

THE
SLAVES OF THE SOIL IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

BY THE
REV. T. B. PANDIAN,
*Author of the "Ancient Heroes of South Indian
Peninsula."*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY
J. E. VEDANAYAKAM PILLAY, B.A.,
*Professor of Logic and History, Church of
Scotland Mission College, Madras.*

• New Edition.
(Revised and much Enlarged.)

MADRAS:
PRINTED AT THE COSMOPOLITE PRESS,
1, RIVERDON ROAD, EGMORE,
1893

THIS
PAMPHLET IS RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED

TO

W. REIRSON ARBUTHNOT ESQ.

(With permission)

BY THE

AUTHOR

*As an humble tribute for the Christian
interest he has always taken in
the welfare of Indians.*

SLAVES OF THE SOIL IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

INTRODUCTION.

This small brochure by my friend the Rev. T. B. Pandian is very well-timed. The burning question of the day, at any rate in Southern India, is the emancipation of the Pariah. Every man who has had his mind enlightened, expanded, and elevated by education has also certain onerous responsibilities cast on him by virtue of such education. Not the least of such responsibilities is that he should take an intelligent interest in, and lend his hearty support to, every movement, inaugurated for the benefit of his uneducated countrymen, or any large section of them. In Mr. Pandian's case, the seed of education has certainly not been sown on a sterile or perverse soil, for the pamphlet before me bears on every page of it ample evidence of a large and sympathetic heart, of a clear and acute understanding. In the brief compass of a few pages, the writer has succeeded as well in presenting his readers with a true and accurate account of the Pariah's wretched condition as in suggesting the lines on which his emancipation is to be practically worked out. Two things strike a thoughtful reader of the pamphlet. The first is, that the writer is careful not to overstate his case, for he nowhere depicts the lot of the Pariah as a jot more wretched than it actually is, and nowhere lays more blame at the door of the authorities than they reasonably come in for. The second is, he is very sober in his tone, never aiming at creating anything like a sensation, never attacking the Government with blind and ill-judged fury, never proposing insane or utopian schemes.

I shall now, by way of introduction to Mr. Pandian's excellent little pamphlet, make a few observations *a propos* of the subject. The agitation that is at present going on in our historic peninsula and which has manifested itself, amongst other shapes, in the shape of this little book, is directed towards the laudable object of obtaining for the down-trodden Pariah a recognition, however tardy, of his status as a free-born subject of the British Indian Government. It may be proper to state here, at the very outset, that the expression *Pariah*, wherever it occurs in the course

of either this introduction or the pamphlet that follows it, is to be construed so as to include the Pallan or any other non-caste or low-caste man whose position in life is analogous to that of the Pariah strictly so-called. When it is said that the Pariah must be emancipated, it may be asked what he is to be emancipated from? In answering this question, care must be taken lest words be used descriptive of a state of things that does not really exist. Slavery, bondage, serfdom, villeinage, are all words more or less misleading, as none of them accurately describes the anomalous condition of the Pariah under the British Government. The British Law does not brand the Pariah as a slave; far from doing that, it recognises the Pariah to be as much a free man as any other British Indian subject of Her Imperial Majesty. The benefit of the Indian Penal Code is as open to the Pariah as to any other. In theory then, the Pariah is on a par with the highest in the land. It is perhaps this theoretical freedom, of the Pariah, this legal equality of the Pariah with the best in the land, that has lulled the Government into that self-complacent mood which has caused it, if not exactly to connive at, at any rate to overlook the oppressive system of village government under which the Pariah has been groaning for several centuries. On no other hypothesis can the inaction of Government in this particular be satisfactorily explained. The Englishman has been the sworn foe of slavery and oppression in all parts of the world, and that he should have consciously permitted the noxious weed to grow rampant so much nearer home, nor stretched his powerful arm to arrest the rank growth, is simply incredible.

