

The Servant of India

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Topics of the Week.

The Aga Khan on Communal Electorates.

In a press interview His Highness the Aga Khan is reported to have stated that it was sheer waste of time and energy to reopen the Communal Award, unless a better and more acceptable scheme was hammered out. But on the merits of communal electorates his emphatic opinion is worth remembering. The experience of the working of democratic institutions would teach both "Muslims and Hindus to realise that neither of them stood to gain anything by the perpetuation of communalism in the political sphere in any form whatsoever. The dawning of this realisation would spontaneously sound the deathknell of communal electorates, which were a necessary evil under the present circumstances." It rests very much with him whether the admitted evil, the existence of which, according to him, was "wholly outrageous to democracy" cannot even now be made unnecessary. The longer the evil is permitted to continue the more firmly vested interests will be grown round it and the more difficult will it be to eliminate it. The sooner it is done away with the better. The coming reforms give an excellent chance for it. No other community in India, whether in a majority or a minority in any province, has insisted so much on communal electorates as the Muslims, led by the Aga Khan himself and Mr. Jinnah. The Hindus have always consistently resisted the introduction of communal electorates.

The least that the Aga Khan can do is to join in the demand that communal electorates should not be compulsory; that it should be left to the individual voter to enrol himself either on the communal or general register. This will not compel nationa-

lists to go on a communal electorate against their own principle, while it leaves those who believe in communal electorates to have their way.

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Indo-Japanese Agreement.

THE Bombay Chamber of Commerce has submitted a lengthy memorandum to the Government of India commenting on the Indo-Japanese agreement. The criticisms offered in this memorandum are based on grounds which are so generally current that a word or two may be said with respect to them. The Committee in the first instance quote the figures of the average imports of Japanese piece-goods into India and exports of Indian cotton to Japan during the last ten years to show that the basic figures of the quota are favourable to Japan. In this connection, however, the average of the last decade is utterly irrelevant. While the situation regarding exports of cotton from India has been more or less stabilised, the competitive strength of the Japanese cotton industry has been steadily growing. Its efficiency has particularly increased during the last five years. Thus it would be wrong to have the quota of Japanese imports of piece-goods based on the last ten years' average. It is the proved competitive strength of the Japanese industry during the latest years that is the valid consideration. In fact a maximum quota of the type included in the Indo-Japanese agreement means the acceptance by Japan of a situation in which it shall not during the currency of the agreement be able to take any further advantage of the fact of improved efficiency. It should further be noted that the limitation of the volume of imports is more necessary in the interests of Japan's foreign competitor in the Indian market viz. Lancashire, than that of India itself. For, the Indian interests are adequately protected by the height of the tariff duties. Leaving an artificial gap in the market, therefore, could only be for benefitting Lancashire. The maximum limit on imports as well as the special limits on certain classes such as bleached goods are in our opinion clear instances of such uncalled-for solicitude for the interests of Lancashire.

The other argument advanced by the Bombay Chamber is that the 50 p. c. duty does not allow for the fall in the yen exchange during 1932. The Chamber seem to argue as if they thought that the fall in the exchange of a country at any time was a good enough excuse for a permanent discrimination against that country. This, of course, is not true. An exchange depreciation can give only a temporary advantage to any country. If depreciation is continuous the advantage will continue to be enjoyed for the period during which the process goes on. But within a relatively short period of the stabilisation of exchanges the position regarding comparative costs will have been stabilised. It is, therefore, wrong to plead for a permanently high duty on Japanese imports because of the depreciation in

1932. The agreement rightly takes it for granted that the effects of that exchange-fall have been worked out and reserves to the Government of India powers to take steps if any further fall of exchange occurs during the currency of the agreement. Even the Tariff Board in its recent report has accepted this view and has found that there is no case for adopting any special measures to counter the effects of the Japanese exchange depreciation.

Textile Tariff.

It is our intention to deal at length some time later with the findings of the Tariff Board regarding the grant of protection to the Indian Cotton Textile industry. One would desire, however, at this stage to make one general observation. It is that while the policy of the Tariff Board and Government continues to become more and more lax, less and less discriminating, neither the Tariff Board nor Government seem to be alive to the responsibilities which follow naturally from this change of policy. An old-established and growing industry is to be protected with a high tariff wall because local and sectional interests may otherwise be jeopardised. But no effort is at the same time contemplated so that these local and sectional maladjustments will at least in time vanish. The Tariff Board acknowledges that little has been done towards giving effect to all the more fundamental recommendations made by the Board in 1927; and that the Bombay industry continues to be in as weak a position and as unorganised as before. Even so the Tariff Board quietly assumes that a long period of high protection will automatically make the industry more efficient. This is an assumption that runs directly counter to the tariff history of every country in the world. As long as local maladjustments are taken to be valid reasons for the grant of national protection there is not the slightest incentive to remove them. We would have thought that the Tariff Board and Government in India would in this respect try to imitate the Safeguarding Duties Committee and Government in England. There in the case, for example, of the iron and steel industry the Government has plainly let it be understood that the protection shall only be for a short period and shall not be continued unless the industry rationalises itself in the meanwhile. This has led to one plan after another of rationalization being canvassed in the industry during the last year or two. This is happening entirely under pressure and we cannot expect the Indian industrialists—especially the Bombay Mill-owners—to be any more keen on reorganisation, unless compelled, than those in charge of the English Iron and Steel industry.

The Late Sir P. C. Mitter.

SIR PROVASH CHUNDER MITTER'S death last week recalls to one's mind his association with the fateful Rowlatt Committee. The unwanted legislation to which it gave birth and which convulsed the country from one end to the other, though placed on the statute book in spite of universal opposition, has remained a dead letter. All the same the fact that he appended his signature to the Committee's report without any kind of dissent from its hateful recommendations shows him to have been the possessor of an uncommon measure of moral courage. He could not possibly have been unaware of the amount of popular opprobrium he was thereby drawing upon himself or of the formidable nature of the handicap such action would mean in public life. And yet he unreservedly endorsed the Committee's recommendations for the perpetuation of the DORA restrictions under the guise of fighting sedition. It is inconceivable that this could have been possible without the possession

of courage of conviction to an extraordinary degree. He held the office of Minister twice and was later made executive councillor. But he died before completing his tenure as such. A staunch advocate of the separation of judicial and executive functions, he had to his credit a scheme prepared as far back as 1913 which aimed at showing how the reform could be achieved without much extra cost. At the two sessions of the Round Table Conference attended by him, Sir Provash did much to safeguard the interests of Bengal zamindars, which he represented. Sir Provash was a right-wing Liberal who was fairly active in his day but whose attendance at the yearly meetings of Liberal Federation had latterly become very rare. This may perhaps be partly accounted for by his official preoccupations. Whatever that be, his membership of the Liberal party had recently come to be more nominal than real.

Uganda Indians.

THE Central Council of Indian Associations in Uganda waited upon the Secretary of State for the Colonies and presented him with a memorandum detailing their views on various questions of interest to them. They thanked him for sanctioning the nomination of a second Indian to the Legislative Council of Uganda. And they claimed that an Indian, along with a European, should be nominated to the Executive Council of the Governor. It is a very legitimate aspiration, which, we hope, will soon be met.

They complained that the legislation regarding the marketing of Native produce had hit them adversely, inasmuch as it was used, in practice, to oust the long-established traders and give monopolies to one or two firms. Far from stimulating Native production, they stated that it had the reverse effect. A few figures would have clarified their case.

