

HINDU FAMILIES

IN

GUJARAT

**(BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR DOMESTIC,
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE).**

BY

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1932

Printed at the Baroda State Press
BARODA.

PREFACE.

The idea of having a book like this prepared originated with His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad, III. who, while in Europe in 1929, happened to see a French book on the organization of a family in France, and with his usual solicitude for the encouragement of literature on social and economic subjects, was pleased to order that a book on similar lines should be prepared with regard to Hindu Families in Gujarat and that the work should be entrusted to me. I am very grateful to His Highness for this kind thought of me; and have endeavoured in the following pages to give effect to his wishes.

The difficulties confronting one who undertakes such a work can well be realised when it is borne in mind that geographically the province of Gujarat extends from Mount Abu to Daman, a long tract of land, and includes also Cutch and

the peninsula of Kathiawad where the Gujarati language is spoken. The manners, customs and mode of living of the Hindus living in such a large area and comprising many castes and creeds, have many local variations. But in spite of this the main features of life are the same and it is only these that can be taken notice of in a book like this. Even these common factors have been undergoing a rapid change under the influence of education and absorption of Western ideas. No one need therefore wonder if what is written to-day is found to have been materially changed before it is published.

I have fully utilised all the available materials on the subject and especially the various Census Reports and Gazetteers, to the authors of which I owe a deep debt of gratitude.

Baroda,
19th January 1932.

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CORRECTION

On page 23, line 21, delete the figure 445.

HINDU FAMILIES IN GUJARAT.

CHAPTER I.

GUJARAT.

The Province of Gujarat forms one of the divisions in the scheme of Natural Divisions drawn up for the whole of India, based on meteorological characters. Politically it is divided into several distinct jurisdictions of which the chief are the British districts of Ahmedabad, Kaira, Panchmahals, Broach, and Surat, the Baroda State and the States under the Western India Agency, the Mahikantha and Revakantha Agencies and the Kaira and Surat Collectorates. It lies between $20^{\circ} 18'$ and $24^{\circ} 42'$ north latitude and $68^{\circ} 28'$ and $74^{\circ} 30'$ east longitude, and has an area of about 70,000 square miles. It extends from Mount Abu in the north to Daman in the south, wherein the

Gujarati language is spoken. It consists of two main blocks, Peninsular Gujarat and Mainland Gujarat. Peninsular Gujarat, that is Cutch and Kathiawad, though an integral part of the province, has, on account of its detached position and large sea-board, developed and preserved peculiar traits and characteristics in its population. Mainland Gujarat may be broadly divided into north Gujarat and south Gujarat. North Gujarat is the tract between Mount Abu and the Mahi river and includes Palanpur, Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Mahi Kantha, Cambay and Kaira districts. South Gujarat is the tract between the Mahi and Damanganga rivers, and includes Baroda, Broach, Surat and Navsari districts and the Reva Kantha Agency.

North Gujarat differs in many respects from south Gujarat. Most of the original settlements such as Modhera, Vadnagar, Visnagar, Deesa etc. from which Gujarati castes take their names are in north Gujarat; the three Gujarat goddesses Amba, Bahuchara and Kalika and, except some on the Narbada banks, venerated shrines like Somnath, Gopnath, Bhimnath, Dwarka, Girnar, Mount Abu, Shatrunjaya,

and Sidhpur are all in Peninsular and north Gujarat. The population is also more dense being most so in the tract called *Charotara* or superior land in the Kaira and Baroda districts. The dynastic seats of ancient Gujarat are also in north and peninsular Gujarat, whether at Dwarka, Junagadh, Valabhi, Vadnagar, Panchasar, Anhilvad Patan, Dholka, or Champaner. The thrifty Vania millionaire, the busy and skilled Kanbi cultivator, the high-born Rajput whether a ruling chief or a talukdar, and the unruly Koli or Dharala, are all found in large numbers north of the Mahi. South Gujarat has a large population of the early tribes with Anavala Brahman cultivators, Vania traders, Shrivak jewellers, skilled artisans and Kanbi settlers. Good physique, wealth, business habits, and thrift characterize north Gujarat; and a general softness, keen intellect, and a taste for show, fashion, and finery are the distinguishing features of the south. Peninsular Gujarat has a stalwart and valorous population including the brave Rajputs and Kathis and the sturdy Ahirs, Bhavads and Rabaris; enterprising Bhatias, Lohanas and Vanias who have been trading from early times with Arabia, East Africa,