As has been already more than hinted, there is a great disparity between the theoretical status of the Pariah in the eye of the law, and his actual status in South Indian Society. The flesh-and-blood Pariah, as we find him toiling in the fields of his master, though he may not be so badly off as the Negro in the service of the United States planter before the War of Emancipation, is certainly much worse off than the Plebeian of the early Roman republic before the passing of the Agrarian laws. Poor and illiterate, under-fed, and over-worked, precluded from exercising proprietary rights over land and compelled to work on soil belonging to others, ground down by a system of caste tyranny and sedulously kept under by interested social tyrants, and in but too many cases, indebted to and

enslaved by heartless usurers, the Pariah, in spite of the freedom that the law invests him with, is virtually no better off than Israel in Egypt in the days of the Pharaoh that knew not Joseph. To look to the caste people of the country for the deliverance of the Pariah from this state of moral, social and intellectual degradation must be as futile as it must have been, to have looked to the obdurate Pharaoh to accomplish of his own spontaneous will, the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian thralldom. Far from taking the initiative in the emancipation of the Pariah, it is very unlikely if the caste people will so much as help to further the good work if it be once set a-going by third parties; it is rather to be feared that they will try to obstruct it. Can the Pariah then be expected to work his way up against the systematised oppression that weighs him down? No, for he neither knows his rights nor has the boldness to stand up for them; long ages of ignorance have made an idiot of him, long ages of oppression have made a coward of him. In these circumstances, there is at once room and reason for Government to interpose on his behalf.

How Government may profitably interpose on behalf of the Pariah without laying itself open to the charge of undue favoritism, Mr. Pandian incidentally indicates in his pamphlet; but it may as well be stated here. The Pariah must be educated, and this will raise him intellectually. Once intellectually raised, the Pariah will himself become a mighty factor in the working out of his emancipation. To this end, primary schools should be started in the parcherries, and facilities afforded to Pariah lads to study in them. It is very gratifying to know that already steps have been taken by Government in this direction. The *Madras Mail* is inclined to regard it as a concession by Government to the agitation of the Press, that augurs well for the future. But there is danger lest Government remain perfectly satisfied with merely opening schools for the Pariahs. There are certain other things that Government must be asked to do without loss of time. The moral up-lifting of the Pariah may be expected to follow naturally in the wake of the intellectual; nevertheless something may be done by Government specifically in this direction. Government, for instance, may make an attempt to regulate marriage and divorce amongst the Pariahs. The social status of the Pariah may also be improved by Gov-

ernment passing laws enabling Pariahs to acquire and own land. The laws of debt may be reformed so as to render invalid all bonds by which the Pariah's person becomes mortgaged to his creditor. In these and other ways, Government can materially benefit the down-trodden Pariah community and earn their lasting gratitude.

Government can do much, but it cannot do all. It can elevate the Pariah intellectually, morally, and socially; but pledged as it is to strict religious neutrality in this country, it cannot elevate the Pariah spiritually. The spiritual regeneration of the Pariah, therefore, must be accomplished by an agency, or rather instrumentality, other than Government. In the schools started by Government for educating the Pariah, the Word of God can find no place. Hence the necessity for Christian bodies, in the case of the Pariah as in that of any other heathen community, to supplement the general educational efforts of Government with distinctively Christian efforts of their own. Mr. Pandian has therefore, very appropriately as I think, appended to his pamphlet an appeal to the Christian ladies and gentlemen of Great Britain, Australia and America to help in this philanthropic work. The appeal speaks for itself, and will, I am sure, be largely, readily and cheerfully responded to.

I shall now conclude with two quotations from the exquisite poetry of Robert Burns, in one of which he deploras man's inhumanity to man, and in the other, speaks of the brotherhood of man as a fact certain to be realized sooner or later.

See yonder poor, o'er-labor'd wight,
 So abject, mean, and vile,
 Who begs a brother of the earth
 To give him leave to toil;
 And see his lordly *fellow-worm*
 The poor petition spurn:
 Man's inhumanity to Man,
 Makes countless thousands mourn!

Then let us pray that come it may,
 As come it *shall* for a' that,
 That sense an' worth, o'er a' the earth,
 Shall bear the grie, and a' that;
 For a' that, and a' that,
 It's comin' yet, for a' that,—
 That man to man, the world o'er,
 Shall brothers be, for a' that.

J. E. V.

A P P E A L .

In the preceding pages I have tried to tell my readers the sad story of my fallen countrymen.