It is difficult to approve of their demand for the employment of Indian medical men on the ground that Indian ladies and children would refuse to be treated by Native physicians because the latter had not yet established a reputation as doctors. As long as they are qualified, it is puerile to question their competence. To object to qualified Native doctors on racial grounds is very much like the objection raised in India by Europeans against being treated by Indian doctors. If Indians want Indian doctors, they must look to private practitioners and private hospitals. The only justification for the demand, but not on that account to be brushed aside, is the fact that in East Africa almost everything is racial. If Europeans decline to be treated by Native doctors, with equal justification, or the want of it, may Indians decline to be treated by them.

On firmer ground stands their protest against the displacement of Indians by Natives in the civil services. The Secretary of State for the Colonies justified the policy of substitution by stating that it was the duty of the Government to train and educate the local inhabitants and if they were fit to take the posts, they would be appointed in place of Asiatics. There will be cordial agreement with the first part of the statement; but does it follow that Natives should displace Indians? The Indians in Uganda are not birds of passage who were drafted for service, even as the Europeans are. They form part of the permanent population of Uganda and have the same claims for employment as the others. It is the European civil servant of Uganda that is a bird of passage and it will be more just to displace him with local talent, Indian or Native. At the moment Indians employed in the subordinate service are not promoted to the superior services not because of their unfitness but wholly on racial grounds.

Protector of Depressed Classes.

THE decision of the Bombay Government to appoint a Backward Class Officer, when it was first made public, was welcomed by us for the reason that it would provide the Harijans with an official protector—one to whom they could turn as a matter of right when they find themselves faced with difficulties of any sort. The Officer has been in being since September 1931 and a report of his doings and those of his assistants upto the end of the last official year published last week shows how admirably his office has been playing that role. The principal activities with which the department concerned itself related mainly to the unrestricted admission of depressed classes children to educational institutions and free access of Antyajias to such public utilities as roads, watering places, etc. The orders of the local Government on the point are clear and unequivocal. They have set their face distinctly against the observance of any discrimination to the detriment of these classes in institutions and public utilities maintained wholly or partly out of public funds, whether under the control of Government themselves or of local bodies. Thanks to the public prejudice against the untouchables, such declarations would remain mere pious intentions unless it was somebody's job to see that they were translated into action. The new department for the benefit of the untouchables saw to it that these orders were complied with both by Government servants and local bodies.

Its work is thus more or less of a routine nature and does not lend itself to any spectacular description but has, we doubt not, greatly benefited those for whom it was intended. The Government policy of discouraging the continuance of special schools for these classes was unfairly availed of by some local bodies for economising their educational expenditure. They did not stop to consider whether the closure of such schools would not place depressed classes children at a serious disadvantage in the matter of the supply of educational facilities and whether such action was not likely to result in the reduction of their number at school. Despite such step-motherly treatment of the depressed classes on the part of local bodies, their number in primary schools seems to be steadily on the increase. The pace of their educational progress would be quickened in proportion as the Backward Class Officer finds himself firmly in the saddle, and as a larger number of teachers belonging to these classes becomes available. It is a matter for satisfaction that the Officer lost no opportunity of impressing upon school boards the urgency of action calculated to bring about the employment, on a larger scale, of such teachers. The housing of the untouchables presents difficulties with which the Officer tried to grapple as well as he could; but the results during the first year and a half of his existence do not appear to be particularly bright. It is hoped that his next report will give a more hopeful account of his stewardship in this respect.

Articles.**BIHAR EARTHQUAKE.**

GRATIFYING as has been the response to Bihar's cry for relief, it appears from the amounts so far collected that the needs of Bihar have not yet been fully realised. The Viceroy's Fund is over Rs. 14 lakhs and the Central Relief Fund over Rs. 9 lakhs. Including other funds, the total has probably not exceeded Rs. 25 lakhs. This amount is much too

inadequate for the purposes of immediate relief, not to speak of reconstruction. This is no doubt in part due to inadequate realisation of the extent and intensity of the devastation caused by the earthquake. It is impossible as yet to estimate with any degree of accuracy the full extent of the damage done and the cost of reconstruction. The catastrophe was stunning in its suddenness and in its colossal scale. The dislocations of all communications prevented a more prompt enquiry into the damage done and due publicity thereto. When press reports did appear and were sensational in character, it was inevitable that the general public should discount them to some extent as the workings of the excited imagination of appalled spectators and inspired by the desire to stir the hearts and fire the generous feelings of the public in order to stimulate response for relief. The Government, on the other hand, were naturally anxious to avoid creating a panic and in their preference for accuracy, were slow and cautious. Without any sensational touching up, the most conservative estimate of the havoc wrought by the earthquake in Bihar is appalling enough in all conscience. Nobody can accuse the Governor of Bihar, a seasoned administrator and a non-demonstrative Britisher, of "writing up" the disaster just for the sake of effect. His unvarnished tale—the result of preliminary official investigation with the help of aeroplanes and other possible means of communication and extending over a fortnight—staggeres the imagination and wrings the heart. Dr. Dunn of the Geological Survey of India had declared that the Bihar earthquake was one of the biggest and most extensive earthquakes in history. The area of the country which suffered most was as large as Scotland with five times its population. In the towns of North Bihar there was probably not one masonry house which was altogether undamaged, while thousands of houses were completely destroyed with not a wall standing. The urban population affected was not less than half a million and twelve towns with between ten to sixty thousand inhabitants have been wrecked. In the rural areas the principal damage was the sanding up of fertile soil, perhaps the most fertile in India. Sand was poured out by fountains of water gushing from fissures and spread over smiling fields. As the result of an official enquiry, still incomplete, it has been found that the deposit of sand over an area of thousand square miles varied from 1 inch to 3 feet. Seven sugar mills have been damaged and put out of action with the result that over half a million tons of sugarcane crop was left standing in the fields. Besides this, there was the damage done to roads, bridges, culverts, railroads, public buildings, records and a host of other concomitants of civilized communal life. The damage done to Government buildings alone has roughly been estimated at over a crore of rupees. So much for property.

Official enquiry, which is still far from complete, has so far enumerated over 7,000 dead. Of the injured there is yet no reliable estimate. The only relieving feature was that the catastrophe occurred by day and not by night or the number of the

dead and the injured would have been very much larger. The *purdah* ladies suffered most. The amount of human agony and suffering was too sickening to contemplate. For every person who was killed outright, there must be several who were buried under the debris suffering excruciating pain and dying by inches. Cases have been reported of persons, and ladies among them, who lay buried under the debris for five, ten and more days.

The fate of those who escaped death or damage from the earthquake was pitiable to a degree. Suffering from the sudden and unnerving shock, mourning the death of their beloved ones, uncertain of the fate of others, lamenting the loss of their all, they had to camp out in the open in the bitter cold of the North Indian winter, with insufficient clothing and food. Their misery was aggravated by unusually cold waves which swept over the country and by torrential rains.

Even the most wealthy and advanced province in India would find its resources insufficient to deal with such a situation. Bihar is neither the richest nor the most advanced. The resources of India as a whole must be mobilised to mitigate the miseries of Bihar and in good time. Immediate relief in the shape of clothing and food and something like shelter was speedily improvised by official and non-official agencies. Medical assistance was rushed to the scene. At the present moment over thirty-three organisations are reported to be engaged in affording relief. It is very gratifying that co-ordination as between the various non-official organisations and between them and the official has been secured. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Babu Rajendra Prasad have borne testimony to this co-ordination and co-operation and the absence of communal preferences and partialities in the distribution of relief. It would be ideal if the various funds and committees were amalgamated into one single central organisation. But that seems rather a remote hope.

The problems of relief, as distinguished from reconstruction, are many and urgent. Food, clothing and temporary shelters are the most urgent. The rich have resources to fall back upon, the poor will seek and accept the gratuitous relief offered. But the middle class have neither reserves nor will they seek or accept gratuitous relief. They would rather buy on credit. Their needs require delicate handling, full of sympathetic understanding. There was naturally a tendency for profiteering by traders. This has promptly been controlled by the officials.