and the Persian Gulf; and sea-faring Vaghers, Bhadelas, Kolis and Kharvas, now hardy long voyage lascars like those of Gogha and Rander but formerly notorious for their piracies in the Arabian sea.

In customs, manners and civilization, north Gujarat, including Kathiawad and Cutch, preserves much that is old, while south Gujarat and especially Surat has been affected by outside influences. But the hold of religion and caste in both is still rigorous. Throughout Gujarat the household still remains to a large extent in its early Hindu state. The people generally continue to retain their joint family system, their marriage ritual, heredity in occupation, regard for the cow and the Brahman, solicitude for male issue, and customs at birth, marriage and death as of yore. The priest and the astrologer still continue to be consulted; there is the same belief in vows, lucky and unlucky days, and omens, though magic, witchcraft and sorcery have lost their hold especially among the upper classes. Education is permeating the younger generation more or less in all castes, chiefly among males, and to a small but perceptible extent among females.

The name Gujarat is said to have been derived from the Prakrit Name, how derived: Gujjar-ratta, the Sanskrit Gujarat. of which is Gurjjar-rashtra, that is the country of the Gujjars or Gurjjars. In Sanskrit books and inscriptions the name of the province is written Gurjjar-Mandala and Gurjjar-desh, the land of the Gurjjars. The Gurjjars were a foreign tribe who, passing into India from the north-west, gradually spread as far as Khandesh and Gujarat to which they gave its name. Like the modern Ahirs of Kathiawad, the Gujjars seem to have been a tribe of cattle breeders, husbandmen and soldiers who accompanied some conqueror.

As early as the sixth and seventh centuries, records prove the existence of two independent Gujjar-kingdoms in mainland Gujarat—one in the north and other in the south of the province. The capital of the northern kingdom was Bhilmal or Bhinmal, and that of the southern one was at Nandipuri, perhaps the modern Nandod, the capital of the Rajpipla State. From the fourth to the eighth century the extensive tract of central Gujarat between the north and south Gujjar Kingdoms was ruled by the Vala-

bhis who are also believed to be originally Gujjars. The establishment of these three Gujjars kingdoms implies that the Gujjars tribe must have settled in large numbers in the province and given it its name. Several Gujjars castes, such as Gujjars Vaniyas (traders), Gujjars Sutars (carpenters) Gujjars Sonis (goldsmiths), Gujjars Kumbhars (potters) and Gujjars Salat (masons) still survive in Gujjars. All these were Gujjars who taking to different callings formed separate castes. The main Gujjars under-layers, the Lewa and Kadva Kanbis, are also believed to be Gujjars, who came to be known as Kanbis, from the Sanskrit word Kutumbin that is one possessing a family or a house. From ancient times the title Kutumbin has been prefixed to the name of cultivators. As cattle breeding and cultivation was the original and characteristic calling of the Gujjars, those of the tribe who settled to cultivation came to be specially known as Kutumbin or house-holders.

The ancient name of Kathiawad was *Saurashtra*, the goody land, Kathiawad, which is found in the Mahabharata, in Rudradama's (A. D. 150) and Skanda-gupta's (A.D. 456) Girnar inscriptions

and in several Valabhi copper-plates. Its Prakrit name as Surath or Sorath is found in works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and is still preserved in Sorath the southern part of the present Kathiawad. The name Kathiawad, the land of the Kathis, is of recent origin. It was not until after the establishment of Musalman power in Gujarat that any portion of the peninsula came to bear the name of the tribe of Kathis. Even as late as the eighteenth century the name of Kathiawad was applied only to one of the sub-divisions of the peninsula. In the disorders which prevailed in the latter part of the eighteenth century the Kathis made themselves very conspicuous. As it was from the hardy horsemen of this tribe that the tribute-exacting Marathas met with the fiercest resistance, they came to speak of the whole peninsula as Kathiawad, the land of the Kathis; and this name was also used by the early British officers and has since been continued.