The Slaves of the Soil in Southern India are in reality hungering and thirsting after knowledge, and only Education, under the Divine Grace, can give them that needful strength to rise from their degraded condition to become valiant soldiers of the Cross of Christ. India will never rise and take her place among the nations of the earth until her down-trodden and desolate ones are raised from their Tophet of misery.

The need of the day, and that which requires immediate attention, is *Education*, which must be imparted through three important channels, viz.—

1st.—Night Schools should be established for the benefit of poor adults who have not tasted in their youthful days the sweets of Education; this will, in due course, make them understand their own interests as well as to study the interests of others.

2nd.—Primary Schools should be instituted in all the Pancherries and the school requisites supplied *gratis* to the little ones.

3rd.—Homes should be opened for the amelioration of the orphans of both sexes, and, in addition to the Primary Education imparted, manual labour should be taught in these homes.

I further propose that small tracts of land be set apart in quiet and healthful localities in some of our large cities and towns, where small decent cottages may be built for the protection of the poor on the Australian Colonization

system, which has most wonderfully succeeded. On these tracts of land there can be ample scope for manual labour in the shape of fruit and vegetable gardens, brick kilns, sheep-farming, poultry-rearing, &c., and also trade depots, churches and schools can be established. This can easily be done, and, if some wealthy land-lord will only come forward to build the cottages and supply the land, let those engaged in the mission for the amelioration of the Pariahs work the scheme faithfully.

I am fully aware of the great responsibility, the trial, and it may be the failure, that my scheme will involve; but, as the work must have a beginning, I have already opened a NIGHT SCHOOL and a PRIMARY SCHOOL, trusting that God, who knows the needs of my country—poor India and its masses—will raise up able and earnest workers to put their shoulders to the wheel and push forward this cause, whether I succeed in it myself or not.

My investigation into the wretched condition of these Slaves of the Soil and their absolute helplessness under the ruthless heel of the land-lord, has filled me with an unquenchable desire to provide for as many as I can possibly reach a technical school in which instruction in different kinds of manual labor may be given.

To establish such a school, at least £ 3000 will be required; and to carry on the work successfully, £ 140 per annum, the interest of £ 3000 of invested funds.

As the first step in the direction of this desired object, a strong committee has been appointed consisting of the following named gentlemen.

Rev. John McLaurin, D. D., Bangalore.

Rev. H. F. Doll, Bangalore.

Rev. Chas. Hadley, M. A., Madras.

Rev. P. B. Guernsey, B. A., Madras.

Rev. J. E. Davis, B. A., Cocanada.

Rev. T. B. Pandian, Secy., Madras.

Mr. F. H. Levering, Ongole.

Mr. J. Herron, Treasurer, Madras.

It is my desire to undertake this work in connection with the South India Baptist Missions only; and I trust that similar committees may be formed in connection with the other Missions in South India.* The South India Baptist Pariah Committee will be thankful to hear from the Missionaries of their denomination from time to time any grievances of the poor Pariah which require their immediate notice for redress.

The attainment of the object for which I here plead will require prayer and sacrifice, large giving, earnest and zealous toil. But these have always marked and conditioned the progress of Baptist Missions in India, not only in former years, not more, perhaps, in former years, than now, when God has given such marvellous success.

Who is there who does not thank God for the earnestness of Adoniram Judson, the "apostle of Burma," the devotedness and high intellectual power of William Carey, the piety and practical sense of Samuel Day, the high enthusiasm of Jewett, the zeal and cleverness of Clough. Who is there who does not thank God likewise for the wisdom of John McLaurin, the fiery zeal and activity of Boggs, the unflinching energy of Doss Anthravadi, the self-sacrifice of Timpany, the firmness and painstaking of Doll, the love and labor of Pearce? Now the Missionaries may well say in the words of the poet:

But the end is not. Look onward!
 Much must yet be done.
 Millions yet, still unbelieving,
 Must be sought and won!

Christians must in faith be nurtured,
 Children must be trained,
 Preachers be sustained, and victory
 Upon victory gained.

Disappointments will be waiting;
 Satan does his best;
 Yet all obstacles must vanish
 At our God's behest.

Courage then, and faith undaunted !
 Christian zeal ne'er knew
 Aught more worthy of endeavour
 Than our end in view.

