when any one is pressing on an Indian audience their duty to the depressed classes of their own nationality, the subject is put forward as though it were especially an Indian fault instead of being common to all the civilised nations of the world. Perhaps I feel this very strongly because both in the East and in the West so much of my life has been spent in contact with these very classes.

The condition of the great cities in England is but little known amongst the Indians at large, and when they hear descriptions of the miseries of their own people they are sometimes, I think, inclined to imagine that the fault is specifically their own above all the other nations in the world. But I can tell you from my own experience, especially in London—but not in London only, for I have visited the worst parts of Edinburgh, of Glasgow, of Sheffield, of Paris, and of many other cities in the West—I can

tell you from my own personal experience in those cities that every land has this canker at the heart of its civilisation, and good men and women in every country are facing the problem that you are facing here, sometimes under more terrible conditions, under conditions that fortunately have not yet asserted themselves in India.

Let me for a moment say a word on this, in order that you may realise that it is not only here that one has to deal with the question of the depressed classes. In London at the present time, according to a very, very careful examination lasting over many years, we are face to face with the appalling fact that one person in every ten of that population dies either in an asylum, a work-house, or a jail; one in every ten! You know how sometimes, where a regiment is to be punished, that which is called decimation is resorted to. Where all are equally guilty, one man in every ten is taken out to suffer the death-penalty, and in the great metropolis of our Empire one in every ten is marked out to die in uttermost misery and degradation—a tenth of the population doomed to that miserable fate. We call them there the submerged tenth, and it includes the hardest-worked as well as the idle of our civilisation. I had need, not so very long ago, in London, to point out some of these facts to an audience composed principally of the highly educated and the wealthy; and I gave them some of the cases that I had picked out in order

to press upon them instances of the terrible poverty of masses of the people around them. For instance, in the sweating of women, one of the greatest evils that there has to be faced, I found as to the wages of the women who sewed on hooks-and-eyes, that a woman had to sew on nearly 47,000 of these in order to earn what here you would call fourteen annas and a half.

Now you will have to remember in dealing with prices, that the value of money is its purchasing power, not its nominal value—what money buys of the necessaries of life, of food, of shelter, and of clothes. That is what you need to know in order to estimate the value of any wage that is paid. I found that women making shirts were paid first a shilling per dozen, that is one anna per shirt, and those first women let them out at 8d. a dozen to women still more miserably poor than themselves. You may reckon perhaps what it means, if I say to you that they worked often for 20 hours out of the 24, in order to earn bare subsistence for their children. And you may find, if you will look into it closely, that where wages are very low, you may have it said—as was said by a foreman in the great match strike in London, when complaint was made to Bryant and May about the low wages they had paid to their girls: “Well, women have another resource as well as their wages.” I do not think that we in India can ever conceive of a statement like that, a woman selling her

womanhood in the street to supplement her wages. And that is the kind of condition that we have to deal with in our submerged classes in England. Therefore, when a member of Parliament asked one of these women: "How do you and your children live on what you get in this way?" "We don't live," was the answer of the woman. Take, if you like, another illustration, and I am speaking here from my own personal experience. Take the way in which many children of the submerged classes have to work, in order to supplement the miserable wages of the parents. When in that match-girls' strike, it was part of my duty to go round among some of the worst parts of London with my pockets full of money, I went alone; not one person would have touched me there, knowing that I was out on the errand of carrying help to the starving. I had to go to house after house where the match-box makers lived—worse off than the match-makers—and I found there children so small that they were tied on to their chairs at the table at which they worked, with their fingers and thumbs running blood as they put the rough paper on the match-boxes, on which, thoughtlessly, every day you strike the matches that you want. The children a little older, coming in from school, instead of going to play as a child should, went straight to the table to make the match-boxes, that they might be sold at an incredible cheapness in order to undersell the foreign competitor. So also in our schools

there, we have what you find here in the Pañchama schools—a child occasionally fainting and falling off the bench, fainting on the floor, and when you ask: “Why?” the answer is: “No food, no breakfast.” And when on the London School Board I pleaded, with one or two others, to give food at least to the children whom we were educating—for the starved brain cannot learn, and it is not fair to put upon the starved frame of the child the extra burden of education—I was told that to ask for that was to pauperise the people, as though you could pauperise people who had no food to eat, not enough to enable them to go through the lessons in the school. Now the children are fed. Now public opinion is changed. Now in England the public conscience is awake, and they are dealing with these miserable conditions in their midst. You imitate England in a good many things that you might leave alone. Imitate her in this also, that her conscience is awakening to the miseries of her people in the slums, and that young men of wealth, young men of position, young men of leisure, are to-day going out among those miserable outcasts of London, and are bringing them the rescue that you should bring to your people here.

And so, if I speak of England and have spoken of it for a moment, I do so that you may realise that in all that I shall say to you now I am not blaming you more than I should blame any other man, any other country. I am not charging cruelty. It is indifference

and thoughtlessness that lie at the root of all these social evils. But I do say to you, that you also must awaken to your duty to these depressed classes, for you cannot build yourselves up, as you are striving to do to-day, until you try to get rid of the national karma of the degradation into which these people have been plunged. For there is one difference here between England and India. The slum population of England is made up very largely of the people of the soil, who have come down from generation after generation of the same blood as the people who are ruling. I know, of course, there is a population of aliens, Russian Jews and the rest, but the mass of the slum-dwellers are Englishmen and Englishwomen. They have drifted there from the country into the town. They have been attracted by the greater liveliness, the greater brightness, of town life, and the difficulty also of getting a living in the country. Hence England, as a whole, is not quite so much to blame in a sense as India is to blame. She has not quite the same responsibility; for these people who are here called the depressed classes are people whom in the past your forefathers conquered. They swept down upon them and reduced them to slavery, and inasmuch as that is the act of your forefathers—and we cannot separate ourselves from the past of our people, either in glory or in shame—there is a special duty upon you, the children of the conquerors, to make good by your own exertions the wrong which

your forefathers inflicted. We shall see in a moment that these people were at one time great, whereas the English slum-dwellers have not fallen down from a higher position into a lower. Here you have a people who once were living in their own land, once were rulers on their own soil, conquered by foreign invasion—for you were foreigners then in India—reduced, as all nations in the past have reduced those whom they have conquered, practically into the position of slaves. And so there has been this, to all intents and purposes, slave population, living generation after generation uncared for, unregarded and despised. Such action makes a national karma.

I have sometimes pointed out to an English audience that when they find so many of the savage type in the slums, they would realise, if they understood reincarnation, that many of the savages whom in barbarous countries they have overcome and slaughtered come back by an inevitable destiny to inhabit the badly-made bodies of these slum-dwellers of to-day; and gradually large numbers of English people are beginning to realise that there is such a thing as a national karma, that there is a law for nations as well as a law for individuals, that there is a morality for peoples as well as a morality for persons, and that the great Judge of all the earth weighs in the scales of His justice the nation that oppresses as well as the individuals who sin, and so demands from every nation the payment of its own

debts; as Īshvara is now demanding from you, the Indian people, the payment of your debt to the children of those whom your forefathers conquered and enslaved.

For we find looking back into the past that these people were long, long ago the possessors of the land. Both from ethnology and also from researches into history, we find that these at one time had power on the Indian soil. I am quoting at the moment from a useful little pamphlet of the late Col. Olcott on *The Poor Pariah*, in which he was pleading for these oppressed people, and he quotes from Mr. Vincent Smith, a very well-known writer on eastern countries, speaking even as late as the time of Ashoka, "that south of his great Empire there ruled the Kings of the Chola, the Pāṇdiya and the Kerala dynasties, and that they and the Sinhalese across the straits were constantly fighting although sometimes friendly". And so one set of people after another was crushed down by conquests, after the original conquest of the earlier Atlantean and even Lemurian people. It is pointed out by a missionary, dealing with this same question, truly enough: "There are people who have a kindly feeling for decayed aristocracies." To such I would suggest the Pariahs are amongst the most ancient of that class in the country, and for that reason alone should find a place in their generous sentiments, and that it is so you will see if you look into the people. For they

are not a brutal people, in the sense that our slum-dwellers in the West are brutal. If you went at about eleven o'clock at night into the East End of London, in the worst parts, and watched while the public-houses were emptying themselves into the streets, you would hardly think you were among human beings at all; so brutal the gestures, the language, the conduct, that you might wonder whether it was Pandemonium that had burst up into our earth. That is not the case with the Pariahs and the other various out-castes who make up the depressed classes here; they are gentle; they are very often in some ways, as far as features are concerned, refined, with traces of old race within them, however much they may be degraded by their living now. They are called the "untouchables," as you know, and they form one-sixth part of the Indian population, a larger portion than our submerged classes who are only one-tenth.

Now why is it that these people are called and very often rightly called "untouchables"? It is because of their ways of living, although they know no better; because of their food, because of their drink, because of the filth of their dwellings, and the filth of their clothing as well. If a man is accustomed to decent living, if he is in the habit of bathing once, twice, thrice, in the day, as the high-caste Hindū does, if he is accustomed never to put on a cloth a second time without that cloth being washed, if he is scrupulously

careful as to the cleanliness of his house, of his food, of all the utensils that he uses, you cannot wonder that he shrinks back from touching a man whose very smell at once betrays the fact that he lives on foul food, both solid and liquid, that he is unwashed, that his dwelling is filthy. And that ought to be recognised by all who criticise. The refined classes in England—save very very few of them, who are saints and philanthropists—do not care to go into these filthy houses of the East End, to touch the children, the men or the women. They do not dream of letting them within their own houses. I want to be fair about these things ; for it is not always quite fair, the kind of criticism that we hear. You cannot mix these people's children in the ordinary schools with the children of better-bred persons, as some people say ought to be done. No one does that, who is really thinking of the uplifting of the people. Do you suppose in England, that is so very free, that the children of the slums go to Harrow and Eton, that they go to the schools where gentlemen's sons go, and the tradespeople's sons go? Not a bit of it. There are special schools for them, schools where more refined children are never permitted to go. And the first duty is to raise these people. As long as these people live as they live now, they must be untouchables ; but our duty is so to raise them from their miserable conditions that they should be fit to be touched, fit to be associated with, fit to be welcomed within the

home. They are ready to learn, quick to learn, quick to adopt better conditions, and so in the education for which presently I am going to plead for them, I ask that cleanliness shall be the very first thing that shall be insisted upon; that they shall be taught in the school, if not out of it, that they must wash their bodies daily and wear clean clothes; just as in one of our Pañchama Schools, the scavenger school, we made the first lesson a bath. The children now come clean, but for some time every boy had to bring on his head a pot of water, in order that the first lesson might be the cleansing of his own body. Then a clean cloth was given, and the dirty cloth from home was washed and put out to dry. Before he left school, the school cloth was washed, and the clean cloth washed in the morning put on, in order that he might go home clean from the school. It is the practical way of dealing with it, and the right way of dealing with it, if you want to raise these children; for cleanliness is more comfortable than dirt, and after they have a clean day in the school, they are not willing to go back into the filth of the home; and so they go out as missionaries of cleanliness, teaching their fathers and mothers, their brothers and sisters, and thus the school reacts upon the home, and the whole type is raised by the teaching of the instructed child. And so my first point is that this untouchableness has been the result of the difference of refinement, of education,

of cleanliness between the higher classes and the lower, and that the very first step towards drawing them together is to lift these people to a higher level of decency of living; to see that their homes are clean; to see that their children are washed; to see that they do not eat the filthy food they eat to-day, the bullock that has died of disease, the pig that lives on garbage. This is no food for any human being to eat. Apart from the question of meat, at least such filthy and putrid meat ought not be taken. Every one will agree about that, but these eat it from hunger. They are not to be blamed, for they take whatever they can get. But it is for us to see that they are taught better ways of living, so that they may be touched by others, without fouling the clean by the touch of the filthy.

Then again as to the getting of water. In a village, the Pañchama is not allowed to draw water from the village well. That is a hygienic rule. If you let down a dirty vessel into the water that the whole village has to drink, you foul the whole water of the well. And one of our inspectors, a sanitary inspector, has praised the village rule which only allows a vessel to be sent down into the well which has been kept scrupulously clean. What has been wrong has been that there has not been a clean man there to draw the water, and to give it to these unfortunate people, so that they have been left waterless and cruelty has been inflicted. Here in the town there is

no difficulty, for tap-water can be taken by anybody without fouling the reservoir; but it is a duty, a duty which should come easily to the Indian, to see that in every place there shall be, within reasonable distance, a tap of water from which the Pañchamas and the Pariahs can take water; and they should not be left, as they are in some of the outskirts of Madras, to travel a quarter or half a mile for every drop of water that they use; that keeps them, naturally, dirty in the hot days of summer when water is scarce. Every one of you living in the outskirts of Madras should see that there is water-supply enough for the out-castes of the population living in your own neighbourhood. You should do there exactly what we have done at Adyar; put up a fountain with a tap to which every one is able to come, so that there is no pollution of the water, and the people can come and take the water and so have a chance of leading lives of ordinary cleanliness. There is a simple duty on each of you to see that your own neighbourhood is properly supplied. In the town the Municipality sees after it; but outside municipal limits it is for the people of each extra-municipal suburb to see to the supply of plenty of clean water for the suffering out-caste population of the neighbourhood.

Looking at it then in that way, we shall realise that the first step to get rid of the untouchableness will be in teaching and helping them to cleanliness of house, of clothing, of food, of drink. But in addition

to the difficulty that the West has, there is a difficulty here that we must not ignore, the difficulty of caste ; it has put an added burden on these unrecognised members of the nation. It has also done one other thing, I may say in passing ; the religious feeling of the people when, as in rare cases, an out-caste has risen from his low estate, when some great soul has been born into an out-caste body for the helping and the uplifting of his people, has honoured such an out-caste. Let us remember that Caste-Hindūism has recognised the Pariah as Saint, and that the proudest Brāhmaṇa has not hesitated to see him as one of the Holy Ones of the earth. For I need not mention the name of the great Pariah Saint and poet, to remind you how his value has been recognised, despite the misery of his social position. So that while on the one side caste has added to their trouble, on the other hand the higher caste has recognised the Saint as above all these artificial distinctions. And his name at least may be taken as showing the readiness of the Indian people to recognise spirituality wherever it appears, even in the very lowest stratum of civilisation.

How are we to raise them ? There is only one way—education. That is the only key to unlock this problem—to educate ; and there lies our first, our greatest, duty. Nay, I will not say the first ; the first is to show respect and sympathy, for it is in these that we are most lacking. I need not remind you how in some parts of

India the out-caste has to leave the road if one of the higher castes comes along ; how a cry is uttered by the higher caste people, and the Pariah hears it and goes off the highway and stays in a field until the superior has gone by. Sympathy, courtesy and respect, these we must show to our brothers in the ranks of the out-castes ; sometimes, I think, that many of you do not realise the way in which you speak to these out-caste people ; how rough it is, unconsciously ; how very often you take an imperious tone, a tone that betrays contempt. That is a fault to be guarded against. It is one to which you are very very sensitive, if the least trace of it is shown to you in the manner of another ; translate the Pariah's feelings into your own, and treat him with the respect that you demand for yourself from others that are around you. I mention this because it is more a matter of habit than a matter of deliberate unkindness. I have known men, gentle and compassionate, who yet have given their orders to a Pariah in a tone which they would never have used to a Shūdra servant ; and it is these things which make people lose their self-respect, and the restoration of self-respect is the first step upwards. Education, then, I put second instead of first.

Many of you who may have known the late Col. Olcott may remember that he started a school in Madras in 1894 in order to gather some of these out-castes into it, and it is rather pathetic to notice, if you look back to the days when he started it, the way in

which he asked for help, help that came to him so very, very, slowly. He says what he had done for them; how out of his own pocket he had managed to build a school, how he had managed also to get the furniture that was wanted, the utensils that were necessary, and how he was glad and willing to go on doing it; but he says: "Would not some one give me £20 (only Rs. 300) during the coming year, so that I may do something more along the same line?" In the first school he not only built it, but he paid the teachers out of his own pocket. Poor as he was, he did this service to the population round him, and, as you may know, his most devoted servants came from this very Pariah out-caste class, because they felt the kindness and the love that were trying to raise them from their miserable condition. We have now of these schools five in Madras itself, well attended, doing a good and useful work. And it is remarkable how brilliant are the educational results; with these children, as is very often the case with people not highly developed, the children are more precocious than children at a higher stage. They are not able as a rule, to keep up the comparative level after they grow into manhood. Perhaps at about 14 or 15, you will find the brilliance of the childhood disappears; but looking at the percentage which we have had in these schools, you will see that it is worth while to notice how the children repay a little attention. In the lowest standard—I am taking the

years 1901 and 1902—75 per cent. passed in the first standard, 77 in the second standard, 92 in the third standard; in the fourth standard, where of course the numbers were very very small, 5 for instance, and then 7, and then 15—these were the three sets that were sent up—actually 100 per cent passed. There was not one failure. Now of course that is due to the fact that we gave them a very good start. The Superintendent was Miss Palmer, B. Sc., from America. Then we had Mrs. Courtright. We have now Miss Köfel, a well-trained teacher for many years, who gives her whole life to helping these children. But, however good a teacher may be, there is obviously much natural ability where you get results like that from little children; and so you will not be surprised to know that a large part of the expenses is paid out of the grants which the children earn in the ordinary way, grants-in-aid by the Government. Another point I may mention, for a reason you will see in a moment, is this. The Municipality here is very ready to help in the education of the out-caste population. They have built for us, after we had been educating for some years and had shown that we were serious in the work, they have built for us no less than three schools. We began with mud walls; we began with roofs made out of palm leaves that we “begged, borrowed or stole,” so that we were able to build at a comparatively cheap rate. We have done it. When we had shown

it could be done, we asked the Municipality for help, and the Municipality came forward very readily to assist us and have built for us good pucca brick schools, and are always ready to do more the very moment we apply for any further help. I would suggest to the Depressed Classes Mission that they should go along the same line, and I am sure they would have the same results; for they have not the prejudice against them that there is against the Theosophical Society. If you find we can do it by good work, in spite of the prejudice, how much easier for the Depressed Classes Mission, where every one is patting them on the back, but very few are putting their hands in their pockets. Now frankly, friends, Madras is not good in this. We could not keep our schools going if we had to depend upon our Madras subscriptions for it, and yet it is a wealthy town, a town that is able to give; and these children want so little; their teachers are but poorly paid; but what is wanted is the personal interest that we have given with regard to these out-caste children.

Do you know that when we opened our scavenger school a number of parents came behind the children, armed with broom-sticks and sticks of all sorts, and they stood in a half-circle round the school. Our teachers were rather alarmed at the demonstration, and one, plucking up courage, went out and asked them what they wanted. "Oh!" said a parent, "we have come to drive the children into the school."

They told them : " Please go back. We will take care that they do not leave. We do not want broom-sticks. The children will come if you leave them alone." And the children soon did come, for they found the school a much happier place to live in than their own homes ; there is no difficulty in filling the schools. If the children are treated kindly and well, they come. I feel sure that the Mission, if it will go along the line of making the school attractive, will be able to win the sympathy of the Madras public, and so there will be schools for all the out-caste children before many years are over. Frankly, we have nothing to complain of. Our schools have become the show-schools of the place. Sir Harcourt Butler, when he comes, must see the T. S. Pañchama Schools ; and when the time comes for a teachers' conference : " You had better go to the T. S. Pañchama Schools " ; and every educational big-wig who comes to Madras always comes to these schools, because the Educational Department is proud of them. You will have good prospects, all of you who take up this work.

But I want to say one word to you who are young men, to the college students. I am not speaking here to the school students ; they are still too plastic, too apt to catch up the atmosphere around them. But I do say to the college students here, especially to those of the third and the fourth years, that they ought to help in the teaching of the out-caste population in these schools. Give them your

company ; educate them ; let them go out and spread the knowledge amongst the out-caste brethren. Believe me, a student will do twice as well himself if he does not learn selfishly only, but learns in order that he may teach. Give them the benefit of your company, of your refinement, of your culture, of better, purer language, of your cleaner person and your cleaner dress. You will lose nothing by trying to share your purity with them ; for the value of purity is that it purifies the unclean by the very magic of its presence and its contact. I know what it means, because in our Central Hindū College at Benares—a caste College, with the exception of the few of other religions who lately have been taken in—our boys of their own accord asked permission to open two schools, one a night school for college servants, and the other a day school for the waifs and the strays whom they picked up in the streets of the town. They gathered them together ; they taught them out of their own College hours. They paid also for a teacher to instruct them. Then, on the College Anniversary, they brought these little boys to take part in the pride of the Anniversary, and we distributed toys to them first before the regular College and school had their share. When these College boys go out into India, they will be ready to work, because they began to work in their College days, and that is a thing I ask of Madras, with its tens of thousands of students in the great Colleges here. Can you not make

a band who will go, day after day, one relay after another—not all every night of course—and go and teach these boys who are Indians, who are children of the Motherland? You who have more should give; you who know more should share. And, if you did it, it would draw the classes together. If you did it, it would make so much better feeling.

But what shall they be taught? They must be taught religion, a simple form, but pure and clean. We have in our own schools, I may tell you, the *Hindū College Catechism*, made more simple, less full of Hindū doctrine. The boys and girls learn it, and like it, and it keeps them in touch with Hindūism. I have often said that the Pariahs are a danger to your religion, if the Christians help them, if the Musalmāns help them, if the Hindūs neglect them. What must be the inevitable result? Their hearts are Hindū; they want to live in the atmosphere of the religion of the surroundings into which they have been born. Then give them some chance, and give them the simple religious teaching on Hindū lines, so easy to assimilate, so easy to understand, which will keep them in sympathy rather than at enmity with those around them. Morals you must teach. Religion and morals go together. There is no sure foundation for morals without religion. Then sanitation you must teach. Teach them the simple laws of sanitation in their houses and their surroundings. You must teach them the simple laws of hygiene, of

personal health. These are a *sine quâ non* in your Pañchama Schools. Then teach them the elements of all education, reading, writing, arithmetic, and so on. Most of them are artistic. You must teach them something of painting and free-hand drawing. You will find an enormous amount of talent hidden in these out-caste children and, curiously, a very strong dramatic turn. They act extraordinarily well, and in teaching that you are teaching them manners, you are teaching them grace of movement, you are teaching them control over the body and over the limbs; and in this way you bring them to a better type of manhood, remembering what they are destined for in life.

But now I want to put another point. Every school for the out-castes should have attached to it a simple technical school to teach them a trade. If you teach them writing and reading only, you will have them pressing into the already over-crowded ranks of the under-paid clerks. It is "more respectable" to write, they think. That is your fault; for the looking down on manual occupation has most unfortunately been the fashion in the past. Why? we have the sons of our nobles in England going into a profession like that of Civil Engineer, or Electric Engineer. I have known such a one, the son of a duke, go into a blacksmith's forge to learn how to do the work that he was afterwards to direct his workmen to do. And certainly you do not want to train

these boys up as clerks. Domestic service, as they learn cleanliness, honesty, and good manners, yes, that may reasonably be done.

Do you want rather to turn them to trade than to the pen? It is very hard to do. I know because we tried. We had a carpenter's shop. We tried to get them to come, even paying them to come; but the moment they had learnt something their parents took them away. They are so poor that the few annas that the children can earn increase the food-supply in their home; and there is no use in blaming them, for it is their poverty which compels them. And so what we have to do, I think, is to create a great system of very small scholarships. That is what we have tried. Give the boys the few annas they would earn if they went out to some poorly paid employment. When they are trained and go into the carpenter's, or any other of these trades, they would be able to earn very much better wages, and gradually the parents would be on your side instead of against as they are to-day. I do not know the figures down here in the south, but I know that in Cawnpore and in Lucknow, carpenters now are getting from Rs. 30 to 40 a month where clerks are only getting 15 and 20. So that you are not in any way condemning them to poverty, but you are rather opening up to them a better livelihood; so, I would urge: Endeavour to teach them a trade. They are clever at gardening. Some of you might take boys from the Pañchama Schools and have them trained

under your own gardener. We have turned out one good scientific gardener. The boy was very clever, and we sent him to the Bombay Horticultural Gardens, and he is now well trained. Some gardeners earn Rs. 40 to 50 a month, because very few scientific gardeners are available.

Those who have Pañchama Schools must think on these subjects, and try to open up avenues of employment for the boys they teach, and not simply teach them and then throw them out into the great whirlpool of competition around us. In this way, by schools well organised and well taught, by trade schools joined to the others, you will be able gradually to raise your out-caste population and they will cease to be untouchable.

You must remember also that you should feed some of them. I mentioned the fainting of little children in the London Board Schools. We have the same thing happening in our schools here; so that now in the poorest schools, after the lesson of the bath, comes the lesson of the meal. The children are given food; and that ought to be done; for if you give a boy food, you are feeding the man who will grow out of him. Neglect in childhood means a weak and stunted manhood, and to feed a child is better worth doing than to feed three or four grown-up men; for the boys are growing, for the boys assimilate all. All you give him as food goes to the building of a stronger frame. There is no better

charity than the feeding of a starving child, and no child should starve in Madras with the amount of wealth which is found here.

Those are the practical lines, friends, I would suggest as apparently more and more schools are likely to be opened in Madras. Every village also should have such a school. Every town should have many. And I am trying to urge on our Theosophical people that wherever there is a Lodge or a Society, there should also be an out-caste school opened in connection with it, because I feel that by that individual exertion only can this great problem of the out-caste population be solved. Make their condition better, and there will not be trouble on questions of emigration. The people are leaving the fields; they are leaving the plantations; because they think they will be better treated elsewhere than in their own country. It is true that indentured labour is only a form of slavery, and when they get into the new country, it is said they find how much they have been deceived. But many of the difficulties in the Colonies to-day, Crown and self-governing, are due to the fact that we have an Indian population there that has fled from its own land because of its miserable conditions, and then has found practical slavery in the endeavour to go after freedom.

Then I would put this to you, friends, finally, both as an individual and as a national question. There is not one of us but has a personal duty in this matter.

That somebody else is not doing his is no excuse for you and for me, if we neglect ours. Personal help is what every one of us should give. If you cannot give the work of your hands, then give something out of your purse, but not one man in Madras ought to be indifferent to the misery of these people, until they have been lifted up. Then, nationally ; we believe—do we not ?—that gradually India is rising step by step, and that Indians will presently have a share, a great share, in the Government of this country. We believe that gradually avenues are opening, and that step by step India will go on, until she has her own Parliament under the supreme Crown of the King-Emperor. We believe that the Indian educated class is going to rise into more and more power in its own country, and that Indians will no longer be practical strangers on their own soil. But can you, for shame's sake, ask for that larger liberty for yourselves, unless you break the chains on the limbs of these out-castes that you have bound around them ? It is useless to cry out to God, to cry out to England, to let you be free citizens in a free land, if the curse of this slavery is to remain upon the land and freedom is to be only the freedom of the educated people. You are educated, yes ; but does that mean the sole enjoyment for yourselves of literature, of art, of all that makes life fair, and that to these are to be added liberty, and public life, and the pride of the citizen in a free land ? Power means responsibility. Power

and responsibility go hand in hand; and how dare we ask for Indian freedom if Indian slavery is the basis on which the pyramid of freedom is to be reared? It cannot be. You must rescue your own people, before you can stand up with your faces to the sun and declare that you are worthy of freedom. These slaves condemn you.

I heard it said the other day, in an allusion to the old legend of the castes, how the Brāhmaṇas came out of the mouth of Brahmā, and the Kṣhatṭriyas came out of His arms, and the Vaishyas from His thighs, and the Shūdras from His feet. Whence came the Pariahs? It seems to me that they have been the ground on which all the other castes have trodden. None has cared for them, and truly they are like the earth; for every one tramples on the earth, and the earth always forgives those who trample upon it; and these poor Pariahs are the most forgiving, the most grateful, the most quick to recognise kindness, I think, of all the people in this land. If in the past you have trampled on them as on the earth, take their forgiveness as the earth forgives; then stretch out your hands to them, and forget these old legends. Realise that every nation is a body politic; that every nation has one life; that neglect of one part injures all; and that while one man is ignorant no other man can be perfectly learned. Learn the great lesson that Hindūism teaches, of one life in all and that life divine, one God in the out-caste as well as in the higher

castes, one God in the miserable as well as in the luxurious. See God in the face of your brother out-caste, and then, as you remember God in him, God will remember you and lead you to the happiness which you desire.

INDIAN INDUSTRIES

AS RELATED TO SELF-GOVERNMENT ¹

THE weather of October 31st was wet and gloomy, but Victoria Hall was well filled for the fourth lecture of the course, with Dewān Bahādur M. Adinārayana Iyah, the well-known helper of all good works, in the Chair. He said :

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

The learned lecturer will address you this evening on ' Indian Industries as Related to Self-Government '. She has suggested that I should offer a few preliminary remarks. I shall make them as brief as possible, for we are all eager to hear her own eloquent exposition. I have also another reason for being brief—I confess I do not quite understand what is meant by that aspect of the subject which refers to the relation of our industries to Self-Government. We have, no Self-Government in India. We have indeed what is call local Self-Government in the management of

¹ I have added footnotes and appendix, embodying some of the materials gathered, which time did not allow me to use.

municipal and local affairs. But that is a very restricted sphere, subject to minute control by Government, and I am not aware that it touches the question of industries at any point, except perhaps for a few small workshops and industrial schools maintained under the auspices of Municipal and Local Boards.

