

2070  
311:CR433  
244215

**Dhananjayrao Gadgil Library**



**GIPE-PUNE-244215**

# **“COW-PROTECTION & THE PRESSING NEED OF IT IN MODERN TIMES.”**

Edited and Published by

**JAGANNATH SEVAK,**

*Zamindar and Pleader.*

*President Shri-Kurkshetra Gaushala, Karnal, (Punjab.)*

Please pass it on to other friend after reading it yourself, any  
suggestions that the readers may care to make,  
should be sent to the Editor.

Rare

λ311:(R433).2

8

244215

## **“COW-PROTECTION AND THE PRESSING NEED OF IT IN MODERN TIMES.”**

The present time which constitutes peace and calmness, has been bestowed upon us; out of His infinite Mercy by that Almighty God, under the British Government whose star of glory is ever at its zenith. In these times of freedom and liberty, each and every country which is under the benign Government can do its duty, in every department of life whether it be religious, national or moral. All works can be done at the time we wish, in the manner we devise and at the place we select. For all these blessings, we owe our hearty thanks to the Government.

Be it said that all works in this world which are connected with a particular class or creed cannot be done without any organization. In fact; the credit of all wonderful achievements is due to various organizations.

All societies; carrying the propaganda of cow-protection can achieve the greatest success, if they work in unison. Societies, working with co-operation can achieve the greatest success in this cause though they be beset with many difficulties. In other words both the help of the people and Government is

needed. When we appeal therefore to the sense of honour and duty to help us in the noble work of cow-protection to our Hindu brethren, and other sects of India; we then expect that our generous Government will not shrink from rendering us help in our noble undertaking.

JAGANNATH SEVAK, *President.*  
*Shri-Kurkshetra Gaushala, Karnal.*

### **Introduction.**

Cow-protection or may it be said, improvement of cow and of kind is one of the first and foremost duties to be performed. Whether we look at this noble work from the agricultural point, material point, moral point or spiritual side; all without any differentiation go to prove the work to be one of the best, suited far bettering the condition and promoting the welfare of our country. The inhabitants of this globe, therefore; Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, others; one and all should think the protection of cows their first duty. In the same light the benign Government should think the matter of cow-protection its foremost duty.

Perhaps my few following words might be taken by misunderstanding a cause of heart-pinching to some of my brethren specially Mohammadans and Christians, yet whatever attempt I have made, I have done from

agricultural, material and economical point of view, leaving aside all religious doctrines. I have attempted to pen the following few words not to injure any body's feeling but with the desire to intimate with facts and figures.

### **Agriculture Depending on Cows.**

India is an agricultural country. The real work of agriculture *viz.* tilling the ground, drawing water from wells and separating the corn from ears is mainly done by oxen. Although in Europe, America and different parts of Asia, work of agriculture is carried on by horses, mules, other animals and even machinery; yet India is quite unable to bear the heavy expenses of these being in the grip of poverty. The work of agriculture in India can only successfully be carried on by the aid of oxen. With this fundamental point in view; the proper feeding and protection is most necessary.

Owing to the severity of famine and want of fodder, a good number both of fine kine and strong oxen is swept away every year. For these innocent animals the keeping of ancient common pastures is no more in vogue. Thousands of these animals are slaughtered for the diet of Muslims and Christians, thousands are put to death due to the ever-increasing trade of leather. Under these circumstances, it is next to

impossible to improve kind and quality of these beings,

When matters stand thus; there is every chance of disappearing the kind of these animals, from the surface of this earth in a very short period. The work of agriculture will be rendered more tedious, difficult and the country will be doomed to destruction. It is an admitted fact that after the suspension of agriculture; the people of India will surely starve. At that time they will repent over their ill-doings; but all wailing and lamentation over the spilt-milk will be of no use.

It is possible that the Government may get less income as tax owing to the scattering work of agriculture; the Government will experience a kind of difficulty, in carrying out its aims; she has in view always for the batterment and prosperity of this country. Taking this point in consideration the Government should give satisfactory help in cow-protection and for the improvement of its best stock; but this help is only possible when the workers and promoter will put their shoulders to the task proclaiming loudly 'God helps those who help themselves' and try to carry voice to the Government emphatically through different papers, tracts and deputations. People should show their humble ideas, noble feelings to the Government in the most constitutional way.



Benefits from cows regarding livelihood. If we look minutely ; deeply into the inhabitants of India regarding their food, living and the other necessities of life ; then the facts reveal that every thing, their health, wealth and prosperity depend entirely upon cow, ox, milk, butter, ghee and curd are not only best of food but are the most beneficial in preserving the health of mankind.

A house having a cow ; giving five or six seers of milk and ten house-holders to live upon there all their requirements are satisfied only with this quantity of milk.

If a cow in her life time gives birth to five calves, out of which at least there may be two cows and three male-cows ; then the house will be in the best of its prosperity. If one calculates the average money obtained form the sale of milk of two cows and its race and the income of three oxen of their life time, men are thunder-struck to see. The losses, we undergo ; when these animals are uselessly wasted cannot adequately be stated.

#### **An humble appeal to our Musalman brethren.**

From whatever side ; we may meditate upon ; meat of a cow is detrimental to good health, produces an excessive heat in the body than required and is injurious in every way.

N.B. There is a proverb in Arabic which goes thus :—

“Meat of a cow is the cause of various diseases and her milk is the promoter of health.”

When the theory of sacrifice is thought of, we come to the conclusion ; it is not necessary that the sacrifice should only be of kine and oxen. If therefore we do not sacrifice these animals ; even then religious doctrines are carried out and the faith remains undefiled. The prophet Ibrahim when made the sacrifice for Mohammadans he sacrificed a camel and not a cow. So Mohammadan brethren should try to avoid cow-killing ; following the examples of their prophets and religious book.

Some Mohammadans inflict different tortures upon these poor animals out of their bigotry and narrow-mindedness. By such notorious works they proclaim themselves to be the best advocates of their religion and faith but are quite wrong in this belief. Wise and educated Mohammādans do not allow such acts even across their minds. This hatred and persistence of slaughtering of these animals brings about many mischievous things.

Sometimes Hindus commit serious mistakes in the cause of cow-protection. These mistakes become the cause of disunion between the two communities, tend to fightings and quarrels. In short Muslim bre-

thens should abstain from killing these animals, keeping due regard of the honour of Hindu brethren and the injury of their feelings. We the Hindus should persuade the Mohammadans, not to do any harm to these pet animals; advocating the mutual cause of love and sympathy, union, brotherhood and fraternity.

We should realise the Glory and Beauty of India. This country is just like a beautiful bride, having for her two eyes the two communities the Hindus and Mohammadans. If one eye is defiled, the charms of the other eye are lost. If both eyes are preserved, the beauty is greatly enhanced.

In India 95% of the muslim brethren world are from the Hindu stock, only 5% are from foreign countries, but they too have become naturalised Hindus since living in this country from centuries. The relations of both the communities have become so intimated that one cannot live without the help and sympathy of the other.

If both nations will work in union the cause of enmity and hatred will be effaced from their hearts.

For Christians there is no commandment of Christ for any sacrifice. In their religious book, control over passions, crushing the bodily desires, worldly pleasures and pursuits of sense pleasure are the best form sacrifices taught. Christ says "Do not perform any deed which pains thy neighbours and brethren.

**Hindus the cause of Cow-killing.**

Hindus will be to hear this, but this is no matter of wonder and astonishment: It is a fact; nay a stern reality.

- I. Being tempted by high interest, we invest money to butchers and help them in financial circumstances.
- II. At certain occasions we give cows in charity or in the real sense of the word as we Hindus call it "Dan" to Brahmans. When we hand over the animal, give no money for her future maintenance, the poor man in wretched circumstances sells the animal to a butcher at a very low price.
- III. We should hand it over on the condition, that if he sells it; he would be required to do so either to a well-organised Gaushala or a well trusted man. If he fails to do, he must pay the price of the cow with some fine.
- IV. Some men give their cattle to those peasants with whom they deal in money. The peasants sell their cattle after some time and give a false report to owners that the animals have been lost.
- V. Sometimes, advocates of cow-protection call different speakers, they speak on the topics which injure mohammadan feeling.

### **Personal Experience in Gaushalas.**

I, myself have gone to different places with a view to see the management of different works done in various Gaushalas. But it is with a feeling of great regret that nowhere except in two or three places good arrangements are to be found. No accurate account of the income is kept up. Societies are not properly organised to see to the different works of a Gaushala.

Only thin, lean and hungry cows are found there. No attempt to improve the kind is done there. Reports of income and expenditure are not printed for general information to the public. All money is extravagantly wasted on fine buildings. The fiscal circumstances are such that if the subscription is not realised, the very moment the Gaushala meets its worst lot.

### **'Important Things and Cow-protection.'**

Experience itself speaks that no work is fully carried on unless it is not done on well organised rules. Principle is a mighty force and serious duty to it is essential. We should pay attention to the following facts when carrying the work of cow-protection. The facts are patent enough to benefit the country.

- I. All Gaushalas should be under a special Cow Protecting Sobha, should work on the principles of economy and trade. Each Gaushala should keep bullocks and cows according to funds. Calves produced from these should be brought up with a special care and nourishment. Oxen thus brought up are to be given to peasants on good terms. Cows should be kept to improve its further progeny. As far as I have gone and seen different Gaushalas; I have come to know that efforts are not being done to improve the kind. Money is being wasted on magnificent buildings. Some of the members and co-workers are deadly against the scheme of "the improvement of cows in its kind". I must emphatically say that on the present existing principles of Gaushalas satisfactory success can never be achieved. We can be successful while work on the methods of Western countries.
- II. Co-adjustors of Gaushalas should assemble at a particular place once a year to consider the proposals advanced; for the benefit of these creatures.
- III. On behalf of the head Sobha starting of a monthly paper is very necessary either under the name of "the cow-protecting union," or

any suggestive name which suits it. It must contain opinions of societies, names of office bearers, Updeshiks, lists of income and expenditure, its property and other items. We should ask best scholars to enlighten the public with their thoughts on cow-protection.

- IV. We should attempt to improve the best kind of cows.
- V. Gaushalas should supply milk, butter, ghee to the public like Dairy Farms.
- IV. Cows should be sold with special terms and conditions. One condition should be that if the owner wants to sell the animal, he should give it back to the Gaushala or some well-to-do man. This condition should be in black and white.
- VII. A cow should be given in Dan to a well-to-do Pandit or to a Gaushala.
- VIII. Gaushala should not arrange for lectures, injuring the feelings of other brethren.
- IX. Management should be adjusted on good lines as the bad management brings about the Death of a Gaushala.
- X. Either paid or honorary speakers should be appointed by each Gaushala, for preaching the dignity and Glóry of a cow in each district.

- XI. Those who realize the Gaushala money should be given a certificate from the Head Sobha as a distinction from those who earn money for their own sake in the name of a Gaushala.
- XII. The main object in opening these Gaushalas should be to promote the kind of cows and oxen.

#### Cow and the Western Countries.

Although Europe and America are paying special attention to the animals with which the agricultural work is mainly done, yet besides their efforts; Government is rendering help to them. We have firm belief the Government would give her helping hand most unflinchingly in our noble work, upon which we have set-forth all our efforts to carry it on to completion.

Although in Western countries the work of improving the best stock is being done in a most satisfactory way; yet such instances of unique achievements were existing in ancient times; in the reign of Asoka "The Lord paramount." His charity is proverbial. He felt the pain of animals as his own. He opened hospitals, charitable institutions, for their feedings and nourishment. He passed laws for the prohibition of animal slaughter. Such accounts do not only occur in our Hindu books but even English



literature is replete with the praises of our achievements.

In modern times, to do such works is no novelty. It is a thing from time immemorial. It is a pleasure to note, our benign Government is taking great pains in improving the kind of cows. Government often appoints commission for investigating the causes in the high rates milk, butter and ghee. The other day; the Government appointed a commission in Allahabad to do the same. Among the many departments under Government there is a special departments for this work.

### **The dignity of a Cow and Ox.**

Persons who are quite ignorant of world's history assert that the doctrine of "The protection of living beings" is only found among the Hindus; but this fact is far from truth. History records the preaching of cow-protection in other countries from time immemorial. Where the strata of the earth are hard to dig; cows and oxen are necessary to be found. In ancient Egypt, ox was greatly revered nay even worshipped. An ox of a special kind and colour was kept in a special house under good management and was given a nice food to eat.

The weal and woe of this ox represented happiness and calamity of the country. Formerly in China, a

cow was regarded to be the mother and ox to be the father of the country. Hundreds of songs were composed and song in their glory. In the same strain, the honour and regard is accorded to cows in Hindu books. We should work disinterestedly in overwhelming numbers with the enthusiasm which the importance of cow-protection necessarily demands.

JAGANNATH SEVAK,

*Dewan Zamindar, Pleader*

*President Shri-Kurkshtra Gaushala, Karnal (Punjab).*

---

KUNTALINE PRESS,  
61, BOWBAZAR STREET, CALCUTTA.  
PRINTED BY P. C. DASS.

SPEECH OF THE  
**Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendranath Bose**

ON THE OCCASION

OF THE

Introduction of the special  
Marriage Amendment Act in  
the Supreme Legislative Council

The 16th February, 1911.

$$Y(217) = (2) \cdot 2 \cdot M7$$

E1

## Special Marriage Act (Amendment) Bill

---

In moving for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Special Marriage Act, 1872, the Hon'ble MR. BHUPENDRANATH BASU said :—

“ May it please Your Lordship—In introducing this Bill which stands in my name I shall take the liberty to place before the Council very briefly the history of the law which at present governs marriages between persons who are not married according to the orthodox rites of the religion in which they were born. I shall deal principally with the question of Hindu marriages, with which I must say at the outset I am primarily concerned. It is well known that marriage is a sacrament with the Hindus and among the higher castes of Hindu society is performed according to rituals which have in all essentials come down from the Vedic times. Their very age, apart from their source, invests the marriage tie with a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the Hindus. After the Vedic ages, coming down through circling centuries, these marriage rites have taken the hue, though not deeply, of the religious beliefs of the times through which they have passed, and we have now the observances of the Pauranic period intermingling

with the simpler rites practised by the ancient Rishis, the ancestors of the Hindu race.

