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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE programme of work before the present Parliament as sketched out by the Premier is a very comprehensive one. It was necessary that it should be so. Bills are to be introduced dealing with the problems of housing, health, development of transport, revival of rural life, land settlements of soldiers and a host of others. Every war brings in its train its own problems for solution. The present war has shaken the framework of life to its very foundation. And we are not surprised at this long list; we wish it had been longer. Many believe, and with good reason, that something will have to be done to regulate marriage relations and to take care of orphans and the children of the very poor. But the most difficult of all the problems awaiting solution is that of labour and its demand. Labour has taken up an uncompromising attitude and has made such extravagant demands that if they are granted the inevitable result will be a state of chaos. The Premier has given Labour a distinct warning, and he may be trusted to deal firmly with the situation. He means what he says.

NOW that the text of the draft covenant of the League of Nations has been published and also formally placed before the Peace Conference, the idea of the League must be considered to have made a real and substantial advance. On the whole the arrangements proposed should receive general support. We know there are people who have no faith in the successful working of such a League and who will still be prepared to call it a League of Dreams. These gentlemen think only of the difficulties in the way and the dismal failures of some efforts at international arrangements in the past.

We ourselves have had our misgivings at times. For instance, the cablegram about the extensive preparations made by America for the economic exploitation of Persia, when the American President was engaged in blessing the idea of the League at the Peace Conference, is hardly reassuring. But it must also be remembered that during the last four years the world has made tremendous progress. Mainly owing to President Wilson's efforts, European politics have been raised to a higher platform, and a new spirit has begun to pervade all international relations. After all, if on every occasion a new proposal is put forward, some one cries out, 'there's a lion in the path,' and we get frightened, we had better say good-bye to progress and reform for all time.

DIFFICULTIES there will be and they must be overcome. So also misgivings must be sought to be removed by due safeguards and guarantees. The proposed arrangements about the League provide these in a fair measure. The general body of delegates of the leagued nations, the Executive Council, the permanent Court of International Justice, the permanent secretariat, are proposals that inspire hope, so also the prohibition of secret treaties and agreements and the necessity for their open registrations, the new doctrine of mandatory Powers, acts or charters to be given to the administered territories and to be guaranteed by the leagued nations—these are features that create confidence. Even if all these end in nothing—which is hardly possible now—we still rejoice to see all these questions discussed in an open conference of the nations of the world.

THE prohibition of secret diplomacy would come none too soon. The world knows and is also suffering from the havoc it has brought in the past. Here is a fresh illustration. A telegram appeared in the papers last week that Japan was exerting pressure upon China not to reveal at the Peace Conference the existence of secret treaties between them. This was immediately followed by an official denial of each one of the allegations. Now what is the world to accept as the truth? While, on the one hand, it is well known that Japan has often followed the western Powers in her methods of secret pressure and concessions and exploitation, it is equally patent, on the other, to all concerned that western Powers are not overfond of Japan, and some of them at any rate are likely to try to damn her in the eyes of the world. But

because secret diplomacy has been rampant in the past, even the official denial of Japan cannot fail to have a bitter taste in the mouth.

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We are glad that the organ of the non-Brahmans in Maharashtra, the *Deccan Ryot*, has joined in the general protest against the excessive solicitude shown to the I. C. S. in the Viceroy's speech. Whilst this protest is entirely just, the announcement contained in the speech about the pay, pension and conditions of the imperial services being determined by the Secretary of State has not attracted the attention it deserves. This announcement certainly goes too far. In the first place, the Viceroy should not have taken a decision on a subject which lies mainly within the domain of the functions committee. Secondly, the interests of the officers already in service should alone be safeguarded, but the future responsible Government of India must be free to prescribe the terms of fresh entrants. Again, the power of access to the Governor behind the back of the minister, proposed to be given to heads of departments, is highly dangerous and cannot but place the minister in a very weak position. No wonder, therefore, that the *Madras Mail* should regard the Viceroy's speech as reassuring to the services.

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THE limitation of the period during which the Emergency Powers Bill is to remain in force to three years, which was the result of a united non-official opposition to the measure, is certainly a triumph of the popular cause, so far as it goes, but that does not obviate the principal objection which has been urged against it, *viz.*, that the reforms should be given a chance to effect an improvement in the situation before any special legislation, arming the executive with extra-judicial powers, is passed. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, in an article from his pen in the *Social Reformer*, has pressed the same view upon non-official members and advised them to refuse to make themselves responsible for the proposed measures. We have no doubt that the advice will be followed, unless of course Government withdraws the measures in the meanwhile. It was of course but fitting that non-official members should thank the Government for the consideration they showed to public opinion, even before the bill went to the Select Committee; and among the members who so thanked the Government were Messrs. Patel, Khaparde, Chanda and Banerjee. Mr. Banerjee, while thanking the Government, also told them that the non-official opposition still remained, and that their final attitude would be determined by the changes which the bill would undergo in the Select Committee.

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AND yet the correspondent of the *Hindu* says that there was an unworthy compact between the Moderates and the Government, the former having agreed to withdraw their opposition in consideration of the concession by Government. This is a

pure myth, invented by the paper out of its well-known partiality for the Moderates. It also holds the Moderates to blame for the participation of the members of the Select Committee in its proceedings, equally without reason. To say that the policy of abstention from the sittings of the Committee was defeated because of the weak-kneed Moderates, is more derogatory to such stalwarts as Messrs. Khaparde and Patel than to the men who have roused the ire of the *Hindu*. It is possible that opinions may differ as to the chance of success of the policy supposed to have been contemplated by the Nationalists, and we take comfort in the thought that Mrs. Besant disapproves of the policy, without any instigation from the Moderates. Mrs. Besant herself is now a Moderate, it is true, but still she is a Progressive Moderate, and perhaps may be recognised as proof against bureaucratic blandishments.