Emerging from the domestic stage, in which each family or some of its members directly converted the produce from their land and flocks into articles required for their own use, our industries have, from the remote past, remained in the state of handicrafts. There appears to have been in connection with some of these handicrafts, such as metal industries, architecture and others, a small development of the factory system. But such discipline as obtained in those factories was always loose. With the growth of the handicrafts, there came into existence craft and trade guilds also; but the guilds were more of the nature of social organisations intended to keep down competition, to promote a spirit of comradeship and befriend the members of the guilds. Gradually the guilds took on a socio-religious complexion. But the individual members themselves were free to pursue their crafts where and when they liked. Under this system each man worked more or less independently of others and in his own cottage, and from start to finish every article manufactured was in the main the product of a single man's labour. Such a system afforded much scope for the exercise of artistic skill.

The value however of Indian Industries lay not so much in the quantity of the manufactured articles. His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda, in describing our arts and industries at one time, remarked that their characteristic was opulence of material with poverty of convenience. I should rather say opulence of material sometimes, but profusion of ornament more often with poverty of convenience. Even in such a place as Madras, where one would least expect it, there are still some old houses, low-roofed and ill-ventilated, where the timbering is loaded with exuberant ornamentation. This elaborately executed work is hidden away in the recesses of dark rooms which shows that the work was done, not for ostentation, but simply for the love of the work and its beauty.

So long as industries in other countries also remained in the handicraft stage, India easily managed to maintain a high place for her arts and industries. When, however, mechanical inventions introduced machinery to aid industries in other countries, the Indian crafts began to decline. Handicraft manufacture, notwithstanding the scope it gives for the cultivation of the artistic temperament is, at its best, a poor and slow method of manufacture. It answered well when it served limited areas and communities; and when our people lived simple lives, making small supplies go a long way. The competition of machine-made goods imported from outside

has thus ousted from the field many of our handicrafts, which in simpler times strove to supply the simple needs of our countrymen.

It is hopeless to revive all our arts and industries on the handicraft basis. For the manufacture of goods of common need and service, India must learn from the western countries the methods adopted by them and introduce machinery. It has been remarked that machinery brutalises industries and kills the artistic temperament of a people. That may be quite true. But without the use of machinery it will be difficult to meet the demand arising from the diffusion of a higher standard of comfort among the people at large, the promotion of which is the aim of all human effort; nor can the country make any advance in prosperity without the use of machinery.

One root evil which has always contributed to the uprooting, to the stagnation, and even to the deterioration of our handicrafts is the fact that they have always been dissociated from higher, technical learning and general culture. If, therefore, the art industries are to maintain their ground and rise to higher levels of excellence and accomplishment, the people must have a large measure of technical and general education.

As regards the scientific and technical education of the people, and the general industrial improvement of the country, three fallacies are at present abroad.

One is that higher technical and scientific education need not be given, so long as the industries themselves have not come into existence or have not adequately developed. The familiar argument in support of this idea is that the creation of men so educated may give rise to discontent among them when they find there is no employment available for them. It is, however, lost sight of that the industries themselves can never have any indigenous growth unless the people are fitted for them by education. All industrial enterprises require for their success three factors: Capital, Character and Capacity. The last two cannot be acquired without a proper system of education, and without them capital can never be induced to move out of its hiding-place. How are we to search for and utilise the resources around us, if we are not equipped with knowledge? The Government of India recently started some enquiries to ascertain what scope there was for the employment of Indian talent which may be trained in higher technology and scientific knowledge. The result of this enquiry showed that the existing scope is very limited. There is also a disinclination on the part of European-managed enterprises to employ Indian talent, on the curious ground that Indians will be found incapable of managing large bodies of workmen. That this objection is an untenable one is shown from the history of the large number of Bombay cotton mills. But the point I want to make out is that

unless indigenous enterprises come into existence and are fostered, there will never be any adequate scope for indigenous talent, and in order that such industries may come into existence, a liberal system of technical and scientific education is necessary and should be inaugurated.

The second fallacy that I refer to is that the State should not undertake the pioneering of industries in the country. This is, I believe, the dictum laid down in a despatch of the late Secretary of State, Lord Morley, and apparently this is based on the ground of the impropriety of diverting the funds contributed by the general tax-payer to the benefit of particular classes. I rather think that in this decision the broader view of promoting the general efficiency and prosperity of the people as a whole is lost sight of.

The third fallacy is one in regard to which my own view may appear to some of my countrymen as unorthodox. I refer to the indiscriminating demand made for the introduction of a Protective Tariff in India. I do not understand what advantages are expected from such a course in the present state of the country. Excepting the Cotton Mill and Jute Mill industries and the recently started great Tata Iron and Steel Works, there are no large industries worth speaking of. By far the greater part of our export trade is in raw produce, most of it going to countries other than England. Our imports, which are mainly manufactured goods, come for the most

part from England. India does not enjoy fiscal independence and cannot expect to institute a Protective Tariff against England, while protection against foreign countries might involve her in trouble and jeopardise her large export trade with them in her raw produce. For, except as regards jute, and perhaps a few other articles such as tea and oil-seeds, India does not enjoy the monopoly of production so as to be able to retaliate against them.¹

In the remarks hitherto made, I have not referred to the great agricultural industry of the country. This too is at present in a very primitive condition, and the strain on land has been increased by the wiping out, one after another, of the Indian industries, under the stress of the competition of outside machine-made goods. All the men thrown out from their ancient handicrafts have crowded on to the land, taking up poorer and poorer soils for cultivation to eke out a subsistence. Government has of late taken some steps to improve this industry, which is at present the mainstay of the people. But there is still a great deal to be done by education and otherwise before the masses can be lifted out of their present unsatisfactory condition.

The late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman once remarked that good Government is no substitute for Self-Government. Probably it is in view of the fact that the promotion of Self-Government in this country

¹ See Appendix I. 'Exports,' p. 151.

would help the adoption of policies calculated to strenuously improve the economic condition of the people and their efficiency, that the learned lecturer has linked up the question of Industries with Self-Government in the subject she will discourse upon.

I call on her to deliver her lecture.

Mrs. Besant said :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS :

I knew that I had captured a very good Chairman when Mr. Adinārayana Iyah was good enough to consent to take the chair on this subject. I did not know that we might not possibly agree on the connection between Industries and Self-Government, but I think it will be all the more fun if I can convert him to my views as to the relationship which, I shall submit, exists between them. I shall not go into the question of tariffs, for the very good reason that I know so very little about it ; I have never carefully considered the question and, therefore, have no right to speak on it. I shall have something, but not very much, to say about handicrafts, on which perhaps the Chairman and myself may to some extent differ. I think he may have thought that I was going specially along that line, because the other day, at another meeting, I tried to dazzle him with some brilliant Benares scarves which I showed as specimens of handicraft ; and so beautiful were they, that he may have thought that I intended also to try to win this audience to a belief in Indian handicrafts by bringing

my scarves and shaking them out before it. I do not, however, propose to go on that particular line to-night. I may just say, in passing, with regard to it, that the very fact that our Chairman mentioned, those painted beams in some now dark houses, rather points to a matter which, to my mind, is of supreme importance. The fact that men would paint beautifully without, as the Chairman quite truly said, any ostentation in their minds means that the sense of beauty is woven into the very nature of the people; that the artist works for joy in his work and not simply for making things which he can sell at a profit; and in estimating the value of a nation, one always has to take into account the refinement, the grace, the delicacy of thought, as well as the delicacy of the bodies of the people, for it is very largely by these qualities that a nation lives in history. Modern Greece is little thought of among the Powers of the world to-day, but ancient Greece, the Greece of perfect art, the Greece of perfect literary expression, the Greece that left us such magnificent architecture, such exquisite statuary, that Greece lives in the heart of every nation and its immortality in humanity is assured. It is partly for the value of beauty, in the refinement, in the happiness of a nation that I would fain preserve, not exclusively but preserve to a large extent, the handicraft industries, in order that the man who creates may take joy in his creation, and that the effect of that on the mass

of the common people may be to preserve them from those shocking conditions of misery, drunkenness and uttermost poverty that the great machine industries of the Midlands and North-West England have made the fate of so many thousands of her people ; it is but little to a nation that it stands as wealthy among the nations of the world, if the wealth be in a few hands and the makers of that wealth are plunged in the direst poverty. It is not in that way that nations gain long life, much less immortality. And, therefore, I would remind all of you with regard to this question—though it is not of the very essence of my lecture to-night—I would remind all of you that those great countries of the West, having experimented in the immense output brought about by power-machinery, having destroyed largely the beauty of their respective countries, having created that miserable thing, a proletariat divorced from the joy of life, from all its beauty, from all leisure, and from all happiness, that those great nations are now reconsidering their position ; and the Governments of those nations are trying to reintroduce the handicrafts that were destroyed. All over the Continent of Europe to-day you find men working at your own industries of the elder time, trying to reproduce that which is dying among you ; for the West knows the evils of machinery as well as its outside glamour, and having experienced the results it has brought about is trying now to modify the conditions of its people, in order

to bring back happiness instead of only making gold.

But, as I said, it is not specially to the relative value of machine industries and handicrafts that I want to win your attention to-night. My mind is set on a larger problem, on the building up of India into a mighty Self-governing community; and it is because I see along certain lines that are growing in India to-day with which—and this is my special pleasure—the Chairman is very largely connected; it is because I am going—if I may use a very unfair expression—to blow him up with his own bomb presently, that I want to win your attention to a subject enormously important, if perhaps a little more dry than the burning questions with which most of these lectures are concerned.

And, first of all, I would ask you, just for a moment, to glance at the old system of Government in India, because I believe that that system shows to a wider extent than any other system in the world, except possibly the Russian, a genius for Self-Government in the people; it shows that the Indian, as it were by nature, is capable of guiding, of shaping, of controlling his own affairs. And while it is true that for a very limited time much of the opportunity for initiative, for the controlling of large bodies of men, and so on, while it is true that that has slipped largely out of the hands of modern Indians, I submit that that slipping out has been due to the outer, chiefly

to the political, conditions of the country, and that the indigenous power of Self-Government, as I shall try to prove to you, is a power that is showing itself to-day not only in a form suited to modern conditions, but in a form which gives us a very definite hope that it is the beginning of an ever wider and wider Self-Government here, and that it is the training-ground in which it will be possible to develop those larger measures of Self-Government for which we are all hoping, and so many are to-day working.

Now, of old, it is clear that the village was the unit in India, and the village was practically very largely self-contained and self-ruled. I do not imagine for one moment that we shall go back to the self-contained village, because we have now means of communication, means whereby rapid communication can take place between village and village, between town and town; but I submit that the spirit in the Indian who built up those village communities in the past, and made India a nation so wealthy that, in a phrase I quoted the other day from an eighteenth century writer, "the droppings of her soil fed distant regions," that that spirit, like so much else in India, is not dead but has only been sleeping, and that, in a great movement I shall come to presently, the sleeper is waking up, and is again showing the ancient capacity and very much of the ancient character.

I put to you first a general proposition, that competent Self-Government, effective Self-Government,

can only be carried on over an area where the people who compose the governing body understand the questions with which they have to deal. That might seem axiomatic; it is by no means axiomatic in modern systems of Government; for the objection that some of us have to what is called in the West Democracy is that the people who govern know practically nothing for the most part about the questions as to which they have to elect their representatives; that they elect a man for some local advantage, and then that he has power to vote on matters unconnected with the locality; and that the great danger of what is called Democracy to-day is that you count heads in your governors and you do not weigh the contents of the heads, as is necessary for rational Government; that you do not demand that men shall understand a question before they vote upon it; you bid them vote out of the plenitude of their ignorance instead of out of the plenitude of their knowledge. You count so many thousands of people as voters, but you give to the learned man just the same power that you give to the labourer in the field. And yet we learnt in our school-days that if you took a nought to begin with, and multiplied it by any figure however large, you got but nought at the end. I sometimes want to apply that to modern Democracy, and when I find a mass of very ignorant people, and see that the first man knows nothing at all, I remark that nothing,

multiplied by a hundred thousand, means nothing at the end of the multiplication as it did at the beginning. So I submit that the ancient system prevalent here dealt with things in a much more practical way, a way which made Self-Government at once effective, competent and real. In a village every one had a share in the village government through the Pañchāyat made by the people, and they knew the questions that had to be decided by it and were competent to weigh the value of their representatives. A certain number of villages together, say ten, made up the next area, with a government again for those ten villages; they in their turn were a self-governing unit, with larger power, with wider knowledge. You go up to a hundred villages, and thus you obtain a larger area; and in each case you find that the council of the higher one is elected by the councils of the others. You have exactly the same system in ancient India that you have to-day in modern Japan, which is making progress on every side. You have in Japan to-day the village with its own council; then the taluk, where there is a council elected by the councils of every village in the taluk. Then you have the taluks gathered together into a district, and the taluk representatives elect the council of the district. Those again elect the general council, which manages the common affairs of the whole of a larger area. And it is that principle of building up from the unit village which I submit to you leads to the best form of

Self-Government. You have already the village ; you have already the taluk ; you have already the district board and the municipality—the district board for the country, the municipality for the town. Those are ready to your hands, and ought to be linked up as they are not linked up now, so that you should gradually bring the whole together, as you did in ancient India, as they are doing in modern Japan. And then you have to create three more bodies ; probably a province with its own local Parliament, overseeing the whole of the affairs of the province, while not interfering with the self-governing control of smaller areas, in so far as they are not affecting the larger area of the province. Then above the province, the national Parliament, where you would have far more restricted suffrage in the electoral body, because the questions to be decided need more knowledge, and only those who know are able to vote intelligently ;¹ and then above that, elected by the national Parliament, the representatives of India as a Self-governing community within the Empire, sending her children to the Imperial Council, where every constituent part of the Empire will also have its representatives, gathered round the King himself, to deal with international affairs, the most delicate, the most difficult of all. In this way no man would be without a share in the governing ; but his knowledge

¹ Probably the great body of graduates as electors, with representatives of large industrial and other interests, elected by those interests or appointed by them, as is found best.

would limit the area over which his share of the Government existed, and you would have in modern days a reproduction, with many improvements, of the old sound system in India which made her so strong, so wealthy, in the older days. You would have a true democratic Government by the people, but each area would elect its representatives, the electoral roll being determined according to the grade of knowledge demanded. You would bind these increasing areas together into one great scheme of Government, and you would have learned how to solve the problems of Democracy on the one side, of Autocracy on the other, by letting a man's power be proportionate to his knowledge, while on the other hand there would be no barrier anywhere to the rising of the competent. A man born in the village might first go to his village Pañchāyat; then if he proved himself effective, if his character were noble, his education good, he might be sent from his village to represent it in the next Taluk Council. If there he still showed great ability, from there he would go on to the District Board or the Municipal Council, as the case might be; from there again to the Provincial, from that to the National Parliament, and finally, if he had the requisite strength and knowledge, to the Imperial Council of the Empire. That is how Joseph Chamberlain made his way in England right up to the Cabinet of Great Britain. He began by being trained in his own town of Birmingham. He worked

there as a Municipal Councillor; he learnt his duties in the smaller area of his native town, and when he won the confidence of his townspeople, when they found him able, effective, honest and capable, then, and not till then, did they send him to represent them in the Council of the Nation, to use in a wider sphere the powers he had perfected in the smaller.

And it is along that line that I want to lead you; for if you look into politics—I am using the word ‘politics’ in the old Greek sense of the word—you will find four great divisions: Individual, Municipal, National and Imperial. Individual Politics in which a man becomes a good citizen, in which he develops public spirit, in which he develops a social conscience; for without public spirit and social conscience you can never build a nation on sound foundations. Individual Politics would include the development of these characteristics in the citizen, so that out of bricks well-made the national edifice might be built. And then you have what I have often called Municipal Politics; meaning by that all those grades of local Self-Government that I have just described. It is by that that the English people have been trained to what is called their genius for governing; for they have a genius for governing, if not always in the pleasantest possible way; they are a people capable of imperial organisation, a power which they have gradually evolved by long training

in local Self-Government in England. Municipal Politics includes all these grades of ascending areas from the village to the province, each governed in the way that I have roughly outlined. Then you have National Politics, dealing with all the internal affairs of the nation; and outside that, Imperial Politics, international, which would necessarily include all imperial matters. I used to call these International Politics, but, in fact, Imperial Politics is a better title, as the many Self-governing communities draw together into a real Empire, and have certain interests in common.

Now it seems to me that our village unit is the root of what I have called Municipal Politics; that it is there that you must train your citizen for the larger work outside. I know that you find among well-educated men large numbers in India who are showing public spirit, self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation; but they are practically a few elect souls who, stimulated by education, by their knowledge of their history, by their love for their country and the people of the country, have managed under most unfavourable conditions to develop a very noble public spirit and a splendid patriotism. I have very often pointed out that there is no good work which is done in this country where self-sacrifice is wanted, that you do not find your Vakil population in the front, leading people on by their example to self-sacrifice, and devoting themselves to patriotic work. Why, if you go

over, in Madras, the names of the men who are the real public workers, you find the majority comes from your Vakil community. It is they who give themselves to the work of the public, because they have realised through education and through the development of character, that it is only where self-sacrifice and labour for the public good are given without reward, it is only there that you will find the possibility of the making of a nation. And if I wanted to particularise at all, I might mention the public work which is being constantly done by my late learned opponent in the High Court; for you find him a leader in all forms of public work in Madras, busy as he is with ordinary legal undertakings. There is our hope—in the younger men. I do not want to be in any way forgetful of the services of the elder. But I do see in the younger generation, not only here but in England and in other countries as well, I see in the youth—from the ages perhaps of about eighteen to five-and-thirty—I see a passion for devotion to public work and the country's interest which is new to me, coming at the end of a long life of experience in public labour. And when I see that showing itself here among the younger public workers, I feel that the day of India's redemption is not so far off as some of us had feared.

And now let me take up, if you will pardon me for being a little dry, particular points that I want to urge on you with certain facts and figures. And I

am interested in that Japanese arrangement that I alluded to a moment ago, because I have just read an account of it in your very useful *Madras Bulletin of Co-operation* for December, 1910, and during the present year I had been writing in the *Central Hindū College Magazine* a number of articles on education, which trace out exactly the same plan of education in the village and in the town with regard to agriculture, as I find here is being worked out in Japan. Japanese agricultural education, it is said here, begins in the primary schools, which numbered 27,138 in 1904, with 108,000 teachers and above five million pupils,¹ and then in the higher primary schools, pupils are taken on to natural science ; simple lessons on plants and animals, arranged to bear on agriculture, horticulture and local industries. Technical agriculture may be taught there as an additional subject. Then going on to the secondary schools, the continuation schools, these classes are expressly devised in order to teach agriculture in a more practical way. So that you have first primary schools, with simple teaching, but leading on to the agricultural life ; and then the secondary schools carrying the knowledge further, and then after that, having been taught "chemistry and physics, the diseases and pests affecting the crops and so forth," you find normal schools with a four years' course of agriculture, "plus a full year of special agricultural work in the College of

¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 68.

Agriculture in Tokio"¹. Now, as I say, that is exactly the plan I ventured to sketch out for schools in our villages, and then higher schools in the towns in India, pointing to the fact that while in your village you begin agricultural training, you should carry it on further, and insist as far as possible on the sons of Zamindars attending these secondary schools where the more scientific side of agriculture is taught; also, you should have in every district an Experimental Farm, where experiments could be carried on and where the results of the experiments could be sent out from that farm for the helping of the schools, and for the helping of the agriculturists in the villages; and then there should be one Agricultural College as a centre for the whole system of agricultural education in a district, such as they are trying now at Cawnpore. There you have the system in outline only, and it is a great pleasure to me to find it effectively at work in Japan. If we could do that in India—and there is a way of doing that with which I am sure my Chairman will agree, but I am coming to it gradually, so as not to have too many great shocks in my steps forward. I shall show that the primary schools can be very readily founded, if they be made part of a

¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 69. The higher schools have passed out 16,823 young men, and the continuation schools 223,389. Experimental and demonstration farms are being established. The first was started by a few young men co-operating with farmers. The Japanese Government shows most praiseworthy eagerness to help in every way.

great movement already successful in this Presidency, as well as elsewhere in India.

After the secondary schools, then, built up for the larger areas, you might have your Experimental Farm, and then your Agricultural College. Cawnpore is only beginning, but it is beginning on the right lines. It is teaching the sons of Zamindars, who are going there, the thoroughly scientific side of agriculture. It is experimenting in soils, and in the various manures needed by different soils. It is making collections of all the forms of insect destroyers, the pests of the agriculturists, of all the birds of the neighbourhood—showing which are helpful and which are harmful; so that you have there a thorough course of training, which would send out the son of a Zamindar able to instruct the sons of villagers, able to guide the village teachers; thus the Zamindar, the landlord, would begin to realise that he has more to do than to draw his rents; he has the duty of teaching the people on whose labour he is largely living. And in that way, with a connected system of schools, you would soon enormously improve Indian agriculture, which is after all the backbone of the country to which all other industries must be more or less subordinate.

I submit that in connection with the village of the past, you had those Craft Associations to which the chairman alluded and which still survive. On this, as I dare say, you know, Mr. Havell has written a good

deal, and it is worth while to read his views, whether you agree with him or not. In fact if you do not agree with him you should all the more read them, because they may show you a side that possibly you may have overlooked.¹ Certain it is that many of these Craft Associations are still existing. Consider the palace built by the present Mahārāja of Mysore. Take the way in which that palace was built by Indian masons and master-builders and decorators, all of whom were trained in the old fashion. And the other day, when I was talking with one of the architects chosen for Delhi, Mr. Lutyens, I pointed out to him that palace, and advised him to try to secure some of the workmen from these Indian Guilds, in order that they might help in the building of the new capital at Delhi. He told me then that if I could put him in touch with any of these local associations, who had some of the men trained in the traditions of Indian architecture and of Indian building—I am making a difference between the planning and the execution—he would gladly have them brought up to Delhi and give them work in the building of the new capital. For where you are dealing with an Englishman who is a good man—and Mr. Lutyens is not only a wonderful architect but a good man as well—you will always find that if a thing is explained to him he will be ready to take it up and look into it, just as

¹ Consult his book *The Basis for Artistic and Industrial Revival in India*.

Mr. Lutyens was ready to take up and look into the question as to how far he could utilise the indigenous Building Associations here.

Suppose you take others as well. You might, if you like, look along the lines which were outlined in a very useful lecture given by Mr. M. R. Sundara Aiyar under the auspices of the Indian Guild of Science and Technology, where he laid much stress on the old crafts of India. You will find that there he compared them with the mediæval Craft Guilds of Europe, showed how here in India they worked hand-in-hand with the Government of the country and not against it, as they so often did in mediæval European countries, and he pointed out that, while in Europe these Guilds were oppressed by the robber Barons who were then so numerous—who came down upon the Guilds to take away their wealth, as they grew wealthier and wealthier by their industry—in describing the Indian Guilds he noted that they themselves often served as Municipal Councils, and in large centres the headman of each Guild was represented in the Council; so that they linked with Government here, instead of being in opposition as they were in Europe. And I find the lecturer arguing that these methods of local administration which had existed from the remote past in India ought now to be “developed in two directions. Firstly, in developing the present municipal organisation of the country, which would maintain its branch railways,

minor irrigation works, institutions for primary education, sanitation, and for the relief of the poor," and so on; and the other, "in the direction of productive and distributive, co-operative and profit-sharing industrial associations, which would organise capital and labour efficiently for the welfare of the community".¹ And I submit that these suggestions, to which I can only point in passing, are well and wisely made, that you should utilise these Associations that still exist, and you should work them along the lines which are being opened up by the great Co-operative Movement in the country.

It is in that movement that I see practically the industrial salvation of India, beginning as it does in the village and spreading upwards from the village ;

¹ The extracts are taken from a report of the lecture given in the Allahabad *Leader* of October 26, 1913. The lecturer rightly pointed out: "The promulgation of wrong theories as to ancient Indian polity and the relegation of India to the primitive stage of civilisation have led many to argue that Indians were not familiar with constitutional forms of Government, or Self-Government, and many Indians themselves have come to believe in that theory." The lecturer pointed out as an illustration the evidence given by some of the Indian witnesses before the recent Royal Commission, that the Indians are not fit to be the heads of offices or to be the Directors of Companies. The lecturer pointed out that the study of Indian Mediæval Guilds will disclose a remarkable development of municipal organisation and corporate industrial life.

The lecturer described in detail the political and economic aspects of municipal administration which these Guilds carried on. The maintenance of roads and public works, the police duties, the relief of poverty, free education, sanitation, etc., were all undertaken by these organisations. The lecturer then described the regulation of wages, the collection of rates and taxes, and the system of local finance with which these local bodies were able to carry on the administration without much help from the Imperial Government.

it has only to grow, as it is growing elsewhere, to make what is wanted here, a happy contented agricultural and industrial population, which at present exists, let me remind you, in no country in the world. For one of the great changes which has come over the West has been the separation between capital and labour. There is the root of our miseries in England and elsewhere at the present time. Wherever capital and labour are separated, there you get that worst form of slavery, which is called 'wage-slavery'. I know most of you would be inclined to say chattel-slavery is worse. It is really not so. The wage-slave is the most miserable product of modern civilisation. The chattel-slave has value. He is like a horse or a bullock, and when you wear him out you have to keep him for the rest of his life; but the wage-slave—you work him to the last ounce of his strength, and then, in England, he is flung out into the work-house to finish the remainder of his worn-out life. Wherever you separate those two factors of production and distribution, capital and labour, there you have industrial conflict, leading to strikes, to lockouts, to all the many miseries you read about in the papers. Oh! if you could see them in England instead of reading about them in the telegrams, you would know what this separation means; and all the wise men in England now are trying to find ways in which to call together again capital and labour, to bring them into the same hands; and the modern way of doing that is by Co-operation.

In the old days, in the small Guild Associations, you had both together in the same hands. In modern days, that is being brought about by the extension of Co-operation, and if you watch its progress in the West, you will see how much of hope it has for the India of to-day.

Now, one of the men who is working hardest at that task, especially in connection with one form of it called profit-sharing, is Lord Grey, who was the Viceroy, or rather the Governor-General, of Canada, whose name, by the way, I saw mentioned as a possible Viceroy for India. Most certainly if England were good enough to send him to India, there would be an impetus given to this industrial question which perhaps no one else could give. Now, he was lately presiding over one of these great Industrial Conferences, Co-operative Conferences, and speaking there he pointed out how high were their aims, how great their hopes. He spoke of their hope of founding a great Industrial International Commonwealth made up of the co-operative societies of every country.¹ "It was in

¹ The following are the most important parts of the telegraphic summary. It was in their power, if they were only sufficiently in earnest, to secure the triumphant realisation of a future co-operative international commonwealth which they believed would one day be equal and co-extensive with the whole civilised world. The great growth in the co-operative movement in Germany, England, Denmark, Ireland and elsewhere, since the date when they laid the foundation-stone of the Alliance, justified their confident expectation that the days of new social order were at hand. "Although," he continued, "we may be separated from each other by differences of race, language and religion, we stand here to-day as one people under the same flag of co-operative fraternity, carrying in our hearts the same motto 'each for all and all for each,' cherishing the same

their power," he said, "if they were only sufficiently in earnest, to secure the triumphant realisation which one day they believed would be equal and co-extensive

ideals, animated by the same hopes, and pressing forward towards the same end, namely the removal of every removable hindrance which may interfere with or impede the march of the people along those roads which in their respective opinions lead to the highest and noblest of attainable development. The Alliance does not stand for any rigid or uniform application of the co-operative principle. The international co-operative commonwealth which we are endeavouring to create stands for community of principles and for unrestricted liberty in the way in which these common principles shall be applied by the people primarily concerned. Co-operation means the elimination of every unnecessary middleman. Every middleman not required by a wise and practicable system of co-operative organisation cannot be regarded in any other light than that of a parasite. The vital interests of society call for his removal and co-operation shows how he can be removed. The principles of co-operation require that the services of every necessary middleman shall be adequately and honourably remunerated, but it also requires that every unnecessary toll taken from an article on its way from the producer to the consumer shall be removed. But the benefits which co-operation has in its power to confer upon our industrial communities are not only material in their character; the moral advantages which form the successful application of the co-operative principles to our industrial and social life are not less conspicuous or important. I do not wish to descant upon the deplorable antagonism which unfortunately most undoubtedly exists between capital and labour. Suffice it to say that our present industrial organisation is responsible for much selfishness, suspicion and hatred, and consequent inefficiency, with its resultant sequel of poverty and discontent. The wants of society can never be adequately met so long as the twin forces of capital and labour are warring against each other. Co-operation shows how the warring forces of labour and capital can be reconciled, with advantages to all concerned, the value of which it is impossible to over-estimate. It remains for all who have at heart the well-being of their fellow-men to promote as far as they can the transition from present conditions to a social state in which the spirit of fraternal co-operation shall prevail. It was the dream of Mazzini, perhaps the most inspired prophet of the last century, that the day would come when, not by any State action but by the voluntary association of free men, the hireling of the capitalist should become his partner, sharing with him in the net profits of the industry which they were jointly serving, one by the loan of his capital, the other by the gift of his labour.

with the whole civilised world." Then he dwelt on the spread of the co-operative movement in England, in Denmark, in Germany, in Ireland and elsewhere, and he pointed out that the result of that was the development of an international feeling. It built up good citizens and had made able administrators; and so he said, "we stand here to-day as one people under the same flag of co-operative fraternity, carrying in our hearts the same motto, each for all and all for each, cherishing the same ideals, animated by the same hopes, and pressing forward towards the same end, viz., the removal of every removable hindrance which may interfere with or impede the march of the people along those roads which in their respective opinions lead to the highest and the noblest of attainable development." And he pointed out that along the lines of co-operation that was possible, that spreading it in each country and linking the countries together, you would ultimately make this great Co-operative Commonwealth and, even though that may be a dream of the future, remember that the dream of to-day is the realisation of to-morrow, and that unless some men dream largely and nobly the nations will never go along the path to happiness and to prosperity.