Gujarat has a very interesting history which stretches back to several centuries before the Christian era. It is learnt from the Puranic legends that a King called Revata, son of Anarta, and

History.

grandson of Manu who had his capital at Kushasthali or Dwarka, governed the country called Anarta. The next Puranic legends relate to the establishment of a Yadava kingdom at Dwarka. The founder and name giver of the dynasty was Yadu. The family seems to have split into several branches, in one of which were born Devki and Vasudev, the parents of Shri Krishna. It was in Shri Krishna's time that the Yadavas had to leave their capital Mathura and come to Dwarka. Family feuds brought the Yadava dynasty to an end and owing to its sea-board position a succession of foreigners invaded and conquered the country one after the other, and absorbed themselves with its people. It was because of this foreign element that the Hindu *Dharmashastras* considered Gujarat to be a *Mlechha* country and forbade visits to it except on pilgrimage.

Gujarat history really dates from the Mauryan dynasty, fragmentary records of whose rule and the names of whose kings have been preserved in their coins, inscriptions and copper plates and the writings of Brahmans, Buddhists and Jains. Inscriptions give reasons to believe that the su-

premacv of Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty (B. C. 319), extended over Gujarat. The Mauryan capital of Gujarat was Girinagara or Junagadh in central Kathiawad and the rock edicts of Ashoka there as well as at Sopara near Daman leave no doubt that Kathiawad, Gujarat and South Konkan sea-board and the country intervening it were in his possession. Mauryan rule in Gujarat came to an end in B. C. 197.

The next available information shows traces of Baktrian-Greek Khastrapas and Guptas. and sway over parts of Gujarat from B. C. 180 to B. C. 100. After the Baktrian-Greeks, came the rulers who affix the title of Khastrap, to their names and who seem to have held sway over the greater part of western India for more than three centuries. These Khastrap rulers were also foreigners and the word Khastrap itself is a sanskritised form of Satrapa, a term used for the prefect of a province in the Persian system of government. Their inscriptions and coins show that soon after the establishment of their rule they became converts to one or other form of Hindu religion and assumed Indian

names. After the Khasstraps the powerful dynasty of the Guptas established itself in Gujarat from A. D. 410 to 470. The names of the kings were Chandra Gupta, Samudra Gupta &c. and in addition to the epithet of Maharaja Dhiraja some of them also assumed many other high sounding ones such as *Parambhagwat*, great devotees of Vishnu, *Avantipati*, King of earth, *Vijitavni*, conqueror of the world &c.

The Guptas were succeeded by the Valabhi
 Valabhi dynasty. Dynasty (A. D. 509–766)
 which took its name from
 its capital Valabhipura, now known as Vala,
 about twenty miles from Bhavnagar. When
 the famous Chinese traveller Houen Tsang visi-
 ted India in the seventh century after Christ, he
 found the whole of Gujarat a very flourishing
 country, ruled by the Valabhis at their capital
 of Valabhipura.

In the following century, the power of the
 Valabhis was broken by the
 Anhilwad Pattan Chalukya Rajputs, who
 kings. conquered the kingdom
 and established their capital at Anhilvad Pattan,
 near modern Pattan, situated within the present
 limits of the Baroda State. When Mahmud of

Gazni invaded Gujarat and attacked the famous temple of Somnath, the Prince of Anhilwad-Pattan marched against him with a large army and fought a decisive battle for his country and his religion. The prince was defeated, but collected a fresh army to meet his foe again and Mahmud avoided a second encounter by retiring across the deserts of Sindh. A succeeding prince, Kumarpala, favoured the Jain religion and the Jains of Gujarat assign many of their religious edifices and other public works and gifts to his reign. Altogether the Rajputs ruled for over five centuries, from the eighth to the close of the thirteenth, and some of the ruins of their temples, fortifications and edifices are still visible at Pattan.