And our God this mission's mighty
 Fortress e'er shall be !
 Unto Him we'll give the glory
 Through eternity !

Regarding the Pariahs or lower classes, Mr. H. B. Grigg, Director of Public Instruction makes the following touching appeal in his convocation address for 1891, which is worthy of reproduction. He says :—

“ I have pleaded with you for your women, and now I would pray you to do what in you lies to raise the condition of the Pariah and other kindred races. No society can be in a wholesome condition, a large portion of which is by custom or prejudice deprived of its proper share in the work of the country and its privileges, which has not in reality as well as in name the same facilities as its other members for ameliorating its condition or of contributing to the wealth of the community. These races form one-sixth of the population of Madras. Your Government many years ago set the prædial slaves free so far as the law can do this and is now considering what measures will best elevate these races and remove their disabilities. But much remains to be done, and it rests with you, Gentlemen, to supplement the liberal action of the Government and the work of benevolent Societies by helping to break down the conservatism of the large sections of society which at present form the great obstacle to the progress of these poor and unreasonably despised people. I say unreasonably because there is ample evidence—witness the Madras Sappers—that when given a fair chance in life they can prove themselves valuable members of a society.”

I invite, therefore, all good men and women of Great Britain, Australia and America to help me liberally in any way they think fit. It is my solemn belief that it is the most sacred duty incumbent on those who dwell in enlightened and favoured lands to bestow freely their talents of whatever kind they may be to help in this elevating movement. I venture to make this appeal, because I believe that the lower masses can only be evangelised by throwing open to them the locked doors of Education and Morality, Thus will the Cross be brought nearer to them, and they nearer to the Cross and to the feet of Christ.

Mothers and Fathers, compare the condition of your own sweet darlings in your happy homes with that of millions of little girls and boys of a corresponding age, among the Slaves of the Soil in Southern India, who have already been sacrificed on unholy altars of human social customs ; compare, and conscientiously ask yourselves the question whether you can stand and gaze with folded hands without doing something to rescue these little ones, as well as millions of their parents, who are in the very vortex of poverty, ignorance and sin ! Millions of heart-rendering voices are daily heard from within the prison cells of the fettered slaves of the soil and thousands perish annually without a ray of hope to cheer their hearts and thousands are daily crushed under a fearful weight of sin and shame.

Will not all of you who peruse this little brochure of mine think of the poor fallen ones and rise to rescue them from their miserable doom ? I, in the name of my Master, Christ, implore of you, friends and benefactors, educationists and philanthropists, princes and nobles, yea ! and all who have the cause of humanity at heart, to be " up and doing." Yes, dear readers,—

" Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait."

Again, in the cause of humanity and in the Holy Name of God, I ask of you, true women and men of Great Britain, Australia, Germany and America, to grant me your help in this undertaking. A divine says, " Bright shall the crown of glory be when we have borne the cross." Yes, after all trials are passed and we have succeeded in the noble objects of our Mission, the Victor's golden wreath shall be our portion, which shall shine with greater brightness on the day of the Lord. May God in his bountiful mercy guide you to help in this movement, and to Him be all the glory through Christ our Lord and Master.

LIST OF DONORS.

Miss A. E. Mullins,	Rs. 100
The Hon. J. W. Handley M. A.,	10
Rev. H. F. Doll,	10
„ W. Boggess,	10
Mrs. Wedderburn,	5
„ L. P. Pearce,	5
Rev. J. McLaurin, D. D.,	5
„ W. B. Boggs, D. D.,	5
„ W. A. Stanton, B. A.,	5
Mr. W. E. Boggs,	5
Rev. W. R. Manley,	5
„ L. E. Martin, M. A.,	5
„ D. S. Bagshaw,	5
„ C. Hadley, M. A.,	5
„ A. H. Curtis,	5
„ W. H. Beeby, B. D.,	5
„ W. S. Davis,	5
„ Wm. Powell,	5
„ P. B. Guernsey, B. A.,	5
„ G. N. Thomssen,	5
Miss. H. D. Newcomb,	5
„ E. A. Bergman,	5
„ L. H. Booker,	5
„ B. L. Slade,	4
Rev. I. S. Hankins,	4
„ G. H. Brock,	4
Miss J. E. Wayte,	3
„ I. A. Skinner,	3
„ S. I. Kurtz,	2
Surgeon Major N. Pemberton,	3
Kerr. Anderson Esq., M. A., LL. B.,	2
Rev. Geo. Stone,	2