And so I would put it to you that the one thing that is vitally necessary for this spread of co-operation, to which I am now going to turn, is education. It has been pointed out over and over again that you cannot make any strong co-operative movement save as you

educate the people who are taking part in that movement; for unless you educate them you find they are too easily led away by interested people, the money-lenders especially of the place, who find that their interest is going down as co-operation spreads, and that they cannot get as much out of the co-operators as they did out of the isolated and helpless individual workers. Now this was seen long ago in England, and you have no more striking illustration of that than the great co-operative enterprise which is known by the name of the town in which it started, the name of Rochdale. Twenty poor men founded that first really co-operative effort. I am not ignoring what Robert Owen did, but the practical beginning of it lay with the Rochdale Pioneers. They put by a few pence week by week until they accumulated the vast capital of £28, little more than Rs. 400; with that, greatly daring, they opened their first shop, and they laid down at that time the principles on which every great co-operative movement since has been founded; and if you turn to what they did, you find that they made education part of their co-operative work. They put aside $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of their profits and devoted that $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to education, knowing that money given to education out of profits is an investment and not a gift, and that as it is invested in education, your next generation will rise up more capable of managing its own affairs, and so, generation after generation, power and capacity will spread; and if

you would take the trouble to look into some of the many co-operative pamphlets which are now available in the co-operative libraries of some of your towns, you may find a historical sketch of that, called *The Co-operative Movement*, by Thomas Dawe,¹ and he traces out there not only the enormous expansion from that little shop with its £28 worth of goods, but he traces it out to the year 1906, when the share capital had run up to nearly 32 millions of pounds sterling, when the trade showed just upon 102½ millions of turn-over, and when the profits of the year were over 10 million pounds. I mention this in order to show you that poverty need not stand in the way. They were but 20 poor men on strike, and because on strike and starving, they had leisure to plan out their work; and it was out of that misery and wretchedness that they were feeling that they began this great Co-operative Movement which has revolutionised England as far as distribution is concerned. Production is not as yet successful to any great extent. Distribution is an enormous success in England, and I only quote these figures, not because I think you are likely to remember them on just hearing them once, but in order that you may, if you like, read some of these valuable pamphlets which are being circulated here, in order to realise that it is not poverty that stands in the way of following along

¹ Published by the Co-operative Union Limited, 2 Nicholas Croft, Manchester.

this road to the success which those Rochdale Pioneers have achieved.

On this I trouble you with a quotation, because it bears directly on what I am saying—the connection of Industries with Self-Government. “The total trade of co-operative societies in the country amounts to 200 million pounds . . . they are carried on by working people who devote their spare hours in the evening to the work, elected by the popular method of one member one vote, and it will not be difficult to get an idea of what the co-operative movement has done to teach the workers of our land true business methods, the art of administration, practical economics and the arts of public speech and debate.”¹ Now in them you have the elements which make up the leaders of a Self-governing community. They are able to administer; they understand economics; they learn how to debate; they learn how to guide; and it is that education through the co-operative movement, Mr. Chairman, that I look upon as the basis of Self-Government in India.

So again you will find, looking at educational funds, the same idea that every co-operative society should have a library, a reading-room, and if possible give some of its funds to schools, so that the school work shall be carried on.² But in England a special

¹ Published by the Co-operative Union Limited, 2 Nicholas Croft, Manchester.

² In 1900, the Co-operative Societies in England gave £64,100 in educational grants.

question has arisen. Government has taken up the question of primary education—it is a small country. Government has largely taken up also the question of technical education. “What then,” the co-operators have been asking, “remains for us to do? If primary education is provided for, if secondary education is provided for, what ought we to do, and what part of education is to be our work?” And then they say that as all the rest of this is being done by the Government, they will drop that part of their work, and take up: “The education of the adult citizens; the training of the English Democracy in the duties of citizenship; the teaching of history, political economy, and political science, and the masterpieces of literature.”¹ That is the part of education to which English co-operators are turning attention because the Government is doing the rest.

But in this country, friends, where the problem of Mass Education is pressing upon you, a problem so vast that the Government shrinks from undertaking it, is it not possible that in your growing co-operative movement, with the success that is attending it, with the vast increase of co-operative societies, with the beginning of the uniting of the co-operative societies together by District Conferences—the very first of which was held at Chingleput, and in my researches I find that our Chairman was the Chairman of it—

¹ *Co-operation and Education*, by W. Hudson Shaw; the same publishers.

is it not possible, perhaps, for that to solve this great question of mass education, and to establish wherever there is a co-operative society a co-operative school also, so that the children shall be taught, and that investment in knowledge shall be made ?

I find in one co-operative association noted in your *Bulletin* of June 1910, pages 146, 147, the Bapatla Co-operative Association—evidently a religious body—say that, recognising the help of the Almighty, they put aside for charities one-tenth of their net income, and that one-tenth is to be spent: one-third to the aiding of needy students, one-third to the education of the depressed classes, and the last third in charity to the suffering, so dealing with a part of the profits as due to the service of the country. If one association is doing this, others can do the same; until, as the net-work of co-operative societies spreads, there shall also be a net-work of schools, educating the peasant population of the country, solving the question that the Government says it is unable to solve by the people themselves. You have your Pañchāyaṭ for your co-operative society. You could enlarge that gradually, as you saw you could so with safety without interfering with its own particular work. You have the nucleus of the Self-Government of the village in the Pañchāyaṭ elected by the association to manage the affairs of the co-operative society of the village. You can utilise that by adding a department looking after education. You can utilise

it in that way in order that the Education given may be well managed, and those people would give practical education; not always, I daresay in pucca buildings and with expensive apparatus brought over from London, but an education which would fit the boys and girls of the village for taking part in the village life and carrying on the co-operative industries out of which their own education had grown.

Now there is no doubt about the immense increase of these co-operative societies and their funds.¹ I have put down here a large number of figures taken chiefly from this very useful Madras *Bulletin* to show the enormous growth of the movement. To save time, I will take only one of these, that of December 1912, in order to show you what kind of instrument it is which is now within your power for the helping of your country. For I find it there stated—I am taking page 87, which deals with the particular growth of the co-operative credit societies in the Presidency—there were then 910 institutions of the rural credit societies with unlimited liability, modelled on the Raiffeisen method, and six with limited liability. There were also 34 urban societies on the Luzzati model, and 13 others. Remember that this is only a very young movement, started practically by the Act of 1904, which enabled

¹ Sir Edward Maclagan stated at the last meeting of the Imperial Council that since 1906 the number of societies had increased from 843 to 8,177, the number of members from 91,000 to 403,000 and the amount of capital at the disposal of the societies from Rs. 23½ lakhs to Rs. 235 lakhs. Large provincial co-operative banks have already been established in several provinces.—*Leader*.

the work to be done; yet in 1912 the deposits in the hands of the Madras Central Urban Bank from these various societies amounted to no less than Rs. 2,443,370 and Rs. 100,350 of share capital, showing how enormously the movement had spread even in five years.¹ Surely where you see that this is going on, and know that it is working not only for increase of material prosperity, as I may say, but for the building of character, for the gradual growth of capacity in those who take part in it, surely it might be well to extend it in some other directions, in which it might prove to be of the greatest service to the country.

There are so many things that can be done by co-operative societies for the helping of agriculture that no peasant can do for himself: ² the purchasing of the better agricultural machinery which may be owned by the society, and let out to the various peasants in their turn; the buying of many things to greater advantage than can possibly be obtained, where the one man has to buy for his one little bit of land; the breeding of cattle in a better way, where a few communal bulls could be bought and used to improve the breeding of the cattle of the neighbourhood.³ So

¹ In India "in 1908 there were 1,201 village banks, with a membership of 93,200, and 149 urban banks on co-operative lines with 55,000 members. The grand total of their working capital amounted to 44 lakhs." *Bulletin*, June 1910, p. 135. In 1909 the banks were 2,008 in number, and the membership was 184,897. *Ibid.*, p. 136. Other details may be found in the issues of September and December, 1909.

² See under Punjab, *Bulletin*, March 1910, p. 72.

³ See *Bulletin*, September 1910, p. 12, and December 1912, p. 108.

also reduction of interest on loans,¹ and many other things of this sort can be done which already have been begun, and which open up a vista of solid prosperity for the country as a whole, as this most beneficent of all industrial movements spreads.²

And then I must put in a word here for my poor handicrafts ; because here there is an industry that is not dead though it is decaying, that of the weavers, and that is being taken up from the co-operative standpoint.³ In Benares, there is a co-operative society of weavers that is doing exceedingly useful work, and I find that the weaving population, according to the reports given, is one of the most difficult to deal with because of the low type of character, because of the ignorance, because of the hopelessness, the very worst enemy of all progress ; and yet it is found that where those men are individually taught, where there is a chance of their learning, where you bring in the hand-power loom, with its improved amount of production, and where, as around Serampur in Bengal, you get a great weaving population, there is hope ; 10,000 men have been trained there in the weaving college and carry to their villages the improved system of weaving. They are able to produce in the same time just four times as much as they did before, and only Rs. 10 is wanted to start such a man on his way.³ Take next what

¹ A long list of reductions is given in *Bulletin*, June 1913, p. 300.

² See the detailed reports on many industries in the December 1912, *Bulletin*, pp. 106-123.

³ See Appendix II. 'Weaving,' p. 152.

is going on now, the body of men who are going round to teach weaving, and which is doing a piece of good work in this very same Presidency of Madras.¹ You will find not only the weaving industry, but others also which are decaying and ready to perish that may be helped, if only the hand of the co-operator is stretched out to teach the labourers better methods, and help them also to dispose of their goods when they are made. For what the weaver wants is first the

¹ See the Report in the *Madras Mail*. After noticing the results of the work of the Salem Weaving Institute, it says: "The Superintendent [of the Demonstration Party organised by the Madras Government to go round and teach improved methods of weaving] has been able to introduce more than 120 fly-shuttle slays in the Coimbatore District, where his party has been at work during the past two or three months. This augurs well for the future. In the south of Madras warping mills of some kind are rather common, while fly-shuttle weaving is rare except in the two West Coast Districts. In the District of Coimbatore, which is one of the most important weaving Districts in the Presidency, 99 out of 100 villages manufacture coarse cloths. For this work the fly-shuttle is eminently suited, as it doubles the out-turn, and not much practice or skill is required to use it with advantage. In introducing the improved slays, the Superintendent has had to exercise much tact and all his powers of persuasion with the illiterate village weavers. In the beginning only small changes, but yet changes which are productive of beneficial results, have been introduced, while the ultimate aim of the Demonstration Party is to popularise the fly-shuttle slays and dobbies wherever useful. So far, those who had adopted the improved methods and appliances and realise their utility are said to be loud in their praise of them, as the improved looms are easier to work and yield a greater out-turn, and their products fetch higher prices in the open market."

The *Madras Times*, noticing Mr. K. T. B. Tressler's report on the progress of Industrial Education, 1912-13, remarks: "In the Weaving Department, we notice the results of much valuable work done in connection with the Jacquard machines, experiments which emphasise its undoubted superiority over the country loom with country harness. Towards the end of the year, a peripatetic weaving party for the purpose of demonstrating improved methods in weaving was formed and is now at work."

supply of his material—that can be done easily through a co-operative society—and then that the goods may be disposed of after he has produced them.¹ There again distributive co-operation will step in to enable him to supply a larger area, and it is in this way that I would try to help these industries which are worthy of survival, and which give another form of work outside the work on the land itself; then in the times—rarer here than in the West—where the farm is not needing full attention, there might be home industries, cottage industries, which again would have their products distributed by co-operative societies: the embroidery which is willingly and gladly bought; the spinning of thread, which again is a woman's industry and used to be one of the occupations of all the great lady housewives in England. There are so many things along this line where special attention is wanted which the co-operative association alone could give, and from that beginning, small as it is, but rapidly spreading, I look for the great industrial redemption of India.

Then consider the good done by training the character by co-operation: training in business methods, training in administration over larger and larger

¹ The *Madras Mail* notes: "The Weaving Institute which was maintained by the Government in Salem for some time did good work in its day, though many of the indigent weavers outside Salem were not benefited by it; but the good effects of the work of the Institute are just now beginning to show themselves in and about Salem. A large number of fly-shuttle slays are at work, and many of those trained at the Institute have adopted this improved method in working their own looms."

areas, as the local societies join together into a co-operative body for the bigger area, and so on and on until you have the great societies, such as exist in England and in other countries.¹ I see in that way a double gain: industrial prosperity regained by the knitting together again of capital and labour; Self-Government rendered possible by the development of the qualities that are wanted for co-operation, by improved education and character, by ability developed, and by the training in the power of administration over ever wider fields gained in co-operative societies.²

It is because of these larger issues which I have seen working in the West, that I look on this as the most hopeful work which has been started in India ever since the British Rāj began, and John Company happily died in 1858. There one sees the possibility of a real redemption of the villages. Otherwise they will be going from worse to worse as time goes on. Then with education you will be able to bring in sanitation; you will be able to teach the people hygiene, the principles of cleanliness and of health. The Manu's ideas were right, naturally, but suitable as they were for the time, they cannot be applied now with the growing population upon every side. He realised how sanitation was essential for the village life, and He

¹ This has already begun in India, and District Co-operative Conferences are being held. See account of the first at Chingleput, *Bulletin*, December 1909, pp. 53-56.

² See Appendix III, 'Political Effects,' p. 156, and IV, 'Moral Effects,' p. 158.

gave it in a form which was suitable to the sparse populations of the time. Now the plan has to be changed, while the principle is the same, and if that be applied it can only be applied, when education has gone before it, because there is no community perhaps more suspicious than the village community. Where you are introducing novelties, they must be introduced by their own people. Government may help, but it can only do so by aiding the educated Indians to spread the movement amongst the peasantry ; for if Government acts directly, it will always be suspected of aiming at the increase of the taxes, increase of the rentals ; and you must remember this village population has been accustomed for ages to a rule that took in kind and not in money, so that the rent varied with good and bad seasons and did not press so heavily as it presses to-day. Hence I would put, as an intermediary between Government and the village such men as our Chairman, who would have the confidence of the people and the confidence of the Government.

Friends, I might go on talking on this subject for hours. I have notes and quotations here to keep you till midnight, but I do not propose to do it, so you need not be afraid. What I had hoped might be done in this most hasty and most imperfect sketch, in which I have not utilised a tenth part of the material that I have gathered, is to stimulate some of you, especially the younger, to study this question carefully and to watch this movement ; to help it wherever you

can. Those of you who are sons of landholders throw yourselves into this work of the helping of the villages, helping them by your better education, helping them by your greater leisure. So will you grow worthy of liberty, and on the basis of these Municipal Politics, as I have called them, you may be able to build up the larger Politics that are necessary for the welfare of the nation.

But remember that only by experience in the smaller can you gain the possibility of dealing with the larger, and if the work of many of the Municipalities here to-day is not as good as it ought to be, and I admit it is not, there are two reasons that you ought to remember. First, that you hardly ever have an Indian at the head; so that you have no chance of introducing the various things that the Indians really themselves want, and you have generally as your Chairman an officer of the Government, and too often, especially in the smaller Municipalities, they only say "yes" to whatever the Collector lays down. I know that in Benares, where we had a rather autocratic Collector who was the chairman of the Municipality, to whatever he said everybody answered: "Yes, Collector Sāhab," until Mr. Arundale was elected as a municipal councillor and then he sometimes said: "No, Mr. Collector," and then the others gathered round him, and began to work for some measures which were really wanted for the improvement of Benares City. You want practice.

You want courage. You want the power to stand alone, if alone you need to be. But when one man stands out, others very quickly gather round him. When one man speaks out, others have courage also to speak out. There is a good deal of speaking out, I see, in your Madras Municipality. You are not quite so submissive as the Municipality I used to know at Benares. They used to make me almost hopeless of Municipal Government in India ; but, reading your debates, I see that there is really life in this Municipality, and work is being done. Practise then in the smaller, in order that you may go on to the larger. Use the powers you have, in order that they may be a platform from which further powers may be gained; for that is the way in which liberty grows. Take what you can get, and the moment you get it ask for more—like *Oliver Twist*. Make it the reason for asking for more, that little that you have obtained. So will you grow from liberty to liberty ; so will you grow from power to power. But, believe me, governing a nation is the hardest thing which it is possible to do, and if you practise in your co-operative associations, practise in your Municipalities, practise everywhere where any administration has to be done, you will learn gradually that statesmanship without which no man can guide a nation, and you will grow into a self-governing community because you are worthy to wield power.

APPENDIX

I. EXPORT

1912—1913

I. Food, Drink and Tobacco (Fish, Fruit, Grain, Pulse, Liquors, Thorns, Spices, Sugar, Tea, Tobacco, etc.)	Rs. 789,709,424
II. Raw-materials and Produce and articles mainly unmanufactured (Coal, Gums, Resins, Lac, Hides and Skins, Metallic Ore and Scrap Iron or Steel, Oilseeds, Tallow, Wax, Textile Materials, Woods, Timber, etc.)	„ 1,030,479,594
Total of I. and II.			Rs. 1,820,189,018
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III. Articles wholly or mainly manufactured (Apparel, Carriages, Chemicals, Drugs, Dyes, Furniture, Earthenware and Glassware, Hides and Skins (Tanned and Leather), Metals, Paper, Yarns and Textile fabrics, etc.)	Rs. 573,296,464
IV. Miscellaneous	„ 24,586,252
Total.			Rs. 2,418,071,734

EXCISE DUTY IN 1912—1913

British India	Gross duty	Rs.	5,617,311
	Net duty	„	5,576,609
Foreign territory:			
(Indore, Mysore, Baroda	Gross	„	221,178
Bhavnagar, Werdhwar etc.)	Net	„	221,178
<hr/>			
Grand Total	Gross	Rs.	5,838,489
	Net	„	5,797,787

VALUE OF TRADE IN IMPORTS OF COTTON GOODS
1912—1913

Total of cotton (textiles) manufactures...	Rs. 608,215,774
Total value of foreign imports 1912—13	„ 1,610,158,534
Glass-bangles, beads and false pearls have been imported to the value of	„ 9,217,619

II. WEAVING

“ But do not let it be supposed that the mechanical improvements necessary for the continued existence of India’s greatest industry are mainly a matter for expert knowledge. They are a few simple things, which any intelligent school boy or girl could learn to manipulate in a week, though they are so important for the village weaver that, were the Education Department as efficient as it should be, every village schoolmaster would teach them and every Inspector of Schools would be able to demonstrate them. Possibly some day a Director of Public Instruction may come to realise this, but having vainly hammered at official doors for many years I cannot waste much more time there. It is, after all, more important that India should learn the lesson of self-help.

“ These suggestions apply to the village weaver who is too poor, helpless, and ignorant to make any attempt to adopt even the simplest improvements to his apparatus. The educational measures hitherto employed, officially and unofficially, hardly touch his case at all. It is useless to provide schools, exhibitions

and demonstrations of improved appliances for his edification. He cannot afford to leave his loom to attend them and has not the means, even if he had the energy, to obtain the required improvements which might help him out of his difficulties ; though the cost of them would seem to be a small matter, for a total expenditure of ten or twelve rupees would provide him with apparatus which would certainly double, and, in some cases, treble his output. (pp. 177, 178.)

“ I have several times called public attention to the success which Mr. A. F. Maconochie, I. C. S., had, while he was Collector of Sholapur in the Bombay Presidency, in reviving the local weaving industry by the simple expedient of making arrangements to provide the weavers with raw materials on reasonable terms, advancing them cash at reasonable rates in the slack season, and enabling them to obtain the best market price for their labour—all of which advantages are denied them by the rapacious village money-lender. In three years the condition of three hundred weavers had greatly improved, twenty-five of them had paid off all their old debts, and recovered their mortgaged property from the sowcars; and at the same time the scheme itself had given a fair dividend on the capital used.

“ If this can be done without any attempt to improve the methods and appliances of the weavers, it stands to reason that an efficient organisation which gives

both financial and practical educational assistance would be certain of success. The example of ten thousand weavers in the Serampore District of Bengal is a proof that simple improved appliances can enable village weavers to double their earnings even without any outside assistance." (pp. 179, 180.) *Artistic and Industrial Revival in India*, by E. B. Havell. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, S.)

"India needs co-operation in her great weaving industries. Not Manchester is killing the weaving, but the lack of unity. A gentleman offered to place orders for many thousands of rupees worth of cloth with the weavers near Bapatla, if they would guarantee fast colours in their weaving. This large order was lost because none of the weavers would come forward and bind himself to weave cloths up to the standard." *Madras Mail*, quoted in *Bulletin*, June, 1910, p. 142.

"There was one industry of supreme importance, namely, weaving. The multitude of hawkers at Kodai-kanal provide an illustration *à propos*. Silks, fine and coarse cloths, rugs, curtains, and so forth were manufactured largely in villages. But one can never find a rich working weaver. All are poor for one or more reasons. What methods for the amelioration of the condition of the weavers could be emphasised by Missionaries? Firstly, improved methods of work should be encouraged and taught. The fly-shuttle should be introduced, where practicable. Secondly,

a cheap machine is needed for preparing the warp. Thirdly, the weavers should be delivered from the middlemen.¹ Few weavers are independent and they lose much by borrowing. Fourthly, the weavers should be urged to combine and co-operate in work and form weaving societies, to buy their own yarn and machines. But co-operation is foreign to India and this phase of work will be difficult to introduce." *Bulletin*, March, 1911, p. 118.

This is quoted from a paper by the Rev. J. H. Macfarlane, of the London Mission, Cuddapah. He was speaking at the Missionary Industrial Conference. The last sentence is curious and has not been justified by events.

Mr. P. Ramachandra Sastry, Secretary of the Conjeevaram Weavers' Union, says: "The trade can be carried on with very little capital; ten rupees are ample for the stock-in-trade of a weaver If a weaver should only be able to secure all his earnings for his own use he would

¹ The *Madras Mail*, usefully remarks: "The chief obstacle to the working weaver's advancement is the capitalist weaver. The average workman, as is too well known, is in the hands of the money-lender, who is often himself a weaver of means and is, therefore, not altogether free to act as he likes, even where his own prosperity is concerned. The capitalist weaver looks with suspicion on all attempts of the working weaver to get out of his control; and one of his favourite methods of discouraging a workman is to threaten him with an abatement in the rate of payment for the products of the loom offered to him for sale. The interests of the capitalist weaver and the labourer weaver thus clash, and it is here that some moral force is required to persuade the former to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the poor working weaver's cause."

certainly be prosperous : but the majority of weaver families continue in a state of indebtedness from generation to generation After giving him a grounding in character, efforts should be made to secure to him the benefits of his labour. The greater portion of the weavers' profits now goes to the seller of cloths and not to the maker of them The great point in the task of relieving weavers is to secure to him the profit which now goes to enrich the middleman. This can only be done by applying to weaving the principles of productive and distributive co-operation." *Bulletin*, June, 1912, pp. 303, 304.

III. POLITICAL EFFECTS

Professor Lees Smith, engaged by the Government of Bombay to lecture on Higher Commercial and Economical Subjects, made the following remarks on the bearing of Co-operative Banks on Self-Government :

"They could scarcely over-estimate the ultimate importance, not only to the economic but to the political life of this land, of a widespread system of co-operative agricultural banks. Here they had the beginnings of representative institutions. They would find that all political philosophers had insisted that in order that a people might secure the ability to work representative institutions, it was not enough to merely confer these institutions upon them. They

must somehow or other supply the ordinary elector with continual opportunity for actual practice in the conduct of self-governing institutions. They would remember that Lord Morley, speaking of local government, pointed out that the great object of a widespread system of local governing institutions was not so much efficiency of administration as of being a means of popular political education. The great test as to whether the people of a country were adapted to Self-Government was whether they, apart altogether from what the Government did, of their own inherent genius created self-governing institutions. What was the secret of the success of Self-Government in Great Britain? It was that the working man who formed the British democracy spent his time night after night, week after week, month after month, year in and year out, in taking part in the actual conduct of some great self-governing institutions—institutions which he had created for himself, such as co-operative societies, trade-unions, friendly societies, working men's clubs, etc. He wished therefore to impress upon them as strongly as he possibly could that the ultimate fate of these co-operative banks would mean much to the political future of the country. He was convinced that the training in Self-Government given by village co-operative societies would be much more real and important than that given by self-governing institutions given them by the Government. One of the great tests as to whether the Indian peoples were

adapting themselves to the self-governing institutions for which England was now expecting them to prepare, would be the success with which they conducted village self-governing institutions." *Bulletin*, September, 1909.

IV. MORAL EFFECTS

Mr. W. R. Gourlay, I.C.S., Director of Agriculture and Co-operative Credit Societies, Bengal, remarked on the character for honesty common in Indian villages: "The majority of cultivators within their own villages have a character for honest dealing among their neighbours, and it is this character for honesty which is the basis for all co-operative credit." The villagers pledge their character as security for loans. *Bulletin*, September, 1909, pp. 4, 5.

"Raffeisen laid it down that whatever security a man offered, even if he were a millionaire, he should not be admitted to a society unless he was a decent man. So that to be a member of a Raffeisen Society was a testimony of thoroughly good character." Professor Lees Smith, *Bulletin*, December, 1909, p. 51.

"A village bank takes its place among the institutions of the village, and arouses universal interest. It draws the best people of the village together, and creates a real sense of proprietorship. It causes the man of bad character to reform, and the rent-defaulter to meet his engagements in order that he

may have the privilege of belonging to the Society.”
Bulletin, December, 1909, p. 46.

“ Experience has proved that a co-operative society well formed and properly supervised can be run by ordinary villagers with immense benefit to all concerned. It can save the raiyat from the mahajan and give him a new outlook on life; it can make him thrifty, hard-working and self-reliant; it can improve agriculture, sanitation and education; it can heal factions and stop petty litigation; it can make village life healthier in all its relations. All these results I have myself seen. Of all the methods of attacking the agricultural problem, not on one but on every side, co-operation is incomparably the most promising. A net-work of societies would immensely facilitate general administration, for the principle goes to the very root of the matter. The instinct of association is already deeply implanted in the people, and the co-operative movement which appeals primarily to this instinct has undoubtedly come to stay.” From the *Annual Report of Co-operative Societies in Behar and Orissa*, 1911-12. Given in *Bulletin*, December, 1912, p. 109.

MASS EDUCATION

THE fifth lecture, on Mass Education, was delivered on November 7th, the Hon. Mr. Justice Miller presiding over a crowded audience.

Mr. Justice Miller remarked that the course of lectures Mrs. Besant had been delivering on Social Reform all dealt with subjects of vital importance to this country, but he did not think that any of them was of greater importance probably than that which they were to hear that night. The question of the education of the masses was a very large question, an important question and a difficult question. When he was invited to preside that evening that invitation was accompanied by a request to express his opinion upon the subject, but he ventured to decline that request further than to express the opinion that the subject was one of the mightiest importance. It was too complex for him and in some parts of the subject his knowledge was inadequate. He had no practical working experience of many of the problems which had to be confronted in dealing with the matter, and consequently he would be unable to formulate an

opinion which would carry any weight. He should be sorry to make a mistake about some of those matters, and consequently he would confine himself to the statement that the subject was a great subject, an important subject, a complex subject, a pressing subject and a difficult subject. Here as elsewhere, Mass Education on a large scale must be a matter of the State to a very great extent. He took it that there were very few people who would say: "Let us have none of it." If a referendum were sent to say Aye or No, few educated people would say No. Many people would say Yes, provided they could give them the proper kind of education. That was one of the questions which seemed to present considerable difficulties. If the question was to be dealt with as a matter of the State, there came the great question whether the education was to be free to the people. That was another portion of the subject on which his knowledge was inadequate. If free, were they to compel people to educate their children? That was a very great question on which there had been differences of opinion. Then again what was the kind of education that they should provide? On that question also there would be differences of opinion for a long time to come. This was a country of vast rural areas, where there were many scattered villages, something like 675,000, each with a population of less than 1,000 souls. To have different schemes for bringing education to all those scattered units over the country

would appear to be a task which would involve many differences of opinion. Another great question was the provision of teachers duly qualified to impart instruction. Could they say: "Go and educate," to somebody who cannot educate? There was another question on which he did not know whether there would be a difficulty in this country but it had given rise to violent troubles in other countries, and that was the question of religious teaching in primary schools.