“Hinduism, like other great religions of the world, has had its dissenters from time to time. The Jainas, the Buddhists, the Sikhs have had their own marriage rites, and minor sects have also adopted variations recognised in their own particular communities ; but difficulties arose with the stereotyping of prevailing Hindu practices during the British period. Law Courts gave rigidity to existing customs, and Hinduism to some extent lost its innate vitality and Hindu practices ceased to yield a quick response to changes necessitated by a change in the environments of Hindu life.

“Early in the Nineteenth century Raja Ram Mohan Roy revived in India the doctrine of the Unity of God and appealed to the sacred books of the Hindus themselves, to the Vedas and the Upanishads, for the realisation and confirmation of this high ideal of religious belief. He founded what is now known as the Brahma Samaj of India in the year 1830, and his great personality soon attracted to it many earnest and thoughtful men from among the Hindus ; for some time the members of the new sect, who called themselves Brahmors, worshippers only of Brahma or the Supreme Being, conformed to the social and religious observances of the Hindus, omitting more

or less what to them seemed repugnant to the ideals of their faith. With the increase in their numbers and under the driving force of the genius of Keshub Chunder Sen, the Brahmos evolved out of the ancient rituals of Hinduism, ceremonials to suit their special needs. Not only did they abandon a substantial part of the old ritual, but they went further and, disregarding the limitations of caste, introduced intermarriage in their own community. Naturally great misgivings arose as to the validity of these marriages. For many centuries the practice of intermarriage between members of different castes had ceased among the Hindus. The Brahmos obtained the opinion of a distinguished lawyer, then practising in the Calcutta High Court, Mr. Cowie, who was then Advocate General, who gave it as his opinion that the Marriages contracted by the Brahmos would not be looked upon as valid in a Court of law. In this state of things, the Brahmo community approached the Government of India for a marriage law which would validate their marriages, and in 1868, Sir Henry Maine, the greatest jurist who has ever held office as a Law Member of the Government of India, concurring with the opinion of Mr. Cowie, introduced a Bill which was very simple in its character. As the Christian community of India had already their own marriage registration law ( 14 & 15 Victoria, CHAPTER XL ), under which they could be married

without the rites of any of the Christian Churches, Sir Henry Maine excluded the Christians from his scheme, and confined it to those who objected 'to be married in accordance with the rites of the Hindu, Mahomedan, Buddhist, Parsi or Jewish religions,' and he laid down a few simple conditions for the validity of a marriage under his measure. These conditions were: (1) presence of the Marriage Registrar; (2) age of the husband should be above 18; (3) age of the wife above 14, and if below 18, consent of her guardian necessary; (4) parties not to be within the prohibited degrees of their own respective communities. Things in India move slowly, and by the time the opinions of Local Governments had been collected and the Bill was ripe for enactment into law, Sir Henry Maine had left the scene of his labours, and his successor, out of deference to the opposition that the Bill had evoked in certain quarters, modified the measure to some extent and introduced a limitation which I now seek to remove. This limitation is as follows, *viz.*, that the provisions of the law should only extend to those who did not profess the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Mahomedan, Parsi, Buddhist, Sikh or Jaina religions, and a form of declaration was introduced which had to be signed by the parties contracting marriage, which made the declarant say that he or she did not profess any of the religions above-mentioned. The present law, Act



III of 1872, stands with this limitation. Now, my Lord, this negation of all existing and known religions of India by those who seek to contract these marriages is felt to be a hardship. The Brahmos naturally object to make the sweeping declaration. Many of them believe that the religion as professed by them is only a purer form of the Hindu faith, and they derive their inspiration from the sacred writings of the Hindus, the Vedas and the Upanishads. We Hindus have no quarrel with them. Our religion is not confined to professions, we do not object to sects, and so long as any section of the Hindu community does not seek to break away from it, the Hindus, subject to limitations which they naturally impose for the protection of the orthodox faith, do not deny to such section the right to live as an integral part of the Hindu society. The Vaishnavas of Bengal have their own peculiar practices and ceremonies and disregard not only the limitations of caste, but also of creed. Muhammadans have been known in the past to embrace the Vaishnava faith. The Vaishnavy in times past have displayed a violent hostility to certain Hindu divinities; but they always been tolerated by the Hindus and treated as a part of themselves. Their great teacher Gouranga is looked upon as one of the holiest of saints, and by a large and very devout section of the people as an incarnation of God himself.

Hindus learnt and taught the lesson of religious toleration when the rest of the world was red with strife. 'I manifest myself to all who come to me whatever may be the path they tread' is the admonition that Srikrishna gave to his favourite disciple centuries ago, and this has largely influenced Hindu thought and opinion in matters of religious belief. But while Hindu opinion is tolerant of other faiths it is naturally sensitive to any departure from its own established code of practices; this attitude has been its great safeguard in the past, and in this view an objection may be taken to my amendment, that if carried into law, it will facilitate intermarriage and lead to an eventual disruption of Hindu society. It cannot be denied that intermarriages between different *Varnas* were prevalent in ancient India and are recognised in *Smritis* and *Sanhitas*, which make provision for succession to inheritance by sons of wives of different degrees regulated according to the rank of their mothers. Even this rule of differentiation seems to have been an innovation for the ancient lawgiver Baudhayana lays it down generally that 'in case of competition of a son born from a wife of equal class, and of one born from a wife of a lower class the son of the wife of lower class may take the share of the eldest, in case he be possessed of good qualities.' Manu, the great law-giver of the Hindus, sanctions the

marriage of a Brahmin with women of lower degrees though he reprobates the marriage of a Brahmin with a Sudra woman, a reprobation which shows that the practice existed. Many of the non-Brahmin castes of India, some of them occupying a high position in Hindu society, are the result of mixed unions. The great sage Vyasa, the compiler of the Vedas, the founder of the Pouranic faith and literature and one of the holiest of Brahmins, was the son of a fisherwoman and was himself the father of three sons, two from Kshatriya brides and one from the bed of a Sudra woman. Vijnaneswara, the great commentator of Yajnavalka, whose treatise the Mitakshara, is recognised as of very high authority throughout India, says in a passage quoted in a judgment of the Madras High Court (I. L. R. 12 Madras), 'a Brahmin begets upon a Sudra a, Nishada she the Nishadi marrying a Brahmin produces a girl, who again marries a Brahmin ; in this manner, the marriage of the 6th daughter produces a Brahmin. Again a Brahmin produces upon a Vaishya an Ambastha, who marrying a Brahmin bears a daughter, and these connections going on for five generations produce a Brahmin,' so that in olden times a Brahmin could be gradually evolved. Jimuta Vahana, the recognised authority on the law of inheritance in Bengal, speaks in the *Dayabhaga* of the union of a Brahmin with a Sudra woman as a

venial offence and lays down, basing his opinion upon Vrihaspati and Baudhayana, the principle that the son of a Sudra wife shall have the same rights as the son of a Brahmin wife, except as to lands given to the father as a pious donation. But whatever may have been the practice in the past, for many centuries now intermarriage between different castes, except in some very rare cases sanctioned by local custom and confined to two or three castes, has been unknown, and this exclusion has gone so far as to prohibit intermarriage between different sub-sections of the same caste. There is a strong consensus of opinion in a considerable section of the Hindu community that restrictions upon intermarriage between different sub-sections of the same caste, if not between different castes, should cease. Cases of such intermarriage have taken place in the Kayastha community of Bengal and there is a growing desire to extend the practice between the sub-sections of that community inhabiting different parts of India, and in some instances between members of different castes. The parties contracting such marriages do not desire to break away from Hinduism and the Hindu tradition. They celebrate the marriages according to Hindu rites, which though same in essentials, differ considerably in practice in different parts of India and among different castes and communities ; but the validity of such marriages

is not absolutely free from doubt. Mayne in his treatises on Hindu law says 'Marriages between persons in different sub-sections of the same caste, *e.g.*, of Brahmans or Sudras, have been said to be invalid, unless sanctioned by local custom.' Raghunandan and Kamalakara, two of the latest commentators on Hindu law and usage as prevalent in Bengal, prohibit intermarriage between different tribes upon the authority of a text in one of the minor Puranas.

"The late Mr. Justice Dwarkanath Mitter, than whom a greater exponent of Hindu law has not adorned the bench of the High Court, observed in one of his judgments (*Melaram Nudial v. Thanooram Bamun*, 9 W. R. 552) as follows :—'Domes and Harees are two distinct castes, and the question is whether marriage between a Dome Brahmin and a Haree girl is good and binding. Local custom is the only authority by which such a marriage can be sanctioned, the general Hindu law being against it.' I may mention that the Domes and Harees in Bengal belong to the lowest grade of Hindu castes and are regarded as untouchable. The Privy Council, in a Madras case affecting the status of Sudras in Madras, held that illegitimate offspring of the Sudra caste belonged to that caste and a marriage between such offspring and another member of the Sudra caste would not

be invalid (13 Moore's Indian Appeals, page 141). In a later case in the Calcutta High Court another eminent Hindu lawyer, the late Sir Romesh Chander Mitter, whose attention had been called to the Privy Council judgment I have just mentioned, held that 'marriage between parties in different subdivisions of the Sudra caste is prohibited unless sanctioned by any special custom, and no presumption in favour of the validity of such a marriage can be made although long cohabitation has existed between the parties.'

"The Calcutta High Court, in a bench composed of two English Judges, in another case in which the reputed husband was a dhobi or washerman and the reputed wife a fisherwoman, both belonging to Assam, held that intermarriages between different sub-sections of the Sudra caste were valid. One would hardly think that in this state of the law, with only a judicial authority by no means unanimous, that valid marriage may be contracted between sub-sections of the Sudras in Madras and of the fishermen caste in Assam, amongst both of whom illegitimacy is no bar to inheritance, it would be safe to pronounce that marriages between the sub-sections of the higher castes in India, who do not profess to be Sudras and in many instances follow the practices enjoined up on the 'twice born,' would be valid. And natu-

rally people would hesitate to form unions the validity of which may be called into question at any time. I am aware that there is a growing opinion that such marriages must be held to be valid, but people cannot afford to marry merely upon legal opinions, however high the source may be from which they proceed. No custom has yet grown up to sanction such marriages, for a custom to be valid must be existing from time immemorial. All that I desire is that this bar which custom, or want of custom, has created in Hindu society should be removed.

“ I do not think it is necessary to deal with the question in its aspect upon the Hindu Law of Succession. Doubts have been from time to time expressed as regards the effect of a change of religion upon the status of the parties. The Calcutta High Court has lately held (*Kusum Kumari Roy v. Satya Ranjan Das*, I. L. R. 30 Calcutta) that a Brahmo father can give one of his sons in adoption to Hindu parents. The High Court of Bombay (I. L. R. 25 Bom. 551) has held that a Hindu convert to Mahomedanism can give his Hindu son in adoption to Hindu parents; and the Privy Council in a very recent appeal from the Punjab Chief Court agreed with the conclusion of that Court that a Sikh or a Hindu by becoming a Brahmo did not necessarily cease to belong to

the Community in which he was born. And they further agreed with the Chief Court in thinking that such lapses from orthodox practice (in matters of diet, etc.) could not have the effect of excluding from the category of Hindu in Act V of 1881 one who was born within it, and who never became otherwise separated from the religious communion in which he was born (I. L. R. 31 Cal. 11). Whatever may be the doubts that marriage under the present Act which makes it incumbent upon a party to declare that he does not profess a particular religion, throws upon the law of succession to his property arising from the fact that a declaration has to be made that the party does not belong to one of the professed religions of India, the amendment of the law which I propose, and which dispenses with this declaration, will have no such effect, for it cannot be contended in the case of Hindus that if they intermarry according to Hindu ritual they shall cease to be Hindus. As regards those who do not desire to marry under a Hindu ritual, their position will not be worse than under the existing Act III of 1872.

“I have not dealt with the other great communities of India. As regards intermarriage the Muhammadan law is extremely liberal, the only condition being that the parties must belong to a religious faith which professes belief in the Ahle



Kitab. The Muhammadans of India are not affected by the present law and the change I propose makes no difference in their case. As regards the Indian Christians, they have, as I have already stated, their Special Act, 14 & 15 Victoria, CHAPTER XL. The Parsis have their own law of marriage and divorce ( Act XV of 1865 ) for marriages *inter se*, and if they do not desire to go beyond their own community, the law as it stands, or the alteration I suggest, will not affect them.