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The *Hindu* has taken upon itself to publish the text of the manifesto which is being privately circulated in Madras among the members of the legal profession. It is understood that the manifesto is receiving wide and influential support, and if there was no other indication of the fact the excited comments of the *Hindu* alone would sufficiently prove it. The policy advocated in it approximates as closely as possible to the Moderate attitude to the reforms, which, in our opinion, is most conducive to the interests of the country. Frankly acknowledging that the proposals of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy constitute a definite advance upon the present position, the manifesto proceeds to point out certain deficiencies in them which need to be removed if they are to be fully satisfactory. In suggesting amendments, it recognises the necessity of abiding by the limitations which are contained in the Parliamentary announcement of 1917 and takes care to see that all its amendments are in accordance with the terms of that announcement. Thus it does not quarrel with diarchy in the provincial Governments, but would only limit its domain by securing as large a transfer of subjects as possible to popular control, and seeks to introduce the principle into the Government of India also. That such a movement should have been initiated in Madras of all provinces by men of weight shows how great has been the recoil from the extreme attitude adopted at Delhi.

* * *

THE *Hindu* points out that the support of diarchy in the transitional stage, which this manifesto recommends, is inconsistent with the condemnation of that system, which was endorsed by the Madras special Conference. But is not the resolution of the special Congress, agreeing to the reservation of certain specified subjects to the bureaucratic Government, equally inconsistent with this condemnation, and did not the *Hindu* support this resolution, setting aside its own former condemnation? While the chagrine which that paper feels

at the support which this manifesto is receiving is intelligible, it is difficult to understand why *New India* should jeer at it as trying to "save the scheme." Did not Mrs. Besant oppose the demand for full provincial autonomy at Delhi with the same object? And did not Mr. Jinnah and Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar do likewise just to prevent the scheme from being wrecked? *New India* calls the scheme unsubstantial and illusive; if this description were just there would not be much justification for opposing the policy of its total rejection; nor would there be any sense in accepting its framework, as Mr. Ramaswami Aiyar does. To go forth then expressly to save the scheme is neither very unpatriotic nor quite unnecessary.

* * *

IN the opening address of the Dewan to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly of Travancore, which commenced its fifteenth session on Monday last, his remarks on the growth of education in the State deserve special notice. Of the total population, 11.9 per cent. attend schools, and eight taluks have all the children of school-going age in schools, calculating the school-going children, however, at the too low percentage of 15 to the total population. The State is arranging to provide noon-day meals to school-children and making strenuous efforts towards the diffusion of education among backward classes. The number of Pulaya schools rose in the past year by as much as 62 per cent., i. e., from 10,913 to 17,753; that of Parayas rose by 37 per cent. and of Ezhavas by 11 per cent. In about two thousand classes children of the depressed classes were enrolled, and in nearly half of them they were admitted for the first time last year. Indeed, it is now reported that 'cent. per cent. of literacy' was attained among the Ezhava and Pulaya communities in most taluks of the State. There were 86 girls attending colleges. All this shows gratifying progress.

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THE next item that will attract attention in the Dewan's speech is the proposal for an increase both in the personnel and in the powers of the legislative council. "It is now more than twenty-five years," says the Dewan, "since the existing enactment on the subject was passed, and the comparatively high level of educational progress attained in the country during the interval warrants the introduction of a substantial instalment of reform, calculated to satisfy the growing desire of the people to share in the work of administration in a larger measure than hitherto." It is to be hoped that the reform which the Travancore Durbar is contemplating will be of a sweeping character.

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THE leaflet on self-determination, issued by the Home Rule League, does not clearly state the manner in which that principle should be applied to India. It takes exception to the policy announced in 1917, first, because of its enunciation having proceeded from a foreign Government and, secondly,

because of the reservations contained in it. Curiously enough, as the leaflet proceeds, it waives both these objections and allows that there must be a transitional period, during which some "transitory provisions" should be brought into effect. It describes in detail what the scheme will develop into at its consummation, but has no suggestion to make about the initial stage, which is the most urgent and difficult question. It must be said, however, with a feeling of deep thankfulness, that the leaflet does not, by special mention, exclude social arrangements from the application of the doctrine of self-determination, as the public speeches of several Nationalists, including the editor of the *Kesari*, did last week in Poona. These sturdy Nationalists maintained, in a characteristic way, that the political fabric alone should be founded upon President Wilson's principle, but not the social fabric.

* * *

THE discussion on Mr. Patel's Bill has led many people to lose all sense of consistency. A paper in South India called the *Hindu Message* is proclaiming every week what, in its opinion, the fundamental principles of Hinduism are. As a staunch upholder of the Hindu standpoint, it is of course opposed *in toto* to the principle of liberty and self-determination in social matters underlying the Bill. But the paper is also strongly nationalist, and therefore is against privilege as exemplified in the position of the Indian Civil Service. Thus it quotes with relish Swami Vivekananda's utterance, "every aristocracy is bound to dig its own grave," in dealing with the I. C. S. A special correspondent quotes a saying that everybody "takes up a cause like a fanatic and defends it like a philosopher." Would a discriminating reader be wrong in giving these quotations which appear in the same number an application which they were not meant to have? The Brahman die-hard may, by his opposition to the Bill, be digging his own grave and may have taken up a position like a fanatic, though his defence of that position is anything but philosophic.