"We are sufficiently liberal-minded," said the Hon. Justice, "and are perfectly willing to give the best possible education, classical, moral, scientific, whatever you please, to all the people of this country or any other, provided we have not to pay for that. But it may be different if we find the Government asking us to pay increased income tax or levying school rates upon us. Then we shall begin to think that economy is one of the great matters to be considered. There is the question again how far the co-operation of the educated people themselves should be invited in dealing with this matter. These are some points which struck me as going to make up this problem. It is a subject that I have not felt that I am competent to give an opinion upon. Upon many of them my knowledge is too slight. But it is otherwise, I think, with the lecturer. Upon educational matters Mrs. Besant speaks to us as one having authority to write, not only on the theoretical

side of it, but with practical experience in this country and other countries, on Primary and Secondary education. In the course of the lectures which she has been delivering on 'Social Reform,' the one great point which I have noticed is that all of them are full of practical, helpful suggestions. I am going to sit down to make way for Mrs. Besant, in the sure hope that before I leave the hall I shall not only know more about this subject, but shall have heard also something to tell me what ought to be done. The first lecture which I ever heard Mrs. Besant deliver some years ago was also on an educational question, and I remember then quite well the practical suggestions that were made. I shall now sit down to make way for her.

"I call on Mrs. Besant to deliver her lecture."

Mrs. Besant said :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS :

It is, as Mr. Justice Miller has just said, the magnitude of the question that we are to discuss this afternoon which really appalls any one who attempts to deal with it. I am inclined to think, perhaps, that the more one knows of the question, the more difficult it is to speak upon it. If one could deal simply with generalities, if one could take up a few phrases, and so dispose of the problems that confront us, then the task might be a comparatively easy one. But the more you know of the details of educational work, the more do you feel that in a question so vast as that of the education of

India, almost all you know makes an added difficulty, and the inadequacy of the means seems to render a rational answer well-nigh impossible. Still, in India as in Europe, this question cannot be escaped from. It is not so very many years ago that the phrase was used as regards England herself: "England must either educate or perish"; for in the West the whole struggle of nations so far as commerce, industry and material prosperity are concerned comes down to a question of superior education. It is in education that Germany went so rapidly ahead, and by the education of her people she seems to have solved the question of poverty. If you look into the details of that, and it is worth your while to do it, you will find how carefully planned is every part of the education, how the Government to the full feels its duty in the matter and discharges that duty. When you come to England you may remember that, not very many years ago, the British Association for the Advancement of Science took up the educational question, pressed it on the attention of the English Government, declared that the hope of England in the future must, if it were to be realised, be realised through education. Looked at from that point of view, you will find that the greatest efforts are being made to provide education in England; it is not only there a question of mass education, but the Government is taking up technical education, is making the Universities more popular, is practically

bringing the higher education within the reach, the easy reach, of the people.

Now think for a moment of the figures with which you will have to deal here. In the discussion on Mr. Gokhale's bill for Mass Education, free and compulsory, it was stated that there were in India one and a quarter crore of children between the ages of 5 and 10; and when you take the age of 10 you are certainly not out of school age for a very large portion of the population. Out of that one and a quarter crore, forty lakhs are at school; that leaves us 85 lakhs of children between the ages of 5 and 10 who are demanding education at our hands. The figure is so large that the imagination fails practically to grasp it and the Government, not unnaturally making a calculation as to the probable expenditure on educating these 85 lakhs, put it—and the difficulty is seen in the roughness of the calculation—put it at between 5 and 10 crores of rupees a year. Five and ten is vague, leaving a large margin. I am only quoting the figures to show you the difficulty which faces the Government when the popular demand for education is made to it.

Frankly, friends, I do not believe that any Government can solve by itself a question so large as this. I believe that it can only be done along different lines, not along one line, and that we need to consider our available resources, as I shall try to put them to you in a moment, and then gradually, using one of

those after another, solve by degrees this vast question of Mass Education. The Government would have to tax the people so heavily, if it were to deal with this, that it would make widespread discontent, and no Government can arouse the danger of such discontent unless there be a popular demand very much greater than that which we can pretend exists at the present time in India. The demand is not as strong as it ought to be; it is not as persistent as I hope soon it will be. Mr. Gokhale is supported, but supported only to a very limited extent, and the more the burden is realised the less, I fear, will be the support he will receive; and yet the need is absolute.

Looking for the moment into the past, we find that in that past education was not neglected for the masses as it is neglected to-day. I will only remind you for the moment of a passage in the *Rāmāyana* of Vālmīki, where you will find it stated as regards the subjects of the father of Shrī Rāmachandra, that every child learnt to read and write; and the great prosperity of the country is put side by side with that universal education. I am not for the moment entering into the question of the date of Shrī Rāmachandra, but when that book was written it is clear that the idea of universal education was familiar to the mind of the writer; whether you say or not that he was talking of an impossible golden age, that he was describing, as some may think in these modern days, conditions that never existed, still at his time that view

was a view which was held not to be impossible. So that without any question as to the antiquity of the age, we have the recognition of universal education as a need that was admitted in India. If you do not go back so far as that, if you will only go back into what you may call a thousand or two thousand years ago, you will find from the questions which were put in schools that the education of the people was fairly widely spread. I shall want to show you when I am dealing with girls' education, how charming were some of the arithmetical questions which were put to the girls. I have to urge that need of education for modern India as one that we must deal with, a thing that cannot be put aside ; for every other question of the day hinges on this question of education. You are blocked in all the progressive movements, because of the want of the education of the people to whom your appeals are directed. Let me take one case, which I am taking from a newspaper, where a very well-known Bombay leader, Sir Vitaldas Thackersay, was speaking about the efforts made in the Bombay Presidency to spread the co-operative ideal of which we were talking last week. The one great difficulty that he and those who were working with him, found in Bombay was the ignorance of the people to whom their appeals were addressed. He says that "their work would be enormously simplified, and the progress would be more rapid and satisfactory, if

there were less illiteracy amongst our agriculturists." During the last two or three years, he goes on, "I have visited many villages in Satara, Wai and Poona divisions; I have had the expert and enthusiastic assistance of the Hon. Mr. Lalabhai Samaldas and Mr. Devadhar in the work. We found that it was necessary to visit many villages at least three or four times before any impression could be produced on the villagers, and when such an impression was produced, they expressed their willingness to form co-operative societies. But when some influence was brought to bear upon them subsequently by the sowcars of the villages, our whole work was undone." You know agriculturists are generally heavily in debt, and that the power of the money-lenders is a power that is used to check co-operative efforts. They know that as co-operation spreads, interest goes down—I gave you on this some figures last week. And so, after the co-operator comes the money-lender, and he undoes the work that the co-operator has done. Only by education can you hope to deal with a problem of that kind, for the educated man will understand his own interests, and will not be frightened by the idea that if he co-operates with his fellows misfortune will attend him. And so this question of the education of the villagers is necessary for commercial prosperity, as well as for lifting them up from the present unhappy condition in which they are.

Moreover you must think of the increasing need of education which comes from the changed conditions of the time. The village of the past was a self-contained unit—as indeed it is largely now—but they had not then the inter-communications which are now changing so much the conditions of village life. You find your villagers often very shrewd, often clever, where their own affairs are concerned; but the moment they go outside their accustomed affairs they are like a flock of sheep, driven hither and thither. I do not know if you remember ever observing pilgrims trying to utilise the railways when they are going to some holy place. All seem helpless—those thousands of people as they crowd together, attempting to board the trains. I found once in the Lucknow station a party of about 12 people, who had been in the station for nearly two days, endeavouring to find the train by which they were to go. They ran about from one platform to another; they desperately asked this official and the other, and the reply was: “You go off there,” and off they went to find the train, and so little was their knowledge of trains and train arrangements, that they did not know what to do. We helped them off by sending one of our own party to take them to the right platform, and to show them exactly where the train would come up, telling them that they must get into it as soon as it came. Nothing more bewildered, more helpless, than these people can be imagined. It seemed as though they

might have remained there for another week or two before they found the train by which they were to escape from that miserable station !

Take, for instance, the effect of certain changes, inevitable under the present conditions. In the old days the village was a very easy-going place. The villagers grazed their cattle on waste land without trouble ; they cut their wood where they liked to cut it. The neighbouring jungle provided them with what was wanted of fodder, with all that they needed in the way of fuel. Now that you have forest laws, now that you have rules as to land, you have indeed a most docile people willing to obey, but they are bewildered by new conditions that they do not understand. And if you will talk sometimes to the villagers, you will find there is a feeling in them of a kind of dumb resentment against the conditions which have taken away from them their freedom to cut wood, their freedom to graze cattle, and to follow a large number of immemorial customs which, in the easy-going times of the past, were part of the village privileges. They feel injured, tyrannised over. If you can help them to understand, and if you can show them new ways of getting what they want, then all will be well. But I think almost any one who has looked into this question will tell you that one of the greatest dangers and difficulties is found in the ignorance of the people—the tendency to panic that you find amongst them, the extraordinary ideas that sometimes fly from village

to village, like the notion that the Government was poisoning the wells when plague was spreading. You must remember that these ideas are dangers, real dangers, where vast numbers of ignorant people are concerned. While I cannot pretend for a moment that I agree with the Indian Secretary of State, Lord Crewe, in saying that attempts to force sanitation in the villages will bring about terrible rebellion, still there are difficulties in the way which only education will remove; and if, in thinking of this, you will also remember that that village unit is the most stable part of Indian life through the whole of India's history, you will realise the immense importance of bringing education to the villager, in order to make him able to live under the changed conditions of his life.

Now I am going to ask you, first, what system do you propose to adopt? Then, starting with Mass Education, secondly, who is to bring about the change, the Government or the people; whence is the change to come? Thirdly, what are you going to teach, when your schools are opened?

The first problem is: what will be the line of instruction given, and how will you knit together the different kinds of schools so as to make an open way for the really clever village lad, that he may be able to feel that, by means of education, he may rise in the service of his country. I well remember the pride with which Huxley once said that he had established, or helped to establish, a system which

enabled the English villager to pass up step by step to the University; and while Mass Education is the foundation, you must have an open road for the talented boy, so that he may pass step by step into higher education, if he be fit for it. So that I put first to you the problem; what system of education will you adopt? how will you link together your various schools, and so make the open road for any one who has the ability to tread it?

First of all, I submit, we must have a village school, a school in every village, and attached to that a technical school of the simplest and most elementary kind. My reason for suggesting that to every village school there should also be attached, to put it practically, a weaving shed, a carpenter's shop, a blacksmith's forge—my reason for that is that one of the dangers of Mass Education, if you do not think it out carefully, will be to flood your nation with people who are able to read and write, and who want to press into the over-crowded ranks of the clerks, instead of using their hands for the production of wealth and thus increasing the material products of the country. That is a danger that you must not leave out of sight. Already your clerks' wages are too low because of the large numbers thus employed; they are starvation wages, practically not living wages at all. And if, in addition to that, you educate crores more as the years go on, all boys whom you have practically spoiled for manual labour by an education not wisely

devised, then in the long run your education will do more harm than good, and after you have accomplished it, you will regret the work that you have done. Therefore I submit that in dealing with the work of village education, you should put before the boys you educate ways of increasing the wealth of their country while they earn their own livelihood, and to that end we should have the simplest possible technical education side by side with the school wherein reading, writing and arithmetic are taught. Then after that, I submit, should come your secondary schools, teaching up to matriculation, in the centre perhaps of the taluk, or in a town ; there you should also have a higher technical school, dealing more with the artisan, with the trade which needs skill, with all metal-working, with all the finer kinds of productive industry, and attached to that, inevitably, something of scientific teaching ; for the work of the artisan insensibly glides into the work of the scientist, and you must have in your secondary technical school some teaching in science as applied to the various forms of manufacture. Then above that again, you would have the higher education, the University, with which of course I must not deal now, with its full literary, scientific and artistic training. I submit that, from the village school, the clever boy who shows he has ability should be passed on to the secondary school, and given there the opportunity to develop his talents : that the cream of the village

school should pass to the secondary school, and the cream of the secondary school should be able to pass on to the University. Then no one would be kept back, for want of teaching, from the full development of every faculty that he brings into the world ; for it is surely the least that every one has a right to ask who is born into a civilised nation, born into a modern State, that the State should be so arranged, the conditions of the nation should be such, that he shall be able to develop to the full all the faculties he has ; for it is frustrated faculty that breeds discontent and you will never have a satisfied nation until its children can follow the line their own capacities make them fit to follow. Therefore I ask for this open road starting from the village ; and then for a sufficient provision—and here Government would come in by grants-in-aid and scholarships—to enable those who are ready for higher education to take advantage of it, and to pass into those ranks of social life for which they are fitted by their capacity. Then we should have a general system, beginning with primary schools, with the simple technical schools attached ; secondary schools, with more elaborate technical schools joined to them, and the necessary instruction in science for all productive industry ; the system crowned by the University where full literary, scientific and artistic training would be given, and where there would be also establishments in which the great organisers of industry would be trained for their important work. Some system of

that kind, with the connecting links which I suggest, is the system for which, it seems to me, we should be working, aiming—although we might realise it slowly—at nothing less than that complete linked education, in order that India may grow to be great among the nations, as she cannot be until she consists of an educated people.

Then we come to my second question : Who is to do it ? and here I said I would suggest more than one line. The Government alone, I submit, cannot fully deal with this question, though it should help largely. It is too big. But is there anything else within reach which may begin to deal with it gradually ? Those of you who followed what I was saying last week about the co-operative societies in the villages will at once see that at which I now am aiming. I submit that wherever there is a co-operative society, a credit bank, or any one of those co-operative associations which are spreading so rapidly not only in this Presidency but elsewhere, every such association shall have a village school connected with it and under its own control. For just think for a moment of the machinery available. You have in your co-operative associations, as we saw, a Pañchāyat established—the old village rule, the old communal idea, that out of the elders of the village itself the administrators of the village are to be taken. Such a Pañchāyat exists wherever there is a co-operative society. Suppose the next step should be that you should add to that number—generally about

five or six, who conduct the affairs of the co-operative society—some two or three or more men who should form the educational committee of the co-operative society; those would have for their work the founding and the guiding of the village school. Theirs would be the responsibility of finding and looking after the teachers, of the determining the lines of instruction, of bringing their practical knowledge to bear on the curriculum that should be laid down; and in every place where there is such a society, there is no reason why this addition should not be made to its Pañchāyat, and why you should not have very shortly thousands of village schools under the control of the village councils. There you can begin; it is not enough but it is a beginning; and a vast subject like this can only be dealt with bit by bit. If the co-operators make up their mind that in founding their society they will make this a part of their work, at least a portion of our educational question will be solved, and we shall be getting a large number of educated villagers, who then will be able to spread the idea further and carry it on in the next generation. They are doing that, they have done it, in England. Those Rochdale Pioneers that I spoke about last week, from the beginning of their work, poor as they were—and you remember they were only 20 poor men who each put aside threepence a week until they gathered together £28 to start their first shop—they made it a rule from the beginning that 2½ per cent of their profits

should be used in educational work ; and when their profits came to be, as they were a little time ago, £60,000 a year, you will realise what that means for education when the educational tax upon the profits is the 2½ per cent. I submit that they have there shown to us what co-operation can do. You will find that all the great co-operative societies in England have their educational work. They are now, as I pointed out to you last week, asking for more such work to do, because the Government has taken out of their hands so much of what they were doing at the beginning of general and technical education. You should at least make a beginning along that line, and where your club, your bank, your association, is concerned, you should attach to that an educational committee of the same Pañchāyat, to found and to superintend a village school.

Now, on this question of education a little pressure is being put on in Bombay, and the pressure seems to me to be of a very clever kind, distinctly ingenious. In the co-operative work I spoke to you about before, they found themselves hampered by that difficulty about illiteracy. What did they do? They said : “ All right ; where there is no school in a village, if we can show to the Educational Department that there are a sufficient number of children in the village who would attend a school, then the Educational Department will help us in that village ; and we will make the parents send their children by what may be called a

‘voluntary compulsion’.” This sounds rather like a round square, but still you will see what is meant in a moment. They very quietly say to their co-operators : “Either you must send your children to school or we will not give you the same amount of financial help that we give to the people who are willing to educate their children.” Sir Vitaldas Thackersay says : “The action that I should like to suggest is that the Central Bank and the District Banks as well as the sympathisers, who lend money to the Co-operative Societies, should as far as possible insist on the members of the Co-operative Societies sending their children of school-going age to schools, and give them to understand that either a higher rate of interest will be charged, or such help will be withdrawn in extreme cases of neglect to educate their children.” I admit that it is a kind of compulsion, but it is a compulsion entirely “for the good of the agriculturists, and they must either choose between sending their children to school, and thus prepare themselves within the next ten years to successfully manage their own Societies, or be without our financial help. I am sure they would prefer the first course and thus at least after ten years relieve us of the responsibility of managing their affairs as we have at present been doing in many Societies. As soon as the younger generation turns out literate and shows signs of literacy, with the necessary consequence of better management, the credit will be enormously increased and can attract local

capital at a very favourable rate." They suggest charging them a little more interest, unless they send their children to the school; so while the co-operation is voluntary, there is compulsion put upon the co-operators; they say: "You shall have more of our help if you will educate your children," and the result of that quite naturally would be that, as the agricultural labourer found he made a profit by educating his children, he would at once begin to send them to the school. In that way the question of compulsion would be solved, and they think in Bombay, as you see, that before very long, after perhaps ten years, they will be able with these educated boys to relieve themselves of the carrying-on of their societies as at present they are obliged to do. They are trying to educate their future co-operators, and thus at once to educate the villagers and to solve the difficulties of the spread of co-operation; for when the village can manage itself, then those who founded the co-operative society there can pass on to another village, and so the good work continually spreads and helps itself on its way by its own efforts. I submit then that wherever there is a co-operative association the school shall follow;¹ that where there is

¹ We noticed a few days back how the people of Fyzabad have already made an attempt on these lines, and their success is certainly more than was expected. They have provided their own school, made education free to the children of poor members and have recently made it even compulsory. If that is the success of the movement in Fyzabad, there is certainly no reason to consider it not feasible in any other part of India.—*Leader*.

none, they shall work for the establishment of the village Pañchāyat, and these are being established at the present time in a very considerable number of districts. Up round Behar many Pañchāyats are being established. In Patiala the whole system has been established. Everywhere it is started it succeeds. It helps to stop litigation. It makes the village far better organised, and you will find that wherever it has been established the Government is glad to encourage it, because of the amount of labour it takes off the officials themselves, and the greater contentment in the village when it feels itself managing its own affairs. But with the Pañchāyat the Zamindar must co-operate. It is absolutely necessary for the success of these schemes that the Zamindars of the country shall take up their fair share of the work; that they shall help and guide with their greater knowledge; that they shall educate their children, so that the second son rather than the elder shall be able to take upon himself the duty of organisation, the duty of instruction, the training along the lines we were speaking of, having studied in the Experimental Farm, in the Agricultural College, to fit himself to become a peripatetic teacher of the villagers from whom the family wealth is drawn. And while I do not say that in this way you will educate everybody, you will, Mr. Chairman, educate a very large number, and from that education will spread, as the value of it is gradually recognised.

Now it is not hard to start a village school. Let me for a moment take figures with which I am familiar, because in the island of Ceylon a very large amount of educational work has been done—I am speaking for the moment, of the Theosophical Society. In Ceylon the organisation started by Col. Olcott has now 350 village schools. They are not wealthy people, they are poor—the Sinhalese are a poor people. The villagers cut palm-leaves for roofing; they asked for bamboos for making the uprights on which the roof was to be balanced; they were satisfied with the hard-beaten earth for the floor; they taught arithmetic by tracing on sand in which the children could make figures, and by beads or anything else that came in handy for addition and subtraction. They did the work cheaply, and village after village started its own Buddhist school, until there are now 350 village schools, and to these about half the school-going population of Ceylon is at the present time going. Government pressure for more expensive methods gives much trouble. Our object was to make simple schools for the people themselves by their own efforts, to preserve their own ancient religion. In addition, there are three Colleges with over 1,200 pupils. There is a training school for teachers, in order that, gradually, teachers may be trained properly for the work they are to do. And out of that school, still small, when, a year ago, 15 pupils were sent up, 13

of those pupils passed, showing how effective was the education that was given them. Now I submit that if that can be done in a little island like Ceylon, among a very poor and ignorant population, something similar might be done here along similar lines. Government has to build pucca buildings; the villager does not need a pucca building. He can do perfectly well with a roof supported on bamboos. He does not need elaborate apparatus. He can do with the simplest possible things. And if you teach the boys to make their own apparatus, they will become very much more clever with their hands than if it is made for them and supplied by Government. Why, in our laboratory in the Central Hindū College where we have had as teacher Dr. Richardson, a man trained in England and Germany,¹ the apparatus used in physics and chemistry—far more elaborate than you want for the village school—was in very great part made by the boys themselves. These boys in learning to make their apparatus had a valuable scientific training. For to play with things that are made for you may only be a trick of the finger; but to learn to make the thing means to understand it, and so the scientific education is practical and not theoretical. Government cannot do these things. That is why I would rather the people did a very large part of it for themselves. And if along these lines a number of schools be started, is it not at least the beginning

¹ He was a pupil of Sir William Ramsay.

of a great work, without such hopelessly large expenditure, such crushing burden of taxation?

Suppose you have made the system I have suggested. Suppose you have, by the help of the co-operative system, by the spread of the Pañchāyat, of the communal administration of the village, gradually made a great number of village schools. Then the all-important third problem comes: What will you teach in them, when the school is opened and when the pupils are there? I submit that primary education should practically be the same everywhere, and that it should be a much more practical thing than at present it is the habit to give. A child *wants* to learn. Why, if any of you are fathers—and most of you are—you must know how the children are constantly worrying you, asking questions: “Father, why is that? what is that? why does that thing move in such a queer way? What is this, that I picked up outside?” Sometimes you get rather cross perhaps, for they ask so many questions, and sometimes questions that your education has not enabled you to answer. A child does want to learn, but he does not want to learn what you teach him in school. There is your difficulty. The man who is only a disciplinarian says: “You shall learn what I want to teach you.” The modern man is beginning to say: “Let me see what this child wants to learn, and I will try to help him to learn it.” That is the modern idea of education. I am not yet prepared to go as far as the

Montessori system in leaving complete liberty to the child, because I have not tried it. But the main idea is right, that you should help the child to teach himself. That is the great secret of all education. Not that you should pour into his brain, as if it were an empty vessel, a certain number of facts that he has to memorise, but that you should draw out his powers of observation, his intelligence, and later his power of reasoning.

What, then, will you teach in the village school? There must be a little book-work, and much knowledge of *things*. You must teach them the elements of religion. That is necessary for character. But surely you will only teach them the simplest elements. You will not go into questions of theology, into questions of the religious dogmas over which their elders are quarrelling. There are some things you all agree about—the existence of God, the duties of man, the love of the neighbour, the duty to the country. These are common things, that you all agree upon. Teach these in your elementary schools, and let the quarrels of religion wait until—if you could leave them altogether it would be better—until after, say, the University course. Teach the common truths of religion in the simplest possible form, and teach morals, more than what you would call distinctly religious dogmas. Do not teach morals by precept. Teach them by stories and by examples. If you say to a boy: “You should love your brother,” he listens, but very often

goes out and fights him outside the school. But if you say to the boy: "My dear child, I want to tell you a story," and if you tell him the story of how Bharata went to his brother Rāmachandra in the forest and refused to take the throne that he thought was his brother's by right; if you describe the conversation between the brothers, show how each tried to outdo the other in sacrifice and in giving happiness and not in claiming it for himself, and then you tell the exquisite ending of the story, when the younger brother goes back to reign in his brother's name, not in his own, and carries with him the sandals of Shri Rāmachandra, that these may be the symbol of the real Ruler of the State, your pupil will learn brotherly love. Teach the children the stories which are all through your sacred literature; teach them the stories in your histories also, coming down the great history of India, from generation to generation. Tell them what their forefathers wrote; tell them how their forefathers laboured; and they will grow naturally into morality, because these will be ideals, warm in the heart of the boy, and he will try to imitate that to which his love flows out. You cannot teach morality by precept, so well as by the example of the great heroes, the great teachers, the great martyrs of a country. Then, take care in the choice of your teachers, take care that they teach by example. Another point you should remember, is to give the children something to sing. Bhajans we call them in the north. Stōtras would be a more

dignified name, I suppose. Let them all sing these songs, each of them giving some little touch of beauty and of morality to the child's life. When you give them any lessons by word of mouth, where you have no objects to deal with, make the lessons very short. The child's attention very soon tires, and a tired child you cannot teach. The moment the attention flags, send him out to play, or to do some athletic exercises, or use some form of teaching about the objects he sees around him. Never strain the children's attention, for they cannot at their age bear to keep their attention very long on any particular point, and above all, never let your teachers strike a blow. That is the coward's way of teaching. A big man catches a little trembling child, and strikes it. It is a shameful thing, wherever it is found. It makes the child cruel then as well as when he grows up, and he practises on the younger child in the school the lessons that he has learnt from the teacher. He strikes because the teacher strikes, and if a teacher strikes a boy he brands himself as not able to teach ; for no man should teach but for the love of teaching, and the man who loves teaching never strikes a blow. In every school with which I have anything to do I abolish punishment altogether as quickly as possible. With what result? Want of discipline? No ; but a discipline that is as good in the absence of the teacher as in his presence, because it grows out of love and not out of fear. In the school at Madanapalle,

which lately came into our hands, we stopped every punishment, and there is not one Inspector who comes to that school who does not notice the good discipline of the boys, their courteous manners, their diligence, their readiness to learn ; for if you beat a boy he is afraid, and the boy who is afraid cannot learn. The boy who trusts you will learn from you. But you must win his trust by love.

Putting aside religion and morals, the next thing I come to is the physical body. Train the bodies of your boys, the village boys. Some of the indigenous exercises are the very best things for training the muscles. Sandow's system is little more than your own Indian system of training, muscle by muscle, by carefully adapted exercises. He has put them into an English form, but they are largely adaptations of the indigenous exercises of the ordinary Indian lad. But teach them also one or two English games, because they learn by them co-operation, obedience, and the working for others, and not only for themselves. The training of the muscles in the indigenous way makes a strong and healthy body. The game makes a good citizen. He learns good temper. He learns to fight for his side, and not for himself. He learns to subordinate himself to the good of the team, and in this way the game builds up the qualities of the citizen. So I would have one training for the body and the other for the emotions ; remember that whatever you give up, you must never give up this physical training,

for childhood is the time for growth. Later on you can continue to learn other things, but you can never make a feeble body strong, when it has been allowed to become enfeebled by neglect in childhood.

Then the elements of knowledge, 'the three R's' must be taught, and the other lessons should be of a practical nature. First, sanitation. Every village school-child must learn the simple rules of sanitation, and hygiene, or the rules of health. Those must be taught very carefully to the boys and the girls. Not only sanitation and hygiene, but the way to deal with small accidents; how to bind up a cut; how to bandage a sprain; what to do in the case of a burn; how a poultice ought to be made; what should at once be done in snake-bite or dog-bite; and in any very serious outside injury, what to do while waiting for a doctor; all these little details of domestic surgery and medicine that your great-grandmothers knew thoroughly well, but that the educated people of to-day do not, should be taught in all primary schools. When your grandmothers had a sick child, they did not send for a doctor; they went to their medicine chest, and knew exactly how to deal with the child. In the village schools all this ought to be taught. It ought to be part of the training of all the elder children to learn how to deal with the common accidents to which every child and adult in a village is exposed, to know, as I said, what to do until, if necessary, the doctor can be brought—if a doctor be available.