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

NAMES.	ADDRESS.	NO. OF COPIES.
Alderson T. K. Esq., M. A., LL. B.,	Madras.	1
Andy S. P. Esq., M.D., M.R.C.S., E.	do.	2
Amirtha Pillay, Esq., Manager,	S. P. C. K. Vepery.	1
Beeby W. H. Rev. B. D.,	Madras.	1
Boggs W. B. Rev. D. D.,	Ramapatam.	1
Bradshaw J. Esq., M.A., LL. D., Inspector of Schools, Madras.		1
Barclay E. Miss.	L. M. S. Madras.	1
Brown C. Miss.	L. M. S. Madras.	1
Brock G. W. Rev.	Ramapatam.	1
Bagshaw D. S. Rev.	Ramapatam.	1
Bilue C. G. Miss.	Madras.	1
Ball E. W. Esq., P. W. D.,	Rangoon.	1
Cooper C. Rev. M. A., Christian College Madras.		1
Craford F. J. Surgeon Major Secy. Sur. Genl. Office, Madras.		1
Cook W. H. Esq., Supt. Survey Department, Madras.		1
Churchill G. Rev.	Bobbili.	1
Craig A. S. Rev.	Akidu.	5
Curtis A. H. Rev.	Ongole.	1
Cotelingam L. Mrs.	Madras.	1
Crombe A. G. Esq., Manager, Bank of Madras.		1
Digby William Esq., O. I. E.,	England.	1
Davis E. F. Rev. M. A., Principal Doveton College, Madras.		1
Davis W. S. Rev.	Ramapatam.	1
Dawson A. Mrs.	Madras.	1
Dawson J. C. Miss.	Vizagapatam.	1
Dawson E. Miss.	Coimbatore.	1
Day M. M. Miss,	Madras.	1
Ellwein M. Rev.	Dindigal.	1
Fletcher N. Miss.	Madras.	1
Falconer A. S.	Free Church, Madras.	1
Groves G. Barten Esq., Asst. Director Genl. Post Offices, India.		1
Guerusey P. B. Rev. B. A.	Madras.	1
Gray A. C. Miss.	Bimlipatam.	1
Heinrichs J. Rev.	Venugunta.	1
Higgins W. V. Rev.	Purlakimedy.	2

Henderson J. R. Esq., B. S., Christian College, Madras.	1
Hadley C. Rev. M. A., Madras.	1
Handly J. W. M. A., The Hon. England.	1
Hewett C. H. Major Madras.	1
Hankins I. S. Rev. Ramapatam.	1
Kurtz S. I. Miss. Madras.	1
Kindnick A. A. Rev. D. D., U. S.	1
Laffamme H. F. Rev. Yelamanchili.	1
Longhurst M. A. Mrs. Church of Scotland, Madras.	1
Larsen A. Rev. Danish Mission, Madras.	1
Larsen L. P. Rev. Do.	1
Levering F. H. Esq., Ongole.	1
Little T. Rev. Wesleyan Mission Madras.	1
Morrison Wil. Rev. D. D., U. S. A.	1
Norren W. B. Rev. M. A., Christian College.	1
McLean J. M. Miss. Church of Scotland, Madras.	1
Macgregor H. Miss. Do.	1
McLaurin J. Rev. D. D., Bangalore.	1
Murdoch J. Esq., M.A., LL. D. Supt. Madras Tract & Book Socy. 6	
Martin L. E. Rev. M. A., Principal Baptist Mission College, Ongole.	1
McKay O. R. Rev. Ongole.	1
Mahommed Ahmad Esq., Barrister-at-Law, Madras.	1.
Macphail A. M. Miss. L.C.S. and P. E., Free Church, Royapuram. 1	
Narayanaswamy Naidu Rev. Professor Medical College, Madras 1	
Naether T. H. Rev. Lutheran Mission, Madras.	1
Pemberton N. Surgeon Major, Guntur.	1
Russell J. M. Rev. M. A., Christian College, Madras.	1
Rukmani M. Mrs. Madras.	1
Stanton W. A. Rev. Bapatla.	1
Schlesch Chr. Rev. Nellikuppam.	1
Start H. S. Captain Madras.	1
Slade B. L. Miss. Nellore.	1
Stevenson R. H. Rev. Chaplain, Bangalore.	1
Stephens Miss. M. E. Mission Madras.	1
Stephen M. M. Methodist Madras.	1
Walker J. A. K. Rev. Rittapuram.	1
Wayte J. E. Miss. Nellore.	2
White C. L. Rev. U. S. A.	1
Warth H. Dr. Gov. Cel. Meuseum.	1
Williams R. R. Rev. D. D. Nellore.	2
Whitmore T. H. Rev. Wesleyan Mission, London.	1
Zehme S. Rev. Principal Cel. College, Tranquebar.	2