The next immediate relief was to find use for the standing crop of sugarcane. Arrangements have been made to collect and distribute the old forsaken small presses worked by bullock power with which to crush the cane, the juice being subsequently converted into *gur*.

The problem of reconstruction is handicapped by the fact that the earthquake has in many places changed the level of the countryside. Streams and waterways have already changed their courses. But the full effect of this change will not be known until the contour survey, which is in progress, is com-

pleted. Experts have cautioned against the construction of *pucca* buildings until after the next monsoon season. It is feared that some areas will be unfit for building towns on and that the present occupants will have to migrate to other places permanently. The removal of the debris, the clearing of sand, the replanning of towns and villages, the building of houses, the rebuilding of the economic life of the people, the adjustment of land and other property rights now obliterated by the earthquake, the reconstruction of public buildings, the restoration of communications of every kind, the care of orphans, and the permanently maimed—these and a host of others problems too numerous to mention require patient working out over a longer period.

It is to be hoped that all the assistance which modern science can give will be pressed into service, compatible with the economic resources of the people, in reconstructing the devastated part of Bihar. In the place of the old type of towns, and villages with narrow and winding lanes and insanitary byepaths—the haphazard growth of antiquated centuries—modern towns and villages will grow up which will serve the civic needs of the people in an efficient manner.

In the meanwhile all the financial assistance which Bihar can get from all parts of India and abroad will be urgently needed. There seems to be no dearth of leadership and volunteers to organise the distribution of relief. Of the agencies which are actively engaged in relief work is the Servants of India Society, under the direction of its Vice-President, Mr. Hirday Nath Kunzru. Any funds that may be entrusted to the Society will be put to the best use possible.

ALL-PARTIES' CONFERENCE AND ITS CRITICS.

THE organisers of the All-Parties' Conference may as well congratulate themselves on the interest which has been aroused among all sections of the people in the country regarding their move, though, to a large extent, it is the result of the adverse criticisms that have been levelled against the proposal to hold such a conference. If these criticisms were to afford any indication of a genuine desire to rouse the country from the political lethargy into which it has fallen, then there would have been some justification for them. Unfortunately, with the solitary exception of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who furnishes a rare instance of a critic exemplifying his own canons, these attacks proceed from quarters which have no desire to do anything themselves, but are jealous lest something happens which might lessen their own importance.

The viewpoint of Pandit Jawaharlal can be understood and appreciated even by those who can never agree with him. He stands for complete independence and self-determination and will have nothing to do with the White Paper, not merely because it falls short of our expectations, but because it recognises the ultimate authority of the British Parliament in Indian affairs. To him the White Paper has no existence and, therefore, does not need any condemnation, much less constructive criticism. He never believed in the method pursued at the Round Table Conferences, and it is an open secret that he only reconciled himself to Mahatma Gandhi going

to England because of the personal influence which the latter wields over him. For such a person to think of joining an All-Parties' Conference and suggesting essential modifications would undoubtedly mean some sacrifice of principles he holds dear, and it is not, therefore, surprising to learn that he has courteously made his position clear to the organisers of the Conference in reply to the invitation sent to him.

The same thing, however, cannot be said about those other Congressmen, who have frantically tried to bring about a reorientation of the Congress Policy since the last Poona Conference which declared in favour of individual civil disobedience. Most of them have realised and some have frankly acknowledged that the civil disobedience movement has failed. Some have written vehemently and expressed themselves still more strongly against an attitude which refuses to face realities and adapt itself to the changed situation in the country. Some of them are bitterly complaining that Pandit Jawaharal has no immediate plan of action to offer and that his idea of a constituent assembly is a dream, because the Pandit has declared that a real constituent assembly can only be convened when the people get the upper hand of the situation. Some Congressmen do not like the socialist views which the Allahabad leader is freely propounding, though they have not the courage to say so publicly. It is at such an awkward moment that the proposal of an All-Parties' Conference has surprised them and the impulse to keep up appearances has been so strong that many have not even cared to examine the proposal on its merits in their haste to denounce it in the name of the Congress. This explains why some prominent Congressmen privately blessed the move for an All-Parties' Conference and even assured their whole-hearted sympathy, and yet the very next day, with a few honourable exceptions, they publicly avowed themselves opposed to the idea. As Mr. Kingsley Martin remarked in a recent Fabian Lecture, most people have no deliberate intellectual judgments about any public or civic things; they have private opinions, but no public emotions.

The gravamen of the charge against the proposed Conference is that it will deal with the purely political aspects of the White Paper and that the question of the Communal Award and that of the 'sanctions' have been excluded from its purview. It is obvious from the letter of invitation issued by the Executive Committee that the decision to omit these questions from the agenda of the Conference was reached after great deliberation in the interest of attaining the greatest measure of unanimity, which would not be possible if those questions were left open to discussion. At the same time, perfect liberty is left to those who would participate in the Conference to advocate the solution of these questions on lines they desire in their own organisations. In the face of this declaration, it is not correct to say that participation in the Conference necessarily implies acceptance of the communal award or of any particular line of political action if the demands of the Conference were not granted by the British Government. In fact even in the All-Parties' Conferences that were held previously and which were attended by Mahatma Gandhi and other Congressmen, Mr. Gandhi had always taken the stand that his presence at the Conference did not mean that its decisions would be binding on the Congress.

That the exclusion of the communal award has no sinister purpose behind it is clear from the fact that amongst those who have promised support to the move, there are persons who have been most critical of the Award as well as those who would stand by it in the absence of any better alternative.

Was it ever suggested that Mahatma Gandhi's self-sacrificing concentration on that part of the Award which dealt with the depressed classes implied his acceptance of the rest? Or can it be argued that because the Mahatma has not paid any attention since his release from jail, and before he was arrested, put into jail for individual civil disobedience and released again, to the question of communal unity, that he does not attach any value to it? The fact is that many of the promoters of the All-Parties' Conference recognise the unsatisfactory nature of the Award, but they feel at the same time that it would serve no useful purpose but would, on the contrary, be distinctly harmful to rake up the past and revive old controversies, thus sidetracking the energies of the nation into unfruitful channels instead of focussing them on the constitutional issue, which if tackled in some united manner was likely to yield better results. The first meeting of the Executive Committee, it would appear, had actually before it a proposal that preliminary attempt should be made to achieve communal unity on some satisfactory basis. But it was pointed out that Pandit Malaviya had tried his utmost, in his Unity Conference, to get an agreement on the communal question, but that the attempt had to be ultimately given up and the Conference adjourned *sine die*. The sponsor of the proposal, therefore, agreed to drop it on being convinced of its impracticability. If Congress and others, who disapprove of the All-Parties' Conference dropping the Communal award from its agenda, are really anxious to make another attempt at communal unity, nothing prevents them from approaching Pandit Malaviya again to revive his Unity Conference, even as a preliminary to the meeting of the All-Parties' Conference. But the organisers of the latter should not be blamed for refusing to have their fingers burnt in the pursuit of what they think to be impracticable in the present conditions.

The question of 'sanctions' is equally puzzling. It is, of course, quite logical to ask "What Next?" but the supporters of direct action at least should not be so insistent when they themselves have not yet been able to find a suitable answer to it. After all, the ultimate sanction behind every movement, including direct action, depends upon the amount of public support it is able to secure, and, unless they are seriously misled, there is no reason why the public should withhold their support from any constructive effort especially if it offers some means whereby all progressive sections can come together on a common platform with a desire to serve the country and fight the forces of reaction which have admittedly gained ascendancy. Even at the time of the Simon Commission Congressmen twitted the Liberals and other non-Congress parties with the question "What Next?" but that did not prevent all parties joining hands and getting a reversal of the policy of Lord Birkenhead. There is also one other consideration. It cannot be denied that at present progressive forces in India are more or less in a state of disruption and the more they are able to come together and appreciate each other's point of view, the better will it be for the country. It might even be that action on one issue might help to evolve common understanding on other issues as well. Even supposing, therefore, that the prospects of the British Government conceding the minimum demand put forth by the All-Parties' Conference were nil, it passes one's understanding how the endeavour to make it clear to the British Government that the White Paper, as it stands, can never secure the willing acceptance of the people or will not ensure a contented working of the constitution, can be described as not in the best interests of the country.