* * *

MR. TILAK in his recent letter from England expresses his disapproval of the controversy raised by Mrs. Besant at Delhi as "wrong" and pleads for unity. So Mr. Tilak also, like the *Hindu*, wants unity, but only on his own terms. But why should he condemn Mrs. Besant's attitude now, when he adopted nearly the same attitude a year before? If he was not "wrong" in opposing Mr. Pal at Calcutta on the question of demanding responsible government for the provinces, why was Mrs. Besant "wrong" in doing the identical thing at Delhi?—Among the men selected for the Congress deputation, there are none, and naturally so, who are opposed to full provincial autonomy. But on the other hand, Messrs. Satyamurti and Barkat Ali, who are in favour of it, were also rejected.

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RE-ORGANISATION OF THE MEDICAL SERVICES.

A COMMITTEE has been recently appointed by the Army Department of the Government of India to inquire into the superior branches of the medical services. It will be remembered that the Public Services Commission left the constitution of these services an open question in view of the profound changes that might be rendered necessary by the war, and that the specific recommendations made in the majority report are altogether halting and inadequate. It is therefore right that the whole question should be gone into in the light of the experience obtained during war time, but we cannot but join the *Leader* in strongly protesting against the personnel of the Committee now appointed, its terms of reference and the secrecy which will shroud all its proceedings. No representatives of the independent Indian medical profession are admitted to it, nor any representatives of the local Governments. It is thus practically a committee of army men, who will carry on their investigations behind closed doors. Apart from these serious defects, the terms of reference of the committee, which have not been published for general information, seem to exclude from inquiry the entire separation of the civil from the military medical organisation. This should not have been the case. On the ground that the war reserve must be somehow employed, nearly 80 per cent. of the superior civil appointments are filled in India by what was primarily intended to be an army service, and this has resulted in general inefficiency and a virtual denial of entry into the higher medical service to sons of India. Consequently there is a universal demand in this country that an end should be put to the system of drafting military men on to civil duties, which is not followed in any other country in the world.

The Public Services Commission, however, desisted from recommending a complete divorce between the two branches, only contenting itself with the suggestion that if, after fully employing the medical reserve of the army in civil posts, any more posts carrying civil duties remained they should be filled by civil recruitment. If then the newly appointed committee is to follow the Commission's recommendations and only to inquire into the military requirements in time of war, not much can be expected of its labours. It is but natural that the army officers, who have ever fought hard against the admission of independent professional men into the superior posts, should desire an enlargement of its cadre, and the civil posts that will therefore escape from their grasp cannot be very many, by any means. If the military reserve has to be so far increased as to endanger the maintenance of a civilelement in the civil medical administration, then the Commission recommends the consideration of the question whether a certain number of posts should not be set apart for the civil medical service. This is an

entirely wrong view to take, and the public are interested in knowing if this view prevails with the Government. Is it to be taken for granted that what is considered as a necessary war reserve should in peace time be employed on non-military duties, and is it merely the function of this new committee to fix the dimensions of this reserve and the proportion to be earmarked for the civil medical service in case the reserve is thought to trench too much on civil employment? If it is so we have no hesitation in saying that the committee will not do justice to the claims of Indians for a proper share in this department of public service and that no appreciable number of posts will be released for civil medical practitioners. The absence of any man belonging to this class from the committee precludes all hope of any other result. We cannot sufficiently protest against the Government's way of dealing with this important question, as if it concerned no one but the army men and the Indians were not at all interested in it.

Apart from the question of Indians participating to the full extent in the medical services, the formation of a separate civil medical service has an important bearing upon the transfer of power to popular control. For it will be maintained that the officers who, although in civil employ, are primarily meant for military duties, cannot be placed under the control of ministers. This argument will look plausible from the formal connection of these officers with the army, but as soon as a separate civil medical branch is constituted and the military branch is rigidly limited to the requirements of the army, no colourable excuse remains for keeping the control over the superior medical officers a reserved subject. And be it remembered that it is not only Indian publicists who are demanding the separation of the civil and military medical organisations in the country. The Bombay Government recommended in 1903 the creation of a civil medical service, and so did the Governments of Bengal and Madras at different times. The Bengal Government mercilessly exposed the defects of the present combination of both the duties in a single service. "Among the defects of the system must be recognised," they wrote, "a want of stability, a want of strict identification with the interests of the country, an exclusiveness which renders it difficult to introduce the natives of the country into the higher employments of the service." Thus in more ways than one is it necessary that a separate civil branch should be established in the medical department and that it should not be made to depend upon the verdict of military men as to the requirements of the army. Mr. Abdur Rahim and Sir M. B. Chaubal required at any rate that two-thirds of the superior civil medical posts should be secured from encroachment by the officers of the Indian Medical Service, and that if they must fill some civil posts, their share should be rigorously limited to the remaining one-third. This is a move in the right direction, but no solution of the question can be accepted as completely

satisfactory which does not aim at a complete bifurcation of the two branches. In appointing the committee which the Government of India has appointed and entrusting to it a task of a very restricted character, the Government has shown itself to be lacking in a proper appreciation of the question and out of sympathy with the just aspirations of Indians with regard to it.

THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN CULTURE.

THE problem of Indian culture is closely related to the problem of Indian economics, but it is something wider and more comprehensive. It is not merely the problem of securing the material basis for continually advancing quality of life, but also the problem of utilising material advantages for the great spiritual advantage. This is essentially the problem of winning for the people of India the tools and machinery for thought and a mastery of them. Some Indian patriots may resent the idea that much has to be done in this direction, considering that in its ancient religion, philosophy and literature, India possesses an apparatus of culture superior to that prized by any other country. For my own part I am quite without qualifications for estimating these intellectual treasures, and can express no opinion with regard to their absolute or relative value. I can only bear witness to a general impression which observation has left upon my mind. This impression is that the Indian has a tendency to rely more exclusively than the European on language as an instrument for thought; and that he is less apt to use alternative instruments, as pictures, diagrams, models and manual experiment; that it is therefore peculiarly important for the Indian that he should possess, in the language he uses, an instrument of thought which is of high quality, and which he has full opportunities of mastering effectively; but that while this is necessary, it is made extraordinarily difficult by the linguistic conditions under which India lives. The problem of Indian culture is, therefore, as it appears to me, primarily the problem of using and developing the languages possible for an Indian so as to give Indians effective mastery of an efficient linguistic thought-tool.