“My amendment is meant specially for the Hindus, and if the representatives of the other communities so desire I shall be content to limit it to Hindus alone. I do not desire to interfere with the Hindu customs and practices as at present observed. All I seek is liberty to those who, while observing Hindu customs, believe that there may be room for expansion and growth in consonance with Hindu ideals, that such growth and expansion may be secured not by secession from the Hindu communion but by reversion to what made it so great in times gone by. And in this there is no violence to Hindu thought or feeling, no forcible imposition of alien and strange practices upon Hindu society. The Widow Remarriage Act has legalised the marriage of Hindu widows. Orthodox Hindu society is not affected by it. Just as it can avoid a convert to a foreign religion, so does it

avoid, when it seems necessary, social intercourse with parties contracting marriage under the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, and so may it, if it likes, put under its ban people who may take the benefit of the legislation that I propose and contract intermarriage according to Hindu rites between sub-sections of the same caste or different castes. Hindu society has resisted violent onslaughts in the past upon its citadel of orthodoxy as understood by itself; it is not likely to be affected until there is a great change in its sentiment and attitude towards intermarriage, and if such a change ever comes, Hindu society will remain Hindu as it is, only orthodoxy will change one of its dogmas. Hindu society was justly indignant because members of its community, however low in the social scale, were at one time destined for the purposes of the Census for a separate classification; let us Hindus not drive out from our body enlightened men who would live the life of the Hindu and marry according to our rites, if in the just exercise of the liberty of conscience they extend their social horizon beyond the circle of their caste or sub-caste on lines at one time recognized by the Hindus themselves and sanctioned by their scriptures. The Lex Loci Act (XXI of 1850) has removed the disabilities of Hindu converts to other religions. Before that Act was passed it was felt doubtful as to whether, when a

Hindu renounces his religion, he would be entitled to succeed to his father's inheritance ; because under the Hindu system of society apostacy was deemed a ground for forfeiture. The Lex Loci Act of 1850 removed that disability. Shall it be said that we are unwilling to remove disabilities from amongst ourselves, that we are unwilling to provide room for healthy expansion and growth ? Such an attitude will be suicidal, such an attitude will seal up the genius of the Hindu race within an iron mould from which it can only escape by violence, or where it shall for ever lie cramped and immured. I hope it will not be so. I am sure it shall not be so, and in that hope and in that faith I crave liberty to introduce this Bill in this Council."

## APPENDIX I

### A Bill to amend the Special Marriage Act, 1872.

---

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the Special Marriage Act, 1872 ; It is hereby enacted as III of 1872, follows :—

1. This Act may be called the Special Marriage  
*Short title.* (Amendment) Act, 1911.

2. That the words commencing with “who do not profess,” and ending with “Jaina religion” occurring in the preamble to the  
*Amendment of preamble, Act III of 1872.* Special Marriage Act, 1872, be omitted, and in lieu thereof the following words be substituted, namely, “intend marriage under the provisions of this Act.”

3. That in section 2 of the said Act the words commencing with “neither of whom,” and ending with “Jaina religion” be omitted, and  
*Amendment of section 2, Act III of 1872.* the following words be substituted, namely, “who intend marriage under the provisions of this Act.”

4. That in the Declarations to be made by the bridegroom and the bride in the Second Schedule Amendment of Second Schedule, Act III of 1872. to the said Act, the words in clause 2 be omitted, and in lieu thereof the following words and figures be substituted, namely :—“ I intend marriage under the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1872, as amended by the Special Marriage (Amendment) Act, 1911.”

---

## APPENDIX II

### Statement of Objects and Reasons.

---

THE Special Marriage Act of 1872 applies to persons who do not profess any of the recognised religions of India and a declaration has to be made by the parties contracting marriage that they do not profess any such religion. This declaration, which is a negation of faith in all the religious systems of India, has been felt to be an unnecessary condition by the community for whose benefit the Act was specially intended.

The provisions of the Act, moreover, cannot be availed of by those members of the Hindu community who desire to introduce intermarriage between different sub-sections of the same caste or between members of the same caste inhabiting different provinces of India. Such intermarriages have not taken place for a very considerable time. Marriage customs observed by the same caste of Hindus in different parts of India vary sometimes considerably, and intermarriages are difficult as people naturally feel great hesitation in contracting marriages the validity of which may be open to question. Under the law as it stands at present,

intermarriage between members of different castes of the Hindus is of extremely doubtful validity, if not an absolute nullity. The necessity for a simple law of marriage wholly optional and which may be supplemented by the religious rites observed by the contracting parties is greatly felt by those who do not desire to break away from Hinduism and at the same time seek to adapt their life to the growing needs of the times.

BHUPENDRANATH BASU.

*The 16th February 1911.*

SPEECH OF THE  
**Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendranath Bose**

ON THE OCCASION

OF THE

Introduction of the special  
Marriage Amendment Act in  
the Supreme Legislative Council

The 16th February, 1911.



## Special Marriage Act (Amendment) Bill

---

In moving for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Special Marriage Act, 1872, the Hon'ble MR. BHUPENDRANATH BASU said :—

“ May it please Your Lordship—In introducing this Bill which stands in my name I shall take the liberty to place before the Council very briefly the history of the law which at present governs marriages between persons who are not married according to the orthodox rites of the religion in which they were born. I shall deal principally with the question of *Hindu marriages*, with which I must say at the outset I am primarily concerned. It is well known that marriage is a sacrament with the Hindus and among the higher castes of Hindu society is performed according to rituals which have in all essentials come down from the Vedic times. Their very age, apart from their source, invests the marriage tie with a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the Hindus. After the Vedic ages, coming down through circling centuries, these marriage rites have taken the hue, though not deeply, of the religious beliefs of the times through which they have passed, and we have now the observances of the Pauranic period intermingling

with the simpler rites practised by the ancient Rishis, the ancestors of the Hindu race.

“Hinduism, like other great religions of the world, has had its dissenters from time to time. The Jainas, the Buddhists, the Sikhs have had their own marriage rites, and minor sects have also adopted variations recognised in their own particular communities ; but difficulties arose with the stereotyping of prevailing Hindu practices during the British period. Law Courts gave rigidity to existing customs, and Hinduism to some extent lost its innate vitality and Hindu practices ceased to yield a quick response to changes necessitated by a change in the environments of Hindu life.

“Early in the Nineteenth century Raja Ram Mohan Roy revived in India the doctrine of the Unity of God and appealed to the sacred books of the Hindus themselves, to the Vedas and the Upanishads, for the realisation and confirmation of this high ideal of religious belief. He founded what is now known as the Brahma Samaj of India in the year 1830, and his great personality soon attracted to it many earnest and thoughtful men from among the Hindus ; for some time the members of the new sect, who called themselves Brahmans, worshippers only of Brahma or the Supreme Being, conformed to the social and religious observances of the Hindus, omitting more

or less what to them seemed repugnant to the ideals of their faith. With the increase in their numbers and under the driving force of the genius of Keshub Chunder Sen, the Brahmos evolved out of the ancient rituals of Hinduism, ceremonials to suit their special needs. Not only did they abandon a substantial part of the old ritual, but they went further and, disregarding the limitations of caste, introduced intermarriage in their own community. Naturally great misgivings arose as to the validity of these marriages. For many centuries the practice of intermarriage between members of different castes had ceased among the Hindus. The Brahmos obtained the opinion of a distinguished lawyer, then practising in the Calcutta High Court, Mr. Cowie, who was then Advocate General, who gave it as his opinion that the Marriages contracted by the Brahmos would not be looked upon as valid in a Court of law. In this state of things, the Brahmo community approached the Government of India for a marriage law which would validate their marriages, and in 1868, Sir Henry Maine, the greatest jurist who has ever held office as a Law Member of the Government of India, concurring with the opinion of Mr. Cowie, introduced a Bill which was very simple in its character. As the Christian community of India had already their own marriage registration law ( 14 & 15 Victoria, CHAPTER XL ), under which they could be married

without the rites of any of the Christian Churches, Sir Henry Maine excluded the Christians from his scheme, and confined it to those who objected 'to be married in accordance with the rites of the Hindu, Mahomedan, Buddhist, Parsi or Jewish religions,' and he laid down a few simple conditions for the validity of a marriage under his measure. These conditions were: (1) presence of the Marriage Registrar; (2) age of the husband should be above 18; (3) age of the wife above 14, and if below 18, consent of her guardian necessary; (4) parties not to be within the prohibited degrees of their own respective communities. Things in India move slowly, and by the time the opinions of Local Governments had been collected and the Bill was ripe for enactment into law, Sir Henry Maine had left the scene of his labours, and his successor, out of deference to the opposition that the Bill had evoked in certain quarters, modified the measure to some extent and introduced a limitation which I now seek to remove. This limitation is as follows, *viz.*, that the provisions of the law should only extend to those who did not profess the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Mahomedan, Parsi, Buddhist, Sikh or Jaina religions, and a form of declaration was introduced which had to be signed by the parties contracting marriage, which made the declarant say that he or she did not profess any of the religions above-mentioned. The present law, Act

III of 1872, stands with this limitation. Now, my Lord, this negation of all existing and known religions of India by those who seek to contract these marriages is felt to be a hardship. The Brahmos naturally object to make the sweeping declaration. Many of them believe that the religion as professed by them is only a purer form of the Hindu faith, and they derive their inspiration from the sacred writings of the Hindus, the Vedas and the Upanishads. We Hindus have no quarrel with them. Our religion is not confined to professions, we do not object to sects, and so long as any section of the Hindu community does not seek to break away from it, the Hindus, subject to limitations which they naturally impose for the protection of the orthodox faith, do not deny to such section the right to live as an integral part of the Hindu society. The Vaishnavas of Bengal have their own peculiar practices and ceremonies and disregard not only the limitations of caste, but also of creed. Muhammadans have been known in the past to embrace the Vaishnava faith. The Vaishnavy in times past have displayed a violent hostility to certain Hindu divinities; but they always been tolerated by the Hindus and treated as a part of themselves. Their great teacher Gouranga is looked upon as one of the holiest of saints, and by a large and very devout section of the people as an incarnation of God himself.

Hindus learnt and taught the lesson of religious toleration when the rest of the world was red with strife. 'I manifest myself to all who come to me whatever may be the path they tread' is the admonition that Srikrishna gave to his favourite disciple centuries ago, and this has largely influenced Hindu thought and opinion in matters of religious belief. But while Hindu opinion is tolerant of other faiths it is naturally sensitive to any departure from its own established code of practices ; this attitude has been its great safeguard in the past, and in this view an objection may be taken to my amendment, that if carried into law, it will facilitate intermarriage and lead to an eventual disruption of Hindu society. It cannot be denied that intermarriages between different *Varnas* were prevalent in ancient India and are recognised in *Smritis* and *Sanhitas*, which make provision for succession to inheritance by sons of wives of different degrees regulated according to the rank of their mothers. Even this rule of differentiation seems to have been an innovation for the ancient lawgiver Baudhayana lays it down generally that 'in case of competition of a son born from a wife of equal class, and of one born from a wife of a lower class the son of the wife of lower class may take the share of the eldest, in case he be possessed of good qualities.' Manu, the great law-giver of the Hindus, sanctions the

marriage of a Brahmin with women of lower degrees though he reprobates the marriage of a Brahmin with a Sudra woman, a reprobation which shows that the practice existed. Many of the non-Brahmin castes of India, some of them occupying a high position in Hindu-society, are the result of mixed unions. The great sage Vyasa, the compiler of the Vedas, the founder of the Pouranic faith and literature and one of the holiest of Brahmins, was the son of a fisherwoman and was himself the father of three sons, two from Kshatriya brides and one from the bed of a Sudra woman. Vijnaneswara, the great commentator of Yajnavalka, whose treatise the Mitakshara, is recognised as of very high authority throughout India, says in a passage quoted in a judgment of the Madras High Court (I. L. R. 12 Madras), 'a Brahmin begets upon a Sudra a, Nishada she the Nishadi marrying a Brahmin produces a girl, who again marries a Brahmin ; in this manner, the marriage of the 6th daughter produces a Brahmin. Again a Brahmin produces upon a Vaishya an Ambastha, who marrying a Brahmin bears a daughter, and these connections going on for five generations produce a Brahmin,' so that in olden times a Brahmin could be gradually evolved. Jimuta Vahana, the recognised authority on the law of inheritance in Bengal, speaks in the *Dayabhaga* of the union of a Brahmin with a Sudra woman as a

venial offence and lays down, basing his opinion upon Vrihaspatj and Baudhayana, the principle that the son of a Sudra wife shall have the same rights as the son of a Brahmin wife, except as to lands given to the father as a pious donation. But whatever may have been the practice in the past, for many centuries now intermarriage between different castes, except in some very rare cases sanctioned by local custom and confined to two or three castes, has been unknown, and this exclusion has gone so far as to prohibit intermarriage between different sub-sections of the same caste. There is a strong consensus of opinion in a considerable section of the Hindu community that restrictions upon intermarriage between different sub-sections of the same caste, if not between different castes, should cease. Cases of such intermarriage have taken place in the Kayastha community of Bengal and there is a growing desire to extend the practice between the sub-sections of that community inhabiting different parts of India, and in some instances between members of different castes. The parties contracting such marriages do not desire to break away from Hinduism and the Hindu tradition. They celebrate the marriages according to Hindu rites, which though same in essentials, differ considerably in practice in different parts of India and among different castes and communities ; but the validity of such marriages



is not absolutely free from doubt. Mayne in his treatise on Hindu law says 'Marriages between persons in different sub-sections of the same caste, e.g., of Brahmans or Sudras, have been said to be invalid, unless sanctioned by local custom.' Raghunandan and Kamalakara, two of the latest commentators on Hindu law and usage as prevalent in Bengal, prohibit intermarriage between different tribes upon the authority of a text in one of the minor Puranas.

"The late Mr. Justice Dwarkanath Mitter, than whom a greater exponent of Hindu law has not adorned the bench of the High Court, observed in one of his judgments (*Melaram Nudial v. Thanooram Bamun*, 9 W. R. 552) as follows :—'Domes and Harees are two distinct castes, and the question is whether marriage between a Dome Brahmin and a Haree girl is good and binding. Local custom is the only authority by which such a marriage can be sanctioned, the general Hindu law being against it.' I may mention that the Domes and Harees in Bengal belong to the lowest grade of Hindu castes and are regarded as untouchable. The Privy Council, in a Madras case affecting the status of Sudras in Madras, held that illegitimate offspring of the Sudra caste belonged to that caste and a marriage between such offspring and another member of the Sudra caste would not

be invalid (13 Moore's Indian Appeals, page 141). In a later case in the Calcutta High Court another eminent Hindu lawyer, the late Sir Romesh Chander Mitter, whose attention had been called to the Privy Council judgment I have just mentioned, held that 'marriage between parties in different subdivisions of the Sudra caste is prohibited unless sanctioned by any special custom, and no presumption in favour of the validity of such a marriage can be made although long cohabitation has existed between the parties.'