A NATIONALIST.

UNTOUCHABILITY AND IDOLATRY.

I FIND that in certain professedly progressive Hindu quarters a red-herring is sought to be drawn across the path of Mahatma Gandhi's temple-entry movement by the objection that admission of the Harijans to orthodox temples would mean confirming them in their idolatrous practices. They suggest therefore that the idolatry prevalent in our temples should be reformed away before the Harijans are admitted to them. This is just the position which some Christian missionaries took when they called the object of the temple-entry movement a 'Dead Sea fruit' on account of the temple idolatry, and for which they were then roundly taken to task in these same progressive Hindu quarters. Apparently these quarters now think nothing of, or perhaps are actually bent upon, playing into the hands of our own reactionaries now so influentially rallying their forces against Mahatmaji's movement; for the Sanatanists are sure to seize upon the objection to the reform, on whatever ground, coming from such pro-reform quarters, as good support to themselves in their fight against the Harijan movement. But be that as it may, I am afraid, to superficial readers and particularly to anti-idolatrous Hindu sectarians among them the objection might commend itself as a valid one on its own merits. There are, however, certain important considerations which detract from its cogency, and I should like with the Editor's permission to place them before the readers of this paper.

(1) It should be noted in the first place that two distinct reforms are here involved. One is the removal of the Harijans' disability as regards the access to public temples, and this may be described as the reform of caste in connection with temples. The other which is concerned with the forms of worship is the reform of the temple cult. It is no good mixing up the two reforms in the way it has been done. Both of them might be pursued independently of each other and it is surely unreasonable to make the absence of one reform an excuse or ground for holding up the other. If "temple-entry" meant only opening new and separate temples to the Harijans and their sympathisers, then the question of effecting both reforms (of castes and of cult) at the same time might be thought of. But opening such new temples is not the primary aim of the Harijan movement; nor would it be in the right direction, for it would only tend to confirm and perpetuate untouchability.

Indeed, of the two reforms that of caste is the more vital and urgent. The reform of the temple cult has only a theological bearing. The caste reform is concerned with human relationship and human feelings—with our social efficiency and solidarity. While idolatry is not regarded as obligatory by Hindu orthodoxy, caste is. That apparently is the reason why the great Ram Mohan Roy, who could carry out his anti-idolatrous cult reform within his Samaj with comparative ease, proved too weak to resist the more powerful as well as baneful influence of caste, as when he made it a rule that only those who were Brahmans by birth should recite the Vedic portions of the Brahmo service, which they did, we are told, in a separate apartment by themselves within the Samaj building. While the idolatry of metal and stone was done away with, the idolatry of caste—the sanctification of particular flesh and blood—continued to be indulged in. Caste thus proved to be the rock on which Ram Mohan's noble Samaj ultimately split. (Besides, what is it but an idolatry of words that prayer and praise should be offered to God in the ill-understood words of a dead language like that of the Vedic verses, as though they were sacred in themselves, or magically potent to move the Deity, or more acceptable to Him than their intelligible

vernacular equivalents?) A greater spiritual force than Ram Mohan's was therefore needed to deal with the monster of caste, and the Mahatma is to-day exerting it.

(2) Mahatmaji's advocacy of temple-entry for the Harijans does not consist in encouraging the Harijans to worship in this or that temple with this or that mode of worship. It is concerned with persuading the other Hindus not to debar their co-religionists who may wish to share their religious life with them within the public temples from doing so. What is aimed at is the removal of a disability attaching to birth among certain Hindus in regard to access to public temples, whether it be for worship or otherwise. For it is a fact that not all who enter temples do so for worship. Even people who do not believe in idols may have occasion to enter idolatrous temples.

It is related of Ranade, the great leader of the anti-idolatrous Prarthana Samaj, that he used to visit orthodox temples and give religious discourses to large audiences in them amid their idolatrous surroundings. He is said to have silenced fellow-Samajist zealots objecting to such conduct of his, by pointing out that, far from countenancing idolatry by his presence in the temples, he was trying by his discourses to win over the orthodox worshippers there to a worthier faith and purer worship. This incident in his life is usually recalled as showing his tolerance and far-sightedness. Now Ranade could enter orthodox temples because he happened to be a 'touchable' Hindu by birth, even though he disbelieved in and wished an end of the idolatry prevalent in them. But what a disbelieving Ranade may do, a believing M. C. Rajah may not, because he is a Harijan by birth. It is this anomaly that the temple-entry movement is meant to abolish.

Sight-seeing is another of the objects for which people go to temples. Some months ago a high European officer with his leather boots on was shown round the interior of the famous temple of Vithoba at Pandharpur by the priests in charge. The incident created some stir at the time, and somebody even remarked in the press that if an "untouchable" co-religionist of the priests had in a fit of devotional ecstasy found himself inside his god's house, those very priests who had obliged the unbelieving foreigner would have driven the devotee out and prosecuted him or got him mulcted in heavy damages in a court of law for defiling the temple by his presence within it.

Entry into temples for sight-seeing purposes, though in itself quite a legitimate act, might be dismissed as being a thing of rare occurrence and hence of little significance. But it should not be forgotten that for the Hindu masses in the villages their temples are their only centres for communal and cultural life. Apart from and more important than the *pujas* and other strictly religious forms of the temple-cult, there are the *kathas* (or *kalakshepams*), *puran*-readings, folk-plays and other amenities, which are the most important (if not the only) means by which both instruction and recreation are provided to the Hindu villager. As it is in the temples mainly that this is done, they may be called the town-halls of our countryside. One can see, therefore, how exclusion of the Harijans from the communal activities which are conducted inside them, and which cannot be said to be wholly unedifying in themselves, must mean the denial to the excluded of so many opportunities of cultural uplift and intellectual recreation now open to the privileged castes. This secular aspect of the temple ban makes it, in my opinion, almost a civic one.

(3) One could understand a plea for greater concentration for the present on the purely civic dis-

abilities of the Harijans (*i. e.*, the bans on the use of public schools, wells, roads, vehicles, etc.) than on the temple ban. Even then we should not lose sight of the facts that untouchability obtains among Hindus as a 'religious' institution, and that the temples are, so to say, the strongholds of Hindu religious life. It is therefore to be expected that with the recognition of the Harijans' right to enter temples the monstrous custom of untouchability will have its back broken, even if it will not be killed outright. Without its removal from the temples we shall be far indeed from its removal from popular Hinduism in its several aspects.

Now popular Hinduism itself, as manifested in the temple cult, may not be the best form of Hinduism. Reform of the temple cult may be a highly desirable thing, but that is clearly a different matter from the caste reform implied in the temple-entry movement. English spelling may be badly in need of reform, but that is no reason why the benefit of literacy in English should be denied to any people that need it or seek it, until the English-speaking world chooses to rationalise its orthography. So it is with the temple-entry question. The objection, therefore, to temple-entry for Harijans on the ground of the temple idolatry sounds like the argument that before English spelling is reformed, facilities for English teaching should not be extended anywhere because it would mean extending and confirming the prevailing irrational system of spelling of the English language. The conflict, therefore, if any, between the two reforms of temple-entry and temple-cult, like the conflict that might be imagined between the removal of illiteracy in English and the reform of English spelling, is more nominal and apparent than real or material. It is mischievous if it is employed as a ground for delaying or as an excuse for preventing what is immeasurably the more vital and urgent of the two reforms.