The bulk of Indian population belongs to the class that does not know English, and yet has received scarcely any formal education through the medium of the vernacular and which consequently can use the vernacular as a means of thinking for only the most ordinary affairs of life. The other and much smaller class has received much more formal education; and having received it through the medium of English, has been obliged to spend a vast amount of time in acquiring English before using it as a means of acquiring information or of thinking. This class frequently appears to have lost in the process of education the power of thinking accurately and vividly with regard to concrete matters in the vernacular, without ac-

quiring the power of doing so in English; and to have acquired instead only the power of producing statements in English sufficiently plausible to pass muster in an examination paper or in debate, and to be far from being able to use English for that accurate and careful thinking which is necessary to do good work in the practical affairs of life. This is a natural consequence of a system of education which provides elementary schools which profess to teach children their own vernacular but refuse to give them any education through the medium of the vernacular, but does offer to selected students education through the medium of English as well as in English.

All this is very much a commonplace, and certain definite ideas with regard to the remedy have been repeatedly expressed. The difficulties in the way of any remedy are obvious enough. Apart from other Asiatic and non-Asiatic languages spoken in India there are according to the census of 1911 no less than 220 Indian languages. About a hundred of these are spoken by less than 5,000 people each, the average running to about a thousand people to a particular language. It is obvious that a language spoken by so few is no good for anything but the most elementary needs. All Indian languages spoken by less than a certain number of people ought to be got rid of as speedily as possible by the process of teaching the people who speak them some other language. But where are we to draw the line and determine that a language has a sufficiently numerous body of adherents to be worth preserving? Five thousand is obviously insufficient. Will fifty thousand suffice, or 500,000 or even 5,000,000? We must draw the line somewhere, but it is difficult to see exactly where it should be drawn. Evidently mere numbers are not everything. The examples of Greece in the days of Pericles and of England in the days of Shakespeare and Milton are sufficient to show that a language spoken by a very much smaller number of people than five millions may produce immortal literature, and the loss of such a language may be a calamity to the world.

Some writers have maintained that every vernacular is valuable to its own people, and that they can attain a high level of culture by means of their own tongue alone, and that they lose something very valuable if they change their ancestral language for that of some foreign country. This view does not appear to me to be confirmed by experience. If we take the three great literary languages of the modern world, English, French and Italian, it is remarkable that none of these is the ancestral language of the people who now use it. English is a blend of Norman, French and Anglo-Saxon. The Normans in their ancestral home spoke a Teutonic dialect which certainly did not originate among them, but which must have been imported from some district of Europe or Asia to the south and east of their country. They settled in France, and abandoned this compara-

tively barbarous speech for the modified Latin of their neighbours. This again was not the native language of the country, nor of any of the races that had inhabited it. They had all abandoned their ancestral varieties of speech, to adopt the language of Rome. But the Normans, having thus taken over what was already a second-hand language, imported it into England, where it got blended with one out of the number of languages already spoken in the British Isles—Anglo-Saxon. Anglo-Saxon itself had, it would appear from its very structure, been adopted by the ancestors of some of the people in the south-east of England from some other folk, and was not their ancestral tongue. French similarly is the language acquired by the inhabitants of France from a very mixed body of immigrants, soldiers, merchants, administrators and the like, coming from many countries of the Mediterranean shore, but using a particular Italic language as a common medium. With regard to Italy, it is true that the peninsula does contain the district which was the ancient home of the Latin tongue from which modern Italian is derived; but the most perfect Italian and the greatest Italian literature belongs to Tuscany, and the original language of the Tuscan or Etruscan people was not Latin, nor any Italic language and not even any Indo-Germanic or Aryan language at all; while the northern plain, which now shows the most vigorous intellectual life, was "Gallia Cisalpina" and spoke a variety of Celtic dialects. It therefore does not appear that there is any sure and certain ground for thinking that a nation or tribe ought to cling obstinately to the language of its forefathers. Rather perhaps it is wise to adopt the motto of the American millionaire who says, "The best is good enough for me." The mere fact that a language is transferred from country to country and from race to race may give it vigour, elasticity and simplicity, and make it more effective than if it remained the monopoly of a particular race living in a particular district.

Hence it is conceivable that the solution of the Indian language problem might be the disappearance of all Indian languages, and the adoption in their place of a modified form of English. This idea is not likely to be welcome to Indians. In the end this might be no great calamity. Nevertheless it would mean, for some generations to come, a perpetuation of the present disadvantages under which India labours in the matter of language. For some hundreds of years to come India would still be handicapped in comparison with the rest of the civilised world, hindered in absorbing ideas originated elsewhere and in contributing original thought to the common stock of the world. This solution of the language problem is therefore undesirable in itself and Indians do well to refuse to welcome it. But this is the direction in which India is drifting, particularly in Southern India. Take, for example, the city of Kumbakonam, the largest and wealthiest city in the rich delta of