THE

SLAVES OF THE SOIL IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

(Opinions of the Press on the First Edition.)

"Madras Standard," Dated May 30, 1892:—"There is no doubt that the secret of their (Pariahs) prosperity and improvement lies in education and the Rev. Mr. Pandian has hit on the right nail in devising a scheme of education for the Pariahs."

"Madras Mail," Dated, May 30, 1892:—"The light which during the last two years has been shed upon the condition of the Pariahs of Southern India has revealed one noticeable fact, namely, that however neglected these outcasts may have been by their co-religionists they have been sedulously supported by the Christian Missionary.....The "Slaves of the Soil in Southern India" is by the Rev. T. B. Pandian..... (it) contains a good deal of valuable information, which has evidently been obtained at first hand.....To ameliorate the status of Pariahs Mr. Pandian proposes education, in which direction, we are glad to say, some steps have already been taken."

"Madras Times," Dated June 1st 1892:—"It is a thoughtful contribution to the literature, scanty as it is, on the subject. On such a subject it is easy for a writer to whatever class or creed he may belong, to write too feelingly and to overstep the bounds of discretion, but it must be claimed for Mr. Pandian that he neither overstates his case nor proposes "insane or utopian" schemes for the emancipation of the Pariah."

Bombay Guardian, Dated, June 4, 1892:—"An Indian anti-slavery apostle has arisen in the person of the Rev. Thomas B. Pandian, a Baptist pastor of Madras, himself a convert from heathenism of about eight years standing. He issues a twenty-page pamphlet entitled, "Slaves of the soil in Southern India," which states the case for the Pariah more concisely than we have seen it done previously. Further light is thrown on the subject by the able preface of Professor J. E. Vedanayakam Pillai, B. A. . . ."

Bangalore Daily Post, Dated, June 7, 1892:—The Rev. T. B. Pandian has contributed a thoughtful paper on the "Slaves of the soil in Southern India," and how best to ameliorate their condition, intellectually, morally and spiritually.

Bangalore Spectator, Dated, June 8, 1892:—"Half the world lives without knowing that there are slaves in India. The Rev. T. B. Pandian has recently published a small pamphlet, under the title "The Slaves of the Soil in Southern India," in which we are told that the urban Pariah and the rural Pariah are virtually Slaves, "though they may not be so badly off as the Negro in the service of the United States planter before the war of emancipation."

Bangalore Evening Mail, Dated, June 11, 1892:—"He describes the condition of the poor pariah with a graphic pen and appeals in the cause of humanity and in the holy name of God."

Calcutta Indian Daily News, Dated, 16th June, 1892:—"We have now before us a pamphlet written by the Rev. T. B. Pandian, entitled "The slaves of the soil in Southern India;" in which the author briefly, yet pithily explains the oppressive system of village Government under which the Pariah has been groaning for several centuries. The brevity of the pamphlet is a recommendation for its being widely read, and we may add that there is no overstating of the case by the writer nor in any of the cases which he has cited has he aimed at the sensational, the condition of the Pariah not being one whit more wretched than he depicts it."

New Zealand Herald, Auckland, Dated, 24th September 1892:—"Mr. Pandian's brochure is a thoughtful contribution to social reform, and is intended as an appeal to the large-hearted classes in Great Britain and Australia to aid in the work of ameliorating the hard condition of the Pariahs, and raising them in the intellectual, moral, and spiritual scale."