Allaudin Khilji conquered the country from the Hindus, and the story of the beautiful Princesses Kamla Devi and Deval Devi, who became the wives of Allaudin and his son, is one of the romances of Indian history. For some centuries, Pattan continued to be the capital of Gujarat under the Mahomedan rulers, but the seat of Government was eventually removed to Ahmedabad. Gujarat threw off the yoke of Delhi and

became an independent Mahomedan kingdom in the fourteenth century, but was once more brought under Northern India by Akbar the Great, in the sixteenth century.

Aurangzeb's mad bigotry wrecked the Mogal empire which Akbar had built up, and in the eighteenth century, the Marathas spread over Gujarat, as over other parts of India. Pilajirao Gaekwad and his comrades in arms firmly established themselves in Baroda in 1723 and the present ruling family of the Baroda State has therefore a dynastic record of over two centuries. Then came the British, who by their alliance with the Gaekwad and the Peshwa, acquired territories which form the present Northern Division of the Bombay Presidency and established their over-lordship over the existing Indian States.

The Province is one of the driest parts of India and is liable to severe draughts. Scarcely any rain falls from November to May. The summer rains begin in June and last upto about the middle of September. Cyclonic storms from the Bay occasionally pass through Gujarat

and give deluges of rains, resulting in destructive floods. The mean annual rain-fall varies between 14'' and 41''. It is the highest in Surat and Navsari (above 40'') and goes on decreasing gradually in the northward direction where it is the lowest (about 14''). Its average variability is 188 per cent being greatest in Cutch; at Bhuj the measure of variability is 245.

The climate of Gujarat varies considerably in its different parts. But
 Climate. it may be said generally that it is dry and hot in the hot season, which commences in March and ends in June, the hottest months being May and June. The climate during the rainy season, that is from July to October is hot, moist and relaxing. During the cold season which commences in November and ends in February the climate is dry and cool. The coldest months are generally, December and January. In the months of September and October the climate is more unwholesome than at any other time of the year and the people suffer considerably from malarious fever.

The inhabitants of Gujarat, for the most part, are agriculturists.
 Soil. The soil is alluvial except in the hilly and stony tracts where it is mostly

formed by the disintegration of the underlying rock. The alluvial soils of Gujarat may be roughly divided into (1) *gorat* or sandy loam, (2) *kali*, or black and (3) those formed by the mixture of the two, *besar*. The rock formed soils are, for the most part black, but when they have come into contact with alluvial soils, they have formed a variety of *besar*. *Bhatha* lands or lands formed in the beds of rivers from alluvial deposits are often found in the tracts where there are big rivers and are most productive.

The principal crops are cotton, tobacco, oil-seeds (including the famous rape-seed exported to Germany), juvar, bajri, rice and pulses. The crops are generally thriving and plentiful in most parts of south and north Gujarat; and where irrigation facilities are available yield garden produce. Kathiawad and Cutch, as a whole, are inferior in fertility to Mainland Gujarat, but there are very fertile tracts, here and there, which yield bumper crops.

In addition to its agriculture, Gujarat was also well-known for its trade and industry. Weaving, embroidery, dyeing and printing, metal work, pottery, carpentry and sculpture, were its

most important industries. The weaving industry of Gujarat was of ancient repute and fine *dhoti*, *sari*, *basta* and *bafta* made in Navsari and Gandevi were in great demand at the Portuguese, Dutch and English factories in Surat and Cambay in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for export to Europe; and in 1788, Dr. Hove, a European traveller visited Gandevi to learn the art from Parsi weavers. This industry, which had practically died out early in the nineteenth century is now being revived under the auspices of the *khadi* movement started by Mahatma Gandhi, fifteen years ago. Pattan, the old capital of Gujarat, from the 8th to the 14th century, was famous for its *patola* (a silk *sari* having the same design on both sides and of permanent colour) weaving industry, and *patolas* made in Pattan, were in great demand all over Gujarat, as they formed the bridal trousseau of high caste Hindu women all over the province. Beautiful work in dyeing and printing was done in many places, but this, as well as all other industries, have suffered from the competition of cheap machine-made foreign articles and the old industries of the province may be said to have practically died out.