Every child ought to be taught these things, and every child would take pleasure in the learning. Your own education has not made you nearly as capable as you ought to be. You know a lot of things which are not of any use, and you do not know many things which would be useful. How many of you can tie a good knot? very few. How many of you can tie a knot in a rope by which a man can be let down, without strangling or compressing him, from a burning house? How many of you know how to drive a nail into a wall without breaking the plaster all round and spoiling the look of the wall? But every child ought to learn these little things before it is eight or nine years of age. It is ridiculous to grow up without knowing all these little common things. They ought to be known to every boy and girl. One reason why the Scout Movement is so popular is because the Scout Movement teaches the boys these common things which they were never taught in the schools. They take out scouts and lose them in the woods. How many of you, left in a wood, could find your way out? What can you do in the wood, if you have no food? What can you do in the wood, if you have no knowledge of the common herbs, the common berries and seeds, as to whether they are edible or poisonous? These are all things that should be taught by object lessons in the village school, so that when the boy at eight or nine is ready to go on to the technical school, he should go up with a whole mass

of useful knowledge in his head and fingers, and not a mere lot of facts, that he begins to forget as soon as he turns to his ordinary work in life. Then, when he goes on to the elementary technical school, he ought to learn about all the birds of the place, and the insects of the place, which are useful and which are mischievous; what sort of snails you should put into water in order to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in it—I doubt very much if many of you know this. And yet there are some snails which poison the water, and there are others which help to keep the water pure. There are some weeds which, if you grow them in a pond, will prevent mosquitoes breeding there. You do not really need to have a travelling party of advisers, as they have here, to tell you what ought to be done. If you had been taught these commonplaces of ordinary knowledge at school you would not be so much bothered now with the questions of mosquitoes and fevers, with the doctors and their western scientific ways. Nature gives you the remedies for nature's own difficulties, but you go along your path with your eyes shut, and then you wonder that you become ill. These are some of the things I would teach in the village school, these common ordinary things. Then the children should be taught how to cook. Every boy and every girl ought to know simple cooking, enough to feed himself in time of difficulty. Every boy ought to know how to light a fire. They give prizes among the scouts

for this, and the one who can light the fire with one match instead of two gets the prize. Why, you can make education a delight to the children, if you teach them rationally instead of irrationally. Most of the boys will learn agriculture from the older peasants, or weaving, or other work. Part of the day should go in the ways given for the school, and part in apprenticeship with an elder.

But some of your boys will go on to the secondary technical school. What are they to learn there? First a more scientific type of agriculture. They should learn under a skilled practical agriculturist how to carry on the work of agriculture; how to distinguish good and bad seeds from each other, so that they may not be cheated if they have to buy seed. They should learn something about the various soils of their district, so that they may know how to deal with particular kinds of soil. They should learn the advantages of deep digging as against shallow digging; what crops grow best on what soil; how to plant trees, and so on. In fact, in a village a child should have been given a little bit of a garden and a few seeds; he should have been shown how to plant them, how to water them, and, when they get high enough, how to transplant them. Some of the co-operators find that if you give the villager any sapling which is two or three feet high, he will take care of it and nurse it into a tree, and make a good part of his living out of it; but that it never strikes him to sow the seed and

look after it as a seedling ; so they sometimes give him the sapling and thus increase the number of trees, which are badly wanted in many of the villages. After the age of nine, the boys should be technically trained. Some may go and learn weaving ; there are simple machines now for weaving, that any school-boy could learn to run, but remember that an art is learnt better by apprenticeship than in a school. Teach your boys to use an improved machine, and then apprentice them to a practical weaver. They will teach their master the new form of machinery, and the weaver will teach them the traditional secrets of his art. Not only will you have weavers, but you will have carpenters, potters, and blacksmiths to train ; all these to learn their practical lessons from the elder workmen. In that way you utilise the craftsmen as the teachers of these boy-apprentices.

Again your police come from the villages, and should come after the education described. There are great difficulties here about the police. But why ? Because you do not teach them properly. You take a peasant out of a village, you put him into a uniform, and he feels very big the moment he has the uniform on him. He can order everybody about. Think of the delight of an ignorant peasant, ordering about people who looked down upon him before. You know how they train the police in England. They train them right through in every duty which the policeman has to fulfil, and consequently the policeman in

England is ever a friend; he is not an enemy. There is not the good feeling between the police and the public here that there should be. The police are too much of a military force. They ought to be a civil force, intended to be the servants of the public, and not a kind of army of occupation in the streets, looking down on everybody and ordering them about. They ought not to be blamed for it. It is not their fault. They should be taught bit by bit their duty. When the young man is taught his duty, then he should be put with an elder policeman who has already been well taught. He should be told that a rough word will get him into trouble, that any lack of courtesy will make difficulties for him. He should be trained in politeness. He should be taught how to deal with crowds, what to do in the case of accidents, how gradually to disperse a crowd without violence, how very often to prevent trouble by foreseeing it and not allowing the conditions for it to arise. They would learn it all if they were taught. They must learn that they are servants of the public and not masters, and should treat all with courtesy. When I go along the road in a motor-car, why does a policeman salute me? I have no business to be saluted by a policeman. He ought to salute his own officers, or the officers of the State, not casual people going along. He would not salute me, if my colour were not white. But that is utterly wrong. You do not want your policemen to discriminate

between the white skin and the coloured skin. He is the servant of the whole public, and would be trusted and loved by the public if he were taught that great lesson. That is what they are taught in England. I noticed at the Delhi Durbar that the police behaved admirably there to every one alike. Probably they had been told not to discriminate. They were told that the King was sympathetic, and that they must not be rough with the crowds, and one day when the King was going from the Polo Ground there, a number of poor village people rushed out longing to see the King, and the police began pushing them back, quite naturally, because they could not allow the King to be run over. But the King stopped the police at once, and told them to allow the people to come near, and he stood there alone in the middle of them, until they had time to look at him and so learnt to love. It was a valuable lesson. The police will learn and are willing to learn. They are apt to think that by harshness they are doing their duty. They have to learn that gentleness is the duty of the policeman. Then the people will trust them instead of fearing them as they do now, for I know a man too often gets out of the way of the police, not because he is afraid he has done anything wrong, but because he is afraid of getting into difficulties. That fear a good citizen should never have. So teach your police. Train every one of your villagers for his life-work—agriculturist, weaver, policeman, chokidar, and the rest. Train

them all while quite lads for the work that they are to take up in their manhood, and so their village education will be a real beginning for their life, and not something put off into a water-tight compartment, which is intended to gain a particular position and then to be forgotten as rapidly as possible.

Speaking then generally, friends, to sum up this, let me suggest that in all classes, for everyone, primary education shall be practical along the lines that I have suggested; that only when the secondary time comes, shall you begin to differentiate, and take up what you may call literary, scientific, commercial, or artistic education; the foundation the same for all—reading, writing and arithmetic, a little Indian history and a little geography, but geography beginning in the village and widening out gradually, not taught by maps but by models, above all by making the map of the village, thus teaching the child what a map means; if you knew the queer notions that a child has sometimes of a map, you would be surprised.

I do not pretend to have solved this question. I can only pretend to have thrown out a few suggestions along lines that are worth thinking out and discussing. I submit that on this question there ought to be discussion among people who understand something about it. They should analyse every proposition made, they should decide which is the better plan of the many plans that are suggested. Experiment in your education, and I would

urge on you, as fathers, that the real burden of the education of the country rests on you. It is for you to do your duty to the children, and all children, remember, are yours because you are elders. If you remember the words of Manu, that every younger is a child to the good man, then you will realise that not only our own children in the home, but the little children in the villages and in the towns are all ours, our children, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, children of Mother India, who cannot take her place among the nations until these little ones are trained, and are worthy to be citizens of a mighty commonwealth. That is the end to which we are looking in all the reforms we are trying to bring about. But education is fundamental. Without education we are not worthy of liberty; without education we shall never learn the duty of a citizen; without education there is no material prosperity, there is no intellectual splendour. And I plead that there should be no step-children in the house of India the Mother, but that every child that is born of her shall be born into the birthright of education.

THE EDUCATION OF INDIAN GIRLS

THE sixth lecture was held on November 9th, and was, as usual, crowded, despite the terrible weather. The Hon. Mr. P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, C.I.E., C.S.I., Indian Member of the Executive Council, Madras Presidency, was in the Chair. He said that the lectures arranged by Mrs. Besant all related to important social problems. But he did not believe there was any one of them which exceeded in importance the problem of that night's meeting. At the last lecture, the Hon. Mr. Justice Miller had dwelt upon the difficulties besetting the problem of Mass Education. If the difficulties besetting Mass Education were immense, those connected with Female Education were of a still more puzzling character. The problem was one which had been the theme of constant discussion on the platform and in the Press. Notwithstanding the constant and unceasing discussion, it had not made great advances towards a satisfactory solution. He did not think it was necessary at that time to dwell upon the vital character of the question. Indian women exercised an enormous amount of influence in

their households, an influence which, whether always exercised in the right direction or not, was none the less potent. But notwithstanding the amount of influence that women exercised, men had not made much progress in educating them to enable them to take their legitimate share in Society. In the case of Mass Education, the difficulties were mainly of funds and want of sufficient numbers of suitable teachers; but in the case of Female Education the difficulties were created by social usages, and by limitations imposed by social traditions and sentiments and caste usages. Girls could not continue to go to school above a certain age, and that was a most serious limitation upon the possibilities of educating girls. With regard to the subjects of instruction, standard of instruction, the language in which they ought to be taught—in regard to these matters there were differences of opinion. Those differences, however, ought not to prove an insuperable obstacle to the solution of the problem of Female Education. The chief point to be borne in mind in regard to the education of girls was the relation between the education given them and their future position in life. That consideration could not be ignored, even in connection with the education of their boys, but it was far more important with regard to their girls. It would not be wise to implant in them, by means of education, tastes which the girls would not have an opportunity to gratify in their after life. There were

certain elementary subjects, a knowledge of which was absolutely essential for all girls. It would be a proper thing to provide a different kind of education for girls whose social position enabled them to pursue their studies to a later period in life. And that consideration would settle at once the question of the language in which they ought to be taught and the subjects they ought to be taught. It was more or less an exploded notion now that it might not be a good thing to give girls a knowledge of English of a higher standard. There might be some fear that English might have an undesirable influence on their religious sentiments. But if it had not done so in the case of boys, there was no reason to apprehend any such result in the case of girls. A great difficulty which blocked the progress of the solution of this question was the want of an adequate staff of capable female teachers, and he saw no means of solving that problem except by educating a much larger number of girls than they did in their secondary Schools or Colleges. It would be necessary, at least in the case of those who intended to enter the teaching profession. The prospect seemed to him to be not altogether so hopeless as at one time it had appeared. There were some rays of hope in the present outlook. There was a growing interest in the country in the subject of girls' education, on the part of parents and on the part of everybody connected with education. The experiment which had been

started of trying to educate young Hindū widows and using their services for the benefit of the country was another hopeful feature in the situation. That was a direction in which they could look most hopefully for a solution of the question of finding suitable teachers. So far as the Government were concerned, they had always been alive to the importance of this problem. He was sure that Mrs. Besant, with her vast experience, would be able to give them most valuable suggestions as to the methods to be adopted for tackling that difficult problem. He called on Mrs. Besant to deliver her lecture.

Mrs. Besant said :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS :

I am sure that you will join with me in a feeling of gratitude that our Chairman has found time, despite the immense weight of public duty, to come and preside over this meeting this evening. Looking up to him as we do as the head of the Indian community, it must give us the very greatest encouragement in the desire to bring about a better state of things for Indian girls, when we know that the representative of India in the Government of this Presidency will look on such efforts with an eye of interest and will extend a hand of help, so that we may be sure that whatever we feebly try to do he will strongly assist, where he sees it to be well planned and earnestly carried out.

Now, friends, with regard to the education of Indian girls let me say at the very outset that the education

I have in mind is one which is directed to the women of the educated classes rather than to the women of the poorer classes, with whom I practically dealt in speaking of Mass Education on Friday last ; as far as education is concerned, until you come to the technical employment in trade and agriculture, the education of village boys and girls may well go on completely side by side. The more difficult problem that has to be dealt with, I think, is the education of the girl-children of the higher classes. It is there that the need of education is being most bitterly felt by the men who are concerned. The difficulty becomes more and more pressing, as the Indians take a greater and greater part in the public life of their country, for, unless in the home the man finds sympathy and inspiration, no great work can be done; if, on the other hand, he finds want of understanding, want of sympathy, a tendency rather to hold back than to go forward, if he finds in his wife, in his mother, in his women relations, opposition to every great reform movement on which he sees that the welfare of his country depends, then such a man, instead of finding in the woman an inspiration, finds in her a clog and a difficulty. It is hard enough in outer life to have to battle against prejudice, against ignorance, against the dead weight of inertia. But it is a thousand times harder, when the heart is weary and the brain is tired, to come back to the home where there is no understanding of the vital nature of the problems dealt with in the

outer world, and to find there an inclination to oppose some of those social changes with which the welfare of the country is inextricably intertwined. Hence every great question in the country in which the men are interested demands for its effective solution the sympathy and the understanding of the Indian women. Never yet has a nation risen to greatness unless the men and women in it walked side by side and hand in hand. As soon may you try to make an Indian nation without the education of Indian women, as a bird might try to fly high in the air with one wing broken before it starts upon its flight. It is only where the men and women stand side by side, heart with heart and hand in hand, that any great social or political progress is possible for any people.

For men and women are not the same, as I fancy some of the reformers in England are inclined to think. Their value lies in their diversity, not in their identity. If men and women were the same, then it would matter comparatively little if only one guided the affairs of the nation ; but because they are different, because they look at all questions from a different angle, a different standpoint, because the women bring to bear upon every question a woman's brain and a woman's heart, which differ very largely from a man's brain and a man's heart—it is because of that great difference that the two together are a power that neither can ever be alone. It is like music,

in which differences of notes add to the richness of the chord, and it is that very difference imprinted on the physical body as well as on the emotional and intellectual nature, it is on that difference that I would base my plea for the recognition of women in the public, as well as in the social, life of the nation. Especially in matters of administration is the feminine type valuable. Frankly, I do not think a woman has the same amount of initiative as a man. I am speaking of course, of averages, not of exceptional people on either side. But if you take the average man and the average woman, you will find the average man has much more initiative than the average woman. But when it comes to the details of administration and the applying of principles to practice, you will constantly find that a woman's brain has a mastery of administrative details which makes her most valuable where organisation is concerned. Let me for a moment put the practical side of it as we find it in England, where women have been introduced into the administration of hospitals, into the administration of asylums for children, into the administration where sick people are concerned, in all places where the poor are gathered together and where the young have to be thought of. There it has been found that women's genius for detail is invaluable in questions of administration. It is found that she will look into details that never strike the mind of a man. I have at the moment in my mind the case of a workhouse,

where there was a large number of children, and where things had gone on for a long time under male administration. Presently a woman was elected on the Board to look after the workhouse. The first thing that she did was to pay surprise-visits—without saying that she was coming. The next thing was to take off the children's boots, and she found that the socks were sewn on to the tops of the boots, and the little feet were sore from being pressed directly against the harsh leather of the boot. She looked into every question of detail for the comfort of the children; not that men were careless, but that it never struck them to look into things of that sort. Wherever you are dealing with a large number of the helpless, there especially is woman ever found serviceable. In fact I once heard a well-known Englishman, Mr. Bernard Shaw—whose name you must all know well—declare that in the future women would be put into all the public offices in order to carry on the details of administration, and that while men would make laws it was the women who would be asked to carry them out. Even if that be too broad a generalisation, there is truth in it. Woman's mind goes to the details and to the effective administration of rules, and it is that particular side of her character that I believe will prove useful here in the future as it has proved useful in the past. It is absolutely necessary to bring women into touch with the outer life, not only that they may not hinder the men,

though that is important, but that they may add another element to the carrying on of a very large part of public business.

I propose in this to separate what I have to tell you broadly into two parts. The second part will deal with the line of education which I shall submit to you shall be discussed as possibly useful in our schools. It is partly based on theory but very much more on practice, because I am concerned with a certain number of girls' schools in this country, which are training up some of the future mothers of the land, and one great point of hope which I have seen in those—and I am speaking of one of the schools in Benares where you have an orthodoxy which is rigid and difficult to deal with—I see as a sign of hope that some of our girl-pupils who have been taken away at 11 years of age—for that is the time of marriage which is there so unhappily prevalent—have come back to the school after the first marriage, after having gone through the ceremony, and in the interval between the first and the second marriages—that is, in the interval where the marriage that makes a widow has unfortunately been performed but the bride has not yet gone to the husband's house—they have come back to the school during that interval, with the goodwill of the husband and the father, in order to carry education further than otherwise it would be possible to carry it. It seems to me that is a sign of hope. It shows that the young men, and the elder men

as well, are beginning to realise the necessity of education for girls, and as that body of married students is an increasing number it gives us good hope that in the future the age to which education may be given to a girl will rise higher and higher. When I remind you that we have purda in Benares to an extent that you do not have it here, that even little girls of 6 or 7 we are obliged to bring to schools in covered carts, so that no one shall see their baby-faces, you will recognise that that sign is one of vital importance as showing a great change in opinion. The details of the education to be given I shall deal with in the second part of the lecture.

What I think is most vital is to induce the Indian public to realise that the education of girls is at once necessary and possible. I feel so often in speaking on this that the Indian men, as a rule, if you will pardon my saying so, in spite of their love for that exquisite womanhood—I think the most exquisite on earth, and I have visited many lands—in spite of their love and reverence for Indian womanhood, they do not appreciate the treasures of high intelligence, of moral strength, of willingness to sacrifice, that lie hidden in their wives and their daughters. They take it too much for granted that, because they are so gentle, so loving, so docile, the stronger side scarcely exists. I am going to contend on the strong basis of history—not only the history of your far-off past

where great Hindū models are held up, but right down through the centuries, through the centuries which are the Middle Ages in Europe, and right down to the beginning of the nineteenth century—that your history is studded with the names of women who shine out in public life and not only in private life. I defy you to find in English history so many women of heroism, of power, of ability to rule, of readiness to throw their lives away for a principle and on a point of honour, as in Indian.

I am afraid that the younger amongst us hardly know of these women, and that is why I am going to appeal to their memory in order that they may realise what Indian women can be, and Indian women can do; for your school Indian histories are a wretched selection of dates of battles and names of Kings, and so on, nothing inspiring, nothing glorious, nothing to make your hearts burn within you for the heroic men and women of your own past. I do not know whether the names I mention will be as familiar to you as they are to me, who have not the good fortune to be of your blood. But I know what the sons and daughters of the Motherland have done in the past, and if you realise that, you will have no doubt of what they can do in the present. Even now, if you have any doubt, look on South Africa, and see there how the women are going to gaol, side by side with their husbands and their sons. See Mrs. Gandhi lying in gaol, and then realise that I

can bring the line of heroines of the past down to 1805, to prove what these women of your own race to-day are showing, that heroism still lies hidden in the hearts of Indian women.

Now in the far-off past that is clear, and truly you can only have heroes born into a nation from heroic women. If there are but few heroes among you to-day, it is because you have not given any chance to your women to be heroic. There lies the difficulty. You all know in the past those great names that shine out from the sacred literature; you know that those women were the heroic and splendid mothers of R̥shis and of Heroes. You can recall easily enough the two divisions, the wife and mother, and the Brahmavādinī, of which I spoke in dealing with the question of Early Marriage. All I want you now to realise is that these women, wives and mothers, were heroic in the old days, and that that heroism came down century after century until about a hundred years ago. If I speak of Maitreyī—you will all know the name—you know that she was the wife of Yāgñavalkya, and that she asked her husband to teach her the knowledge of Brahman, and so on. That is part of the commonplace of Indian thought. You remember Kunṭī, the mother of the Pāṇdavas. You remember that heroic phrase of hers, when one of her sons was a little doubtful whether or not it was wise to plunge into war in order to regain the kingdom which had been wrenched from the

Pāṇdavas by force and fraud; you remember the word she spoke: "This is the moment for which a Kṣhaṭṭriya woman bears her sons." She sent her sons off into the battlefield to do their duty to their country, exactly in the same spirit which you have heard of and admired in the Japanese woman, who was found weeping after a great battle. Those who had gathered round to comfort her, consoled her by saying that her sons had died for Japan. "No," she said, turning round to the comforters, "I am not weeping because my sons are dead; I am weeping that I have no more sons to give to the service of the country." That was the same spirit you find in Kunṭī. Again Ḍamayantī, another name which is familiar to you in the sacred literature, you know how she tried to come between the husband and his frantic gambling, how the elders of the nation, the ministers of the King, came to her that she might plead with him in order that he might be saved from his desperate end; and you see her going to him and praying to him for the sake of his country to give up his game of dice. You see similar counsel from Gāṇḍhārī, the mother of the Kurus, brought into a council of Kings and warriors, that her voice might be heard in pleading with her headlong son. You will find the noblest heroism linked with the name of Sītā, with the name of Sāvitrī, who showed courage that could follow death itself in the effort to rescue her husband over whom death's noose had been cast.

But these are all so far away that you feel that you can admire them at leisure, and that you need not try to reproduce in yourselves people who lived so very long ago. They come into the things that you believe, but that you do not want to act upon—a very large part, I fear, of modern India's life. So I want to bring you down to comparatively modern times, and to remind you of some splendid women who lived in the great days of struggle, in the days when war swept over the land, in the years from the thirteenth down to the nineteenth century; for if I can show you that at that time Indian women had these qualities of heroism, of splendid courage; that they helped their men—they did not hinder them; that they strengthened them—they did not weaken them; then it may be that these more modern examples will inspire you when you are dealing with their daughters at the present time. I go largely to Rājpuṭāna for my illustrations, partly because war there was waged so fiercely, partly because the Rājapuṭrīs were as splendid as the Rājapuṭras there.

Take first that story of the Lotus, of Paḍminī—Paḍmāvaṭī sometimes she is called—the wife of Bhīmsi, the Regent of Mewar in A. D. 1275. Remember how the fame of her beauty spread far and wide and caught the fancy of the Mussalmān Emperor who had invaded Mewar, and was going to besiege Chittor. Remember how he asked that he might be allowed to see her, if not face to face at least in a

mirror, and how out of his great courtesy the Regent admitted the plea; and so in a large mirror that was put up, the Mussalmān warrior, coming in under the safeguard of the Rājput word of honour, saw in the mirror the wondrous beauty of the Lotus-Flower of Chittor. And then you know how when, in his courtesy, the Regent accompanied his guest outside the gates, he was suddenly seized upon and carried to the camp of his enemy, leaving his wife behind, bereft of her husband; how then her woman's wit devised a way by which the husband's life might be saved. The demand was: "Give up yourself, and your husband shall come back," and so she made up her mind that she would go to the camp of the enemy; seven hundred litters went with her for her waiting-women—she could not go by herself—and she went in her litter with six bearers to carry her, and in every one of the seven hundred litters was a waiting-maid, and each had also six bearers; at the camp she asked whether she might see her husband for a moment before she was torn from him, and the courtesy of the Mussalmān gave her permission. Then into the tent where he was prisoner she went. One quick whisper to him that there were horses outside; one swift leap on their backs, and then a dash forward; and out of each of the seven hundred litters there sprang a Rājput warrior, and each six bearers threw down the litters, and there were 4900 armed men standing there to guard their Prince and Princess, and every man died

there where he stood, in order that these might escape ; and thus woman's wit and woman's courage had saved her husband and taken him back to Chittor. That is not the end of the story. Chittor was surrounded, besieged, desperately defended till all hope was gone. What then was to happen ? There were thousands of Rājput women, and there were thousands of Rājput men. Should the men bow their necks to the yoke ? What would happen to the women if they were left ? Paḍminī knew what would happen, and she gathered together the whole female population of Chittor, and presently a song was heard as the long procession of women wended their way through the streets, and the men hearing the song and knowing what it meant, went and put on the saffron robe to be ready to ride into battle, ride never to return—for the saffron-robe meant victory or death. The saffron-robed thousands gathered together waiting, and the women came and passed into the cave of sacrifice ; and they waited as the song became weaker and weaker until only one voice arose, that of the one who was the last to die—the Rāṇī. Then there was silence, for all had passed away by fire ; and as the black smoke rolled out from the cave the warriors charged into battle to die, knowing that there was no woman left behind to dishonour ; and they rode out from the City of the Dead, where not one man, not one woman, was left to be enslaved under the foreign yoke.

Were they alone? Go forward to A. D. 1535 and you will find the second sack of Chittor along the same lines. There a gallant woman, the Queen-Mother of the Rāṇā, when there was a great breach made in the wall, led her army through the breach and died herself on the field of battle, while Chittor's thirteen thousand women, standing on the ramparts, were blown up with gunpowder because there was no time for the slower death by fire. There are many tales like that. Think of the time [A. D. 1566, the third sack of Chittor] when every Chief was killed except one boy of sixteen, Paṭṭā of Mailwa, a boy just married. None but he was left to carry on the struggle. His mother brought him out the saffron robe and clothed him with it with her own hands, and then she called the girl-bride, and with the bride she rode out herself into battle and died, lest the idea of mother and bride might weaken the boy's heart, and he might not be willing to die unless his womenfolk went before him through the gateway of death.

A little before this take another case of heroism, of a different kind, the case of Nurse Pannā, who had a young Rāṇā, a babe, a few months old, in charge as foster-child with her own son, both suckling at the breast; and the word ran round the palace that the royal babe was to be stabbed in order that an elder relative might seize the throne. As soon as she heard the rumour, and the tumult accompanying the coming of the murderer, she caught

up the little baby-chief and threw him into a basket lying there, covered him over with fruit and vegetables, put the basket on the head of a barber telling him that the basket should be carried outside the fort to wait for her ; she snatched up the cap of the prince and the belt of the prince and put them on her own baby-son, placed him in the cradle where the baby-prince should lie ; and as the murderer appeared and asked for the prince, she could not say where the Rāṇā was, she could not speak, her voice failed, but she pointed to the cradle where her own treasured child was lying, and stood there whilst her son died that the prince might live ; then she went out to meet the barber, took the child to a safe place and left him there, lest her presence should bring suspicion on those who gave him shelter. It was gallant to die, gallant to be willing to give up life for honour, but still greater, I think, the heroism of the woman who gave up her only child to save her prince, and then even surrendered her foster-child, lest her presence should bring suspicion on the babe.

Those are Indian women. Can you doubt that heroism is in their blood, and is part of their very nature ? Think of Tārā Bāi. Because her father had no son to train as heir and prince, she trained herself in all warlike exercises and athletics. Think how she held herself up as prize, as wife, for the man who would fight for her father's throne and win back the kingdom he had lost. Think of the wonderful Chāṇḍ

Bībī, who ruled the land, fought for her capital against the besiegers, struggled against rebellion, and finally, stabbed to death by traitors in the city, died quietly saying: "It is the will of Allah that I should go." Or take the latest of this noble series, Ahalyā Bāi of Indore, a marvellous woman for power, for courage, for ability to rule. She was Queen-Mother—or rather hardly Queen-Mother, but the wife of a Rājā who was killed, and a son who died after a brief reign. "Let a male child of thy race to be put upon the throne and throw the burden of the rule upon me," said an elder relative. The woman could not do it. Said she: "I am the wife of one Rājā, the mother of another; how then should I set a third over myself? I will rule and none other, until it pleases me to put another on the throne." She ruled so effectively and so splendidly that she left behind her a kingdom which was at peace, with a full treasury and a powerful army. We learn that the routine of her daily life was to rise early, to perform her pūjā, to read from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and then with her own hands she fed Brāhmanas and the poor. After taking her food and a little rest, she went to the Durbār, where all the rest of the day was spent, attending to the many duties that the ruler must perform. The kingdom over which she ruled stretched far and wide, "the roads were planted with shady trees, wells were made and rest-houses for travellers. The poor, the helpless, the orphaned,

were all helped according to their needs." She took pride in seeing that fine cities grew within her realm, and in knowing "that her subjects were not afraid to display their wealth lest the ruler should snatch it from them". That great ruler only died in 1805, after showing the power of the woman where she had the opportunity to exercise it.

Now all this went, of course, with education, for the education of the woman was not then neglected. I told you last Friday that I came across a very charming case of arithmetic as taught to Indian girls in the twelfth century. "Out of a swarm of bees one-fifth settled on a blossom of nauclea, one-third on a flower of silindhri; three times the difference of those numbers flew to a blossom of echites. One bee, which remained, hovered and flew about in the air, allured at the same moment by the pleasing fragrance of a jasmine and a pandanus. Tell me, charming woman, the number of bees." The type of question is common enough. But the way in which it is put, the grace of the whole thing, and the fact that it was a problem given to the girls at the time, and that it was the "charming women" who were asked to calculate it, show they were not left unheeded. Now we have in our school-books: " $\frac{1}{3}$ A went in one direction, $\frac{1}{5}$ A in another direction, and thrice the difference in a third direction, and 1 A was left behind; how many were there?" That is the kind of problem you have in the materialistic age. "Tell

me, charming woman, how many bees there were!" The delight of it is that it shows how women were being taught. There are many cases that one might cite, only this happened to be a particularly graceful one, and it is for that I took it.

Now in the earlier training of women, even down to the grandmothers of forty or fifty years ago, you will find that there was a very effective training. It is only during the life-time of two generations, practically, that there has been this falling back of Indian women so far as knowledge is concerned. Many of my friends of forty or fifty years of age have told me about their grandmothers, how the elder women used to tell them stories from the Purāṇas, and how they used to recite hundreds of shlokas which they had learnt; how they ruled over great houses; how sometimes in the joint family system there would be a hundred or a couple of hundred persons all under the rule of the oldest woman of the family; how she was able to provide for all their needs; how she was able to see to the details of her great family; how also she had no need to send for a doctor when a babe was a little hurt or was a little ill, but used to seek in her own medicine chest; how she knew all simple medicines, and how it is a modern thing to send for a doctor every other day to look after a baby. In the older days it was the grandmother that was the doctor of the children, who kept them a good deal healthier than our modern western

doctors do at the present time. Though she was to a great extent not taking interest in public life, if you find that so many men of that age have so high a respect for the elder women of the family, it is because they have learnt their value and understand the power, the rightful power, that they wielded. I have a friend of fifty years of age who would not go abroad, though he wanted to go, because his grandmother would have been pained if he went outside India. I know very often that modern people laugh at that idea. To me, it is a beautiful proof of the reverence evoked by noble women, that men past middle age still care for their opinions, and would cross their own wishes rather than displease them. For all of us know, of course, that there are stories circulated about the subjection of Indian women made up for other countries. The Indian woman has more power than almost any woman in the world. Inside the house at least she is supreme, and the men bow down before her and do all she wants. There, in fact, lies the great difficulty of reform.