"The Calcutta High Court, in a bench composed of two English Judges, in another case in which the reputed husband was a dhobi or washerman and the reputed wife a fisherwoman, both belonging to Assam, held that intermarriages between different sub-sections of the Sudra caste were valid. One would hardly think that in this state of the law, with only a judicial authority by no means unanimous, that valid marriage may be contracted between sub-sections of the Sudras in Madras and of the fishermen caste in Assam, amongst both of whom illegitimacy is no bar to inheritance, it would be safe to pronounce that marriages between the sub-sections of the higher castes in India, who do not profess to be Sudras and in many instances follow the practices enjoined up on the 'twice born,' would be valid. And natu-

rally people would hesitate to form unions the validity of which may be called into question at any time. I am aware that there is a growing opinion that such marriages must be held to be valid, but people cannot afford to marry merely upon legal opinions, however high the source may be from which they proceed. No custom has yet grown up to sanction such marriages, for a custom to be valid must be existing from time immemorial. All that I desire is that this bar which custom, or want of custom, has created in Hindu society should be removed.

“ I do not think it is necessary to deal with the question in its aspect upon the Hindu Law of Succession. Doubts have been from time to time expressed as regards the effect of a change of religion upon the status of the parties. The Calcutta High Court has lately held (*Kusum Kumari Roy v. Satya Ranjan Das*, I. L. R. 30 Calcutta) that a Brahma father can give one of his sons in adoption to Hindu parents. The High Court of Bombay (I. L. R. 25 Bom. 551) has held that a Hindu convert to Mahomedanism can give his Hindu son in adoption to Hindu parents; and the Privy Council in a very recent appeal from the Punjab Chief Court agreed with the conclusion of that Court that a Sikh or a Hindu by becoming a Brahma did not necessarily cease to belong to

the Community in which he was born. And they further agreed with the Chief Court in thinking that such lapses from orthodox practice (in matters of diet, etc.) could not have the effect of excluding from the category of Hindu in Act V of 1881 one who was born within it, and who never became otherwise separated from the religious communion in which he was born (I. L. R. 31 Cal. 11). Whatever may be the doubts that marriage under the present Act which makes it incumbent upon a party to declare that he does not profess a particular religion, throws upon the law of succession to his property arising from the fact that a declaration has to be made that the party does not belong to one of the professed religions of India, the amendment of the law which I propose, and which dispenses with this declaration, will have no such effect, for it cannot be contended in the case of Hindus that if they intermarry according to Hindu ritual they shall cease to be Hindus. As regards those who do not desire to marry under a Hindu ritual, their position will not be worse than under the existing Act III of 1872.

“I have not dealt with the other great communities of India. As regards intermarriage the Muhammadan law is extremely liberal, the only condition being that the parties must belong to a religious faith which professes belief in the Ahle

Kitab. The Muhammadans of India are not affected by the present law and the change I propose makes no difference in their case. As regards the Indian Christians, they have, as I have already stated, their Special Act, 14 & 15 Victoria, CHAPTER XL. The Parsis have their own law of marriage and divorce ( Act XV of 1865 ) for marriages *inter se*, and if they do not desire to go beyond their own community, the law as it stands, or the alteration I suggest, will not affect them.

“ My amendment is meant specially for the Hindus, and if the representatives of the other communities so desire I shall be content to limit it to Hindus alone. I do not desire to interfere with the Hindu customs and practices as at present observed. All I seek is liberty to those who, while observing Hindu customs, believe that there may be room for expansion and growth in consonance with Hindu ideals, that such growth and expansion may be secured not by secession from the Hindu communion but by reversion to what made it so great in times gone by. And in this there is no violence to Hindu thought or feeling, no forcible imposition of alien and strange practices upon Hindu society. The Widow Remarriage Act has legalised the marriage of Hindu widows. Orthodox Hindu society is not affected by it. Just as it can avoid a convert to a foreign religion, so does it

avoid, when it seems necessary, social intercourse with parties contracting marriage under the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, and so may it, if it likes, put under its ban people who may take the benefit of the legislation that I propose and contract intermarriage according to Hindu rites between subsections of the same caste or different castes. Hindu society has resisted violent onslaughts in the past upon its citadel of orthodoxy as understood by itself; it is not likely to be affected until there is a great change in its sentiment and attitude towards intermarriage, and if such a change ever comes, Hindu society will remain Hindu as it is, only orthodoxy will change one of its dogmas. Hindu society was justly indignant because members of its community, however low in the social scale, were at one time destined for the purposes of the Census for a separate classification; let us Hindus not drive out from our body enlightened men who would live the life of the Hindu and marry according to our rites, if in the just exercise of the liberty of conscience they extend their social horizon beyond the circle of their caste or sub-caste on lines at one time recognized by the Hindus themselves and sanctioned by their scriptures. The Lex Loci Act (XXI of 1850) has removed the disabilities of Hindu converts to other religions. Before that Act was passed it was felt doubtful as to whether, when a

Hindu renounces his religion, he would be entitled to succeed to his father's inheritance ; because under the Hindu system of society apostacy was deemed a ground for forfeiture. The Lex Loci Act of 1850 removed that disability. Shall it be said that we are unwilling to remove disabilities from amongst ourselves, that we are unwilling to provide room for healthy expansion and growth ? Such an attitude will be suicidal, such an attitude will seal up the genius of the Hindu race within an iron mould from which it can only escape by violence, or where it shall for ever lie cramped and immured. I hope it will not be so. I am sure it shall not be so, and in that hope and in that faith I crave liberty to introduce this Bill in this Council."

## APPENDIX I

### A Bill to amend the Special Marriage Act, 1872.

---

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the Special Marriage Act, 1872; It is hereby enacted as III of 1872, follows :—

1. This Act may be called the Special Marriage  
SHORT TITLE. (Amendment) Act, 1911.

2. That the words commencing with "who do not profess," and ending with "Jaina religion" occurring in the preamble to the  
Amendment of preamble, Act III of 1872. Special Marriage Act, 1872, be omitted, and in lieu thereof the following words be substituted, namely, "intend marriage under the provisions of this Act."

3. That in section 2 of the said Act the words commencing with "neither of whom," and ending  
Amendment of section 2, Act III of 1872. with "Jaina religion" be omitted, and the following words be substituted, namely, "who intend marriage under the provisions of this Act."



4. That in the Declarations to be made by the bridegroom and the bride in the Second Schedule Amendment of Second Schedule, Act III of 1872. to the said Act; the words in clause 2 be omitted, and in lieu thereof the following words and figures be substituted, namely :—“ I intend marriage under the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1872, as amended by the Special Marriage (Amendment) Act; 1911.”

## APPENDIX II

### Statement of Objects and Reasons.

---

THE Special Marriage Act of 1872 applies to persons who do not profess any of the recognised religions of India and a declaration has to be made by the parties contracting marriage that they do not profess any such religion. This declaration, which is a negation of faith in all the religious systems of India, has been felt to be an unnecessary condition by the community for whose benefit the Act was specially intended.

The provisions of the Act, moreover, cannot be availed of by those members of the Hindu community who desire to introduce intermarriage between different sub-sections of the same caste or between members of the same caste inhabiting different provinces of India. Such intermarriages have not taken place for a very considerable time. Marriage customs observed by the same caste of Hindus in different parts of India vary sometimes considerably, and intermarriages are difficult as people naturally feel great hesitation in contracting marriages the validity of which may be open to question. Under the law as it stands at present,

intermarriage between members of different castes of the Hindus is of extremely doubtful validity, if not an absolute nullity. The necessity for a simple law of marriage wholly optional and which may be supplemented by the religious rites observed by the contracting parties is greatly felt by those who do not desire to break away from Hinduism and at the same time seek to adapt their life to the growing needs of the times.

BHUPENDRANATH BASU.

*The 16th February 1911.*

# The Social Service League Bombay

---

## Constitution and Rules.

1. The League shall be called "The Social Service League, Bombay."

2. The objects of the League are :—

The collection and study of social facts ; the discussion of social theories and social problems with a view to forming public opinion and securing improvements in the conditions of life, and *the pursuit of social service.*

3. All persons over 18 years of age irrespective of caste, creed or sex, who sympathise with the objects of the League and *are prepared to work for it*, are eligible for membership of the League.

4. The League shall consist of a President, Vice-Presidents, Patrons, Fellows, Life-members and Members.

(a) Persons contributing at least a sum of Rs. 1000 at one time or

within a period of 5 years are eligible to be elected *Patrons*.

- (b) Persons contributing at least Ra. 500 at one time or within a period of 5 years are eligible to be elected *Fellows*.
- (c) Persons contributing Ra. 200 at one time are eligible to be elected *Life-members*.
- (d) Members will be of four classes:—
  - Class A of those who pay Ra. 25 a year,
  - Class B of those who pay Ra. 10 a year,
  - Class C of those who pay Ra. 5 a year,
  - Class D of those who pay Re. 1 a year.

5. The affairs of the League shall be conducted by a Managing Committee, consisting of 21 members, exclusive of all office-bearers elected every alternate year at an Annual General Meeting of the League. The President and Vice-Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers shall be elected at the same meeting and shall be ex-officio members of the Managing Committee.

6. The Managing Committee shall have the power of admitting members on their being recommended by two members of the League.

7. The Managing Committee shall have the power to elect Patrons, Fellows and Life-members from among its members and outsiders who may have rendered important services to the cause of social service.

8. The Managing Committee shall have the power to add to their number not more than two out of the members of the League.

9. Any vacancy occurring in the Managing Committee in the course of two years shall be filled up by the members of the Managing Committee.

10. At all meetings of the Managing Committee seven members shall form a quorum. In the absence of the President, the Managing Committee shall elect their own Chairman.

11. All questions before the Managing Committee shall be decided by a majority of votes, the Chairman for the time being having a second or casting vote in case of an equality of votes.

12. Any member of the Managing Committee absenting himself without sufficient

cause from the meetings of the Committee for six continuous months shall cease ipso-facto to be the member of the Managing Committee but shall not be prevented from being re-elected.

13. The business of the Managing Committee shall be conducted in the meetings assembled, provided that in case of emergency, the Secretaries may, at their discretion, take the votes of the members of the Committee by circular and shall take such action as the majority vote for. Decisions so arrived at shall be recorded in the minute book and treated as the proceedings of the Committee.

14. The proceedings of the meetings of the Managing Committee shall be recorded by the Secretaries, and the minutes thus recorded shall be read and confirmed at the next ensuing meeting and shall be signed by the Chairman for the time being. The minutes shall contain :—

- (a) The names of the members present.
- (b) A fair and correct record of the proceedings of the meeting.

15. The Managing Committee may make such bye-laws, not inconsistent with the rules of the League, as they may from time

to time think necessary and may alter, repeal or add to the same from time to time as they may deem necessary ; and all such bye-laws shall have the same force as the rules, provided they have obtained the sanction of a majority of the Managing Committee for the time being. Such bye-laws shall be entered in a book, and be always open to inspection by the members of the League and notice of the passing of such bye-laws shall be exhibited at the office of the League. Any matters not specifically provided for in these rules shall be disposed of by the Managing Committee.

16. The Managing Committee shall have power to appoint sub-committee from the members of the League.

17. The Managing Committee shall have absolute power to decline the admission of any applicant to the membership of the League without disclosing any reason for their action.

18. The Managing Committee shall have power by a majority of four-fifths of the members present at its meeting to expel a member whose conduct is unworthy of membership of the League, provided that no proposal to expel shall be considered unless the member concerned has been given an opportunity of explaining his conduct.



19. The interpretation of the rules and of the bye-laws and the construction and effect thereof shall rest with the Managing Committee and the ruling, if any, given by them, shall be taken as final.

20. An Annual General Meeting shall be held in July each year—the year of the League will be from the 1st of June to 31st of May—

- (a) To receive the Managing Committee's report for the preceding year,
- (b) To pass the accounts submitted by the Secretaries and Treasurer after they have been duly audited by two auditors appointed by the general body,
- (c) To transact any other business duly brought forward.

(At every alternate Annual General Meeting the election of the Managing Committee and the office bearers shall form a part of the Annual General Meeting's programme).

21. The annual accounts of the League shall be kept open at the offices of the League for the inspection of the members at least seven days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

22. Ordinary General Meetings may be convened by the Managing Committee on such occasion, and for such purposes as the Managing Committee may think proper.

23. The Managing Committee may, at any time, of their own accord and shall on a written requisition of not less than 25 members call a special General meeting of the League to consider such questions as may be mentioned in the requisition and others as the Managing Committee may deem it fit to place before the meeting. Such meetings shall be called within 15 days after receipt of the said requisition after giving due notice to the members of the League.

24. At all General Meetings 25 members shall form a quorum.

25. No quorum shall be necessary at any adjourned meeting.

26. Seven days' clear notice shall be given for the holding of the General Meeting. The notice shall state the business to be transacted at such meetings; and no other business shall be taken up except with the permission of the chairman on the occasion.

27. The meetings of the Managing Committee shall be held at least once a month. The Secretaries shall call a special meeting

of the Managing Committee on the request of the President or on receiving a written requisition signed by at least five members of the Committee within a week after such request or after the receipt of such requisition.

28. The sub-committee may carry on their business by holding meetings or by circulars ; and shall from time to time report their proceedings to the Managing Committee. They shall abide by the instructions issued to them by the Managing Committee, and may refer to it for guidance and advice on any question of difficulty or in respect of which there may be a difference of opinion among them.