More than fifty years ago when a campaign was started by a band of patriots headed by the late Sahitya Martand Rao Bahadur Hargovindas Kantawala for the use and encouragement of *swadeshi* articles, there was very little following. When the first cotton spinning Mill was started by the late Rao Bahadur Ranchhodlal Chhotalal in Ahmedabad, he was nicknamed *Rehentiawalla*. Since then nearly a hundred cotton spinning and weaving mills have come into existence in Ahmedabad and some other parts of Gujarat; and the introduction of improved types of hand-loom, through the efforts of Government, both in British India and in the Baroda State, have given a good stimulant to hand weaving. But the *swadeshi* movement started by the Indian National Congress, and the Industrial and other exhibitions held under its auspices have had marvellous results in the revival of old home industries like spinning and weaving and the encouragement of new ones, by discouraging the use of foreign-made articles, and the use of only Indian made ones. These efforts which are yet in their beginning have already produced good results and if the people of Gujarat stick to their determination to use only *swadeshi* articles, there can be no doubt that the old industries of Gujarat will be revived.

CHAPTER II.

HINDU POPULATION.

The answer to the question "Who is a Hindu?" has been discussed at length in many Census reports and attempts have been made with a view to find out, for the differentiation of those following that religion, some decisive criterion of what the term should denote. Interesting and useful as these attempts have been, they have been, for practical purposes, more or less vain. They had been made with a view to exclude those who may return themselves as Hindus, that is followers of the Hindu religion, but whose religious beliefs are so distinct from those of the Hindu religion, that they cannot really be called Hindus. Such are, for instance, the Jains and the Animists whose religious beliefs are different from Hinduism. The exclusion of such people from the category of Hindus is of course quite right so far as the

Census is concerned. In the Census the main object is to determine the number of persons who follow a particular religion. But where the main object, as in this book, is to study the social life of a group of people who have the same social institutions and who, like the Jains, in spite of their difference in religion, are looked upon as Hindus, so far as family life and social institutions are concerned, it would be improper to exclude them from the category of 'Hindus', simply because they follow a religion different from Hinduism.

Those returned in the Census as Jains, Aryasamajists and Brahmos, have therefore been treated as Hindus, for the purpose of this study. In India the line of cleavage is social rather than religious, and the tendency of the people themselves is to classify their neighbours not according to their religious beliefs but according to their social status and manner of living. Moreover the Jains share the Hindu beliefs in transmigration of soul and the doctrine of Karma. They employ Brahmans in their domestic ceremonies and there is naturally a

desire amongst them, as amongst all other adherants of Indo-Aryan religions, to adopt the name Hindu as a racial signification of expression of their national unity. Beyond this there is also the fact that the Jains are a distinctively commercial community and wishing to live in unity with their Hindu neighbours have adopted a good many of the social observances of Hinduism and have not even hesitated to enter into marriage relations with the Hindu sections of their corresponding castes. It is therefore proper that in a sociological study they should be included under the category of Hindus, as had also been done in the Bombay Gazetteer Volume IX, Part I, which is a study of the social institutions of the Hindus. The definition adopted by the All India Hindu Maha Sabha, viz., "Hindu means any person professing to be a Hindu or following any religion of Indian origin and includes Sanatanists, Arya Samajists, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and Brahmos &c." also supports this view. The number of Buddhists, Sikhs and Brahmos in Gujarat is negligible and their manners and customs are also different. But the Jains form a large part of the population; and though the Arya Samajists are comparatively

smaller in number, both they and Jains have the same social institutions as those of the followers of Hinduism and are also connected with them by marriage relations and are therefore 'Hindus' to all intent and purpose.

Gujarat has a total population of more than a crore souls, of which over 89 per cent are Hindus and Jains, 10 per cent Mahomedans, and less than one percent Parsis, Christians and others. They all live together in villages and towns which are within easy reach of each other.