Now to come to the important question as to the kind of education that has to be given if you decide it ought to be given. I have been trying to urge upon you the reasons why you should do something, because the *wish* to raise women is the thing which is most wanted. Suppose you are with me on that, let us see what sort of education shall be given to Indian girls. Clearly it must be

one which will not denationalise them. It is bad enough to denationalise your men. It would be a thousand times worse to denationalise your girls, for that would be the death-knell of India. The first thing you will have to recognise is that you cannot give the same education to all the women of the cultivated classes. You must give some of them education, as our chairman suggested, which will enable the great lack of teachers in girls' schools to be supplied. That of course means University education. But that, I think, will never be the education of the great number, the great mass, of educated women in India. But there are always some who will find their happiness along lines of public work, and I cannot but think that a very large number of the childless widows who exist in the community might there have a career open to them which would make them at once happy in themselves and useful to their country. The more Widows' Homes multiply in which this higher education is given to fit those women who have no real homes, as it were, of their own, for teachers, for skilled nurses, for doctors, the better will it be for the homes that they will later bless with their presence. There must be more women than men in order that the work of the nation may be carried on. In the West those women—surplus women as they are very often called—do not marry. Either they remain unmarried in the outer world, or become sisters in some religious order

—women of the most noble and most self-sacrificing character, whom to know is to revere and to love. Among the Little Sisters of the Poor, among the Sisters of Mary, and under many other names—names do not matter—you have thousands of good women who are verily mothers of the motherless, the nurses of the sick, the helpers of the miserable. Every nation has some of these. Now in India you have avoided the problem so far by your joint family system, for under that there were no homeless women, and there were none needing help in the house who could not be looked after by the widows in the family. That was their natural work within the circle of the joint family system. Women who had no children of their own nursed the sick children, perhaps of the sister, of the aunt, of the brother. There must be some women to carry out these charities of life, and in the past that was done by the Indian virgin widows or childless widows in the home. The mother cannot do all the nursing of the sick child without losing health and strength. The childless widow took the place which the nun, or the sister, or the skilled nurse took in the small English home. But as your system is changing and as your young men are no longer willing to live in the joint family, and as they are taking up the western system of separate independent homes, so that each family shall be an isolated unit, there comes the absolute necessity, with the breaking up of the older system, to adapt yourself to

it by training widows properly, so that they may perform their ancient duties but perform them in a way suited to modern conditions. That is the secret, of course, of national growth. You cannot bring back the old system which the people have outgrown, and which you are no longer willing to follow. But you can take what you had of good in the old and adapt it to the conditions of the new ; and so I submit that you ought to have Widows' Homes everywhere, where this higher University education should be given, and where technical education for skilled nursing as well as for medical women should be provided. That is a clear line so far marked out for the great widow population.

But the enormous majority, of course, will be wives in their own homes, and their education is the next to which we turn. Widows for teachers, for skilled nurses, for doctors, for those special lines of work for which higher education is wanted. In England higher education is wanted largely, because women are going into professions and competing with men. The day is far off here, when you will have your wives competing with you in every walk of life, for the place of the wife is clearly in the home where the children claim her care. How then will you educate the wife and the mother ? Religion is clearly a part of her education ; religion and morals must be a part of her education. Morals, I think, come almost instinctively to her. May I say one word about religion ? Too much

of the religion of the Indian ladies to-day is devotion without knowledge, zeal without understanding. I do not want in a public lecture to go into details on a subject so sacred. I will only ask the men at once whether it be not true that when they go back into the home they go into an entirely different atmosphere in matters of religious thought from their own, and whether they do not find there observances which are childish rather than elevating; whether it would not be well to add to the women's devotion a knowledge of religious topics, which will make her worship intelligent as well as loving; for remember that your young boys are brought up at their mothers' knees; if the boy worships as the mother now worships, he will later think all religion is childish, and only fit for women and children. How many young men of sixteen, seventeen and eighteen reject their mothers' faith because it is unintelligent, and her observances because they are regarded as superstitious; so I say educate your women in religion, not to diminish their devotion but to render it more intelligent, so that they may prevent the boy from growing into a sceptic, and that he may learn at his mother's knee a religion of which he need never be ashamed.

Outside religion and morals, literary education. What should that be? I submit it should include first a thorough literary knowledge of the vernacular, the vernacular of the family to which the girl belongs. That is fundamental, so that the great vernacular

literature may be studied by her to the enrichment of her life. Then she should learn, according to her religion, the elements at least of Samskr̥ṭ or Arabic, according as she is Hindū or Mussalmān; for so you open to her the great treasures of sacred literature, which cannot be rivalled by modern writings. These are fundamentals. I plead next for knowledge of English, and I will tell you quite frankly why. English is the language here of politics. of social matters, of discussions among the men. You cannot discuss these things in the vernaculars conveniently, because the vernaculars are so different. Why! at a meeting here the other day, chiefly attended by Mussalmāns, Hindūs did not understand the Hindustāni speeches that were made, and the reporters were not able to report, so that the public had not the benefit of the speeches. It has become necessary in public work that English, the common language, shall be used by all educated men. Are you going to shut your educated women out of all that? Are you going to shut out from her sympathy all political and social life and aspirations? Are you not going to open to her the treasures you have found through knowledge of English, and enable her to sympathise with you in all those great problems which have to be solved, and for which knowledge of English is clearly a necessity under the conditions of the present time? So I plead that an English-educated man should also have an

English-educated wife, English-educated in this sense only, that the English language shall form part of the school curriculum. I leave you to think over and decide the question, for the question should be decided by Indians and not by foreigners, however sympathetic the foreigners may be.

Outside religious, moral and literary education, I will ask you to give her a simple scientific education, so that she shall know the laws of sanitation; that she shall know the laws of hygiene as her grandmother knew them; that she shall know the value of food-stuffs, so that she may know how to build up the bodies of her children, that she may distinguish between the effects of different kinds of food. Unknowingly, out of affection, mothers very often give their sons food that is far too stimulating, because the boy likes it. The boy does not know that it is bad for him. That increases all the difficulties of adolescence, and the mother in her love, but foolish love, stimulates the boy's body when everything that ought to be given as food should rather be of a bland and soothing kind; thus, unknowingly, she flings the boy into dangers from which with all her heart she would shield him if she only understood. Then she should learn First Aid, and what to do in an accident. You know how men and women stand around at present, not knowing what to do when a little accident happens. First Aid is wanted constantly. You may even save a life by knowing the mere

elements as to what to do at once. Then she should also learn simple medicines, and how to deal with children's trifling ailments. That is the scientific side that I suggest for women's education. I do not know whether cookery is by itself supposed to be scientific, but it ought to be, if it is to be carried on for the good of the household.

To all that I add some little knowledge of art. It may be music. Music when I came to Madras was thought of as a rather disreputable thing for a girl to learn. It was mostly owing to the efforts of Mr. V. C. Seshachariar, who started a music class, that it is now popular. So many girls are learning music, and that largely for the benefit of the boys; because if they have music at home, they won't run off after dancing girls and undesirable associations. Teach the sisters to sing, if only that they may keep their brothers safe. You will not only have done a good thing for the home, but you will have given pleasant amusement to the girls, who will feel happy in their art, and spend the time well, instead of only eating sweetmeats and talking gossip. The girl may learn embroidery, drawing or painting; for a girl ought to have some form of amusement to fill the idle hours which occur in life.

Only one thing I must warn you against. If a girl is taught to make an old-fashioned English sampler, the thing in which she works making square stitches on canvas, you must stop her. When I once went to a

school in Mysore, I saw most extraordinary elephants, most extraordinary cows, and most terrible dogs and cats, on samplers brought as copies from England. I think they must have shipped them all over here to get rid of them ; they were certainly not examples of Indian art. I begged the Lady Superintendent to throw them all into the fire, to get rid of them as rapidly as she could. For you spoil the taste of girls and degrade their artistic instincts, when you give them animals of no colours in heaven or earth, and produce most horrible caricatures of beautiful objects. If your girls learn this sort of thing at school, you go and tell the school-mistress that you will not allow such teaching for a moment.

The only other point in girls' education that I would add to this, is physical education. I have said religious, moral, literary, scientific and artistic. They are all very big names. Lastly I come to physical. Do not forget the bodies of the girls. Let them have plenty of exercise which shall develop and strengthen them. In the old days when they did all the housework, that kept them healthy. Now that they are too fine to do it, and sit upon English-made sofas, they are apt to become very anæmic and very weak. With early marriage on the top of that, you cannot wonder at the enormous death-rate of women under twenty-five years of age. Down here in the South you have a very useful dance for the girls. Kolāttam is an admirable form of

exercise, pretty, ingenious, graceful, and needing great accuracy and promptitude. Everything which improves the grace and the beauty of the body should be encouraged. And remember that grace and beauty depend on the perfection of the muscles, on their flexibility, their elasticity. You cannot build a really beautiful body by simply putting on a lot of fat over a poor muscular system. Beauty depends on the form and strength of the muscles, and not on the wobbling kinds of tissues.

These are the lines which I venture to suggest to you as those which are wanted for the education at present of an Indian girl. By using them all you will prepare her for the life of a wife and mother, to be a helpmate for man, to sympathise with him, to train her children well. Not one of these tends to 'unsex' them, or to make them less feminine than they would otherwise be. I am putting them down as a necessary minimum. I am suggesting them now to you as a student of the subject, who has had a good deal of experience in it, as plans—plans that some of us are now trying to introduce, bit by bit, as one school after another for girls comes into our hands. I submit that these questions ought to be discussed, so that you may form your own opinions on the best form of girls' education, and then carry them out.

All I would say, in conclusion, is that along some such lines of education you must guide your girl-children for the sake of India. Education for women

is wanted more than anything else. I hold that it is more important even than Mass Education, because to have only a male educated class is to strike at the root of the happiness of the home, out of which all good things come. It is dangerous that from a vivid public life, full of interest, full of keen and strenuous struggle, a man should go back into the woman's quarter of the house, and find himself carried back over centuries; nay, not even that, for they were better than to-day. Indian women have fallen between two stools: English education of men and the Paṇḍit education they used to have in earlier days, when every family had a Paṇḍit to read to the women in the evening, and so they had literary education, if they had not the outer education of the world. Both have been taken from the girls, and yet they remain with brilliant intelligence. I would back Indian women against Indian men for brilliance of intelligence, for willingness to study, and above all for that power of self-sacrifice which appears as public spirit, when it is carried out into public life.

What you want most in this country is that practical spirit of self-sacrifice, that public spirit which looks on the interests of the country as greater than the interests of the individual. You can learn this from women. They sacrifice themselves every day and every night for the interests of the home; they realise the subordination of the one to the benefit

of the larger self of the family. Learn that from your women and then you will become great, and India will become great ; for if you carry into public life the self-sacrifice of women, then the redemption of India will be secured. But you will do it best, if you will go with them into the world hand in hand, men and women together. The perfect man is made up, remember, of the man, the wife and the child, and not the man alone. If such men become citizens of India, then her day is not far off.

THE COLOUR BAR IN ENGLAND, THE COLONIES AND INDIA

THE seventh lecture of the course was presided over by the Hon. Mr. Kesava Pillai, and was delivered to a very full audience on November 14th.

The Chairman said :

The subject of the lecture has always been one of painful and anxious interest to the coloured races, owning willing allegiance to the mighty and gracious Sovereign of England. And the momentous events transpiring in South Africa have been straining our heart-strings, and given room for grave and sad reflections which one is unable adequately to express. Prejudices of colour, race, and creed have wrought havoc to man all over the world ; and England, despite her lapses, has always laboured and stood out for the emancipation and brotherhood of man. All the teaching of religion and the solemn and wise resolutions of British statesmanship have, however, not succeeded in reconciling all the hostile forces, and effectually checking undue racial ascendancy, guaranteeing peace and contentment to the weaker peoples.

The selfishness, which has organised itself under the banner of the colour white, presents a bar to the coloured subjects of His Majesty, in one or other form. In some places it is insidious in its operation, and in other places it makes an unabashed and brutal display, as we see it in the Colonies. But there are indications that the more refined mind of England and the true Christian faith and conscience are not slumbering over it; and, as previously in the world's history, the evil forces will be overthrown, and righteousness will be established for the peaceful, contented progress of all His Majesty's subjects. We are not altogether unfamiliar with the sort of disease, or the moral atrophy, that afflicts a portion of mankind with a white skin, and we have had it as caste bar in our own country. Caste has always been checked and diverted into healthier channels by great Sages and Saints. But caste in its worst phase has never been so cruel and heartless as the pride of colour.

The sentiment underlying it is opposed to the letter and spirit of the religion of the gentle Christ, as it is to every other religion, and it is hostile to the solemn and repeated promises and pledges given to us by the gracious Sovereign of England, as it is opposed to all the glorious and liberal traditions of the British race. And in the struggle for supremacy, as has so often happened in history, the evil forces will, we may trust and hope, succumb, and justice

prevail promoting harmony in the human family, so that there may be contented and peaceful working for the ardently hoped for federation of man, at least under the British flag, which has always been identified with equality and justice.

It is but meet and proper that a great philanthropist and religious leader like Mrs. Besant should raise her voice against unhealthy developments, and give warning of the dire consequences to mankind of colour prejudices, as of other prejudices among men.

I call on Mrs. Besant to deliver her lecture.

Mrs. Besant said :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS :

It is also, if I may say so, a very great pleasure to myself that the Hon. Mr. Kesava Pillai has taken the chair this afternoon ; for I have long watched his work in defence of the inarticulate masses of the Indian people, and knowing how, not only in the Legislative Council but outside in every place where tongue can plead, he has worked for the poor of India, it is surely specially suitable, specially reasonable, that he should preside when I am going to plead for those who, in a very real sense, may be called the poor of the world, the coloured races, but specially for the Indians, the people who make up this part of the British Empire, but who are very largely aliens in their own land.

A few weeks ago Sir Sydney Ollivier, coming back from Jamaica, where he had most successfully carried

on the Government of that Colony, speaking in England, used the phrase: "the colour line must go". You have there the keynote of my lecture. The colour bar must go, and it must go because the welfare of the Empire demands it; because justice decrees it; because the people ask for it in no uncertain voice. It is not possible that Indians shall remain for ever, as they are to-day, shut out from so much of right, so much of good, and shut out on that most flimsy of all pretences, the fact that, because of their climate, the colour of their skin is dark. Darkness of skin does not belong necessarily to the Indian branch of the Āryan race. If you go up into Kashmir you will find Indians living there who are far whiter than many of the European peoples. If you put a Spaniard, an Italian, a Kashmiri, side by side, it is the Kashmiri who is by far the whitest of the three; for, as a mere matter of fact, the pigment laid down in the skin, to which colour is due, is simply the result of certain chemical changes brought about by certain types of climate, and to make that a reason for political disability, for social inequality, is a scandal that cries aloud to heaven for redress. There is no God-given right in the white skin to claim authority over all the coloured nations of the world. There is no birthright in the white skin that it shall say that wherever it goes, to any nation, amongst any people, there the people of the country shall give way before it, and those to

whom the land belongs shall bow down and become its servants. Differences of race, those do carry with them connotations of difference of brain ability, of evolution, as regards humanity. If you take for instance, such a type as the Negro, if you take the Kaffir, if you take some of the hill tribes of India, if you take the Veddas of Ceylon, the hairy men of Borneo, there you are dealing with racial types, with particular developments of intellect; I cannot say with development of morals, for morals are often non-existing; but in any case with differences which are fundamental, and so do affect political and social equality. But where you are dealing not with racial type but with colour of skin, you are in an entirely different atmosphere, in an entirely different world. It is quite true that there are child-races just as there are children in a family. You do not set the child to manage the house—although he is very often the tyrant of it, I admit! You do not ask that the baby shall go out and look after merchandise and carry on the business of the family; and just as you have children in the family, so humanity has child-races, who should be treated fairly, justly, tenderly, kindly, in order that their evolution may be quickened because they have come into touch with a superior race.

But nothing of all that applies to the Indian of this country. None of the arguments can be used here with regard to the Indians who, taking them man for man, are equal with any Englishman. Some

Indians are greater, better, cleverer than some Englishmen, as some Englishmen are greater, better, cleverer than some Indians. That which I want to put to you is the position that, taking them as nations, you cannot say that either is in everything superior to the other. You may say that the Englishman is prompter, more accurate, more business-like than the Indian; but even then, if you go into it, you will very often find it is only a difference of method, and that the method of the Indian business man among his own business men is just as effective as the method of the English business man among his own compeers. I grant that when the English business man and the Indian business man come into touch with one another, very often, there is disappointment on both sides; not only on the side of the Englishman, I can assure you, but also on the side of the Indian. There are differences of ways and of customs. The Indian is very much more polite, for instance, than an Englishman, and if he does not want to close a bargain he will do it with many polite words and a good deal of salutation and all the rest of it. But he knows his own interests and his customers' abilities and wants quite as well as the Englishman does, and the clash is rather the clash of two civilisations than that of men inferior or superior to each other. So I am going to put as the foundation of my lecture that the Indians and the Englishmen should in all things be treated as on the same level.

And I submit that if the Englishmen in England were treated by some intruding nation, say the German, as the Indians in India are treated, you would not find that patience which here is found ; you would not find the submission which here lasts so long. And thus my foundation is equality, social and political.

This is absolutely necessary for the good of the Empire. This is not a question that concerns either England or India alone. I believe, as you know, that if they go on side by side, the whole world will be the better for their uniting ; but the condition of union is equality between the races, and the recognition on each side of that political and social equality. Without that the future is hopeless, and the difficulty is becoming greater, not less, day by day and year by year. Now, is this an unfair thing to claim ? But it was claimed in the Proclamation of Her Majesty, the Queen-Empress Victoria, which was issued in 1858. It was clearly laid down there that in her Indian dominions offices should be opened alike without barrier of colour. I am only repeating what that great Queen declared, and the Indian people have put their faith in the imperial word, and are always asking again for that which she declared was given. But you cannot give a gift and then take it back. You cannot bestow a royal boon, and then allow royal servants to filch it out of the hands into which it has been given ; yet I ask you : " Is that proclamation a reality, or is the colour bar still found

with respect to offices in the State, with respect to association in society?" You remember Sir John Hewett. I came across that rather imperious gentleman more than once during my time in the United Provinces, and one day he asked me to go to see him and I went; after we had had a good deal of talk, and after I had pointed out to him why many boys were getting into mischief, Sir John tried to entangle me in my talk. He said: "Well, Mrs. Besant, I notice that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has just said that he would be willing to serve under an Indian as Viceroy; do you agree with him?" My answer was: "Sir John, I agree with Her Majesty's proclamation of 1858." I thus succeeded in evading the question, because he could not go against the Queen, but on the other hand he was not willing to admit that an Englishman can serve under an Indian Viceroy. All honour to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal for daring to say out a thing like that. He was really a loyal subject, following the line of the imperial proclamation. He was willing to carry out what his Sovereign had declared to be her will, and the arrogance—for it is nothing less—which makes the claim that the white skin here must necessarily dominate the Indian is one, as I said, of peril to the State, of peril and of increasing peril, as communications become more rapid, as education spreads to ever larger and larger numbers. And it is because of this danger of the spread of education that the *Times*

objects to education being given as it has been given ; the *Times* says it has been given along wrong lines ; it says that the Government should take great care to control education, and be very very careful as to the kind of people whom it appoints to teach the youth of India. Very careful ! It seems to me they are careful enough when we look to Calcutta and see those three lecturers shut out of the Calcutta University, because they showed sympathy with suffering Muhammadans ; the *Times* slanders them and says that they are identified with sympathy with outrage ; what grosser libel could you have than that by the greatest journal in England ?

And there is one phrase the anti-Indian papers are very fond of : " We took India by the sword and we must hold it by the sword." England never took India by the sword. That is one of the common falsehoods which are circulated everywhere, in order to make everything distorted in the relation between England and India. Now I know the history of India. I have written a sketch of that history—it was many years ago—but I do not think my history of India would be admitted in the schools of this country. I know all the details from the coming of John Company here, very humble, very submissive ; only wanting small things : just a bit of land along the Madras coast—there was not a regular Madras then ; just a little bit of the island over on the western coast ; just a fragment up by the Hughli river, only to

build a factory and not to interfere at all with the people of the country ; but just to have a mill, just to be allowed to manufacture, just to be allowed to trade —because India was so wealthy in those days that trade with India meant a fortune in a few years. And so they came and settled down, and they were very good and very quiet and they had their own places. And then they went on putting out one finger after another and drawing in, drawing in. Then when there was a poor Indian who was in trouble, the Company must interfere to prevent this poor man being oppressed. The Company said: “ You come along with me. I will take care of you and you shall not be troubled.” And the result of their defence was another little bit of land pulled in, and presently came Clive and Warren Hastings. They are putting up a statue to Clive, but they do not put up a statue to Clive’s victims. They praise Warren Hastings. I would rather put up a record of his impeachment in Westminster Hall. If you read the treaties of those days as I have read them ; if you read the way in which every treaty was broken the very moment the Company had gained what it wanted and was strong enough to break it ; if you see the promises which were made in order to gain an advantage, and then torn into pieces the moment the advantage was gained ; you will understand why, in 1858, Punch wrote that fearful epitaph upon the Company—I forget the exact words—to the effect that it was well

that it was dead, and it went out of life with the detestation of all honourable men and the rejoicing of all who loved justice and truth. How did the Company win? When there was a quarrel between two Indian States it would side with the weaker, because by joining the weaker with the Company's arms it became the stronger, and then the two together were able to kill the stronger alone, and when the stronger enemy was out of the way the weaker could be conquered. And then you may read how a black powder was sold for gunpowder by treachery, so that the Sikhs were mown down by our guns and they helpless, with nothing but their deathless courage; and so you may go on page after page; and when you have read them all, I doubt if you will be proud of the way in which the Company "conquered" India, if it did conquer. It did not conquer, save by the swords of India's own children. That was the way in which the conquest was carried out by the Company. Now the Crown rules, and Lord Minto, speaking quite honestly and frankly, spoke the truth in Government House, Calcutta, when he said: "We are here because the majority of Indians now desire that we shall be here; and the moment they lose that desire we shall have to go." That is true, and that great Viceroy did well to speak out the truth so bravely; and he did it in a moment of danger, when he had hurried back to Calcutta where assassinations had taken place, and where he went to peril his own life, and show his confidence in

the Indian people. Because he believed in the Indians and believed that they wished him there, he sent away the British Guards who had been placed round Government House, and put back an Indian regiment to guard him, to show that he knew the Indians and trusted them.

I urge, then, that this sort of talk on the part of the *Times* and other papers should stop; that they should not try to stir up bad feeling against India; that they should realise that to make peace between them in feeling and heart is the duty of great newspapers, and that the more that is recognised the better for both lands.

Now where lie the special points of danger with regard to this colour bar? I have mentioned in my title three places: England, the Colonies and India.

Let us look first at England. I have spoken of the newspaper mischief. Now there has been, quite naturally and inevitably, an inclination for many years past for the young men of India to find their way to England. At first they went off in ones and twos; got into many difficulties in a strange land; did not know where to live; did not know how to arrange matters for themselves. And it was in that way that I first came into touch with numbers of them; some of them walking the streets, not knowing where to find a home; many who had run away from their fathers and managed to get somehow or other on board ship; sometimes a lad clever but poor coming

with a richer lad whose father permitted him to go ; and so one after another I met a number of these young men, and I found that they were very often not leading the best possible life. How could they ? They did not know where to find proper associates ; they had no one to help, to guide, to counsel, or direct them ; and can you wonder if, as strangers in a strange land, they often ran wild and got into foolish ways ? for there was no man to hold out a helping hand ; there was none to counsel. Here and there, yes, a friend was found, but not enough to deal with the ever-growing stream of Indian students. Now, why do they want to go ? I have heard an Englishman say here : “ Why do they not stay in their own land ? Have they not got good Universities here ? ” Yes ; but the reason why they want to go to England is that it opens to them the way to positions in their own land which no education here will give them. If England will examine over here for the Indian Civil Service, if England will give to the Universities here the same privileges given to the Universities in England, and let them be open gateways to all the highest positions in the Imperial Service in India, then it is very likely that Indian boys would not want to go to England as much as they want to go now. But so long as they cannot rise in their own land to the highest positions in the educational, medical and other forms of service, so long they are not to be blamed that they seek in England that which England denies to them in their

own country. If the stream is to be stopped, then bring about the reforms here to which I have just alluded ; but do not first say that no Indian shall rise to high posts in his country unless he goes to England, and then turn round, when the men go, and say : “ What do you come here for ? why don't you stay in your own land ? You have got your own Universities ; go to them ; why do you want to come to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and all the rest of these places ? ” You cannot blow hot and cold in that way. No one can believe this means good-will ; and Indians are angered at the mockery.

Things have very much changed in England now. The students are too much looked after now, as they were too little looked after in the earlier days. Here again I am speaking out of my own experience ; for some years ago we started in England a little Society for helping students, which has its own hostel ; which sometimes meets the boys at the stations ; which keeps a list of decent lodgings to which they may safely go ; which keeps also a list of families willing to receive them, vegetarian families, where they can go as paying guests ; which has a committee of country ladies of good position who invite the boys down to their own houses from Saturday to Monday, when they are free, and so treat them as friends and not as strangers ; and in many other ways we are trying to bring help rather than coercion. After a time 21 Cromwell Road began to notice us,

because they found a number of boys were in this way brought into touch with better surroundings, and Mr. Arnold—who is really, as I said the other day, a very good man and thoroughly sympathetic—asked us if he might sometimes send us students who did not want to be looked after too much, but still wanted a certain amount of help. And so things went on and on, until we linked hands, to some extent, with the Educational Adviser in England, and we have our office now at Cromwell Road, although we keep our hostel quite apart. And then, with his consent, we started a Society for helping distressed Indians, and so the work there is going on; but the difficulty is this: if you go to Mr. Arnold and ask him to help you to place boys at the Universities, to introduce them in any way to educational roads, he finds that he is blocked continually and that his best efforts often do not succeed. “Indians are not popular in England,” we are told, and it is only too sadly true. We have a number over there, some 8 or 10, all of whom will be able gradually to enter the Universities, but by private interest for the most part. After all, it does not seem a very good plan to have a very costly educational establishment with one adviser and an assistant adviser—I do not know how many more advisers there are now—and then to find that, if you want a youth to enter the University, you had better keep perfectly clear of all those who are concerned in the advising. It is not the fault of

Mr. Arnold, I repeat. But that sort of way of dealing with educational questions in England can never answer. Oxford and Cambridge have always been free. They have always admitted young men on their own accounts without dictation from anybody; and they are not inclined to fall in with all the red tape of the educational establishment. They would rather pick and choose for themselves, and not take these young men as they are sent down from London. I urge on this one point that there is a growing difficulty in England for Indian students, and that the great Universities there are becoming more and more unwilling to accept them. The colour bar is showing itself in the Universities as it did not show itself some years ago. The University authorities are limiting the number they will take, and they plead: "Well, people come to us from everywhere. They come to us from America, they come to us from the Colonies, with the Rhodes scholarships." And there lies another danger; for the more Rhodes scholarship men you have in Oxford or Cambridge, the more colonial-born youths win those scholarships and come to Oxford and to Cambridge, the more will the colour prejudice grow, and the colonial hatred of the coloured man will influence the whole atmosphere of Oxford and Cambridge life. That is one of the increasing dangers. The Colonies are the great danger to the Empire to-day, and if they are to send their men to Oxford and Cambridge, to pass on from that into the

Indian Civil Service, I wonder what kind of Indian Civil servants we shall have here. South Africans, and Australians, and Canadians, and all the rest of them, who keep Indians out of their own countries, will then come here to fill up the ranks of our Civil Service with their hatred and contempt for the coloured man.

That is one of the great difficulties facing us with this colour bar in the Universities to-day. And suppose after the University difficulties you take other questions in England. There is not the same social equality to-day in England that there was some time ago. Mr. Gokhale says that it is because of the large number of Indian-returned officials. His opinion is always to be listened to with respect, and if he says he has found it so, he is probably speaking of what he knows. For I have heard him speak with a righteous bitterness of the feeling of inequality continually present in the Indian heart; and as you get greater and swifter communication between England and India this difficulty is ever increasing. The old official came here to live. He settled in India. His friendships were here. His interests were here. His home was here. Now they come over and go back on short leave. Now they are always thinking of how quickly they can return to the land they love, and leave "the land of regrets"; and so the official becomes less Indian in his affections and not more so, for he is always looking to the day when he will go

back to England instead of thinking of spending his whole life here, and dying in the land of his adoption. That is one of the increasing difficulties which Mr. Gokhale has very rightly pointed out.