Tanjore, one of the ancient centres of Hindu civilisation, with an exceptionally large percentage of Brahmans and of educated people. Here there is a free library, in two divisions, one division containing English books, and the other books in Indian languages. In the whole city there are but four European residents; nevertheless the issue of books from the English section of the library is far in excess of that from the Indian section. Kumbakonam is a centre of the Home Rule movement. At meetings for purposes of discussing Home Rule, and political questions relating thereto, I believe it is practically an invariable rule that all the speeches are delivered in English, in spite of the fact that Tamil is the one vernacular of the city. That this is not merely the result of governmental action appears to be shown by the fact that the proportion of English-speaking people in the independent States of Cochin, Travancore and Mysore is extremely high, far higher than, for example, in Bombay, the United Provinces, or the Punjab. It would almost appear as though the native languages of Southern India are destined before long to be found only as a sort of cooly *patois* on the one hand, and as literary curiosities preserved in ancient manuscripts on the other. I am curious to know whether Indians are going to continue to drift in this direction, and if not, what they are going to do about it.

It is, however, in this very district of South India, with its Dravidian languages, where the decay of the vernacular appears most imminent, that the possibility of a new movement, which may develop Indian vernaculars and secure their future, is also to be noticed. The Canarese language was spoken in 1911, according to the census, by over 10½ million people, and it is officially recognised as the language of the State of Mysore. An independent Mysore University with its scientific department located in Bangalore, but its literary department located in Mysore City, has been established, and it is the desire of those in authority, without neglecting the study of English, to do whatever is necessary and practicable for the study of the Canarese language and its ancient literature and for the fostering of a modern Canarese literature. Already educationists are beginning to take into serious consideration the question whether this is not a precedent which should be followed in other districts. We are beginning to discuss the question whether there should not be a Malayalam University to serve the 7 or 8 millions of Malayalese of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, established at Trichur or Ernakulam or some other central spot on the initiative of the State of Cochin or the State of Travancore. If so, surely the 20 millions of Tamils should also have their University, which might most appropriately be located at Trichinopoly, the natural military centre of India south of Madras and the present railway centre, with the great temple of Srirangam adjoining, one of the great pilgrimage centres of India. We have

moreover already a considerable amount of agitation for an Andhra or Telugu University, perhaps the most pressing of all, considering that the 1911 census records 23 million people speaking this language.

The beginning actually made in Mysore can obviously be followed up on a much larger scale for the Sanskritic languages of Northern India. The greatest of these is Hindi, and the Benares University is situated in the midst of the Hindi district. By the census report there were 82 millions whose language was Hindi, besides 14 millions speaking western Hindi and 2 millions odd speaking eastern Hindi. Surely these three languages might be brought sufficiently near to have one common literary form and one common literature. Could not the Benares University initiate some organisation which would do for the Hindi language the services rendered to the French language by the French Academy, in the direction of maintaining its purity and integrity, but at the same time recognising and meeting the need for elasticity and change? If so, might we not see a further absorption of those Sanskritic languages which most closely resemble Hindi into this premier language of India? The more widely a language is spoken, other things being equal, the more amply it repays all efforts to provide it with a great literature. Again, if Bengali is too distinct to be absorbed in Hindi, a similar service could be rendered to it by the University of Calcutta; and why should not the State of Baroda create a Gujarati University? Rangoon also hopes shortly to have its University, which should be able to do much for the Burmese language and literature. As for Munda, Santali, Shan, and other Austro-Asiatic or Tibeto-Chinese dialects the number of which is legion, I doubt if they are worth retaining.

But now let us consider the question whether, supposing India should become equipped with Universities on a linguistic basis, what policy these should adopt in order to make Indian languages efficient servants of Indian culture. The great essential is that they should beware of the Pandit. The Pandit will seize on the very idea of an academy for an Indian language with avidity, and will set to work to do what Pandits always endeavour to do to throttle the living language and turn it into a mummified corpse. The Universities and Academies must do everything that the Pandit abhors. They must welcome new words from foreign languages, bearing in mind that the modern development of an international language for science and abstract ideas is one of the greatest services which modern progress has done to humanity. The language of international chemistry, for instance, should be adopted into Indian languages without alteration. Then there should be no scruple in regularising the language as far as possible, eliminating unnecessary inflections as well as irregularities. The object should be to make the language as easy to learn as possible, in order that those who learn it may pass on as quickly as possible to learning

other things through the medium of the language. Again the question of script should be dealt with without any pandit prejudice. Scripts may be based upon the principle of expressing vowels by modifications of consonantal signs, or by distinct letters. The latter principle is that of the Roman alphabet, the former is more common in Asiatic languages, and has been introduced into European languages for shorthand. It should be recognised that the existing Indian scripts were developed for the purpose of producing longhand handwriting, now obsolescent; and what is wanted now is not one script but two, (1) a shorthand script, and (2) a script for the typewriter and printing press. For the latter purpose the principle of separate symbols for vowels is far superior and should be adopted. This means that the Devanagari, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Canarese and Malayalam scripts should all be regarded as obsolete; that no new books should be printed in any of these, nor children be taught to read or write them in the elementary school or in the high school; but the study of them should be reserved for students who have special need to master them for the purpose of historic research.

Indian languages, thus provided each with its governing authority, and all of them using one common shorthand script and one common letter press script, should be enriched with a full equipment of translated literature, so that all the best books of the world may be accessible to every child who has passed through the elementary school without learning any foreign language. The same universities should then proceed to provide an indigenous literature in history, economics, and local geology, pharmacology, etc. Universities can do nothing for great original creative literature directly. That must come from the spontaneous efforts of the man of genius. But universities can prevent a man of genius from being wasted, for they can provide an educated public accustomed to obtain knowledge and ideas through the medium of the cultivated vernacular language which will welcome the works of the man of genius when he appears.