The land of the province is divided into portions varying in area from a few hundred to several thousand acres, each of which is appropriated to a single village. "Parish" in the ordinary acceptance of the term denotes accurately enough one of these territorial divisions. The whole population of the parish live together in the village itself which is generally situated in the centre of the area. The houses are closely packed together on a small site, usually about 5 per cent of the total area, the rest of which is cultivated. There are sometimes hamlets subsidiary to large villages, but isolated

dwellingings are seldom met with. The village is generally built beside a tank or a large embanked pond shaded by trees among which is the temple of the local god or goddess. At the entrance are the huts of the Bhangis, one of whose duties is to guide travellers and on the outskirts live, each in their separate quarters, the Dheds, Chamars, and other untouchable castes. In the middle of the village live the yeomen, the owners and cultivators of the land.

In the village proper the community consists of husbandmen and such other people as are required for their wants. But as civilization advances wants of the community gradually convert some of the villages into centres of trades and manufactures. In such places, in addition to the owners and cultivators of land, a large number of traders, artisans, and others following non-agricultural professions form the principal part of the population. While a village with mostly agricultural population is called a *mauza*, one with mostly non-agricultural population is called a *kasba*, or town. The census definition of a town as a place which has a municipality or in which there is the head-

quarter of a taluka or which has a population of 5000 and over has raised to the dignity of a town many over-grown villages. Towns with a population of 100,000 and above are termed cities, and the number of such cities in Gujarat is only 3.

There exists a considerable difficulty in defining what population Rural and urban should be considered rural and what urban. Gujarat is a distinctly agricultural country and many of its so-called towns are really over-grown villages. A large percentage of the population living in them is employed either in the production or distribution of agricultural produce. Industrial enterprise and manufactures on the western model are confined only to a few places like Ahmedabad. Assuming however that the population of places classed in the census as towns is urban and the rest rural, it may be said, roughly speaking, that in the province of Gujarat as a whole out of every 100 persons in the population 20 live in towns and 80 in villages.

But this proportion does not indicate how the followers of different religions spread them-

selves between towns and country. It appears however that of the total number of the followers of Hinduism, 20 percent live in towns and the rest in villages; while of the total Jain population 40 percent live in towns and the rest in villages, showing that Jains are greater town dwellers than Hindus.

The pressure of population on the soil of Gujarat is far from uniform, as it depends mainly upon the character of the soil, the amount and variability of rain-fall, irrigation facilities, demand for labour &c., which are different in different places, and therefore, even in the different parts of a district, density of population varies considerably. The density per square mile on the total area of the Bombay Presidency, is about 160, while that of Gujarat as a whole is 295 and that of its Ahmedabad, Broach, Panchmahals and Surat districts is about 235, 210, 445, 240 and 410 respectively. The density of the Baroda State is 299, while that of its Baroda, Navsari and Kadi districts is 370, 223 and 329 respectively; but that of the Petlad taluka in the Baroda district is 812, and that of Gandevi in the Navsari district is 865,

owing to the richness of their soils, and other favourable factors. The lowest density is in Kathiawad, where the mean density of the Amreli district of the Baroda State is about 161, that of the Bhavnagar State is 168 and that of Junagadh is 163—all of which are higher as compared with that of the rest of the Kathiawad which is only about 150 per square mile.

Gujarati is the spoken and written language for all Gujaratis both in Peninsular and Mainland Gujarat. In Cutch a dialect called Cutchhi which is more akin to Sindhi than Gujarati is spoken, but not written. Several phonetic and grammatical peculiarities mark the speech of Peninsular Gujarat which is called Kathiawadi. Gujarat proper has the coarse and homely Gujarati, which is called Ahmedabadi, while the speech of Broach and Surat bears traces of softness due to fashion and refinement and is called Surati. Certain vocal peculiarities and pronunciations mark the language of north Gujarat as compared with the Surat speech. Marwadi traces begin with Palanpur, Radhanpur, Pattan and Idar. The language of the lower classes including Kolis and Dheds shows no difference

except that it is corrupt. The Bhils have a dialect allied to Gujarati which can be easily understood. Certain foreign words and idioms mark the *patois* of the Kathis, Bharvads, Rabaris and Ahirs in Kathiawad. The written character is Gujarati, but Devnagari, also called Balbodh, is used for Sanskrit writings and for religious and ceremonial purposes.