But turn from England to the Colonies for a moment. I do not want to say much about South Africa. We heard much of that last night.¹ But I do want to remind you that between the years 1907 and 1911, in four short years, no less than four thousand Indians in South Africa have been condemned to imprisonment with hard labour without committing crimes. You should keep a few of these facts in your memory in order to stir you into effort, and I must also remind you—for I want to put them on record here—of two or three sentences published lately in England by Lord Amptill, who was Governor of Madras as you know, and who for a time acted as Viceroy of India. I am only quoting these in order to show you how he regards the question in relation to the Empire. I am quoting for the moment from the *Empire Review* article as reprinted over here. "This question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa is a test of our fitness to be an Imperial people, and a test of the fitness of democracy to deal with external affairs." But that means that England is on her trial as an imperial people. It means that democracy is on its trial, whether it can or cannot

¹ There had been a public meeting on the South African question the night before, at which the whole position there had been dealt with.

deal with outside affairs. Frankly, I am not a democrat—I beg my Chairman's pardon—I do not believe that democracy is capable of dealing with great problems of statesmanship. I do not think that a nation is the only thing that can be governed without knowledge, which seems to be one of the central points of democracy; and so I hold to the need for an Imperial Council, made up of representatives of every nation in the Empire, which alone shall deal with Imperial affairs, and leave democracy in each nation to deal only with its own internal affairs, which it can at least understand better than imperial concerns. And this is a test, Lord Ampthill says, of England as an imperial nation, as a democracy fit to govern. Then he says, as to “the special pretence that a self-governing Colony cannot be interfered with”—I am going to apply this to Australia in a moment, where it is peculiarly cogent—that “the self-governing Colony cannot get on without our interference. Ordinary law and order cannot be maintained in South Africa without the assistance of British troops, as we all have been forced to recognise during the past few months.” Then there is a way of putting pressure on South Africa. If she cannot keep order and law without the assistance of British troops, and to keep it has to ask England for her assistance, then England can make it a condition of preserving that law and order, that the Colony shall treat with decency the Indian whom it has tempted to live upon its soil. So again I find Lord

Amphill pointing out: "There is no excuse for the neglect and incompetence which allowed the deplorable trouble in the Transvaal to continue to grow until it aroused indignation in India, more general, more widespread and more genuine than any movement of public opinion which has yet pervaded that vast and heterogeneous dominion. Can any one doubt that if British subjects of whatever race or colour were ill-treated in any foreign country, we should insist on having redress? Why then should we be afraid of insisting on our rights with our own kith and kin across the seas?" If England could go to war with a South African Republic because it ill-treated Indians, can it not control the same people when they are ill-treating them worse than the South African Republic ever did? And so Lord Amphill gives grave words of warning: "The harm is not confined to the sufferer on the spot; for what do you imagine would be the effect produced in India when these poor people return to their country to report to their friends that the Government of the Empire, so mighty and irresistible in India, with its population of three hundred millions, is powerless to secure redress at the hands of a small South African State?" Are these words of incitement or words of warning? Are they not the words of a lover of England and India, who sees the danger into which the Empire is rushing? I find him also saying: "It is a matter of good faith, of the credit of British statesmanship, with

which every citizen and well-wisher of the country and Empire is concerned." That is true. It is those who most love England who are so sad over the colonial problem; they would fain see her mighty and respected, and the Colonies are throwing mud into their mother's face.

It is not only the Indian question in South Africa, though your sympathy may naturally have hidden from you another question there. I only allude to it, for I am not speaking on coloured races in general. There is a problem arising for the South African peoples themselves. They have issued a passionate appeal for help, for protection; for this same evil Government in South Africa has passed a 'Native Act' which practically confiscates the lands of the people, makes them outcasts in their own country, drives them away from their little settlements, and leaves them helpless and starving and unprotected. At the end of the hopeless appeal to England, they send up a passionate cry to God for help; they say: "For the weak, for the poor, for the helpless, for the inarticulate, for the down-trodden, there is no help in Britain; only God is left to help us and protect us." Those are an inferior race, I grant; but how bitter it is that they, children as they are, should look in despair to God for the protection that is refused to them in the Empire.

Now look at Australia for a moment. I want you to see what this question means. Australia has a

population of five millions of Whites ; no more at present. There is an enormous continent ; they claim it as theirs. Nobody else must come in ; the Japanese shall not come in ; the Chinese shall not come in. All these people—are they to be kept out ? Can they be kept out ? a few have settled there. What is going to happen, if Japan, which has more claim in the Pacific than the white colonists of Australia, makes up its mind that it also is going to have a Colony in Australia, and takes up a part of that vast line of unprotected coast, settles itself down in thousands in a part of Australia as yet unoccupied ? what is Australia going to do ? Japan is much nearer than England. The Japanese fleet is able to take care of itself. The Japanese soldiers can give very good account of themselves ; suppose Japan says : “ We are going to settle on these empty lands of Australia,” what is Australia going to do ? Cry out to England : “ Oh ! we want your navy. Oh ! please send over some troops here. We will give you one Dreadnought, if you will promise to send a number of Dreadnoughts to guard our coast line, which we cannot keep against the intruding Japanese.” But what right have the English there that the Japanese have not ? They are both invading the land of another people, and I do not know that the Australian settlers have any particular claim to monopolise the whole of that great continent. “ Oh ! ” they say, “ the Pacific will be an Asiatic lake.” Why should it

not be? People never seem to ask these very obvious questions. The Pacific is more connected with Asia than with any other continent. It is not connected with Europe at all. America may have something to say about it. But why should not the Pacific be an Asiatic lake, if the Asiatics choose to make it so? The Australians seem to realise only their own power, and to be unconscious of other peoples' power. *There* lies England's power over these recalcitrant Colonies. It is England's name that keeps Japan to-day from invading Australia. If England were not there with her flag on Australian soil, we should soon have the Japanese Sun flying over a Japanese army of occupation. The magic of England's name and of her Empire alone closes Australia against Japanese invasion.

Very well then; let the Mother Country turn round and say: "You depend on us to keep your lands for you. In exchange for that, we demand that our Indian subjects shall be allowed free entry into those lands." Why not? I would put pressure on in that way. I would say: "Yes; if you insist on making trouble for the Empire, the Empire is not going to protect you; if you are so short-sighted, because so ignorant, that you claim to be superior and to trample on the Asiatics, then we will stand aside, and let you show your superiority; we will see whether, in the final arbitrament of battle, you will be able to hold your own against the Chinese and Japanese millions."

There lies the answer to this arrogance on the part of these upstart self-governing Colonies.

Again, when Indians go, say to the West Indies, the Fiji Islands, or anywhere else, they go under indenture. That ought to be forbidden absolutely. The Indian Government has forbidden emigration to South Africa. Let them forbid it everywhere under indenture. I am told—I have not been able to verify the figures—that of those who go out from here indentured to those islands, half die; that the death-rate is 50 per cent. I mean to try to verify that and see whether that is true; for emigration is emptying the fields of India of agriculturists, and the plantations of India of the labourers, and if they only go out to die under the slavery that is called indenture, it is time the Government declared that under no name shall slavery be allowed wherever the flag of Britain floats; for do not forget that that flag is the flag of Liberty, and should float over no slave. If you send a man under indenture for a term of years, to go away into a country where the whole judicial machinery is in the hands of his master and owner, that means that he has no more liberty than the chattel-slave, that his wife's honour is not safe, his children are in peril. Indentured labour is a shameful thing. No civilised country should allow it; for it is always used against the weak and the helpless in order to put them under conditions that the strong would not endure. And so along that line I submit

that the Colonies need to be taught a lesson, and that it is the duty of India, which is suffering so much, to point out to the Imperial Government that along that line a lesson should be given. It needs union here, strength, courage, self-control; but given those, the millions of India are able to protect their brethren abroad.¹

But what about India herself? What about the colour bar here? I said that I claim for India, for Indians in their own land, perfect political and social equality with the white people here. I believe the political equality will have to come first; because without that there is always a sense of contempt and despising, of superiority on the part of those who rule. Political liberty—has it ever struck you that wherever Indians have been tried they have shown themselves to be fully the equals of English people in matters of Government? Why, the Government lends its own officers to Indian States. Nothing could be more unwise, if you will allow

¹ Time did not allow of the mention of British Columbia, where the wives of Indians are not allowed to join their husbands, and where an Indian may be prevented from landing, if he has not come direct from India—a thing he cannot do, because there is no direct line. One instance of the results there may be given; an Indian, walking with his companions, fell down in the street, taken suddenly ill. It was found to be a woman, on the verge of child-birth, who had come in man's clothes, in order to rejoin her husband. A Sinhalese Theosophical lecturer was obliged to obtain a permit to enter Vancouver from the United States, and was only admitted on condition that he should stay for only a very limited time. The Christian Christ was an Asiatic, but no Christian Colony would admit Him were He now on earth. They worship Him, well out of their way in 'heaven,' but would "pray Him to depart out of their coasts" were He on earth. And they ask His blessing! Could hypocrisy go further?

me to say so, than the policy of shutting them out of office in the British Rāj; for when England lends a good officer to an Indian State, when that officer becomes Dewān of the Indian State, when he shows that he can administer, when he shows he is able to govern, when he makes the Indian State far better than it was before, when he feels his own power to control, his own power to administer—what do you think he feels when he comes back to the British Rāj, and reverts to his former inferior position? Well, the Government is teaching Indians that they are able to govern. But it is expecting them to forget the lesson, the moment they come back within the limits of the Presidency here.

Take your judiciary. You have tried Indians there on equal terms. Has it not answered? Has the High Court of Madras ever been more respected than when Sir V. Bhashyam Aiyangar and Sir S. Subramania Aiyar were judges, representing India there? Was it ever stronger, ever fairer, were its decisions ever more respected, than during the days when those men sat on the judicial bench, and when Sir S. Subramaniam was the Acting Chief Justice in Madras?¹ And if you look at the High Court now, it has ten judges, six of them English and four Indians; one of the Indians being sick, an Englishman was lately put in his place; so that now we have only three Indian judges

¹ The change for the worse of feeling towards Indians is shown by that same High Court now treating that eminent Judge as unworthy of credit as a witness in the Court over which he ruled.

and seven Englishmen on the Bench. Is that fair? Certainly Mr. Justice Sundara Aiyar is no particular friend of mine. But I am bound to say that when he was disabled by illness, another Indian should have been put in his place, not a seventh Englishman. For, after all, most of the decisions are Indian decisions, affecting the lives of Indian people and the property of Indian people, and it helps in the administration of Justice when Indians, who have justified themselves by their power, have a fair share of the High Court Bench, and their countrymen see them in high places of honour. The High Courts have been the only places where Indians have had fair play, and there they have absolutely justified themselves.

I urge now that step by step—it cannot be done in a moment—more and more Self-Government should be granted to the educated people of the country, and that there shall be a definite recognition that that increasing Self-Government shall never stop, until India has her own Parliament, and is represented, as a Self-governing part of the Empire, in the Imperial Parliament also.

Only when the colour bar is swept right away in politics, shall we find the principle of social equality prevail. Now social equality is a matter of feeling, of hearts. It does not exist here. It is better in the South than it is in the North. In the North, during all the time I have been at Benares, until the last few years, when an Indian went to call on the Collector or

the Commissioner, he was kept outside in the verandah—among servants, and the poor people who were waiting—until the Commissioner or Collector was ready to see him in his office. I do not notice that here; down here you are not as bad as that, I am happy to know. Even now in Benares if an Indian goes to call, he is not shown into the drawing-room; he has to go and wait in a summer-house, or some inferior room, until he is admitted to the office. Never is a call returned. My Indian friends go and call on the English official. Why should not the Englishman go and return the call? Why these differences in social matters? Why is it that going down the Beach Road here, I never see in the same car an Indian and an Englishman side by side—save in one case; Mr. Justice Miller has been seen driving in a car with a coloured man. He is the only one thus seen, excepting, of course, people in cars belonging to the Theosophical Society; there you do not get one colour only but both colours, for as a matter of principle there is no colour difference amongst us. That is one reason why we are disliked by the arrogant among the English. When there are parties, what happens? All the English people drift off on the one side; all the Indians drift off on the other. Now and then, a very condescending Englishman walks over to the Indian side to say a few patronising words. Friends, it does sound absurd, I know, but you know it is true. You have been, as I have been, to many

of these functions, and I have felt shamed by that distinction showing "Government by colour". It is making a growing bitterness in the hearts of some of the best men in India, and especially in those of the younger generation. It is growing up in them, with the danger that it will grow into hatred of England, because they feel themselves insulted wherever they go. I know young men, able, clever, capable, honoured in the Indian community, whose hearts are full of bitterness against the English because they are not treated as equals anywhere in English Society. I am told that over and over again; and you know that it is true. All that has to stop; and it lies with the English to stop it. The Indians have been friendly, but they have found themselves thrown back over and over again; and it is now for the English everywhere to come forward, and meet their Indian brethren on equal terms, in every social function, walking, talking, driving, and in their clubs. How many Indians are there in the Madras Club? (cries of "none"). No, there are none; and if there happens to be an Englishman who is friendly to Indians, he is told he had better withdraw his name, otherwise he will be "black-balled". I do not speak of these things without having certain facts in my mind. And your Cosmopolitan Club? How much cosmopolitanism is there in it? Oh, a few English names? Do their owners ever go there except when a Viceroy comes? Then I have no doubt they flock

in ; but in the ordinary life of the Club, in the daily meetings of the Club, are there any Englishmen ? You know there are not ; cosmopolitan in name but, to use an offensive term, “ native ” in practice. No, these things make hatred. They make bitter indignation, none the less bitter because it is silent. Oh ! it is said ; there is a “ habit of subordination to Europeans,” and so a man is never able to speak out. It is not very pleasant for those who respect Indians to hear it said that all manhood goes from the Indian when he has been an official, and has the habit of subordination to European superiors. I heard the phrase the other day, and I shall never forget it ; for it means that under present conditions the Indian loses all sense of dignity and self-respect, and becomes a serf in reality although a free man in name. I do not myself believe that that is true, but if the English believe it, it is ill both for England and for India.

Friends, it is better for all that these things should be said out openly, for they are whispered everywhere where Indians meet together. Better that a person in a white body should say them out frankly, where all may hear them, in order that they may be changed. For I believe that the colour bar and all it implies are largely due to thoughtlessness, to silly pride, to the pride of race, which has grown mad in a country where there is no public opinion to check it. And yet these very people who show it—not the best and the highest of the English here—if you only

knew how when they go back to England they disappear into the crowd and nobody recognises them. It is all very well for the lower officials here, who stand very high and mighty with their subject population; but when they go back to England they are only too glad to meet as friends the people whom here they overlooked. They hate me here because I associate with Indians on entirely equal terms, and have given my whole life to India. There is the difficulty I have to face to-day; because it is known I stand with Indians and will stand with them, as my equals not as my inferiors. If I go into an Indian house I follow the Indian customs, as Indians are expected to follow English customs when they go into an English house. I show them the same courtesy that I would show to the people of the body that I have. I make no difference with man, woman or child. To me they *are* my equals, and I know that because of that the English community here hates me. One of the Judges said here lately that I had no idea as to how much I was hated by the English community. I dare say; I am sorry, but I cannot help it. I am not going to change my conduct for any disadvantage that comes from it; for I believe that I do England more service by showing my Indian fellow-subjects respect and honour, than I do by holding up my head in the air and not seeing when an Indian goes by. When I go back to England, these people who would not know me here are only too glad to know me there; for

they quite naturally find their own level in ordinary English society, and, as in England I happen to be very popular, they like to see me there. I laugh at these things, they do not make me angry, because they are perfectly absurd. But while I may laugh, because I am indifferent to all these petty distinctions, it is not a matter of indifference to the man whose livelihood depends on the favour of the lower official; the livelihood, not only of himself but of his wife and children, depends completely on his standing well with his immediate superior. A black mark of an official against a name needs a strong man to wipe it out or to disregard it; and therefore it is that I, who have nothing to gain and nothing to lose, speak out clearly what thousands of Indians are saying quietly from mouth to ear; for that dull, dumb discontent is dangerous to the Empire I love. I look for the day when the English and the Indians will have forgotten all these silly questions of colour; when they will meet, man and woman, as free citizens of one mighty Empire; when there shall be no differences save by merit of character, by merit of ability, by merit of service to the country. Those are the true tests of the value of any man or woman, white or coloured; those who can serve best, those who help most, those who sacrifice most, those are the people who will be loved in life and honoured in death, when all questions of colour are swept away and when in a free country free citizens shall meet on equal grounds.

THE PASSING OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

THE eighth and last lecture of the course, on November 16th, was densely crowded, the ordinary restrictions on admission being waived, so that every inch of space was packed. Dewān Bahādur L. A. Govindaraghava Iyer presided, and was very warmly welcomed.

The Chairman observed that he had been told that some harsh things were going to be said by Mrs. Besant against the Brahmins, or at any rate, that they were to be treated to ideas which might appear to be not pleasant to the Brahmins. He also heard that she had a purpose in fixing upon a Brahmin as Chairman that night. But if Mrs. Besant considered that the placing of a Brahmin in the Chair was necessary, she was mistaken in fixing upon him as that Chairman. He was one of those who thought that any caste or section of caste had first to look to the welfare of the community of which it was a portion in the first instance; and with the reason ceasing for any particular portion having dominance the dominance was bound to go. The question of caste

was one which was intimately associated with the Hindū social organisation and there were numbers of people who attributed much of the good influences in Hindū society to the system of caste. There were again numbers equally large, if not larger, who thought that many of the evil features which now darkened Hindū society could be ultimately traced to this pernicious system of caste. For ages past caste was a recognised institution and it was bound up with Hindū genius. Pains should be taken not to subvert it but to modify it, and change its influence, so as to make it more suitable to present-day conditions. Whether they willed it or not there were laws at work which affected the making and progress of society. Those laws were bound to affect Hindū society as much as any other, and they would be rendering great service if they recognised what the purpose was for which those laws were intended, so that they, by willing recognition of what was expected from them, might also throw in their lot intelligently in the way of putting those laws into operation in a way which would cause the least friction. They should in that way invite all discussion, and welcome it. It was idle to pretend that the caste system could be abolished altogether. When they thought that their progress could not be effective or desirable unless they carried the masses with them, and unless they implanted in the masses some of those cravings, the realisation of which would make them progressive,

then they had to recognise that it was impossible to do away with castes. The subject was the Passing of the Caste System. It might well be that it had to be recognised that the conditions in which they were living had become so changed from what they were when caste was first thought of, that there was a necessity for a rearrangement of the basis on which Hindū Society was to proceed, and every one ought to recognise that there was considerable force in that desire for rearrangement. They found that although the hereditary organisations still continued, the specialisation of functions was no longer to be found now. With respect to several social observances there were lapses. With the intimacy of communications of the different nations of the world, and the interchange of thoughts between the peoples of the world, their ideas were undergoing transformation, which must have an effect on the system of caste as well. The time had come when they should take account as to how they stood, how best their goal might be reached, what modifications were necessary, and how best to bring about those modifications. To do that they wanted persons who had experience not only of this country but of other countries. If they could only secure one who, with a scientific and analytical turn of mind, was able to bestow a dispassionate consideration on the question and viewed it with sympathy and understanding so as to enable Hindū Society to take its proper place, to such a

person their thanks would be due. Mrs. Besant spent her whole life-time in a scientific study of things. She knew enough of their Society, and she had such insight into Hindū sentiment and the conditions of Hindū life, that she would interpret them to the meeting correctly, with the detachment of view that was essential to a consideration of the subject.

He called on Mrs. Besant to deliver her lecture.

Mrs. Besant said :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS :

My wish to have a Brāhmaṇa in the Chair was not because I wanted to say hard things of that great caste, but because I wanted to separate my lecture at the outset from the idea that it was an attack upon Brāhmaṇas. Most, though not all, of my dearest friends in India belong to that caste, and I should not dream of attacking it. May I, before I begin, say one word of especial thanks to our Chairman, because he travelled all through last night in order to keep his engagement to-day, and I feel grateful to him that he has come at very great inconvenience to himself in order to fulfil his promise to occupy the chair this evening.

I am not unmindful of the very serious gravity of the question on which I am to address you this evening. It is quite true that the institution of caste lies at the very foundation of the Hindū system of polity, and no one who did not take a pleasure in destruction, no one who was not reckless of the

results of what he did, would dream of striking at the foundation of the house without exercising great care as to how his blows were made. For it is quite possible, when you are dealing with foundations, to bring the whole building down about your ears; certainly a result that no lover of India could hope for, certainly not an outcome of any very careful consideration of the subject. Let me say at the very outset that I do not regard the fourfold caste as necessarily destructive of what is called brotherhood. I know that is very often said, but I do not share the opinion, and I will tell you why; I have found in my personal experience with my Indian friends that it very often was more conducive to brotherhood than injurious. I have found that the recognised line of the great castes very often made it possible to have a social friendship which in the West it would be difficult to carry out. For instance, in Benares one day I happened to want a shawl and went into a wealthy friend's house; he sent round word to a shop to bring some shawls down. The merchant who was going to sell them came in, sat down on the drawing-room floor beside us, playing with the children of the house and conversing about public matters, while waiting for the arrival of the goods. And I confess that in the West I should have been very much surprised if I wanted a shawl, and Messrs. Robinson came in there, and made themselves entirely at home in my drawing-room.

Similarly, I have noticed that when a dramatic representation was being given, the whole place outside the immediate one marked for the guests was thrown open to the streets, and people came up from the street and enjoyed the theatrical performance without let or hindrance of any kind; the mutual courtesy that grows out of a recognition of the order made that a possible thing to do, whereas no one having a party in London would dream of letting any one come up out of the street. It would not be possible. A recognition of a social order very often may conduce to greater freedom of social intercourse. It is not then along that line that I am going at all.

I am going to submit that with the progress of evolution in human society you must have in a living society flexibility and the power of adaptation. I am going to submit that the caste system, as it exists, is rigid, lacking in flexibility, and unadapted to the present conditions of the day. I am going to submit that very sweeping changes are necessary, but side by side with the changes there should be the recognition of certain facts in nature and certain facts in history. I am going, in fact, to try to show you that great alterations must be made, and that the caste system, as it exists to-day, has to pass away. The realities underlying it can never pass away, for there are certain great facts in nature which are not peculiar to India but are found everywhere, which are the real foundation, or were the foundation, of the

system in the past; it is because the caste system of to-day fails to meet those facts of nature, it is because the dharma of the caste and the name of the caste are now entirely unrelated, that the caste which was natural has now become artificial, and that which was a defence to Hindūism has now become a danger and a menace to progress. Changing conditions are all around us, and every nation is adapting itself to those changes brought about by the inevitable progress of evolution, which, let me remind you, is the expression of the will of God.

Now we notice that in Indian history great reformers have tried practically to abolish the caste system. You find Guru Nānak, for instance, and the latest of the ten great Gurus of the Sikhs, Guru Govind—you find they tried to make an equal brotherhood without recognition of caste. You cannot read the institution of the definite organisation of Sikhism by the tenth Guru, without seeing that he was sweeping away entirely all differences that could be called differences of caste. Nevertheless, in modern Sikhism those differences have grown up again. Hindū reformers of more orthodox type, they also for a time, like Chaitanya, have tried to do away with caste; none the less it has ever returned. Even in the Christian Church you may have noticed that there is caste among Indian Christians as well as among the Hindūs; and quite lately in the Court some of the Christians claimed their right to go into the chancel

of the church, while others said: "You may stand down in the nave, you may remain in the aisles, but we cannot allow people of your sort to come to the sacred chancel near the altar." When you see caste reappearing everywhere, it gives pause for thought. As our Chairman has said, that system has lasted for thousands of years. You have to see why it has lasted. It has lasted because there is a truth at the base of it. It has lasted because that truth needed expression at the time when the system was formed. The vitality of a system is in the truth concerning it, and not in the errors. That is true as regards everything that lasts for ages. The venerable has ever in it some kernel of truth, and I am not in any way going to ignore that in the points that I want to put to you. In fact I rather feel as though I should offend all of you; on one side by showing the uses which caste has subserved in the past, on the other in saying that the time has come for radical changes which are needed by the progress of the people. And I do not know whether I shall be in the proverbial position of a person who falls between two stools, because I am going to try to show you the two sides of the question, and that is the best way of getting abused by both sides of any method that I know.

First of all then, friends, as regards caste, I want to remind you of two passages, very familiar to you, which we find in that great scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*,

and I will ask you to remember, when I mention that sacred name, that it is a book which, perhaps above any other book in India, sways the thought of the great masses of the people, both educated and uneducated. It is useless to ignore, it would be criminal to deny, the enormous weight that this great scripture has in Hindū thought, and we must and we ought gladly to recognise the weight that we may here find attached to the system of caste; although I shall submit that it is only to the true system to which these shlokas apply, and not to the changed and degraded system that we find in India now. Shri Kṛṣṇa says in the fourth adhyāya: "The four castes were emanated by me by the different distribution of qualities and actions. Know me to be the author of them, though the actionless and inexhaustible." Then later on in the 18th adhyāya the same idea is repeated: "Of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣhatṛiyas, Vaishyas and Shūdras, O Parantapa, the duties have been distributed, according to the qualities born of their own nature." There you have caste, as defined, as seen, by Shri Kṛṣṇa Himself, emanated according to certain qualities, distinguished by certain natural characteristics; and that view of caste, I may remind you, laid down by Shri Kṛṣṇa, is one which is also emphasised by the Manu. It is one which you find asserted in several of the Purāṇas; it is one which you find proclaimed in the *Mahābhārata*, so that this union of name and quality lies at the very

foundation of caste as rightly understood and as serviceable in the progress of a nation.

Look outside India for a moment. Is there any country in the world where the fundamental natural facts on which caste is based by Shri Kṛṣṇa are not to be found? You find a productive class, the manual workers, that we call in Europe the proletariat, the great masses of the population, the producers of wealth. I put them then as the productive class. Then you have above them the class that takes those products, that distributes them over the nation and over the world; I will call that the distributive class. Then you have a third class, those who protect and guard the whole nation, the protective class, represented by the nobles with the King at their head, by the judges, by the barristers, as we should say over there, by all who are engaged in the profession of law, by the army, the navy, right down to the ordinary soldier and sailor and the civil police force in the nation. Their duty is to protect, and under their protection the whole nation works at peace. Because they are there to guard, the producers of wealth can work in safety; because they are there to guard, the distributors of wealth can send their goods to every corner of the nation, and load ships with them to distribute them over the world; and so you find those three: first productive, next distributive, and third protective. Then you have one other class—those who instruct. Now, if you look at this in

the West, now far does the hereditary principle come in? because that is the next point that we shall have to consider with regard to caste here. It is quite clear that the productive class are those who here would be called Shūdras; that the distributive class would be called Vaishyas; that the protective class would be called Kṣhaṭṭriyas; and the teaching class, religious and secular teachers, those here would be called Brāhmaṇas. But notice that in all these, qualities and classes go together. Those who belong to the productive class produce; those who belong to the distributive class distribute; those who belong to the protective class protect; and those who belong to the teaching class instruct. But you do not always find that those who belong to the Shūdra caste here produce. On the contrary, among Rājās there are some Shūdras. You do not find that every Vaishya distributes, though, on the whole, the Vaishya has kept to his dharma more than any one of the other castes. You certainly do not find that the Kṣhaṭṭriya carries on the whole government of the country, or the legal business, or the administrative work. You do not get many Kṣhaṭṭriyas among your Vakil population here in Madras. When you come to the teaching class, I am afraid that the Brāhmaṇas are rather conspicuous by their absence from that. So you see the difficulty we are getting into by dividing the qualities and the castes. See how you have the confusion of caste which Arjuna

feared and prophesied. You are in the midst of it to-day; for remember that the highest—the teaching caste—is the one on which the strictest rules were imposed, the greatest restrictions laid. They could not have the liberty of the Shūdra to go about wherever they liked and to travel as they pleased. They could not have the wealth of the Vaishyas; that was taken up by the Vaishya. They could not have all the pomp and the strength of the Kṣhaṭṭriyas; that was taken by the Kṣhaṭṭriya. In the old days learning was their glory and poverty was the crown which they wore; but you now find surely that most of the lawyer profession are Brāhmaṇas, Mr. Chairman. It is no wonder, because of the brilliancy of their intelligence, and they are the most highly educated caste, and have been so for thousands of years. Remember that they are the caste against which all the arrows are shot by those who do not approve of the longing for liberty among the Indians. Sir Valentine Chirol, for instance, always talks about the Brāhmaṇa caste as dangerous, that which should be trampled down and destroyed. Why? Because they stand for educated India, if you take them as a whole caste. I do not mean that in the other castes you do not get splendid men; but I mean that the highest intelligence certainly belongs, on the average, to this caste above all others, the caste which has been highly educated, which has been learned for thousands of years.