S. D. NADKARNI.

A TRIUMPH OF REASON.

THERE is a stage probably in the development of every community when giving expression to an opinion not generally held by a majority of the members is considered to be a very dangerous crime and is punished severely. Moreover, the punishment is quite out of proportion in many cases to the gravity of the "crime" and irrespective of whether a breach of peace is threatened or not. The persecution of the heliocentrists, the Christians, the Reformers, the Jews, the Birth-Controllers, the Pacifists, the Heterodox and even the political opponents are all different manifestations of the same general fear of anything different from the general run of thought.

It is the general belief, that we in the 20th century have now got over that phase of barbarism and that nobody is punished for an expression of mere opinion, so long as no incitement to any action against the laws of the country is involved. How wrong this belief is, is shown by various instances of prosecutions under the so-called blasphemy and obscenity laws, launched by governments in practically all countries. Even in England, supposed to be one of the most tolerant of countries, these laws still continue to be on the statute book, a menace to the free expression of opinion. In India there was no blasphemy law until recently and were it not for the deliberate policy of the Indian Government to placate the orthodox sections of the different commu-

nities, the law might not have been passed. The desire to gain friends among the Indian public men, of whatever sort, resulted in placing upon the statute book a law which declared as a crime the attacking of any religion with malicious intention to wound the feelings of its followers.

The first prosecution under the law in the Bombay Presidency was launched recently against that well-known rationalist writer, Dr. D'avoine, the editor of *Reason*, the organ of the Rationalist Association of India, Bombay. The articles objected to were published in the December issue of the magazine and one of them contained an attack on the proposed resolution in the Senate of the Bombay University for the introduction of compulsory religious instruction in the Colleges. Fortunately the learned Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bombay took the correct view of the matter and acquitted Dr. D'avoine. The acquittal was based on the absence of any malicious and deliberate intention on the part of the accused to wound the religious feelings of the communities concerned. If this sane and eminently reasonable view is not taken, any criticism of the beliefs and superstitions of a community would be impossible. In fact, reformers will be so handicapped that no agitation against the age-old customs would at all be possible. Even Mahatma Gandhi's anti-untouchability movement must then be banned, for, surely, it is by now quite evident that the religious feelings of the orthodox Sanatanists are being wounded every day.

Nobody apparently is concerned about the feelings of Rationalists. There is nowhere a law to protect *their* susceptibilities and inner convictions. If the law were to be entirely impartial, the religiously minded should also have been prohibited from attacking, say, atheists like the present writer. That is however not the case and any religious writer can attack a rationalist in any way he likes. Of course, I do not object to it so long as the same freedom is granted to me. If, in future, the blasphemy law is to be administered with the same liberal spirit as the Chief Presidency Magistrate showed, it will have been rendered much less objectionable.

With the general spirit of intolerance rampant in the world, with Hitlers, Mussolinis and Stalins threatening everybody who dares utter a single word against the established creed of the men in power, it is indeed a gratifying sign that in India, of all countries, an honest and straightforward criticism of irrational religious beliefs is not considered a crime.

D. D. KARVE.

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Correspondent.)

London, February 2.

BROTHER ANDREWS.

C. F. ANDREWS (Charliebhai) may soon be on the move again. He is proposing to visit a sister in New Zealand, and it is likely that he will pay a visit to South Africa *en route*. I hope most

sincerely that he will escape local factional propaganda if he should decide to pay a visit to his old friend, Sir Maharaj Singh, the present Agent of the Government of India. Sir Maharaj has been the victim of much undeserved criticism from a section of the Indian community that has condemned and separated off from the South African Indian Congress on account of its having implemented its undertaking to participate in an inquiry as to the possibility of finding territories to which voluntary emigration from India and from South Africa might be directed. Mr. Andrews is definitely of the opinion that to have refused to participate in the present inquiry, both by being represented on the preliminary committee appointed by the Union Government and by giving evidence before it, would have constituted a breach of faith that would have told very badly against the Indian community. Another well-known authority here on questions relating to Indians overseas entirely shares Mr. Andrews' views on this subject. Sir Maharaj Singh deserves all the support from Indian public opinion that he can get in his difficult task.

A GOOD STICK.

When Sir Samuel Hoare some time ago warned the "dogs" not to bark as the "caravan" passed on, it probably did not occur to him that the time might come when he, too, would be mistaken for a canine, if also a candid, friend. Yet that seems actually to have taken place. The *Daily Mail* has always hated the White Paper policy and all its implications and Sir Samuel has frequently come under its lash. It now takes advantage of an attack by Brig. General Groves, in a book entitled "Behind the Smoke-Screen", upon Sir Samuel's record as Air Minister, in which he is charged with being ready enough to "press for air parity with other nations", when out of office, but being also responsible when in office as Air Minister, for the fact that just before the fall of the last Conservative Government, in 1929 his Under-Secretary was forced to admit that "from being the first Air Power in the world we have sunk to the position of fifth." It is lower still now, I believe. The *Mail* accordingly deduces that "Sir Samuel Hoare must not be allowed to repeat in the case of India the confidence trick (the *Mail's* italics, not mine) which has lost Great Britain the command of the air and piled up such serious liabilities for the tax-payer." Evidently the *Mail's* view is that any stick is good enough to beat a dog with.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

The first detailed reports, the first personal accounts, as also the first pictures of the earthquake disaster have reached this country by air mail. The accounts are even more tragic and pitiful than the earlier reports. The descriptions of eye-witnesses and the photographs of the scenes of devastation help us, in a small degree, to visualise the extent of the disaster. It seems almost impossible to realise that those quiet and placid towns and villages of Bihar, with which one was familiar, have become the victims of these terrible forces of Nature. And yet, if it is any comfort or consolation at all, it is of interest to know that the death-roll does not appear to be so high as that of the great volcanic eruption of Mount Pelée, in Martinique, some years ago, and that the scene itself was not so unrecognisably distorted as when, half a century ago, the volcano of Krakapoa in the Dutch East Indies blew itself to pieces, and the entire island was submerged beneath the sea. Nor fortunately can the recent event be in any way compared with the vast convulsion of Nature that sunk alike mountains and valleys beneath the sea between what is now Western India and the South-east coast of Arabia, of which we are just beginning to gather some knowledge. All this, however, must be poor comfort for those who have been deprived of their

nearest and dearest, or whose cultivated lands have been destroyed, or who have otherwise lost their all. An individual disaster always outweighs a general one—for the individual. It is not every one who can, like the bereaved mother, derive consolation from Buddha's reminder that there were probably few families where death had not snatched away a child from its mother's arms.

Yesterday, the Lord Mayor issued a letter to the Press, in which he appealed for public support for his fund in aid of the Viceroy's Indian Earthquake Fund, for which a special meeting will be held at the Mansion House next Thursday. The Lord Mayor has acted at the request of the Secretary of State for India and in collaboration with the High Commissioner. In his appeal the Lord Mayor recalls (and it would not be surprising if the inspiration for this passage came from Mr. C. F. Andrews) that only a few months ago the Province of Bihar and Orissa suffered from a flood disaster in Orissa which taxed its own public and private resources to the utmost. Among those who have joined with the Lord Mayor in a request for a demonstration of British goodwill towards the Indian people and a tangible evidence of our practical sympathy and support in the disaster which has befallen them are the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Reading, Lord Halifax, Lord Hardinge, Lord Zetland, Lord Linlithgow, Lord Meston, Lord Lothian, Sir Stanley Jackson, Sir Harcourt Butler, and the Governor of the Bank of England.