29. The President, or the Chairman for the time being, shall decide all questions of order at the meetings, and his decision shall be final.

30. At all general meetings of the League, or the Managing Committee or sub-committees, all question, other than those of order, shall be decided according to the opinion of the majority present, expressed by a show of hands or any other method of open voting, the President or Chairman for the time being having a casting vote in case of equality of votes.

31. Voting by proxy shall not be allowed.

32. All general meetings shall have power to adjourn to any day to be then fixed for the purpose of deciding on such propositions as may remain undetermined or for the purpose of transacting any business remaining unfinished and which is required to be transacted at a general meeting.

33. Any question decided at a general meeting shall not be re-opened until after the expiration of six months.

34. The donations received from the Patrons shall be carried over to a fund called "The Reserve Fund" which fund shall be deposited in the Bank of Bombay or in other public investments authorized by law. The interest accruing therefrom shall be utilized towards the expenses of the League unless otherwise specified by the donors.

35. The Secretaries in consultation with the Treasurer shall prepare an Annual Budget to be submitted to the Managing Committee for its approval not later than August each year. Whenever necessary the Managing Committee shall have the power to vary the Annual Budget.

36. The accounts of the League before they are laid before the Annual General meeting shall be audited by two auditors

appointed at the general meeting; but no member of the Managing Committee shall be eligible to act as an auditor during his continuance in office. The audited accounts shall be embodied in the Annual Report.

37. No member shall be entitled to vote at any meeting of the League, managing Committee or sub-committee whose subscription has fallen in arrears for over a year and who has not paid the same within a month after the receipt of notice to pay the same from the Secretaries.

38. If the subscription of a member is in arrears for over a year, the Managing Committee may give him notice to pay; and if he fails to pay within a month after such notice he shall be liable to have his name removed from the list of members by a resolution to that effect by the Managing Committee. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to bring to the notice of the Managing Committee all undue defaults in the payments to be made to or by the League.

39. Members wishing to resign membership of the League shall give notice of the same to the Secretaries, and shall also pay up all sums due by them to the League, and return any books etc., belonging to the League in their possession.

40. No person shall be re-admitted as a member of the League unless he pays all arrears due by him to the League, as well as returns any articles, belonging to the League he may have with him.

41. Property of every kind belonging to the League shall be considered as vested in the Managing Committee for the time being in trust for the League.

42. The rules may be amended, altered, repealed or added to at any time by a majority of the members of the League at any general meeting duly assembled.

The  
Debt Redemption Committee,  
Bombay

AND ITS

Aims, Objects and Rules.

---

OFFICE ADDRESS:

*Servants of India Society's Home,*

GIRGAUM, BOMBAY.

---

1915.

---

Printed at the Bombay Vaibhav Press,  
GIRGAON, BOMBAY. ;

## THE DEBT REDEMPTION COMMITTEE, BOMBAY.



( An organization to spread co-operative  
movement among working class people. )

In order to assist and promote the Co-operative work started by the Servants of India Society, particularly with a view to improve the economic and social condition of the poor labouring classes, principally in Bombay, by organizing their credit, by starting co-operative societies to redeem their indebtedness and by securing other benefits, that flow from co-operation, calculated to bring about the material and moral advancement of the people, a Co-operative Debt Redemption Committee was started, at the instance of Mr. G. K. Devadhar, M. A. at a meeting held at the Servants of India Society's Home, in Girgaum, on the 4th December, 1913, when the Hon'ble Mr. C. H. A. Hill, C. S. I., C. I. E., I. C. S., member, Executive Council, Bombay, the Hon'ble Mr. P. D. Pattani, C. I. E., member, Executive Coun-



cil, Bombay and the Hon'ble Mr. Lalubhai Samaldas, C. I. E. and others were present. At its last meeting held on the 3rd of November, 1914, at the Secretariat, a few more names were added to this committee, as power had been taken to add to their number.

It was then resolved that a few rules be framed for the business of the Committee and be circulated among members for their suggestions. The following few rules have been passed at a regular meeting of the Debt Redemption Committee held on the 18th of March, 1915, under the presidency of the Hon'ble Mr. Hill, the President of the Committee. A complete list of the members of the Debt Redemption Committee is published below.

### MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL BODY OF THE COMMITTEE.

#### President.

The Hon'ble Mr. C. H. A. Hill, C.S.I. C.I.E. I.C.S.,  
*Member, Executive Council, Bombay.*



#### *Members:—*

The Hon'ble Mr. P. D. Pattani, C. I. E.,  
*Member, Executive Council, Bombay.*

---

Sir Narayan G. Chandavarkar, Kt.  
 The Hon'ble Sir Fazulbhoy Curresombhoy, Kt.  
 Sir Shapurjee B. Broacha, Kt.  
 Mr. Ratan J. Tata,  
 „ H. A. Wadia,  
 „ Jehangir B. Petit,  
 „ Chunilal V. Mehta, M. A. LL. B.  
 „ Purushottamdas Thakordas, B. A.  
 „ Ratansay Dharamsey Morarjee.

—————:o:—————  
 WORKING COMMITTEE.

*Chairman:—*

The Hon'ble Mr. Lalubhai Samaldas, C.I.E.

*Joint Secretaries:—*

Mr. Gopal Krishna Devadhar, M. A.,  
*Member, Servants of India Society.*

„ Vaikunth L. Metha, B. A.

*Treasurer:—*

Mr. Amritlal V. Thakkar, L. C. E.  
*Member, Servants of India Society.*

*Members:—*

Mr. Shridhar Ganesh Vaze, B. A.  
*Member, Servants of India Society.*

Mr. Narayan Malhar Joshi, B. A.  
*Member, Servants of India Society.*

Mr. Keshariprasad M. Thakore,  
*Probationer, Servants of India Society.*

Mr. Hairat Fardunji M. Dastur, B. A.

—————:o:—————

***Paid Inspectors:—***

Mr. Narayan Dhondu Kadan.  
 „ Samant Nanjee Marwadi.

**RULES.**

**Name:—**The Committee shall be designated the “Debt Redemption Committee, Bombay,” and its Headquarters will be in Bombay.

**Objects:—**The work of the Committee will chiefly lie in the direction of

- (1) providing guidance and supervision and securing the good management of the co-operative societies that have come or may hereafter come within its cognizance;
- (2) finding fresh fields for the extension of co-operative societies, first in Bombay and later on at other industrial centres in the Bombay Presidency;
- (3) spreading the knowledge of the principles of the co-operative movement by means of lectures, leaflets, lantern slides &c. &c.;
- (4) organizing co-operative gatherings and arranging co-operative social functions;
- (5) starting co-operative stores for the benefit of members of the societies and, whenever circumstances permit, undertaking co-operative housing for the poor;

---

(6) arranging to insure in Bombay the lives of the members of co-operative societies within its cognizance, or under its direct supervision;

(7) securing medical relief and giving educational facilities for the members and their families;

(8) arranging to secure the money necessary for financing the co-operative societies within its cognizance;

(9) advising the societies in the matter of balancing the excesses and deficiencies of their funds; and

(10) devising means to encourage thrift among the members and taking such other steps as may be deemed necessary to promote the objects of this Committee and to secure the safety of the investments made by the public.

**NATURE OF THE WORK:**—The Debt Redemption Committee will fulfill, in a general way, but without taking any direct financial responsibility, all the functions of a Co-operative Union, until a properly constituted Union of these societies comes into existence; but thereafter the chief function of this Committee will be of the nature of a "Board of Supervision."

**FUNDS:**—The Committee will collect the funds necessary for promoting the objects men-

---

tioned above and for meeting, in the main, the ordinary expenses of actual management, office-staff, supervision and inspection of societies, for issuing pamphlets and reports of the work with a view to raise its usefulness and for the payment of the paid-staff for carrying on the work from day to day. These funds will be secured from the following sources :—

(1) Fees paid annually by the societies from profits made.

(2) Fees paid annually by the members of the societies.

(3) Subvention from Government towards meeting the expenses of organization, supervision, and inspection of societies within the cognizance of the Committee.

(4) Annual subscriptions from members of the Debt Redemption Committee and from sympathisers of the movement.

(5) Donations from the public,  
and

(6) Miscellaneous income.

**MEMBERS** :—Those who sympathise with the aims and objects of the Debt Redemption Committee and are prepared actively to help it in its work are eligible for membership. Memb-

---

ers will be selected by the Committee at its meetings.

**MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL BODY :—**

The meetings of the general body of the Debt Redemption Committee will be held quarterly. As far as possible they will take place in March, June, September, and December. The President will preside at such meetings and in his absence one of the Vice-Presidents and in their absence the members present will elect their own chairman.

**Business :—**The Secretaries will prepare an Agenda for such quarterly meetings and will send it to members at least a week before the date on which the meeting is to be held. They will place before the meeting, among other things, reports of the following :

- (1) The progress made by the Societies;
- (2) the work done by the Inspectors;
- (3) the work done by the Working Committee ;
- (4) the statement of accounts ;
- (5) new schemes and new proposals for the extension of the movement;

**Business by Circulars :—**When the Secretaries think it advisable, in order to meet urgent cases, to dispose of any business by circular they shall arrange to take the votes of the mem-

---

bers by a circular issued by them and shall, if three-fourths of the members are in agreement, take action accordingly. Decisions so arrived at shall be recorded in the minute book and treated as the proceedings of the Debt Redemption Committee.

**Working Committee :—**The conduct of the actual work will be entrusted to a Committee consisting of such members as may be appointed for the purpose and the body thus formed will be called the "the Working Committee."

**Meetings of the Working Committee :—**The Working Committee shall meet at least once a month and among other things will receive reports of all the societies within its cognizance, examine their balance sheets, scrutinise the accounts, and will prepare a report on the work of the Inspectors; the Working Committee will also frame new proposals for submission to the Debt Redemption Committee.

**Inspectors :—**The Inspectors will be present at such meetings but shall not vote.

The Working Committee will arrange and supervise the work of the Inspectors on the lines approved by the Debt Redemption Committee.

---

**Meetings of Chairmen and Secretaries of Co-operative Societies:**—The Working Committee shall ordinarily arrange a monthly meeting of the Chairmen and the Secretaries of the various societies to obtain from them information as regards the working of the various societies and to discuss with them their needs, the ultimate object of such meetings being to form a regularly constituted Union or Unions of these societies.

**Meetings of all Members of Co-operative societies:**—The Working Committee shall ordinarily arrange every three months, a general meeting of all members of the various societies and on such occasions a lecture on some co-operative subject will, when possible, be delivered. Such opportunity may be utilized for some social function for the benefit of the members.

**Annual General Meeting:**—An Annual General Meeting shall be held to which all the members of the Debt Redemption Committee and the members of all co-operative societies will be invited. Such meetings shall be held not later than March in each year. At such meetings the following business will be transacted:—



---

(1) To receive the report of the Working Committee for the preceding year.

(2) To elect the office-bearers according to rules.

(3) To pass the accounts submitted by the Secretaries and Treasurer after they have been duly audited by the Auditor.

(4) To pass the annual Budget of expenses.

(5) To lay down general principles for the conduct of business by the societies represented particularly with reference to the procedure of debt redemption.

(6) To transact any other business, which may be brought forward, with the President's permission.

**Election of office-bearers:—**The office bearers of the Debt Redemption Committee and of the Working Committee shall be elected every alternate year. Vacancies will be filled by the Debt Redemption Committee either at its quarterly meetings or by circular.

**Special Meetings:—**The President shall have the power of calling a special meeting of the Debt Redemption Committee whenever he finds it necessary.

---

**Quorum:**—Five shall form a quorum for the meeting of the Debt Redemption Committee and three for the meeting of the Working Committee. No quorum shall be necessary at any adjourned meeting.

**Power to alter the rules:**—The rules may be amended, altered, repealed, or added to at any time by a majority of members of the Debt Redemption Committee at their quarterly or annual general meeting.

---

**ADDRESS**

delivered by.

**Sri Maharani Lady Gajapati Rao Garu**

(OF VIZAGAPATAM)

PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE

**“Bharatha Mahila Parishad”**

held at the

**Victoria Public Hall, Madras**

on the 30th December 1908

4  
5

Y15 x M  
D86

DEAR SISTERS,

I am deeply grateful to you for the honour you have done me in electing me as the President of the Bharata Mahila Parishad. When the Honourable Mr. Justice Sankara Nair asked me to preside at this Ladies' Conference, my first impulse was to decline the honour, because I think I am not worthy of the distinction as no doubt there are others worthier than myself, and also because ever since my great sorrow, I have taken no active part in any public function. After leaving the invitation unanswered for a week and after consideration, I decided to accept it for two reasons. Firstly, it would be lack of sympathy on my part if I did otherwise towards a movement which had been got up for the amelioration of our Indian women to discuss our wants and aspirations; secondly, I thought it in the nature of a Command, a call to duty. It is in this spirit that I stand before you to-day to address you on some of the subjects in which this Conference is interested.

We have come here to consider the state of our Indian women, to cultivate mutual love, and to devise means to better our condition. No work is nobler and holier than this. I need not dwell too long on the importance of female education, for its importance in improving the lot of women is admitted

on all hands. The days of stern opposition to the education of the Hindu girls have happily passed away and there are hopeful signs in all parts of our country for the advancement of female education which materially contributes to social, moral and spiritual elevation. It is gratifying that our ladies themselves have begun to take a deep interest in matters relating to their own progress and welfare, and every one of us should strive to promote the cause of education among our sisters. Education means knowledge that distinguishes right from wrong. Knowledge is the light that expels the darkness of ignorance. Therefore, without distinction of sex, knowledge is absolutely necessary to every human being, and to acquire such knowledge, education is indispensable. A wealthy king is respected and revered in his own province but cannot command the same respect in foreign lands, whereas an educated man is respected and revered everywhere. Therefore try to improve your education and increase your spiritual knowledge.