Now with regard to that, I said I would ask where in Europe—England I will take as an example—the hereditary principle comes in? Clearly, it does with all the four but one. If you look back to the Middle Ages and see how it worked down to our own day, you will find the proletariat, the productive class, fastened to the soil. Generation after generation the son of a serf was a serf. But there is still a trace of that left in modern England, for in modern England if a tramp or vagabond is taken up, what do they do with him? The first thing they do is to ask him what is the parish to which he belongs; where does he belong by birth; and then they send him back to his place of birth because, as a child of the soil, he must be supported on the portion of the soil where his birth took place. It is one of the many traces of the old system, that sending back a man to his own parish to make him chargeable upon the people to whom by birth he belongs. If you take the middle class, you find that right through the Middle Ages, as they grew up, the freedom of the occupation of the people of that class passed from father to son. Now, although I am three parts Irish, I have one-fourth part English, from my father. He happened to belong to the Fishmongers' Company in London. They are not now fishmongers—for those Companies are a queer survival of old privileges; but because of the hereditary principle, I could take up my freedom in the Company, although for my part I had

nothing to do with it save by right of birth. Then again, if you take the King and the nobles, clearly there the right is hereditary, and the outcry against the House of Lords is that it is based on the hereditary principle. The only class in Europe which was not based upon that was the Church. The Church was thoroughly democratic and took in people from everywhere. Why? Because the priesthood was celibate, and because with celibacy, with an unmarried priesthood, the hereditary principle obviously cannot be maintained. That is the reason why the hereditary principle is not visible with regard to the Church.

Look then for a moment at that fairly, and recognise that everywhere this fourfold division must inevitably exist. You must have division of labour. It is the very groundwork of civilisation. The arrangement wherein the cultivator of the soil had a knife stuck into his belt, so that he might save his life from the marauding thief, is not a convenient arrangement for a civilised country. It is perhaps better to have a policeman round the corner, than for one to keep one eye in one direction and another in another, to see whether anybody was coming to cut your head off. You must have this division. It is the very condition of progress.

Why then am I speaking of the passing of the caste system? Because the qualities and the divisions of the castes do not now go together; because the qualities are no longer found marking out the

castes one by one ; and because the hereditary principle no longer represents the facts as it did in the time when quality and name went hand in hand. Exactly the same reason that in England gives rise to the cry : " Abolish the House of Lords," gives rise here to the cry : " Abolish the caste system." The leaders have forgotten their duties, and in forgetting their duties they ought rightly to forfeit their privileges. In the old days in England when a man was a Duke, what did it mean ? *Dux*, a leader ; and when a trader took off his hat to the Duke he took it off to a man who bore on his shoulders the burden of the trader's defence. A Duke had to go and fight in the battlefield for the trader ; he had to lead his own retainers into the field for the tradesmen. The Duke and his peers had to support the whole burden of the army of the country, and not one penny of taxation fell on the wealthy trader while those men were a reality in England. But can you wonder if now a tradesman turns round and says : " My Lord Duke, I pay taxes for the standing army ; you no longer defend me for nothing, as you used to do in the old days. I cannot give you both things : I cannot give you the honour due to the man who fights for my protection, and also pay the heavy tax for the army and navy, for the defence which was your duty, and which you have neglected to do."

The same reason comes in here. When the Brāhmaṇa was learned, when he was poor, when he was

the teacher of the people, and when he was verily the mouth of God for those amongst whom he lived, there was no complaint as to the honour paid to the Brāhmaṇa caste; it came out of a grateful heart, and it grew out of a real reverence for spiritual superiority; but when a man goes into a law-court and finds the Brāhmaṇas contending one with another on two sides of some legal question, you can hardly wonder if he turns round and says: "My Brāhmaṇa friend, you used to teach me for nothing; you used to educate my children: now you ask me to pay fees to you as a Vakil. You must not expect the honour due to a Brāhmaṇa at the same time that you take fees for the fighting of my case."

Now where you find these things taking place in different countries, it means that a change is going on. That is why I make the comparison. You have here to deal with a great world-movement, which is altering the conditions of modern society, and the duty of the thoughtful and the wise is to try to understand the forces that are at work, to compare them in country after country, and realise the unity of forces under the differences of names. Then I think you will see that, all the world over, this great movement changing society is going on in every community. It demands flexibility, it demands the absence of rigid caste here, of rigid class in the West. It demands that a man's qualities shall have free play in society, and that he may do whatever his inborn faculties enable him to do.

If I look back into the past, into the facts of the caste system, I find in that past that there was a very great flexibility. I want now for a moment to glance at the historical side, because originally, remember, there was no caste among the Āryan people. It was not an original institution of the Lord Vaivasvata Manu, the Manu of the Āryan Race. At first there was absolute equality, for all were children of the Manu. 'Sons of Manu' was their title of honour, and between sons there may have been elders and youngers, but there was no division of caste. Caste was only established when the Āryan minority, coming down into India, was in danger of being swamped by constant intermarriages between that Āryan minority and the vast majority of the mixed population round them. I recall the name of caste in Samskr̥t. What is it? Varna, colour—a very significant name. If you happen to remember a picture by Ravi Varma, a picture of Viṣṇu in the form of the Fish-Avatāra, you may recall that He is coming up from the sea of matter with four little children in His arms; and one child is white, one is red, one is yellow, and the fourth is black. What does the legend mean?

You have four Varnas, or colours. If you go back you will find that the pure-blooded Āryan was white; that intermarriages had brought about a red type—intermarriages with the great warrior race of the Toltecs, whom the Āryans first fought and then fraternised with, so that you had great groups in Northern

India of red-brown people. Then there had been intermarriages also with a type of Mongol, with whom all trade was carried on, and the intermixture of the Āryan and the Mongol gave rise to a yellow type. Then there were the children of the better class of aborigines, not the lowest types but a comparatively civilised type, though blacker, and these passed into the ranks of the Shūdras.

Now pause on that for one moment, because it is important historically. Your white Āryans, white as when they came down, and of pure descent, they were the Brāhmaṇas; and as they came down to the South they became, in the South, the hereditary priestly class, changing in colour naturally with the change of climate—for as I was pointing out to you on Friday, differences in colour of skin are differences of climate and not of race. Then you had a great fighting caste of pre-Āryan India, a mighty, stalwart people, intermarrying with the conquering Āryans, who became the Kṣhatṛiyas, the mixture of the Āryan with the red Toltec giving rise to the red-brown type that is still preserved, let me remind you, among the Kṣhatṛiyas of Rājputāna. Then you have the third, the trading people, the Vaishyas, who had the yellow tint by intermarriages with the Mongols; and then the great mass of the population, the dark, the Shūdras. All those who had the Āryan blood were twice-born, and the Shūdras alone were outside, as the fourth caste. The more you look back into the history of

the past, the more you will see how this comes definitely out. You see how Varna is really the correct word; how the colour represented in each caste the characteristics of the descent of each caste: the priestly, who were learned, pure Āryans; the fighters, coming from the Āryans and Toltecs; the traders coming from the Āryans and Mongols; the servants coming from the aborigines. This is the historical view, while the other that I was putting is the view based on fundamental facts in nature.

If you will take the trouble to go into that fully, as you may, with the help of the many ethnological treatises and others, that will enable you to judge, you will see that the establishment of these Varnas was a measure of self-preservation, necessary to keep the people of purer blood from such numerous inter-marriages as would have swamped them entirely, and led to their disappearance in those early days; necessary, in order that the Āryan type might persist and dominate; in order that the partial mixture, having occurred, might not be lost, swamped by numbers, but might be preserved with the enormous value that they had gained by bringing over from the past great types all that was necessary for the full development of the Āryan people. Then went out the command that the three castes might not inter-marry outside their own borders, so that the types might be definitely established, and the great Hindū polity built up on that basis of caste, growing out of

hereditary types, out of difference of quality, and partly out of difference of origin.

But then you must remember that although there was this historical foundation, this necessity for refusing further intermarriages and for laying down strict rules as to the intermarriage of the caste-people among themselves, none the less there were many exceptions. You will find in the *Institutes of Manu*, mixed as they are, you will find there that a Brāhmaṇa, having married a Brāhmaṇa wife, might, under certain conditions, intermarry with the other castes. You will find also that it was possible for people to pass from one caste to another.

When is the thread ceremony, at what age? It is not, like the Christian baptism, performed with a babe. The Christian theory that a baby is taken into the Christian Church is quite rational and intelligible. A Christian parent has a child, and the baby is baptised into Christianity. But you never give the sacred thread to a boy as a baby. You give it to him when he has reached a definite age, varying according to the caste. Why, do you suppose? Surely because of the qualities. If the inborn quality was not there, justifying the birth from a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣhatṭriya parent, then that child might not be recognised as belonging to that particular caste. If you doubt it, let me for a moment turn to the authorities which at least every orthodox Hindū must accept—I do not say that the unorthodox need accept

them. I find it laid down most definitely in the *Mahābhārata*: "Not birth, not Samskāras, not study of the Vedas, not ancestry, are causes of Brāhmaṇahood. Conduct alone is verily the cause thereof." Now it is sometimes said that this is based on the idea of reincarnation only, and that conduct in one life would simply bring a man into the appropriate caste in another. That would be a maintainable proposition if that passage stood alone, for I frankly admit that the whole idea of caste, as a religious institution, is based on the great principle of reincarnation; I have often pointed out that the soul is intended to pass up from caste to caste, learning the lessons of each caste in the lives that are spent therein. But I read with regard to this same question not only the statement that birth and samskāras alone cannot make the Brāhmaṇa, but I read a sarcastic phrase: "As a wooden elephant, as a leathern deer, such is the unlearned Brāhmaṇa; the three are only names. The Brāhmaṇa who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere, becomes a Shūdra in that very life, together with his descendants." I have heard some of my Vakil friends say that they do not know anything about the Vedas; I have heard them suggest that the doctrines of Hindūism were quite outside their study; so that I might almost read into this that the Brāhmaṇa Vakil, who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere in the law-courts, becomes, according to the doctrines of the Hindūs, a Shūdra in this very life! You know

you cannot apply orthodoxy on one side and not the other. You cannot argue on the documents as far as they help you, and then carefully shut them up the moment they go against you. That is what many of my orthodox friends do. They quote the Shāstras wherever they suit them. We have a proverb in England that "the devil can quote scripture for his own purpose".

A wooden elephant and a leathern deer may be pretty and ornamental, but they are not of much use; and there is a great deal of birth-Brāhmaṇahood to-day which, like the wooden elephant and like the leathern deer, is exceedingly ornamental in the matter of privileges, but is not very valuable in the matter of the qualities of the caste. That is the point that you must bear in mind in the changes that are to come.

Then you may read: "The Shūdra becomes a Brāhmaṇa, and the Brāhmaṇa a Shūdra (by conduct). Know this same to apply to him who is born of a Kṣhatṛiya or of a Vaishya. It is conduct that makes them, not birth."

I should venture to submit that a perfect Brāhmaṇa would have both conduct and birth; but so thoroughly was it recognised that conduct was necessary, that that was made sometimes the only test of caste. You remember in the *Chhāndogyopanishāt*, when Saṭyākāma came for instruction, and he was asked by the Guru whose disciple he wished to be: "To what Goṭra

do you belong?"—a quite proper question—Satyākāma did not know. He was desirous of truth, as his name implies; he spoke the truth. He said: "I do not know my Goṭra; I was born when my mother was a maid-servant at an inn. Jābālā was her name." What was the answer of the Guru? He embraced the boy and said: "Because you have spoken the truth, I accept you as a pupil." So he passed into the Brāhmaṇa caste—though apparently an illegitimate lad—because he showed what ought to be the quality of a Brāhmaṇa, that he could not tell a lie, even for his own credit, even to gain his own end. But he does not stand alone. I can give you a dozen names of people who changed their caste in the old days, because they showed the quality of one in which they were not born and desired the name as well as the quality. With all these undoubted facts behind you, can you say that your modern caste system is right as a matter of fact? Never. Birth alone shines out at every point. Sometimes what ought to be the child-soul of a Shūdra is found in the body of a Brāhmaṇa, or the bargaining soul, as it ought to be, of the Vaishya in the body of a Kṣhatṭriya. Can you pretend that these are the castes spoken of by Shri Kṛṣṇa as emanating out of Him by qualities and character? The only thing you can do, in such conditions, if you wish to keep the outline of caste, is to change it back to the old flexible form, and say that whatever the qualities are which the man shows out, they mark his

caste. Then it would be reasonable ; then it would answer to the facts of nature ; then it would show caste as part of a natural order, and no one would object to it. But when you find the whole thing mixed up anyhow, and the qualities of one in the body of another, can you wonder that respect for the men who have the name and not the reality has fallen away ?

Then there is another point on this that I should like to put to you. It is not a question only of the four great castes in modern India ; it is a question of the innumerable sub-castes which break up the whole of Indian society practically into these little water-tight compartments. Why, you cannot marry a child outside your own fragment of caste. It is not as though a Brāhmaṇa merely married a Brāhmaṇa ; it is this particular kind of Brāhmaṇa who must marry with their particular kind. There is far more harm in these artificial distinctions of sub-castes, than there is in the four broad divisions of caste. It was because of that, that when writing the textbook for our students of the Central Hindū College, while showing what caste ought to be, the following words were used : “ Hindūs are split up into innumerable little bodies, each hedged in by a wall of its own, regarded as all-important. It is difficult, if not impossible, to create a national spirit from such inharmonious materials, and to induce those who are accustomed to such narrow horizons to take a broader view of life. While a man of one of the four castes in the

old days felt himself to be an integral part of the nation, a man of a small sub-caste has no sense of organic life and tends to be a sectarian rather than a patriot." And then we went on to say : " Unless the abuses which are interwoven with it [the caste system] can be eliminated, its doom is certain ; but equally certain is it that if the abuses could be destroyed and the system itself maintained, Hindūism would solve some of the social problems which threaten to undermine western civilisation, and would set an example to the world of an ideal social State."

It was because I know the West so well, with all its struggle and its competition, that when I first came here and found this outline of the caste system, I tried to find out whether it was not possible to revive the old system by reviving the dharma, so as to make caste a reality. The first eleven years of my working in India, I worked perpetually at the attempt to revive the idea of dharma, of function, in relation to the four great castes. By 1905 I had come to the conclusion that it was hopeless ; that you could not get those who were the highest caste to go back to the old duties, to give up the power, the wealth, that they were accumulating, and the life, the larger life in the world, which had become their natural expression. By that time I saw the task was hopeless, and from that time onwards I have been working, solely to form an opinion in favour of change. Seeing, then, in the words that I

have lately quoted, that the system was dying, I urged that we should try to make the transition as easy as possible; that amid "the crash of falling systems" we should try to carry on the realities while we could not carry on the form; and failing in that also from 1905 onwards, I have found myself compelled to go a step further and to say: It is not possible to do anything more than to admit that the form is now but a shell and not a reality, that it answers neither to natural facts nor to social functions, nor to anything of the historical conditions which once in the past made caste valuable, nay, priceless, to India. I regret it, but am bound to say that I do not believe the caste system can continue in India in the changing life of the nation, and with the heavy responsibilities which, more and more, will fall upon her sons. Since the castes will not perform their dharma, since none are willing to take up special work because they have the birthright, I think we must be honest and say that qualities and caste are separate; the Brāhmaṇa does not show the Brāhmaṇa quality, save here and there in his power of self-sacrifice, in which his claim to the ancient Brāhmaṇa spirit shows itself. I have said sometimes that it is among your Vakil population that you find your best, your most self-sacrificing workers, and I love to think that that is because they are mostly Brāhmaṇa, and that they have brought over that splendid quality by tradition from the past.

It seems to me, friends, that the steps that we have to take now are steps which shall abolish the distinctions of caste which no longer represent realities. And there is one idea that I am borrowing from Babu Bepin Chandra Pāl of a most valuable character, which I had worked out to some extent for myself, but which he has put better in a little paper given to me by Mr. N. K. Ramaswami Aiyar. In a very useful way he has pointed out that Varna never stood alone; it was always Varn-āshrama was emphasised, and he has urged that the discipline of the Āshrama kept the Varna along healthy and real lines. He points out, for instance, that it is only in the second Āshrama, the household life, that caste really comes out in all its divisions. In the Brahmacharya, the first of the Āshramas, all the boys went together to the Guru; they lived alike; they were on an equal footing; they all begged; they all studied; they lighted the Guru's fire; they looked after the Guru's cattle, and all the rest. So there were no caste divisions; all were equal. During this time, they did not go back to the family; they remained with the Guru from the time of the giving of the thread until their education was completed. So that through the whole of the student life caste did not appear. When they came into the Gr̥hasṭha life, the second Āshrama, then the divisions of caste appeared; then they were carrying on the functions of national life, the functions of organic

life, through the castes. When that was over, they passed into the third Āshrama—the Vānaprastha—the forest-dweller. Then again caste disappeared. No longer was any claim made upon others; and in the Samnyāsa, the last Āshrama—what is there? It is the Shūdra caste glorified; the servant, no longer the servant of the individual but the servant of humanity. He owns nothing; he holds nothing; he gives himself to the people; he has become, as it were, a transfigured Shūdra, the lowest become the highest, after the Āshramas had been gone through. What was the result? As Mr. Pāl says, it made caste only in one Āshrama practically, the Grhasṭha. In the first, the Brahmacharya, the third, the Vānaprastha, the fourth, the Samnyāsa, there were no traces left of caste. A most luminous idea, showing how the training of the Āshramas kept the caste in its right place; how a boy, coming out, with nothing of caste-pride in him, to take up the Grhasṭha function in the body politic, would go to the discharge of the duties for which his qualities fitted him. So the Vaishya would be a Vaishya because he had the qualities of a Vaishya, the Kṣhatṭriya a Kṣhatṭriya, the Brāhmaṇa a Brāhmaṇa. Thus in the life of the household, the name would express the function and the character of the man who entered into it. So the Ashrama moulded the Varṇa, and the two together gave you a splendid social order.

We are not likely to get that back. That would be too good to be true. And let us say frankly,

friends, that we have no true caste in India to-day. We only have the name of it. That is why I speak of the 'passing' of it. Nor can you wisely have it restored in the form in which it once existed, even if that were possible. For you have to take up greater responsibilities, the greater responsibilities of Self-Government which I have spoken of, and caste is keeping you out of the conditions of life which are absolutely necessary for the growing of India in the future. If you have to mingle with all around you, men of every caste and men of none; if you have to mingle with the English, as you must do—for remember the colour bar exists on your own side as well as on theirs; if I spoke on Friday of the pride and arrogance of the one, we must not forget that on the other side there was and is as much pride, as in the days when a Brāhmaṇa would wash his hands carefully if he had shaken hands with an Englishman. The bar is not all on one side; I have had a Brāhmaṇa do it with me; I do not mind, naturally, because I thought it foolish and childish. But there is the fact that now you have to mingle side by side. I have pleaded for equality, but equality in society and politics means intermingling with people of all castes, and with the English and with other foreigners as well. You cannot do your duty to Mother India in the future, unless you are willing to meet men of all types on the same level. What about our Musalmān friends? Caste breaks up Indian society far more than

anything else. What may not be accomplished if Hindūism and Islām are left to mingle without any barrier of caste? So far as I know, Islām is the only religion where there is absolutely no caste. I have seen a Musalmān take food out of the same dish with a man who was on the same level as a Pariah; a low-born Musalmān taking food out of the same dish as a Musalmān gentleman. If Musalmāns and Hindūs are to work for the redemption of India side by side, this caste division must go. You cannot refuse to work with them; for if you do, it means working against each other. There will then be no possibility of the greatness for India of which we dream. It is not a division of religion. Your philosophy is the same. If you will only look into it, there is really no difference between the Vedānta of the Hindūs and the great metaphysics of the Middle Age doctors of Islām. I have read both, and I know that of which I speak. I see the bridge between the two religions in that wonderful teaching which comes from both alike. But the caste difficulty is a real one. You cannot sit side by side to take food; you cannot now even eat in opposite rows. In Benares the fathers of the present generation were less rigid. The barrier of caste is now stricter than it was in those days. Some of my friends tell me that when they were little boys they had food in the same room with their Muslim brethren. They ate in the same room, and they

talked over the same food. Again, when you meet Englishmen you must meet them on terms of social equality. You cannot do that, while your caste keeps you separate. You have to choose between isolation and subjection inside your caste, or, on the other hand, perfect political and social equality outside the barriers of caste. Inevitably it is coming, whether you will or not. The Spirit of the Age is greater than any believe who are clinging to old customs from which the life has fled.

But you have a choice between two ways of change. And now I venture to speak to my Brāhmaṇa friends. There are two ways in which privilege disappears: one when the people, who no longer respect the privilege-holders, are angry with these privileges which outrage their sense of justice; and if it goes too far, you get a great uprising like the French Revolution, and the privileged aristocracy perish by violence and are lost in the midst of the nation. Or you may have the wonderful action of the privileged class in Japan, as privileged as any of the Brāhmaṇa caste here, who, called on for their country's sake, stripped off every privilege they held and threw them at the feet of the Motherland, in order that she might become free and great. Their privileges were even greater than the Brāhmaṇa privileges here. They might strike down a man in the street who they thought insulted them, striking him down with the sword which they alone might wear.

None could say them nay, none could arrest or save; and yet that warrior caste, proud with the pride of warriors, flung all aside and stepped down amongst the people, content to justify their warrior spirit in the war against Russia, where those very Japanese who had thrown away their privileges showed their Kṣhatṛiya spirit, lived on the battle-fields in defence of their country.

Which way will you take, you of the great Brāhmaṇa caste? Will you wait until the surging wave of prejudice and anger, rising higher, higher, and higher, sweeps you all away against your will? or will you perform that noblest of all acts—sacrifice your privileges for the sake of Freedom, for the sake of the greatness of the Motherland, stretching out your hands to all without exception, and calling on all to share with you in the redemption of the land?

Oh! I have had a vision, which I hope is not only a dream, of this mighty caste, which in the past has given to India all that she has of greatest in her literature, in her arts; of you, the natural leaders of the people by your high education, by your brilliant intelligence, by your power of speech—I have had a vision of your mighty caste going forward to the feet of India, the Mother, taking off the coronet of privilege from your own heads and laying it down in sacrifice at her feet. I have dreamt that that great act of national sacrifice, once accomplished, splendidly

performed, India the Mother would stretch out her hand in blessing, and would say to her children who had made the sacrifice : " Go back to your people, and take your rightful place again as leaders still in India. Give to them your splendid intellect, give to them your wonderful eloquence, give to them the power of your past and the influence of your names, crowned no longer with the crown of privilege but with the deathless crown of self-sacrifice."

That is the vision which I have seen, that the dream which I hope will prove true. Then the Brāhmaṇas, having stepped down, will be raised up by the love of a grateful people, who will follow leaders who are leaders by quality, and not merely by the accident of birth.

BROTHERS OF SERVICE

Brothers of Service Series No. 1

CONFERENCE OF THEOSOPHICAL WORKERS
AT ADYAR

"THEOSOPHY must be made practical" was a sentence written and published long ago by one of Those whom Theosophists regard as Masters. Since Mrs. Annie Besant came to India in 1893, she has been seeking for ways of service to India, so that the country of her adoption might rise in the scale of nations, and take the world-position to which her past entitles her and which her future will justify. Rightly or wrongly, she judged that the great Forward Movement must begin with a revival of spirituality, for national self-respect could only be aroused, and the headlong rush towards imitation of western methods could only be checked, by substituting spirituality and idealism for materialism. Great success attended the work, and she then added to it educational activities, so as to appeal to the citizens of the future and shape their aspirations towards Nationhood, as an integral part of the coming World-Empire. Cautiously she carried on some Social Reform Activities, organising propaganda against child-marriage, and in favour of foreign travel, helping the latter by the establishment of an Indian Hostel in London, and of a

Committee of friendly Theosophists who would welcome youths arriving in England as strangers. For many years many of her more attached followers have been pledged to delay the marrying of their children for some years beyond the custom of their caste and neighbourhood. In politics, she has urged the larger ideals, and has, especially in England, spoken for the just claims of India.

Now another step has been taken, and some of the best T. S. and E. S. workers enrolled themselves on the 20th September, 1913, in a band who have taken the following sweeping promise :

“Believing that the best interests of India lie in her rising into ordered freedom under the British Crown, in the casting away of every custom which prevents union among all who dwell within her borders, and in the restoration to Hindūism of social flexibility and brotherly feeling,

“ I PROMISE :

“1. To disregard all restrictions based on Caste.

“2. Not to marry my sons while they are still minors, nor my daughters till they have entered their seventeenth year. (‘Marry’ includes any ceremony which widows one party on the death of the other.)

“3. To educate my wife and daughters—and the other women of my family so far as they will permit—to promote girls’ education, and to discountenance the seclusion of women.

“4 To promote the education of the masses as far as lies in my power.

“5. To ignore all colour distinctions in social and political life, and to do what I can to promote the free entry of coloured races into all countries on the same footing as white immigrants.

“6. To actively oppose any social ostracism of widows who remarry.

“7. To promote union among the workers in the fields of spiritual, educational, social and political progress, under the headship and direction of the Indian National Congress.”

Breach of any clause entails expulsion from the organisation. Those who are not prepared to take the whole of this, may take any clause or clauses which they feel they can work for. Thus some who are in Government Service, take all but 7, as they cannot participate in the Indian National Congress as a movement. Non-Hindūs take clauses 4, 5 and 7.

On the 21st another meeting was held of all who were working for education, or social or political reform. Various matters were discussed, and the members agreed to do everything possible in their respective neighbourhoods to unify the various bodies engaged in progressive work; to establish Libraries for books about the four departments of the forward movement; to form translation committees for the publication of leaflets and pamphlets for propaganda purposes. The co-operative movement was recognised as one of vital importance in the Department of Social Reform.

Mrs. Annie Besant's carefully planned and sequential work of the last twenty years seems to be issuing in her carrying with her the bulk of the Theosophical Society—while guarding it from committing itself *as a whole* to any special opinions or activities—along the line of National Service to India, just as in England she is leading the way along a similar path, ventilating plans for profound social reorganisation, with love instead of hatred as an inspiration. She aims at the ever-closer union of the British and Indian races by mutual understanding and mutual respect. The present bold step has been led up to very gradually and quietly, and its effect on Indian public life will be watched with interest.

Brothers of Service Series No. 2

FOR THE UPLIFT OF INDIA

SOME earnest workers for Social and Religious Reform have determined to make a resolute effort to serve India by bringing about the changes necessary to enable her to take her equal place among the self-governing nations which owe allegiance to the British Crown. They are prepared to sacrifice themselves for this purpose, and to face the difficulties in the way of all who are ahead of their time, allying themselves with all who are working for the same end. With this object in view they have taken the following promise:

“Believing that the best interests of India lie in her rising into ordered freedom under the British Crown, in the casting away of every custom which prevents union among all who dwell within her borders, and in the restoration to Hindūism of social flexibility and brotherly feeling,

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“7. To promote union among the workers in the fields of spiritual, educational, social and political progress, under the headship and direction of the Indian National Congress.”

Those who cannot take the whole of this promise may choose any one or more clauses of it, which they feel they can honestly carry out. Everyone who takes the whole, or any part of it, must understand that he must personally maintain the principles he has accepted, and must face, for himself and his family, any social difficulties that may arise in consequence of it.

It is earnestly hoped that many religious Hindūs will join this band of workers, in order that they may preserve to India the ancient and priceless religion of Hindūism, now threatened with decay by its practical separation from the Movement of Progress in India. The splendid heritage of spirituality and philosophy transmitted from the past is in danger of being identified with a narrow and unprogressive orthodoxy; the life of a religion is shown by its power to adapt itself to new conditions, and while its roots are deeply struck into the past, its branches must spread far and wide, and shelter all progressive movements into which the life of the Nation is flowing. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Islām, are moving forward towards a future in which all shall dwell together in civic amity, and shall co-operate for the

common good. Hindūism, the oldest and the most widely spread faith in India, must take her place with the sister faiths, and must no longer stand apart in social isolation. Let her cast away the unessentials, and cling only to the essentials—the Immanence of God and the Solidarity of Man. All gracious customs and elevating traditions may be followed by her children, but not imposed on the unwilling, nor used as barriers to prevent social union. So shall she become a unifier instead of a divider, and again assert her glory as the most liberal of religions, the model of an active spirituality which inspires intellectual vigour, moral purity, and national prosperity.

ANNIE BESANT

Packets of this leaflet, containing 500 copies may be had for Rs. 6/- 1,000 Rs. 10/- post free.

Brothers of Service Series No. 3

THE STALWARTS' PLEDGE

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"7. To promote union among the workers in the fields of spiritual, educational, social and political progress, under the leadership and direction of the Indian National Congress."

(Date).....

(Signature).....

(Address).....

.....

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Those who are not prepared to take the whole of this, may take any clause or clauses which they feel they can work for, writing these out and signing them. Thus some who are in Government Service, take all but (7), as they cannot participate in the Indian National Congress as a movement.

All communications should be sent to

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