LORD READING'S NEW OFFICE.

Many people were surprised to read in Saturday's papers of the appointment of the Marquess of Reading to the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, upon the resignation of that office by Earl Beauchamp. The Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports is an office dating from Saxon times, and partook of the nature of the custodianship of the naval defence of the south-east shores of England. The original five ports, of which Dover has always been the chief, were Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Romney and Hastings. To these were subsequently added Winchelsea and Rye, which are now inland towns, owing to the silting up that has deprived Romney, too, of its maritime importance. In these days, Hythe is overshadowed by its majestic neighbour, Folkestone, which was formerly merely an annex of Dover, and has never been a Cinque Port. The Lord Warden's official residence, in which died the Duke of Wellington, who formerly held the office as have many other distinguished men, is Walmer Castle, near Deal. To-day the office is a sinecure and its duties are purely formal and decorative.

I have just heard that the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, is now not expected to see the light of day until "the late spring," by which we mean usually April May, just in time, perhaps to welcome Lord Willingdon upon his arrival here for a few months' holiday.

PROPAGANDA LECTURES IN ENGLAND.

At a summer school or other similar organisation to be held presently in Kent, Mr. Louis Stuart and Mr. Edward Villiers are to speak against and for the reforms scheme. Mr. Villiers on behalf of the Union of Britain and India has been touring the South Coast towns on a lecturing expedition and, as I should gather from a leaflet which has just been sent to me by a local resident, he is doing his job of preliminary circularisation with considerable thoroughness.

One of the most interesting addresses delivered recently was that of Sir Charles Stead, formerly Inspector-General of Police in the Punjab, who recently gave evidence before the Joint Select Commi-

tee for the Indian Police Association. Referring to criticism of the high proportion of illiterate voters in the proposed Indian franchise, he said that he regarded them as the very salt of the electorate; he had always been greatly impressed by the "horse-sense" of the illiterate voter and by his unflinching judgment of men and actions. The danger was rather from the literate urban electorate than from the illiterate countryside. "Our top-heavy educational system in India," he said "has placed secondary and even university education within reach of the town boy of poor status and only moderate ability, while it has largely denied facilities for even primary education to the son of the sturdy and self-respecting yeoman who bears the greater of the burden of taxation and is the backbone of the Army and Police Forces. No doubt under self-government the illiterate electorate will see to this."

Turning next to the attitude of the police to the reforms, he said that the Indian police had made certain recommendations to the Joint Select Committee which, if they were accepted, would furnish the police engine with automatic gadgets designed to make it amateur-proof. The restrictions which the Association would see imposed on the Minister in charge of the Police portfolio were those which any form of government in India, autocratic, bureaucratic, or democratic, must impose on itself if it was to maintain public order. The present Government of trained and experienced administrators had always imposed these restrictions upon itself, and as it was vitally important that mistakes should not be made at the outset of a new regime, it would be courting disaster to omit to give these restrictions statutory force when the police portfolio fell into the hands of untried and inexperienced Ministers, however brilliant their brains and however upright their motive.

Finally Sir Charles remarked that the Indian Police Association, being fully alive to the advantages of a settlement by an agreement which would receive reasonable support in India, believed that if the measures that it proposed were adopted, its serving members would be able to continue to render useful service to India and to support the new administration as loyally as it had served the old.

GANDHIJI AND TRADITION.

In a lecture to the Manchester Soroptimist Club and the British Federation of University Women, Dr. Betty Heimann, formerly Extraordinary Professor of Indology in the University of Halle, and the only woman professor in that University, now a German refugee, spoke of the strong influence of tradition upon the habits and customs and ways of thinking of the people of India. The past was constantly teaching modern India in Science as in Politics. Gandhi's strength, she said, lay in the observance of the traditions. Passive Resistance (by which, no doubt, she meant Satyagraha), voluntary starvation, and other symbolic acts had their precedent in Vedic text. Therefore he had authority more perhaps over the unsectical Brahmans than over the Westernized minds of young India.

I may here add that the speaker at the Guild-house last Sunday before a large audience, on Mahatma Gandhi as one of the "Makers of the Modern Mind" was Mr. Hy. S. L. Polak.

RETURN OF MESSRS. HUTCHINSON AND BRADLEY.

A public meeting was held at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, last Saturday, to welcome the two released Meerut prisoners, Mr. Lester Hutchinson and Mr. Ben Bradley. The meeting was principally noteworthy for Mr. Harold Laski's speech, in which he said he wanted the two ex-prisoners to go up and down the country, and especially to Lancashire, to drive home to the working classes what it meant to

go to prison and suffer the terror in India. The electorate was not aware of what was being done in its name, but the people of England were responsible. "In the years immediately ahead the Indian people," he said, "are going to be confronted with difficulties compared with which the present ones seem small. Increasing political tension in this country will tend to draw our minds away from the Indian issue. It is urgent, while there is yet time, to teach British people the realities of the situation." The two ex-prisoners who were entertained at the House of Commons this week by the Meerut Committee, of which Mr. Morgan Jones, M. P. is Chairman, have had a great deal to say about the abominable treatment of Indian prisoners, both political and ordinary. They are both convinced that they would still have been in prison if it had not been for the agitation which was carried on in this country.

Our Parliamentary Letter.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

New Delhi, February 11.

PRINCES' PROTECTION BILL.

AS was expected, the Princes' Protection Bill was sent to Select Committee on the 7th by an overwhelming majority of 69 to 30 votes. It was remarkable that every speaker, whether he opposed or supported it, harped upon the undesirable clause fettering the liberty of the press. Raja Bahadur Krishnamachari and Mr. B. Das pointedly asked the Government if there was a real demand for such an extraordinary legislation, from any one of the princes; but the Home Member merely repeated that the measure was put forward simply on its own merits. Mr. Dumasia in supporting the measure had a fling at the agitators against the Bill, whom he characterised as not the people of the States, but outsiders who were professional propagandists. Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh wanted that if *jathas* were going to be prohibited from British India, legal *jathas*—meaning thereby British troops—should also be not sent to the States against the wishes of the rulers, as was done in case of Alwar. Mr. Glancy, the Political Secretary, who defended the necessity of the Bill, explained that it was 'dangerous to weaken a nucleus round which loyalty and patriotism would gather when they were to have many changes in India.' He said every incident in the States was given a communal term by the sensational press and they wanted to give the States a fair play. Sir Abdur Rahim, Leader of the Opposition, showed how the Bill would not affect so much the people of Indian States, but would restrict the liberties of the people of British India. He compared it to the Ordinance Bill which gave the Government extraordinary powers and exclaimed that even the justification of the dual policy of maintenance of law and order and reforms did not exist in this case. The Home Member denied that Government had all the necessary powers under the existing laws and again assured that the Bill did not seek to stop all criticisms of Indian States. It only penalised such criticism as brought the States' administration into hatred and contempt. He affirmed that the press provision was an essential part of the Bill.

In the Select Committee an effort was made by Sir Abdur Rahim to get this particular clause deleted, but it failed. Now an agreement seems to have been reached to limit the life of the relevant portion to two years.

PROTECTION TO TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

Sir Joseph Bhore introduced a Bill on the 5th for giving protection to the Indian Textile Industry, giving at the same time effect to the Indo-Japanese and the Mody-Lees agreements. The preamble of the Bill recognises that the Indian Textile Industry does require further protection and the present measure is to remain in force for five years, till the 31st of March 1939. The duties proposed, however, may be changed in 1935 when the Bombay-Lancashire agreement ends and in 1937 when the Indo-Japanese agreement expires. In the section giving effect to the Indo-Japanese agreement, British piecegoods receive a preference of 25%, being liable to 25% duty as against 50% duty on non-British goods. The Tariff Board, which enquired into the problem of protection to the Indian Textile Industry, had submitted its report by the end of 1932 and by its publication after such a long period characterised by abnormal commercial convulsions, Government have rendered it practically out of date. The Board had recommended that Indian goods required protection not only from the goods exported from foreign countries but also from goods imported from the United Kingdom, and yet the Bill provides a 25 p. c. preference for goods imported from the United Kingdom. How the Government have treated the findings of the reports speaks for itself.