*Advantages of Education.*—I shall now dwell upon the advantages that accrue from education. Knowledge is derived from education, which enables one to manage well the household affairs, saving time and trouble to the husband. Besides this, educated women will be inclined to listen to the advice of elders and to cultivate love and friendship and thus avoid quarrels and

misunderstandings in society. These are but a part of the benefits of education. By reading the life and history of the virtuous Janakaja, Drowpathi and Savithri, we cherish a desire to follow in their footsteps. When misfortunes befall our families, our minds are immersed in sorrow. We can then have recourse to reading Uttaragita, Bhagavatgita, and the like Puranic books to find consolation for our afflicted minds. By hearing and reading such sacred books, the grief will diminish and our minds will be pacified. Could we not, therefore, if we are educated, bring peace and pleasure to our depressed minds by reading such sacred books in leisure hours? For educated women, charity, wealth, love and moksha are objects easily attainable. Janakaja, Anasooya, Chendramathi, and Damayanti, the gems of the fair sex, have distinguished themselves by the excellence of their education and their devotion to their husbands. It is education that leads us to the knowledge of God. Devotion to husbands, affection for brothers and sisters, love towards parents, desire to do good to others, kindness to animals and such noble virtues are the outcome of education. We learn from our ancient books that some educated women became famous as authors of books, and as benefactors to the world by preaching wisdom to the ignorant after much self-sacrifice and renunciation.

I should like to refer briefly to the history of the women noted for their education in ancient days and

the examples set by them, and I crave, my dear sisters, your indulgence for any shortcomings.

Maiden Gargi was well educated and she composed an Upanishad which goes by her name. It is stated in the Bhagavatham that Kapila taught his mother, Devahooti, Sankhya Philosophy. The pious and holy Seeta, the illustrious wife of our Sri Rama, had a masterly grasp of Vedanta and imparted it to Anjaneya at the instance of her husband. It is so stated in the Seeta Ramanjaneya Samvadam.

At the time of gambling, Drowpathi entered the hall of play and questioned Bhishma and other elders of the Kuru family on a legal doubt whether she was first staked and lost or he (Dharmarajsh) first staked and lost.

It appears in the Mahabharatam that Virata Maharajah had got his daughter Uttara trained in the art of dancing under the tutorship of Brahanala.

It also appears in the Puranas that Ratnāvali, a virgin, had drawn a picture of the object of her love from memory and so subdued the sorrow of separation.

Education of women is a custom prevailing from our forefathers, but the conquest of India by Mussalmans has tended greatly to retard the progress of education and to the seclusion of women.

Female education had been on the decline, but it speedily began to revive and spread under the benign rule of our late-lamented Queen Victoria.



Every town and almost every big village now contains an institution for the education of our girls. We should therefore pay as much attention to the education of our girls as we do for the education of our boys. The crowning victory is won by education when it convinces you of the existence of God, the supreme importance of religion in our life and the ultimate basis and foundation of merit and moksha in morality and righteousness. You cannot buy off God by prayer and charity alone—Give, you must, Pray, you must. He rises in wrath against those who disobey His dictates of Right and Justice. Again, to train up children is an important task imposed upon women and this task cannot be advantageously accomplished without education. The child takes its first lessons from its mother, who without education cannot generally be expected to give the children a proper training. If not for your sake educate yourself for the sake of your children. We are the builders of manhood and womanhood. Let your love for them manifest in this way. Teach them from infancy obedience to their parents, loyalty to the king and duty to God and man. The mother should not neglect to teach them, when at leisure, truthfulness, patience, obedience, love and kindness towards God's creatures, to do good to others and even-mindedness and piety towards God. To train young children as above, small verses composed to soothe the baby minds should be read, and care should be

taken that they are led to follow the good ways conveyed to them in the verses.

We should not always punish children by beating, but we should try to teach them obedience and win their tender hearts with love and with mere show of fear. We should try to exact good behaviour from children not by imposing merciless punishments, but by such simple means as not letting them out for play at play times, and by withholding from them sweets, etc., and taking care to make them understand that for their misconduct, the privileges allowed to them are now withheld. By this way of smooth admonition and by studying the nature of each child, children can be brought up to learn to obey order in their course of early training.

*Health.*—While attention is paid to education, health should not be neglected. It is of primary importance that we should know the principles of hygiene. This knowledge benefits the mothers and their children. The duty of man is to do *dharma* and the body is *dharma sadhanam*. (శరీరసాధనం ధర్మసాధనం). The science of health should be taught in all the schools, more especially, in schools for girls; for a girl will be later on entrusted with the management of her house, her husband, her children and of other members of the family. Any ignorance or disregard on her part of the principles of health means ruin to many. Hindu sisters, the Acharyakanda prescribed by our forefathers is evidently based on

hygienic principles. No doubt that some of the rules are misunderstood and misapplied. But if these rules are observed in the spirit in which they were made, there can be no harm to health, and I do not therefore propose to discourage those orthodox ladies who observe Acharam, but strongly commend to you all, the absolute necessity of the knowledge of the principles of hygiene for the maintenance of good health, which is the best of all blessings. I do not hesitate to assert that this science is a most important one, and believe that others of culture will readily agree with me. If we strictly follow the principles of this science from childhood, sickness will not attack us even in our advanced age and we shall be able to enjoy robust health.

Pure air, pure water and wholesome food are the chief elements for the preservation of human life, and of these three, air is the most important factor. If we allow our homes to be dirty, filthy and impure, the air becomes contaminated and impure matter gradually gets into water and food, and makes the objects we eat unwholesome. So, every endeavour should be made for the maintenance of good health. All filthy and impure matter should therefore be promptly removed so that our air and water may be kept pure and uncontaminated. In addition to pure air and pure water there are other factors which contribute to good health and happiness. Sound sleep and clean clothing are other chief

factors for human health and happiness, and no one can deny that any neglect in the direction of securing any of the above will bring on sickness. Again, one has to take exercise and keep the mind in a happy state. I therefore strongly advocate the teaching of hygiene in all the girls' schools.

*Domestic Economy.*—Another subject the knowledge of which is so essential to women, is domestic economy, and where it is not practised there is no happiness. Waste of money in all branches of house management must be avoided and care should always be taken to live within one's means. One should never think that any business in the house is not worth one's attention. By engaging servants, you have not done your work. You must supervise their work and see they do it all and well.

*Bringing up of infants.*—In this world there is no greater pleasure than being blessed with children. To enjoy this pleasure to the fullest extent, there are many things which we should know. I shall here state briefly what they are :—

Parents should take care of their children and see what they eat, drink, and what exercise they take. It is the natural wish of all parents that their children should live long in this world, but they do not adopt means consistent with their wish. If parents do not possess a proper knowledge of bringing up their children, they do as they think with a spirit of self-sufficiency without consulting persons better

qualified in the art of nursing. By such ignorance, the children become weak and meet with premature death. The training which the children undergo in their infancy will be beneficial to them in after life, both in bodily strength and longevity. Special care is therefore necessary in the bringing up of children.

*Food to infants.*—Food to infants should be in the shape of liquid. It should be fresh and easily digestible, but it should be neither too hot nor too strong. There is no food better than milk.

*Pure air.*—Pure air is very essential to infants. In this respect, we may treat infants as plants. Irrespective of the care we take to foster plants, they would soon perish if pure air is shut out from them, and the same fate awaits the infants if pure air cannot be had for them. Bathing should be continued from the date of birth of the infants, and fresh and tepid water is a soothing factor for the bath of infants, and bathing as a rule should be done, of course, early in the morning. By taking the infants into the open air, the organs of breath would be strengthened.

*Clothing of infants.*—Tight clothing is prohibitive for infants and it should not be stiff, but as soft as possible. Hot and crowded rooms should be avoided for their accommodation. Their bringing up demands great care and vigilance on the part of every mother.

*Charity.*—The principle of charity is to help the needy and the deserving without any distinction of caste or creed. Charity bestowed upon undeserving objects is no real charity. There are institutions and causes which rightly require your help. We cannot atone for our sins by making Dharma. Dharma should be done for its own sake. Those who do wrong in this world cannot secure heaven. There is a prevailing notion that charity should chiefly be made to Brahmins and temples, and this is a mistake. You all know how famine is raging almost every year in some part or other of our country and how the benign Government is striving to combat the ravages of famine. Although our Government is doing their utmost to relieve a very large number of people from the effects of famine, yet more funds are wanted—charity done for the relief of the poor, for the maintenance of hospitals, poor houses, etc., is praiseworthy. There is another most worthy object of charity that commends itself to us, and it is the establishment of “Widows’ Homes,” wherever possible.

*Social Reform.*—To come to the question of social reform—there is no denying that our social life requires improvement in many directions. The advancement of our country depends on a large measure upon how we exert ourselves to reform our society. This question of social reform mainly centres round the position of women.

1. Marriage is a big ceremony held for five days. It has become costly and all attempts should be made to curtail the expenses. Marriages are said to be the cause of ruin and misery to many a family. In all other castes except Brahmins, it can be performed in a day, but some of these castes are imitating the Brahmins and celebrating their marriages for five days, irrespective of their means. Even among Brahmins, marriage can be finished in one day if celebrated at a sacred shrine. This practice is happily increasing but has not become common. I commend the question of curtailment of expenses whether celebrated for five days or one day to your careful thought.

2. A shameful feature of our marriages is the demand and payment of large sums of money. Let us see what the bargain is exactly. You pay a man for marrying your daughter or he pays you for giving your daughter. In effect your daughter buys him for a husband or he buys your daughter for a wife. The price is a sum of money. Good trafficking in human beings! This is nothing short of slavery in another form. This pernicious custom of "Kanyasulkam" and "Varasulkam" is condemned by our Sastras and by all right-minded men, including perhaps even those that take part in this objectionable custom which is apparently coming to stay amongst us and it is in your hands to root it out. It is this custom that is responsible partly for early

marriages, and partly for early widowhood. Even among Brahmins, Vaisyas, and a few other castes where marriage of girls after puberty is prohibited, girls could be kept unmarried until at least they are 11 or 12 years old. This reform is easy and within your power.

It is to be regretted that in castes where marriage after puberty is allowable, the custom prevailing among Brahmins is blindly imitated. There is no necessity whatever for this. The result of this evil practice of early marriages has been the increase of child widows, whose condition is deplorable. There was a time when Suttee was prevalent in the Indian Empire. This pernicious custom had produced a baneful effect on womankind. The great reformer, Rajah Ramamohun Roy, came forward for the relief of the poor widows and got this custom abolished by the most benign Government by means of a penal enactment, by which the practice of Suttee was put a stop to. Unless some of our distinguished reformers concert effective measures to put a stop to the marriages of girls under 11 or 12 years of age, the obnoxious custom of child marriages cannot be stopped. They may of course approach the benign Government and apply for legislation on this subject. Brahmins and Vaisyas are in dread of excommunication from caste if they marry their girls after puberty, and it may take some time to introduce a change for the better in this direction; but I think it



a point of importance for all men interested in our social reform to take up the question in earnest and endeavour to bring about a wholesome change, in consultation with the Gurus of important Matts—  
 “Nothing venture, nothing win.”

To ameliorate the condition of these widows it would be well to start useful home industries in embroidery and the like, and to train some of them as teachers for girls' schools, as nurses and midwives for hospitals, as the want of such qualified women is felt everywhere. I have no doubt that any qualified and trained widow will find ready employment. As such, they will be of great value among all the women in their homes.

The above-mentioned reforms, I feel sanguine, will have your hearty support. Indian homes are noted for their purity, and I exhort you all to preserve and improve that purity. All obscene literature and lewd songs should be strictly prohibited, and the greatest care possible should be taken to keep our boys and girls free from all vicious influences. In the Mahabharatta, two conditions are laid down for success in life, viz., human effort and the will of God. The will of God is for the prosperity and betterment of His creatures.

*Truthfulness.*—In this world truthfulness is the source of all human happiness. There is no virtue of greater importance than truth. Irrespective of the troubles and difficulties to be encountered in

this stage of life, one has to adhere to truth, which alone can bring happiness in this world and everlasting bliss in after-life. Was it not by this truthfulness that Hariachendra Maharajah, who was involved in troubles and difficulties, had become famous amongst the kings of his time and is still alive in the dear memory of the world's generations? In days of yore, when Balichakravarti had promised to make charity to Vamanamurti, he was pressed by Sukracharya to withhold it, but Bali refused to hear him, saying that he could not retract what fell from his lips whatever might be the consequences following. We have read several such instances in our sacred books. When the speaking of an untruth even in trivial matters destroys confidence of husbands in their wives and of parents in their children, there is no need to speak of its effect on others. It is not a difficult thing to say what is directly seen and heard. No effort is necessary to speak the truth. As regards untruth, one has to fabricate stories to deceive others and guard himself from exposure. If one perhaps commits a sinful act by mistake, his conscience pricks him till he confesses the truth before man or God. Repentance will then follow, and the penitent will pray often for peace of mind. A mind thus bent cannot venture to commit an evil act. God is all truth and He consequently loves those that are truthful and punishes the untruthful. The prayers of the

truthful souls are most pleasing to God. Their prayers are granted. Lying lips are an abomination to God, and their prayers are not heard. The virtue of being truthful is the best of all good qualities, and we should always exert ourselves to practise this virtue.

In this Bharatakhandam there are now several religions, each of which has its followers; but a major portion of the whole population adheres to Hinduism. We should, therefore, exert ourselves to improve our religious knowledge and offer prayers to God every day, not only during ceremonials and festivities. Further, some day in each week should be fixed, and at a stated time and place all women should congregate and read the morals embodied in Ramayanam and Mahabharatam—the 5th Veda for the female population, and other books on Ethics.