Such, in outline, appears to be the natural programme for the Indian reformer who does not desire to see Indian languages either disappearing from India, or continuing in undeveloped and uncultivated forms in which they would remain a hindrance to the advance of Indian culture.

GILBERT SLATER.

MR. PATEL'S MARRIAGE BILL.

THE Social Service League is in sympathy with the principle and object of the Hindu Inter-caste Marriage Bill, but the Bill as it stands is defective and should pass into law with certain modifications (stated below) which, in the opinion of the League, are called for in the interests of enlightened social reform.

The opposition to the Bill appears to be based principally on the following grounds:—

(1) that its principle and object are hostile to and subversive of the *Shastras*,

(2) that the Bill interferes with the customary law of the Hindus, and

(3) that it proposes a departure on the part of the British Government in India from the policy of religious neutrality to which it stands pledged.

Dealing with the first of these objections, I am to point out that, so far as it is based upon the *Shastras*, it is not a correct statement of the case. The Shastric law is summarised by the late Gholap Chandra Sarkar Shastri, in his work on Hindu law, which is accepted by our courts as an authority on the subject. He says:—

"Dealing with the marriage, the sages lay down that marriage between persons of the same caste is preferable, and they also recognise marriage between a woman of an inferior caste and a man of a superior caste to be valid, but they do not say anything about the marriage between an inferior man and superior woman. There are, on the contrary, passages in the Smritis," which "by implication prohibit intermarriage between a man of an inferior tribe and a woman of a superior tribe. . . It should, however, be observed that these prohibitions appear to be of moral obligation only; hence, although marriage of an inferior man with a superior woman may be disapproved and condemned, still, if such a marriage does not in fact take place, the same must be regarded valid as between the parties to it and the issue legitimate."

It is true that relying upon some of the minor Puranas, some of the latest commentators on Hindu law absolutely prohibit intermarriages. "But in this respect they differ from the two leading Treatises and the Smritis." (Gholap Chandra Sarkar Shastri's Hindu law, pp. 106 & 107, 4th edition.)

As the alteration in the law relating to Hindu marriages proposed in the Bill is of a purely permissive character, it is not open to the objection that it seeks to interfere with the religious customs and practices of the Hindus by forcing on them a new marriage law seriously modifying those customs and practices. The necessity for such a measure has arisen from the fact that among a large number of Hindus throughout the country there is a strong feeling in favour of intermarriages among Hindu castes and the number is daily increasing. At present, as the Courts have held such marriages illegal on the ground that, though sanctioned by the written word of the *Shastras*, they have been rejected by the tradition of custom, Hindus, desiring such intermarriages, are compelled to resort to the remedy provided by Act III of 1872, known as the Civil Marriage Act. But the Act penalises the conscience of such Hindus by requiring, as one of the conditions precedent to the intermarriage, that they should declare that they do not believe in and belong to the Hindu religion. A Hindu, therefore, who believes in that religion and professes it, has to make the declaration against his conscience, if he or she wishes to intermarry.

Assuming that, as seems to be urged by the opponents of the Bill, the number of Hindus sympathising with and feeling strongly the need of such a law as this Bill proposes is small, even a minority has a right to be protected by the legislature where conscientious religious scruples and convictions are concerned. This is not a question where a majority has any right, legal, social or moral, to force the minority to accept its customs and views under the shelter of law.

Nearly 35 years ago Mr. Justice West, then a Judge of the High Court of Bombay, who was rightly regarded as a great authority on Hindu law and custom, held in one of his judgments in a case tried before him that Courts of Justice, in dealing with the question whether a particular custom should be judicially recognised, should be guided by the enlightened consciousness of the community in days of change and progress. The view of the learned judge was indeed not accepted by Sir Charles Sargent, then Chief Justice of the High Court of Bombay. That was upon the ground that it was not for the courts, but for the legislature, to decide as a matter of public policy and in public interests whether a particular Hindu custom should be given effect to or not and that a Court's duty is simply to administer the law as it is in its integrity and to give effect to the custom, if it is not immoral or opposed to public policy. The legislature, as the representative of the people in the juridical sense of the term, being the arbiter to decide whether a change in the customary law is called for, the question with reference to the Bill to validate intermarriages among Hindu castes is whether, being a permissive measure, it is in accordance with the enlightened consciousness of the Hindus, though that consciousness may be confined to a minority of that community.

The Bill, therefore, cannot be justly described as proposing to interfere with the Hindu religion. It only interferes with the law of Hindu custom and that only in a permissive manner. If the great bulk of the orthodox Hindu castes disapprove of such marriages, it is open to them to ostracise socially the parties to such marriages by means of excommunication from the castes. That liberty of the castes is in no way affected by the Bill.

If it be urged that by allowing Hindus, who resort to intermarriages, to profess the Hindu religion all the same and pass for Hindus, the Bill creates a breach in the solidarity of the Hindu community, enables seceders from it to label themselves as Hindus and forces on that community a section which, by not conforming to the custom invalidating intermarriages, forfeits or ought to forfeit its right to call itself Hindu and profess the Hindu faith, the answer writ large in the history of Hinduism from ancient times is that even such communities as Jains and Sikhs, who in their origin were seceders from the orthodox Hindu religion and custom, have not ceased to be ranked as Hindus. Whenever any schism ha-

arisen within its fold, with reference to any religious dogma or any social custom, Hinduism, while excommunicating the schismatics from their caste, has all the same allowed them to remain within the fold of Hinduism and ranked them as Hindus. Accordingly, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has held that a departure by a Hindu from the standard of orthodoxy binding on him in matters of diet and ceremonial observances does not exclude him from the term of the category "Hindu" and that a Hindu by becoming a Brahmo does not necessarily cease to be a Hindu (Indian Law Reports, 31 Calcutta, at page 33). This principle of toleration has been from ancient times one of the remarkable features of Hinduism. That being the case, why should any Hindu be now debarred by the law of custom from marrying in a different caste and professing the Hindu faith and calling himself a Hindu?