PROTECTION FOR KHADDAR.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh was fortunate enough to get his Khaddar Protection Bill passed in the Assembly on Thursday last. It is rarely that a private Bill goes successfully through all the stages in the Legislature. The Bill restricts the use of the name Khaddar to only hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. It has been brought specifically to see that mill-made cloth is not passed on to the unsuspecting buyer as Khadi. There is, however, a chance in the Bill which may prevent its coming into force immediately. It leaves the Local Governments free to bring it into force at their discretion.

PROTECTION AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT.

The debate on Mr. Joshi's resolution asking Government to take measures against increasing unemployment among the workers and reduction in wages, was continued further on the 6th when the speakers who supported the resolution complained against the aimless policy of the Government in the matter. Sir H. S. Gour thought that the present system of education was greatly responsible for the unemployment and asked the Government to establish a Central Board of Education and a Board of Industry. Sir Henry Gidney accused the Government of not moving with the times and keeping back the valued recommendations of the Hartog Committee. Financial stringency, he said, should not be allowed to stand in the way and Government ought to find the money for the purpose. Mr. G. S. Bajpai took the opportunity to explain the policy of the Department of Education in this matter. Owing to the subject being primarily in the hands of provincial Ministers, he said the Central Government had very little hand in the matter. They did think it desirable that a Central Board of Education should be established, but the financial position did not allow this for the present. The Hon'ble Member for Industries, Sir Frank Noyce, denied that the position of Indian workers in certain big industries was as bad as that of workers in the Western countries. He agreed that there was under-employment due to depression and that Government would try its best to reduce it. He then referred in short to the strides that Labour legislation had made in India in protecting the workers and thought the best way was to revive trade and industrial prosperity and to that end their efforts would be directed. He said

Government would be prepared 'to take such measures as were practicable' to protect the workers. Mr. Joshi having agreed to this amendment, the resolution was passed. Government thus have somehow come out of an uncomfortable position and it is to be seen what 'practicable' measures they would pursue in the near future.

Review.**FROM PURDAH INTO THE SUN.**

INTO THE SUN. By FRIEDA H. DAS. (Dent.) 1933. 20cm. 312p. 7/6.

INTO the Sun of Outer Life, Freedom and Service from the darkness of purdahhood is the theme of the latest book of Frieda Das whose books published on Indian subjects, viz. "Marriage to India," "Purdah," and "Leaphome and Gentlebrawn" have already created a stir in England. The book under review is unique, because it is the first European novel that shows intimately and from inside knowledge the life of a Brahmin household, and the several phases of life it has been undergoing in recent years on account of the migration from the village to the town, and of the impacts of the western civilization and of the national movement. It is unique also, because it belongs to that class of literature of the type of Dr. Rabindranath's *Gora*, which presents, in a novel form, an unbiased exposition of the national life, thought and aspirations. In a sense, it may be said to be the successor of Mr. K. S. Venkataramani's "Kandan, the Patriot," in that while the latter pays a glowing tribute to the sacrifices and constructive work of the national movement in South India in 1930 and 1931, the present treatise records a fine picture of the gallant services rendered by our women in the field of Congress work and Harijan service since the inauguration of this phase of the national movement in 1932, the scene being now laid in the land of Urmila Devi, Bengal.

Ramadevi, the grand-daughter of the orthodox Pandit Ram Mohun, and daughter of the still more orthodox Sita, who was widowed in her ninth year, shook off the shackles of a Hindu widow's life of penance and renunciation at her blossoming age, and, thanks to the influence of her understanding brother, responded to the call of the Motherland. "When God Krishna calls, human Radha must go. Today our country calls, Goddess India, our great Mother, calls for this new form of service, this new worship, and we must go." A holy guru, a saint, truly a man of God, calls forth women to her duty higher than their domestic duty. Hitherto the call of duty had meant for them merely self-abnegation of individual will and service to the family within the four walls of the home. But now the call was that of higher duty, the call to go out into the world, and serve other than household gods. Ramadevi had her share of work in the political activities of the Congress; but when the Congress directed its activities in the channels of solid social reform and reconstruction, Ramadevi's quiet strength, inexhaustible patience, and devoted determination were useful for the type of constructive social work. In fact, the main theme of the whole book is the marvellous manner in which Ramadevi tackled the several problems raised by Harijan service; and it is no over-praise of the book to state that it will prove a very valuable guide to every Harijan worker.

The crux of the Harijan problem is truly stated to be the deep-rooted belief on the part of the Harijan that his abased condition is a just retribution for sins committed in the past lives, and is to be ac-

cepted uncomplainingly as part of an inevitable expiation. "We are untouchable; it is our dharma; we live as God wishes us to live. We live where God has placed us, and it is a sin for us to wish it otherwise." The unresponsiveness of the Mahars to the work of the band of the women volunteers is thus understandable. Even when the volunteers approached the village with a smile of frank, warm friendliness, the Mahars, in a voice full of tears, and with maddened fear, cried, "Oh! ye Heaven-born, turn your feet. Turn your feet. What have we done to you? How have we offended? Oh, do not destroy our village, do not bring the curse. Go back! go back! If you put foot in our village, some great calamity will befall us. Why do you want to destroy us?" The moral to be drawn by the Harijan workers is that 'they should not fancy themselves in the role of benevolent crusaders. They must first take the role of supplicants, beggars, who first earn the privilege to serve those whom their kind has scourged. Brick by brick, they must first, with their own delicate hands, demolish those harsh walls erected between themselves and untouchables. Deep-seated suspicion and superstition must be overcome; they must woo the confidence and consent of those whom they so blithely and confidently had undertaken to uplift.'

The Sanatanists' attitude towards the question has been admirably put into the mouth of the Mahant:—"The Mahars are where their own sins have put them. Step by step they must mount from incarnation to incarnation by their own efforts, not by yours; they must pass from no-caste through rebirth to lowest caste, up, up, from birth to birth. You cannot raise them; only they themselves can do that. You rob them of their opportunity and push them back when you give and serve. It is they who are born to give and serve; that is divinely ordered. Have you completely forgotten our sacred books which teach that the only way we high castes may help low castes and outcastes is by providing opportunities for them to serve us? If Mahars rebel against their lot or aspire to rise out of expiating degradation during this life, they defeat their own hope and will but sink deeper with each rebirth."

The reader's attention is drawn to the tragic aspect of the whole problem, viz., that the outcastes whom high caste interpretation of Hinduism had for untold ages exploited and depressed below the level of human existence, should yet be so loyal to the Hindu faith. "Above everything, every Hindu, however degraded his position, dreads to be cut off from the living body of his people, for his Karma is indivisibly interwoven with its very fibre; within the Hindu fold alone can he conceive the working out of his salvation—progress from life to life, from Mahar to Sudra, from low caste to high caste, ever upwards in an unending scale. There is no other path; beyond this exists only outer darkness for a Hindu born."

The depression, to which some workers fall a prey when they are not able to fight local evils such as money-lenders' exploitation, or when they are not able to make headway, finds expression as follows: "You can't fight local evils efficiently till you have national power in your hands! We must work with the educated groups and the students. There lies our hope. We must win political freedom first and then turn to social reform." The volunteers clean roads, huts and bodies; what more could they do? At every turn the realisation forces itself into the mind of the workers that only large-scale centrally organized reconstruction could bring lasting relief and results. Power, money and freedom in their own hands, that was what was

needed—municipal power; wider still—central Governmental power. What hopeless speculations!