It is gratifying to learn that Hindu Ladies' Associations are already coming into existence for this purpose here and there, and it is hoped that more of these will be formed everywhere.

Religion should be particularly taught in all the schools. It is desirable to teach suitable portions dealing with the virtues and duties of righteous wives from Dharmā Sastra, Puranas and Itihasas. In this way they will acquire a knowledge of their duties in this world and also of the future state of bliss. Let each of us therefore work her little mite to attain the objects of the Conference.

Beloved sisters, I thank you all for the trouble you have taken to come here and for the patience with which you have so kindly listened to me.



**THIRTYFIRST**  
**Indian National Social**  
**Conference**

(DECEMBER, 30, 1917.)

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

BY

**Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ray**

I make no apology for appearing before you on this platform though I feel that my faith and training make my position somewhat delicate. I am, however, encouraged by the thought that I am one of you in spite of the particular hall-mark I may happen to bear. I crave your indulgence and hope that my humble words will be taken in the spirit in which they are offered.

We stand to-day on the threshold of a new era in our history as a nation. New ideas, high aspirations are pulsating in our hearts. A wave of democratic movement is spreading all over the world. It cannot be expected that India alone will remain a mere passive and silent on-looker unaffected by the time-spirit.

A dispassionate observer watching the present state of things from a position of detachment cannot fail to notice the weak points in our body politic. While the echo of *Swaraj* or Home Rule is reverberating from one end of the country to the other,—while ambitious schemes of political re-construction are being propounded by every section of the people—while gorgeous visions of a United India are capturing our imagination—loud protests of indignation are raised by classes and communities amongst us which we can no longer ignore. Why is there this note of discord where there should be only peace and harmony? Why this rift in the lute?

The answer lies in a nut-shell. It is our failure to recognise that the question which presses for solution at the present

moment is as much a political as a sociological one. By the nature of things, it must be so. For, however much we may try to divide and isolate the various parts of the national problem, they cling to one another as fast as ever and mock our attempts at self-deception. We can not, with impunity, give undue preference to one over others. The law of *Karma* or causation is inexorable, and our past neglect in the work of social reform is bearing its evil fruit at the present hour. It has begun to clog the wheels of political progress. Let me state the problem clearly and definitely, and, in doing so, I shall confine myself chiefly to my own province, though what I am going to say will apply *mutatis mutandis* to the other provinces as well.

Leaving our brethren of the Islamic faith out of account, though they form the majority of the population in Bengal, we find that out of 21 millions of Hindus, Brahmins contribute 12½ lakhs, Kayasthas 11 lakhs and Baidyas only 89 thousands. As you are all aware, these three castes constitute what is called the higher castes in the Bengali social hierarchy. Then come the *Navasakas*, i.e. the various castes and sub-castes which are allowed to carry water for the Brahmins and are thus placed under the category of the touchables; these include the Tantis, Tilis, Kaivartas, Sadgopas, Gandhaboniks, etc.

Next come the vast majority of the population, most of which occupy the lowermost rungs in the social ladder and are more or less classed as *untouchables*. It is not my intention to take up your valuable time or tire out your patience by entering into any lengthy details regarding

them. If I at all refer to these, it is only to point a moral and adorn a tale—in this case, I regret to say, a tale of woe and national disgrace. It should be remembered that what is called a bold peasantry and stalwart yeomanry are mainly distributed by these so-called *untouchables*.

Let us for a moment take a historical retrospect of the gradual formation of the social strata of Bengal. From the 4th to the 11th century A. D., this province was more or less converted to the Buddhistic faith. A brass image has recently been unearthed in East Bengal, from the inscription attached to which we learn that Queen Pravabati of Samatata (সমতট) (Gangetic Delta), though herself belonging to a dynasty professing the creed of Buddha, was by no means inimical to the worship of the goddess Sarvañi (a form of Durga). From another copperplate we also glean that the Queen of Madanapala of the Pala dynasty made a grant of land to certain Brahmins, who recited to her episodes from the Mahābhārata. We also gather from the Chinese traveller, Hiouen Chuang, that in the 7th Century A. D., King Siladitya of Kanauj (Harsabardhan) was a Saivite with Buddhist proclivities. In fact, the whole of Northern India from Kanauj to the Gangetic Delta was under the sway of Buddhism. It is scarcely necessary to point out that, during this period, the Caste System, if it did not altogether disappear, was very much relaxed, and there were frequent inter-marriages among the members of different castes and classes.

On the decline of Buddhism, when the Brahminical faith once more began to rear its head, a sort of reorganization of the existing castes and subcastes took place. Hindu-



ism with its graded system of castes received an authoritative stamp under King Ballala Sen, the reputed founder of *kulinism*. Those who were the earliest to recognise the signs of the times rallied round the king and supported his reconstituted hierarchy, and thus secured for themselves social precedence. There were many, however, who called in question the pretensions of this ruler and held aloof. They were mostly degraded to the lower ranks; the Suvarnabaniks and the Jogis suffered most, inasmuch as water offered by them is not drinkable by the members of the privileged classes.

Here we have in a nut-shell an insight into the social history of Bengal. A convenient legend has been given currency to in later times that as, during the Buddhist period of social disintegration, religious rites as enjoined in the Vedas (वेद विहित क्रिया कर्मणः) were well-nigh forgotten in Bengal, five learned Brahmins were imported from Kanauj by King Adisur to revive the *Sanatan Dharma*, whatever it may mean.

Granting that there is some substratum of fact in the above legend, it may be reasonably asked how many of the 13 lakhs of Brahmins in Bengal today can claim direct lineal descent from these five prolific ancestors, who, by the bye, were not accompanied by their consorts. As Mr. Ramaprasad Chanda, a devoted worker of the Varendra Research Society, very tersely puts it:—"One other obstacle to the credibility of the stories of the origin of the Bengali Brahmins as given in the geneological works of Radhiyas and Varendras, is that it involves the assumption of the practical absence of Brah-

mans in Bengal 30 to 35 generations, or, say, eight to ten centuries before. According to the geneologists of Rádhiyas there were seven hundred Brahman families in Bengal at the time of the coming of the five Brahmans from Kanauj. But now-a-days representatives of the seven hundred families are nowhere to be met with, whereas, the descendants of the five immigrants fill the whole country." Scratch a *Saptasati* Brahmin and you will find non-Aryan blood in him.

It is well known that when a handful of men, even of a superior race or culture migrates to a distant land and settles down in the midst of a backward race, the former is compelled by the laws of nature to choose their mates from among the latter. It is also believed that some of the sub-castes amongst Brahmans in other provinces are of foreign origin. I shall not name them for obvious reasons. A similar state of things is going on under our very eyes among the *Nambudri* Brahmans in Malabar. It is an historical as also a sociological fact that, barring a few isolated instances, the Brahmans of Bengal and other provinces are made up of a heterogeneous blend. Ethnology also tells the same tale, and anthropometric data and cephalometric measurements fail at any rate to detect much radical difference in the facial contours of a Brahmin and a non-Brahmin. Mr. Chanda very pithily sums up the results of his own researches in the following lines ;—“The head form of the Outlandic Bráhma does not support his claim to be the pure-blooded descendants of the Midlandic Vedic Risis but indicates his close physical relationship to his non-Brahman neighbours classed as Sudras and “antyajas”, or outcastes. The

wide difference in the head form of the Kányakubjya Brahmans of the United Provinces and Maithila Brahmans of Bihar on the one hand, and the Nágar Bráhmans of Guzrat and Rádhiya Várendra and Vaidika Brahmans of Bengal on the other, cannot be explained by the miscegenation alone, but indicates that the Bráhmans of the Outer countries are at base Outlandic in stock and have not absorbed Midlandic elements in larger proportions than their non-Brahman clients (*yajmána*)". Sir Herbert Risley's ethnological conclusions may not be palatable to many of us, but Mr. Chanda's investigations at any rate go to establish the social identity of the various castes and sub-castes. So much for the Bráhmans. As for the Kayasthas, there is a current Bengali saying 'whoever loses his caste takes shelter under the hospitable fold of the Kayasthas (जान हारने के कायस्थ). Apart from the Kulins and Mauliks, there are some 72 sub-classes among them. Any member of these, if he can graduate in the University or earn a fair competence, is sought after by our blue-blooded Kulins, who vie with one another in offering him his daughter in marriage; and thus promotion in pedigree from sub-class 72 to a *maulik* is constantly going on. Again, according to no less an authority than M. M. Haraprasad Sastri, the Mauliks were mainly Buddhists.

It is unfortunate that chemical analysis cannot be applied to ascertain the degree of adulteration in the blood of Brahmans and Kayasthas as in the case of *ghet* (clarified butter). As far as one can see, the caste regulations in their present crystallized form dates from the time of Ballala Sen :

and latterly, Raghunandàn has done his bit, who was generous enough to concede that Kayasthas are after all *सक्त्त*'s, i. e. Sudras—but of a higher order. Then again, the northern part of the Empire of the Palas was overrun by a horde of barbarians from Thibet and a kingdom was carved out by them which lasted for half a century till it was overthrown by Mahipala. These exotic settlers were finally absorbed in the main population as is attested by the numerous temples which they have left behind them. The kingdom of Kuch-Bihar at one time also embraced considerable portions of Northern Bengal, and this lends support to the theory of an admixture of Mongolian blood amongst certain classes in the Varendraland. Tod's surmise that some of the clans of the Rajputs and Jats are of Hun and Scythian origin has been borne out by recent researches. This is not the time nor the place to enter into an elaborate discussion as to the infusion of non-aryan blood into the high-caste Brahmins, but the following extract from Ranade's address on "Southern India a Hundred years ago" may throw a flood of light on this subject :

"The fact appears to be that the Brahmin settlers in Southern India and the warriors and traders who came with them were too few in number and too weak in power to make any lasting impression beyond their limited circle upon the vast multitudes who constituted the aboriginal races in the Southern Peninsula. In North India where their power was more distinctly felt they appear to have been, about the commencement of the Christian era, submerged by fresh hordes of Scythians or Sakas, of Huns and the Jats or Goths who subverted the Roman Empire. In Southern India, it

was not foreign invasion, but the upheaval of the aboriginal Dravidian races which brought about pretty much the same result. There is a tone of despondency and panic in the Puranas written about this time which can only be explained by some such phenomena. However this may be, this is certain, that when Hinduism revived from the depression into which it had fallen in consequence of the rise of Buddhism, it did not revive in its old pristine purity, but in the more or less adulterated form as we now see it even at the present day. In their anxiety to destroy Buddhism and later on the Jain faith, the Brahmins allied themselves with the barbarians of the land, represented in the countless multitudes which they had till then contemptuously treated as Sudras and as out of the pale of their early institutions. From being sages and prophets, poets and philosophers they descended to the lower level of priests and Purohits and thus sacrificed their independence for the advantage of power and profit. The gods and goddesses of the Dasyus or Rakshasas who held no place in the old pantheon were identified as being more or less pure forms of the old Brahminical Triad or rather of the two divisions of Shaiva and Vaishnava cults. The old elastic system of the three divisions of the Aryas and the fourth non-Aryan section became crystallised into local and professional castes of which the Brahmins became the priests; and these subdivisions became strict and insurmountable barriers. Such a change as this could not be brought about without a surrender all along the line to the brute force of barbarian influences..... Brahmanism having failed to conquer from want of power allowed itself to be degraded and con-

quered by the multitudes whom it failed to civilise." Why then this boast of heraldry ? Why this apotheosis of pedigree ? Why then this insatiate craving for claiming descent from the Sun and the Moon and tracing geneology from the Vedic Rishis ?

At present it is custom and traditions which have usurped the place of religion in the affairs of the Hindu people. It is noteworthy that Manu, and Parasara, and the Mahabharata were more liberal and catholic as regards marriage laws and caste regulations than the latter-day commentators and exegists like Raghunandan. I can only make time to read out to you one or two extracts from these :

"The Yaksha asked, 'By what, O King, ! birth, character, study or learning, doth a person become a Brahmana ? Tell us with certitude.'

Yudhishtira answered,— "Listen, O Yaksha ! It is neither birth, nor study, nor learning that is the cause of Brahmanhood. Without doubt, it is character that constitutes it. One's character should always be well guarded, especially by a Brahmana. He who maintaineth character unimpaired, never impairs himself. He, however, whose character is lost, is lost himself."

(*Mahabharata Vana Parva, Chap. 312*).

"Receieve pure learning even from a man of lower caste, the highest law even from the lowest, and the gem of a wife even from a base family.

Wives, learning, (the knowledge of ) the law, (the rules of) purity, good advice, and various arts may be acquired from any body."

(*Manusamhita, Chap. II, st. 238,240*).

"The texts of Revelation contradict one another. The traditions also contradict one another. There is not even one Rishi whose opinion can be accepted as infallible. The truth about religion and duty is hid in caves. Therefore, that alone is the path which is followed by great men."

(*Mahabharat, Vana Parva, Chap. 312*).

"The maiden, though marriageable, should rather stop in (the father's) house until death, than that he should give her to a man destitute of good qualities."

(*Manusamhita, Chap. 9—st. 87*).

"For the first marriage of twice born men (wives) of equal caste are recommended; but for those who through desire proceed (to marry again) the following females, (chosen) according to the (direct) order (of the castes), are most approved. It is declared a Sudra woman alone (can be) the wife of a Sudra, she and one of his own caste (the wives) of a Vaisya, those two and one of his own caste (the wives) of a Kshatriya, those three and one of his own caste (the wives) of a Brahmana."

(*Manusamhita, Chap. III, 12-13*.)

Eminent scholars like Bhandarkar are of opinion that on the revival of Brahmanism during the Gupta dynasty, the Scriptures and the *Puranas* were retouched and interpolations freely made to support the pretensions of the spiritual guides.