With reference to the objection that the Bill seeks to violate the principle of religious neutrality to which the British Government has pledged itself, I am to point out that this objection would have been appropriate if the Bill had not been of a permissive nature. It stands in that respect on the same footing as the law permitting widow-marriage enacted by the British legislature in India. Non-interference with religious customs has not been an absolute principle of legislation with that Government, as is proved by such laws as those for the emancipation of converts and the prohibition of *Sati*, the Age of Consent Act and other like enactments. There is, therefore, no question of interference with the Hindu religion involved in the principle and the object of this Bill, and *a fortiori*, no question of violation of the principle of religious neutrality to which the British Government in India has pledged itself. Some of the Native States have passed such a measure as part of their law, and it has been accepted quietly by the Hindu population thereof. That is a positive proof in support of the opportuneness of time for such a permissive measure in British India also. For the British Government in India to refuse to pass such a measure into law on the ground of its principle of religious neutrality would be to acknowledge that it is unable to operate as an enlightening and socialising force and that it will undertake such legislation only when the volume of Hindu opinion is so great that it can be safely counted as the opinion of the Hindu community as a whole. The country might have to wait for ages for progress if it were to measure its steps by that standard.

While on the above grounds the Social Service League accords its support to the Bill, it is of opinion that, as it now stands, the Bill is defective in some essential respects and should be remodelled to bring it in consonance with the spirit of the times and the enlightened consciousness of the Hindu community. For that purpose the League begs to suggest the following modifications in the Bill.

First, the Bill should be amended by applying to intermarriages under it the principle of monogamy which has been applied to marriages under Act III of 1872. The object of the Bill is reform, and the legislature should not allow intermarriages, leaving polygamy at large in their case. Though polygamy is permitted by the Hindu religion, the general sense of the community does not look upon it with favour and the great majority of the people are in practice monogamists. The acceptance of the rule of monogamy in the Bill will not be contrary to the real sentiment and practice of Hindus. If it be argued that, that being so, it is unnecessary, as being superfluous, to fetter the right of intermarriages among Hindu castes by the rule of monogamy, the answer is that as the Hindu religion and law permit polygamy, the legislature, legislating for these advanced times, shall refuse to apply the rule in its laws relating to marriage, even though there be no danger of polygamy being practised in a large number of cases falling within the new law.

Secondly, the Bill should fix an age limit (as in Act III of 1872) in the case of parties to a marriage under the proposed law and should in that way discountenance infant marriages.

Thirdly, the legislature should take care that the evidence of marriages under the law shall be such as to make the fact of marriage certain and not open to doubtful testimony, should the fact happen to be questioned subsequently by either of the parties. When the parties to a marriage are of the same caste, there is no risk of the factum of the marriage being at any time disputed by and subjected to the uncertainties of litigation, either because not only of the wide publicity of the marriage in the caste but also of the strong sentiment of the caste in support of such marriages. That consideration, however, does not apply to intermarriages. The League, therefore, suggests that while the ordinary ceremonies prescribed by the Hindu religion to validate a marriage should be deemed essential for the validity of intermarriages under the proposed law, the parties to such intermarriages should be required to register them by some such procedure as is applied to marriages under Act III of 1872.

N. G. CHANDAVARKAR,
President, Social Service League.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

FOR a long time time plans for the establishment of an organisation with the object of settling international disputes by means other than war are in the air, and while many were yet sceptical about a practical application being given to President Wilson's idea, the covenant of the League of Nations is being discussed in the Peace Congress and will soon be ratified by the Allied countries. The credit of pushing on this idea which, even if partially successful, promises to transform the whole of the international system, certainly belongs to Dr. Wilson. It was he who

first emphasised that the peace of the world depended not upon certain bargains being negotiated between the contending powers, in which case the foundation of the peace would be very unstable, but upon the final settlement being essentially fair and just. Unless the problems are dealt with "in a spirit of unselfish and unbiased justice," he declared, "with a view to the wishes, the natural connections, the racial aspirations, the security and the peace of mind of the peoples involved, no permanent peace will have been attained. . . . Whatever affects the peace, affects mankind, and nothing settled by military force, if settled wrong, is settled at all. It will presently have to be reopened." If, therefore, wars are to be prevented in the future, the arrangements to be made at the conclusion of the present war must be such as can be equitably maintained for all time. Thus he introduced ethics into international politics and lifted them to a higher plane—so high indeed that his constructive idealism was generally regarded as visionary by hard-headed people.

How far will the central idea of Mr. Wilson be carried out by the international machinery to be set up by the covenant? To what extent are Mr. Wilson's sentiments reflected in its articles? "There shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages. Peoples are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference, or an understanding between rivals and antagonists. National aspirations must be respected; peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. 'Self-determination' is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril." Such were his sentiments. How are they to be made realities? It is proposed to divide the colonial possessions of the derelict empires into three groups according to their fitness for self-government. Those which are sufficiently advanced in civilisation and material resources so as to dispense with outside help will be recognised forthwith as independent states. There will be some others "deficient in the qualities of statehood," to use the phrase of General Smuts's pamphlet, and though "they are perhaps capable of internal autonomy, they will in one degree or another require the guiding hand of some external authority to steady their administration." Again there will be other cases where "autonomy in any real sense will be out of the question and the administration would have to be undertaken to a very large extent by some external authority." The external authority is to be selected by the League of Nations, though "the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration" in its selection, and its precise authority defined; it is to render an account of its trust to the League every year, which is to see that its mandate is carried out. General Smuts is more explicit in regard to his proposals as to the choice of the mandatory Power; for he says that the nomination of a particular state "should be conditioned by giving the peoples in question the right to state a preference as to the Power which should be given the mandatory duty," and he also states that in each case of mandate, "the League should issue a special Act or charter clearly setting forth the policy which the mandatory will have to follow in that territory." It must be recognised that this is a satisfactory arrangement so far as it goes, and infinitely better than the present colonial policy which openly subordinates the interests of the subject people to those of the rulers.