Again, the attitude towards the Harijan problem of those who are strongly influenced by their reading in economics and sociology and by their smattering of knowledge about protracted labour struggles in the west, is well depicted in these words: "See that those poor devils get decent wages and you may trust them to take care of all the rest of their problems." The question of temple-entry does not appeal to such folk; in their opinion, that is all bosh. "As if it mattered where Untouchables worship as long as their bellies are empty or as if all people, who worship side by side treated each other well! Now-a-days temples are not worth entering anyhow! They're neither spiritual nor cultural centres, and I doubt if they ever Were!"

The right attitude towards the entire problem is indicated to be that adopted by Ramadevi, the heroine of the novel. She believed that other aspects than the economic might be equally, if not more, important. She had been deeply influenced by Gandhi's expositions on self-purification. The Mahatma's novel conception that the work of uplift of Untouchables constituted for high castes a God-given chance of atonement for their sins of age-long omission and commission, for their sins of exploiting and degrading these poorest of human brothers, had tremendously appealed to her. She felt it essential for deep and lasting success that the worker should live in the village, share the life of the Untouchables, be truly, wholly, one with them, constitute their moral backbone. She also felt at times that it was just this sense of everlasting dependence, this necessity to the Untouchables of the presence of outsiders, which formed the weakest spot in her own and in all Western-influenced efforts towards village regeneration. Something was lacking, something which of old had been present as a living force in Indian village life, upholding and renewing it from within and not from without.

Thus the various problems of Harijan service have been unobtrusively dealt with in the novel, which is an interesting and valuable contribution to the history of the national movement, and a very valuable guide to the Harijan worker. The reader is inspired with buoyant optimism for the future of his country with a new love and a new hope, hope for all of us; the hope that we shall all know better, juster days, and that all shall be free—all of us, every one of us, every son and daughter of India. We are all alike, we are children of the One Great Mother. We shall walk forward together into a better day, we shall grow more ready, more worthy, together. Not one of us can walk alone, no person, no caste, no town, no province. The walls of the new structure of the United India of our hearts' desire, cemented by the love, aspiration and devotion of Indian Youth are slowly, but surely rising, and rising true."

Apart from the main purpose of the novel, the graceful pen-pictures in minutest details of the Hindu household and customs, the psychological analysis of the conflict between a mother's love and grief for her children, and her soul's duty towards her sacred ancestors, the progress of the plot, and the striking decision to have "two camps under one roof, widely separated, each strictly within its limits, not transgressing, not incriminating, not accusing,—all these should be enjoyed by the reader of the book, the first patient reader of the Mss. of the book having been the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri.

R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR.

Correspondence.

A TREATISE ON BIRTH CONTROL.

I

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—With reference to the criticism on my book on Birth Control by Professor R. D. Karve, published in your columns of the 18th January, I wish to bring to the notice of your readers the following points.

1. Professor Karve assumes that the author refers to the famous Bradlaugh-Besant case, in the Introduction of the book, as having been conducted in India. Evidently, the Professor has not heard of the case that came up before Justices Parsons and Telang of the Bombay High Court in October 1892, about which the author refers.

2. The author is a doctor and not a literary man, and as such, we cannot expect the best of literature from him.

3. Regarding some of the scientific points that have been raised by the Professor, I would point out the following elementary principles in physiology. (a) All mucous membranes absorb substances that are in an absorbable form, that come in contact with them. As such there is possibility of absorption of the semen from the seminal vesicles. (b) Internal secretion of any particular gland alone cannot effect a particular function. Various factors contribute to the development of the secondary sexual characteristics in man, of which the absorption of the vital substances that go to make up the semen is an important factor. This fact is clear from the late and slow development of the secondary sexual characteristics in those who are used to excessive waste of the semen by masturbation or otherwise, in their growing stage. (c) Ovulation may occur on any day during intermenstrual period. Dr. Knaus of Austria and Dr. Ogino of Japan have formulated the theory that ovulation occurs more often between the third and the twelfth days after the last day of menstruation, and this has been corroborated by the observations of thirteen doctors in America.

4. Vasectomy is done in various ways. Spermatozoa is produced in the testes if the lower end of the cut vas is left without a ligature, and it is possible that impregnation is possible by a certain percentage of those who had reunion of the vas. Evidently, the Professor did not read or understand the details given in that chapter of my book.

From the trend of the criticism by the Professor and those criticisms that have appeared in other papers, I think, that it may be safely concluded, that the Professor's review of my book is like the blind man's opinion of the elephant after his feeling the tail or the tusk of the huge animal, and saying that it is something like a broom-stick or a spear—Yours, etc.

Travancore,
Jan. 30.

A. MATHEWS.

II

PROF. KARVE'S REPLY.

I am returning Mrs. Mathews' letter herewith. I may reply in short. (1) I admit that I was not aware of the case in the Bombay High Court and I will withdraw my remark on that point. (2) I do not expect outstanding literary merit from a medical writer,

but there should certainly be no possibility of mistaking the meaning, as there is in this book. I am also surprised that Mrs. Mathews refers to the book as 'my book.' (3) Though I am not a medical man, I do possess some knowledge of physiology, and my opinions are based on the works of eminent writers who are *not anonymous*. The semen in its final form is never present in the seminal vesicles and, instead of vague statements, the author might have said what exactly are the substances which in his opinion are absorbed. Modern opinion does not at all subscribe to the view that one drop of semen is worth 40 or 100 drops of blood. The bad effects of masturbation or sexual excess are due to nervous strain and not to actual loss of 'vital substances', whatever that may mean. About ovulation, contrary to what Mrs. Mathews says, recent researches show that ovulation occurs about the 12th to the 14th day from the beginning of a period, though there are exceptions. (4) If vasectomy is not done correctly, of course it will not be effective. Mrs. Mathews says I have not "understood" that chapter of her book. I have already said that it is difficult to understand that kind of English I may say that I never write a review of any book without going through it, so I need not reply to her remark about the elephant. I may add that I have studied the subject for more than 30 years.

I notice that the price of the book is marked as Rs. 3/8, and I repeat that there are cheaper and much better written books on the subject in English, and this one at that price was certainly not needed. Books are needed in the vernaculars and they should be cheap. My English booklet (Rs. 1) is out of print, but was on sale at Adyar. I have books in Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati (the last in press) at as. 12 each, giving detailed information for the ordinary reader, and I think this is the kind of work that is needed in other vernaculars.—Yours, etc.

Bombay, Feb. 4.

R. D. KARVE.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

- THE A B C OF CIVICS. By BENI PRASAD. (The Indian Press, Allahabad.) 1933. 23cm. 157p. Re. 1/8.
- THE MAIN CURRENTS OF MARATHA HISTORY. By GOVIND SAKHARAM SARDESAI. (K. B. Dhavale, Bombay 4.) 1933. 21cm. 232pp. Rs. 2.
- COUNTER-ATTACK FROM THE EAST. By C. E. M. JOAD. (Allen and Unwin.) 1933. 20cm. 269p. 7/6.
- EAST AND WEST IN RELIGION. By S. RADHAKRISHNAN. (Allen and Unwin.) 1933. 20cm. 146p. 4/6.
- INDIAN FILE. By E. P. WHITE. (Allen and Unwin.) 1933. 20cm. 96p. 3/6.
- EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA. By A. S. ALTEKAR. (The Indian Bookshop, Benares City.) 1933. 20cm. 386p. Rs. 3.
- ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF KASHMIR. By RAM CHADRA KAK. (The India Society, London.) 1933. 26cm. 172p. LXXVII plates. 25/-

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