So much for the historical basis of the claims of the higher castes. I now appeal to you from a different standpoint. There is such a thing as expediency even in Sociology. Is it fair, is it just, is it in the best interests of

our country that a handful of privileged men should continue to monopolise all the advantages accruing to them through the accident of birth and drive the submerged teeming millions to hostile camps and compel them to live in a state of armed neutrality? A house divided against itself cannot stand. The backward classes are flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone and it is the bounden duty of our men of light and leading to extend to them the right hand of fellowship and lift them up from the quagmire of degradation and despondency. We cannot afford any longer to have in our social frame-work a microscopic minority of Spartans lording it over the *helots*. The loss to the country from the intellectual stagnation of the overwhelming majority of her people is simply incalculable. We are loud in claiming political equality with our British fellow-subjects, but when it comes to yielding an inch of ground to our own countrymen we fight shy of it and cry help! murder!

We are never tired of citing the example of Japan when we want to prove that political progress can be achieved even in an Asiatic country. But it suits our convenience to forget all that the Land of the Rising Sun has done for her social regeneration. There, up till the seventies of the last century, the *Samurai* clans had monopolised to themselves all the privileges now arrogated by our Brahminical castes. The *eta* and the *hinin* (the *untouchables* of Japan) were regarded so impure and unclean that they were not even allowed to dwell in the ordinary villages but had locations assigned to them,—a state of thing now met with in some parts in the Southern Presidency. But on the memorable day of 12th October in 1871, the *Samurai*, with a spirit of chivalry no less of patriotism,



voluntarily parted with their vested interests and abolished the artificial and invidious caste distinctions and thus laid the foundations of a compact and homogeneous nation.

What was possible in Japan in 1871 is found to be impossible in India even towards the close of the second decade of the 20th century. Even now we find that, as the saying goes, 12 Rajputs must have 13 cooking pots ( बार राजपुत्रे तेर हारिण्ड ), and 500 Congress delegates require as many kitchen arrangements. This at any rate is applicable to our friends of the Southern Presidency, who have worked out the problem to metaphysical nicety in as much as they have added a new category namely दृष्टि दोष, or contamination by sight of the cooked food of a Brahmin when seen by a member of the Panchama class even from a distance, say by means of a telescope.

In Bengal, Behar and Orissa the situation is fortunately not so very acute and the pride due to racial superiority has been much softened. In fact, in Bengal, the Kayasthas and the Baidyas are quite the peers of the Brahmins in intellectual and in social position. Judged by the standard of literacy the Brahmins are found to occupy rather a subordinate position. Thus, in Bengal, the Baidyas per mille contribute 532, Subarna Banik 451 and the Brahmins 399 and the Kayasthas 347; while in Behar and Orissa the Kayasthas top the list with 332 and the Brahmins 168: in other words, for every 2 Kayasthas who can read and write there is only one Brahmin who can do the same. Moreover, in Bengal, a sort of compromise was arrived at long ago by which the Kaibartyas, Napits, Sadgopas, and Tilis were made जलाचरयोव (i. e.

castes which may offer water to the Brahmins). But in Madras and Bombay the Brahmin literates are overwhelmingly superior in number to those of other castes and the gradation between a Brahmin and a non-Brahmin very abrupt.

This intervening of a wide gulf has been a fruitful parent of racial animosities. Out of a population of  $41\frac{1}{2}$  millions only a million and a half are Brahmins. The march of events is now very rapid. Hinduism has proved to be elastic and flexible in the past ages and we must make a vigorous effort to adapt ourselves to the altered circumstances. Toleration and charity should be our watchwords.

Some 7 or 8 years ago I spoke about the misuse of the Bengali intellect which holds good for the rest of India also, and I cannot do better than quote what I then said,—“True, it is that we are wont to take pride in the acuteness of the Bengali intellect as evidenced in the subtleties of disputations based upon the modern school of Nyaya as also of Smriti (of Nava-dwipa). It should however be borne in mind that while the great promulgator of Smriti (Raghunandan) was ransacking the pages of Manu, Yaynavalka, Parasara and others, and laying down the rigid rules of fasting to be observed by a child-widow of nine years of age and in default thereof holding out the terrors of hell-fire for her ancestors on the paternal and maternal side; while Raghunatha, Gadadhara, Jagadisa and other mighty logicians were engaged in composing glosses and commentaries on the classical works of logic and were thus adding to the consternation of the pupils of the tols; while our astronomers were calculating the omens and prognostications from the

cawing of a crow at a particular moment in the south-west quarter; while our pandits were disturbing the peace of the assemblies by acrimonious dispute over the controversy 'whether the sound raised by the falling of the palm-fruit accompanied it or was an after-effect';—I say when the intellectuals of Navadwipa were thus utilizing the precious gift of time, in Europe, Galileo, Kepler, Newton and other philosophers were unravelling the mysteries of Nature and ushering in a new epoch and thus glorifying the intellect of man."

Swami Vivekananda truly observes,—“A religion which does not feel for the miseries of the poor, which does not uplift man, forfeits the name of “religion.” Our religion has degenerated into a creed of the “touchable” and the “untouchable.” O! my God, the country whose best intellects have for the last two thousand years busied themselves with such abstruse problems as the propriety of taking up the food, with the right hand or the left, that country only courts and richly deserves downfall.”

See to what extent our intellect has been misused!

The problem of “touchableness” has assumed a scientific aspect in these days. If a pariah crosses your threshold you throw away your jar of drinking water as polluted, but ice and lemonade manufactured by the untouchables pass current! A distinction conferred on a member of our society becomes the occasion for giving a dinner in the Town-Hall catered by Peliti and the recognised leaders of the Hindu society take part in the function and their names are published in the morning papers, but when on the occasion of a

marriage or *Sradh* you are guilty of sitting to a feast with a Christian or Moslem or even a Hindu of the *lower* castes you are threatened with excommunication. Reason, logic and common sense are thus scattered to the four winds.

If you cannot see your way to abolish the castes, you can at any rate see that its bonds are loosened and its stringency relaxed. You render yourself incapable of cultivating the higher civic virtues if you allow your social structure to be honeycombed with inequalities and your mind to be distracted by petty squabbles over sectarian matters and the nice shades of distinction between tweedledum and tweedledee.

Listen to what the Apostle of the idea of National Unity says:

"When the Indians really believed that some of them were born from the head, others from the arms, and others from the feet of Brahma, their Divinity, they organised their society by distributing mankind into castes; assigning to one caste an inheritance of intellectual labour, to another of military, and to others of servile duties; thus condemning themselves to an immobility that still endures, and that will endure so long as belief in that religious principle shall last."

Mazzini's words uttered some eighty years ago are still ringing in the ears of civilised mankind.

The future of India—her claim to call herself a nation—depends upon the solution of this burning question. Ancient India, however, was far more liberal and enlightened in this respect. The beautiful legend of Satyakama

Jabala in the Chhandogya Upanishad exemplifies the fact that truth and learning opened out in those days a path to the highest honour and to the highest caste.

There is a prevailing belief that the submerged masses have all along been contented with the position assigned to them and have taken it lying down and that it is only of late that they have begun to raise a voice of protest in view of their awakened self-respect. A similar complaint is made by the Anglo-Indians about the present generation of Indians. Long before the advent of the Europeans and the spread of western democratic ideas, in fact, so long ago as the 12th century A. D. we find the bitter cry of the outcastes. In a poetical work of surpassing interest, recently unearthed and published called *ब्रह्मपुराण* or *धर्मपुराण* which gives a vivid picture of the transitional period in Bengal when Buddhism was slowly merging into Hinduism occurs a remarkable passage of which I give the translation here.

“The Brahmins go about asking for gifts and if they fail to get them of any householder they threaten to reduce the world to ashes by their imprecations.

“Dhamma in Paradise was sorely aggrieved and produced darkness of illusion.

“Then Dhamma assumed the form of a Mussalman and put on a Fez and took up in his hand a gun and a spear.

The Gods of one mind put on pantaloons in delight :  
Bramha became Mahomet and Vishnu a Paigambar and Siva Adam ;  
Ganes assumed the form of Ghazi and Kartik of Kazi,  
Narada giving up his ascetic garb became a Sheikh... The sun  
and the moon and the other gods filled the ranks of in-

antry and began to beat drums and then laid under ruins the town of Jaspur." It is thus evident that even 6 or 7 centuries ago there existed bitter hatred against the Brahminical self-assertions.

Within the last three centuries, and from time to time there have arisen also in our midst saints and prophets like Guru Nanak and Kabir and Chaitanya to preach the Doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man and had it not been for their teachings a far larger proportion of the people of N. India would have embraced Islamism.

The position of women in our society equally calls for radical reform. If ignorance is the curse of god, as the immortal poet has it, then it is ten fold so when applied to women. For, man, at any rate, comes in hourly contact with the external world, mixes freely with all sorts and conditions of people, and has all his angularities rounded off. But our women-folk, living in the seclusion of the Zenana, cut off from contact with the outside world live, move and have their being like frogs in the well; she jealously cherishes all the absurd notions and superstitions which she imbibes with her mother's milk and takes every care to inoculate the child in her lap with the poison, and what is bred in the bone cannot go out of the flesh.

The tragedy of our home-life was depicted by our own Rabindranath some 30 years ago in a poem of singular pathos. The poet depicts a vivid picture of the expectant bridegroom on the first night of the honeymoon. He unbosoms to his partner for life his soul's aspirations and meets with a chilling response. The child-wife replies to his

yearnings by only asking for plums, her favourite pussy and finally wants to return to the lap of her grandmother.

Yes, it is the grandmother who plays the leading part in the moulding of the character of the child-wife. We have been talking a good deal about Home Rule the last few days but we forget that there is another Home Rule under the autocratic sway of the grandmother, who moulds the young wife according to her own ideals and pattern and thus takes good care to check any budding ideas of equality and comradeship with her enlightened husband. Thus our educated young man has to lead a two-fold existence in two distinct watertight compartments. In the drawing room, our cultured youngman talks of Home Rule on Colonial basis. But as soon as he enters the Zenana—the veritable Doll's House—he has to descend to the common places of an un-enlightened domestic environment.

/ Many of you with academic distinctions on your brow do not hesitate to sell yourselves to the highest bidder in the matrimonial market. It rends my heart to have to confess that some of you at any rate consciously or unconsciously have been or will be the instruments of self-immolation of many a Snehadata! Many a leading member of our society is found to prate on the platform on the evils of the dowry system, but when his own turn comes he gives the go-by to his preachings and is extortionate in his demands, and when he is taken to task he roundly lays the blame at the door of his mother and grandmother, or his wife, and washes his hands clean. I appeal to you the rising hopes of our country to take a solemn vow not to be a party to such bargaining.

Ancient India can boast of a Gargi, a Maitreyi; nor should it be forgotten that the authors of many Vedic hymns were women. In the palmy days of Buddhism also there were eloquent lady preachers. We have evidently degenerated now.

It is no exaggeration to say that in some points our womenfolk even of the higher castes labour under all the disabilities and disadvantages of the "depressed" classes of the society. No doubt we feed them, we clothe them, we generally treat them well. But is that all? Are we not bound to educate them and bring them to the level of an educated man's culture and intelligence? For considerations alike of justice and expediency it is necessary to bring the light of education to them. A people, half of whom are immersed in darkness, can never expect to grow. Nation-building cannot proceed in this half-hearted fashion. Growth to be real must be harmonious. Those who think we are able to make any great headway in politics without a simultaneous advance in social and industrial matters, labour under a great mistake. Let us approach the national problem in a truly broad and catholic spirit and not grapple it by halves. I appeal to my countrymen with all the emphasis at my command to keep this ideal in view and I am sure as night follows day that their activities for the good of the country will be crowned with success.

Before concluding, I would desire a passing mention of the following points, but as the time at my disposal is



short I leave these for other more competent speakers for discussion :—

(1) Advancing the age of marriage both of boys and girls in Hindu Society.

(2) Raising the 'age of consent' to 16.

(3) An Amendment, on Mr. B. N. Basu's lines, of the Act. III of 1872.

(4) Removal of social restrictions on sea-voyage.

In the great federation of the nation of the world, India at one time occupied the place of its brains and heart. Out of India, civilisation and culture spread to East and West, North and South. In that morning of ancient history, the world looked forward to India for light and guidance, for knowledge of the accurate sciences such as algebra and chemistry as shown in my History of Hindu Chemistry for personal and social purity, for sacrifice and abstinence, for plain living and high thinking. Now, thanks to the cumulative effect of centuries of social inequalities and oppression, of the degradation of the condition of women and of large sections of the people, and the walls of differences raised between man and man by custom and tradition, India now lies at the feet of nations—powerless and helpless. The blood that flows from her heart and goes to her brain does no longer reach the lower limbs of the body-politic. As the consequence of this abnormal condition, India finds these parts of her organism practically paralysed and atrophied. So long as the blood does not begin to reflow and vitalise the limbs which now remain palsied, there is no chance for India to get back a place in the sun. I appeal to my fellow-countrymen, high and low, rich and poor, Brahmin

and non-Brahmin, orthodox and heterodox, to forget the pride and vanity of place and birth, and begin ministering to the limbs the neglect of which now drags us down to a life of humiliation, and makes the name of our Motherland a bye-word of contempt and reproach in the civilised world. India must wake up, shake off her degradation, put life and heart into every class of her people, elevate her women and depressed classes and remove the galling restrictions of caste and all social inequalities. When this is done she will enter into a new era of her life and then, like Prometheus unbound, she will be recognised as a great power in the world and will have a unique place in the comity of nations. I appeal to you all, ladies and gentlemen, to direct your best efforts towards the consummation of that great ideal, the realisation of that aspiration. We owe it to our Motherland to rise equal to the occasion, face the situation and brave the difficulties, and, once we begin to help ourselves, I have no doubt Providence will begin to help us. *Bande Mataram.*