But does this go far enough? Is it not the

principle of self-determination to be made applicable to the colonies of the Allied nations? Did Mr. Wilson mean his doctrine to be so one-sided as this? Indians will exclaim in wonderment. For their hopes have been stimulated by Mr. Wilson's inspiring addresses, and the belief is widely cherished that the world is to be cast anew on the lines laid down by him. Those who entertained such hopes will be bitterly disappointed, for there is not a word in the covenant which indicates the likelihood of self-determination being extended in its scope. Nor does Mr. Wilson, to do him justice, seem ever to have intended such an extension. The question of giving people a choice to determine their own allegiance arose only in connexion with the colonies of the enemy countries, whose large empires had been broken up in the war, and there is nothing to show in Mr. Wilson's speeches that he intended these glorious doctrines for any but the colonial possessions of the enemy. That the covenant does not contemplate the enforcement of self-determination in the case of Ireland, Egypt or India is clear from the fact that in the pamphlet of General Smuts, which seems to form the basis of the covenant, the British Empire itself is likened to a League of Nations—"the only embryo League of Nations, because it is based on the true principle of national freedom and political decentralisation." Indeed, he says that the mandatory Power is to exercise its authority as the British Empire is exercising in the case of its dependencies. "The minor constituents of the Empire, consisting of crown colonies, protectorates, and territories . . . are administered or looked after by the individual principal constituent states referred to, just as it is here (in the League of Nations) proposed that the Powers should under the League look after the autonomous undeveloped territories." Even President Wilson does not appear to have cherished the ambition to reconstruct the whole world on a new basis, but to have meant to give only a limited application to the doctrine of self-determination of nations. It may well be asked why the principle should not be extended in its scope; and it will not be easy for the Allied Powers to give a satisfactory answer. Count Hertling, for his own purposes, asked the question last year and put England in a rather tight place. The claim put in by General Smuts that effect is already given in the British Empire to the principle which is now proposed to be applied to the enemy colonies cannot of course be allowed as just and valid. While therefore we are entitled to demand the extension of Mr. Wilson's doctrine to our case, his speeches hardly warrant the inference that he had meant that the destiny of the peoples now subject to the Allies would be settled in accordance with that principle. The English Labour party has made such a demand, but it is well to remember that the application demanded by them is of a restricted scope. In a statement on this subject Mr. Henderson said:—"Further, the Labour party accepts the principle of self-determination for all peoples, and believes that this can be secured for Egypt and India by a rapid extension of self-governing institutions on Dominion lines." On this theory then India will be treated on a footing of nations falling within the second category, and if England is made the mandatory Power, one does not know what the mandate will be. There will be the great advantage, of course, of having access to an international tribunal, but this advantage is denied to us by the scheme now put forward.

S. G. V.

SELECTION.

MR. DEVADHAR IN ENGLAND.

The London correspondent of the *Times of India* says in his letter dated Jan. 9 :—

Mr. G. K. DEVADHAR scored a success in his address to the Association of Headmistresses at University College last Friday on the education of the women in India. He carried the audience with him in his declaration of the urgent necessity for a bolder and more liberal policy on the part of the Government and for more strenuous efforts on the part of his countrymen. Miss Ashworth announced her complete conversion to the policy of compulsory free education in India, while the veteran Mrs. Fawcett emphasised the fact that the present is a time of great hope for the women of India. I may mention that Mr. Devadhar had a strenuous time in the North in the last two or three weeks of the old year. At Manchester he took the opportunity to closely investigate the trading and other activities of the co-operative movement. At York he studied the welfare work carried on in connection with the Rowntree factories. He has been impressed by the large concerns run by the Co-operative Wholesale Society, as affording evidence of the practical capacity of the working class people of this country to give effect to their dreams of socialism in a constructive way. At the Indian Conference at Ilkley, which is intended to be an annual gathering, Mr. Devadhar spoke on the co-operative movement in India. The Conference was attended by about 50 Indians of both sexes, mostly students, and its objects are to promote social intercourse among Indian men and women resident here, to foster a spirit of national solidarity, and a proper appreciation of Indian culture, its progress and problems. Mr. Devadhar spends the next few days in Ireland.

The same correspondent says in his letter of Jan. 23 :—

Following the example of the Chief of Ichalkaranji on his visit here in pre-war days, Mr. Devadhar has been closely investigating in Ireland the working of the co-operative movement, and in particular the valuable service of Plunkett

House, inaugurated by Sir Horace, to whom Mr. Devadhar had the privilege of paying his respects before he left for America. Mr. Devadhar also met Lord Montague, Mr. George Russell ("A. E."), Sir James La Touche, Dr. John Pollen (who was of the greatest help to him during his three days' stay at Belfast) and many others. At Dublin, Ennis-corthy, Belfast, Lisburn, Omagh and Portadown he visited the co-operative organizations, industrial concerns, technical schools, etc. Owing to his many engagements here the visit was short, and Mr. Devadhar hopes to make another trip to Ireland before his return to Poona.

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