Over and above the Gujarati language Hindi is taught in the primary and middle schools in the Baroda State under the orders of His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwad so that there may be a common language which can be understood over the whole country. It is a language easy to learn and easy to understand and would serve the purpose of a common language for India if similarly introduced in schools elsewhere.

CHAPTER III.

FAMILY LIFE.

In Gujarat, a *ghar*, house, conveys the idea
not of a homestead or en-
Houses. closure but that of a place
in which a family, that is people living together
have one common *chulah* (hearth). It is a cus-
tom in most of the Gujarat castes to make a pre-
sent, *lahani*, of utensils, sweets, &c on festive
occasions, to the members of the caste or a section
of it living in a particular place or to near
relations. A *lota* or *thali*, is given to each *ghar*
or family and not to each person in the caste
and for this purpose, those who have one *chulah*
i. e. those who mess together are taken to mean a
ghar. A house may therefore be defined as a
place consisting of buildings one or many,
inhabited by one family that is by a number of
persons living together and eating of food cooked
on one *chulah* or in one mess with their resident
dependents such as mother, widowed sister,

younger brothers &c. and their servants who reside in the building. In other words a house may be defined as the dwelling place of one family.

Houses are built in Gujarat of various types which depend upon the locality and the stage of development and the race or caste of their inhabitants. In the outskirts of villages and towns, the houses of Bhils and other primitive classes consist of mud or wattle huts with a small single room measuring about 12 by 12 feet, circular in shape, covered up with thatch and having a small entrance in the front. The houses of Kolis, Dheds, Bhangis, Khalpas and similar other castes have generally an inner room called *ordo* and an outer room called *padsal* and occasionally *osri* or an open verandah in the front. The walls are made of mud but the roof is tiled. The houses of Kanbis, Vanias, Brahmans and other higher castes and of artisans are made of bricks and have one or more storeys, but the arrangement of *odro*, *padsal* and *osri* is the same. The *ordo* or inner room is used as a cooking and dining room and also as a retiring room for females, and for

keeping the stores. It is usually 16 feet wide and 12 feet long. The *padsal* which is 12 feet wide is used as a sitting and dressing room and when the males are in the verandah, is used for grinding, pounding, and other household work by the females. The *osri* or verandah is 8 feet wide and is used for stalling cattle or as a sitting or sleeping place for the males, if the cattle are stalled in the open compound or some other room in or near the house. Some houses in towns have an open *chowk* between the *ordo* and *padsal* and an open terrace either on the two sides of it or above the *padsal* or verandah. Such houses have a separate cooking-room and water-place near the chowk. In most of the houses windows are very sparingly placed and the few that exist are generally shut up. Most of the houses are dark and ill-ventilated. In villages, houses though small, have open courtyards and the evil effects of bad ventilation are to some extent mitigated by the fact that generally people sleep out whenever it is possible to do so. In towns the evil of bad ventilation is heightened owing to the want of open space near houses and to their being located close to each other in long, narrow and tortuous

lanes. Education is, however, spreading among the people a better knowledge of sanitary principles and houses of a better kind are gradually coming into existence. There is a tendency to replace the old structures of mud and wood by structures of brick, and the sense of security afforded by efficient police *bandobast* is encouraging the opening of more doors and windows. The houses rebuilt in towns in recent years are generally far better in style and accommodation than those which they have replaced. The building of bungalows, more or less on the European model, by the wealthier classes in towns, is noticeable.

In villages and even in small towns most of the people go to the fields to answer the call of nature. In a few houses in the bigger villages and in most of the towns, there are water-closets on the verandah near the front door of the house. These water closets are cleaned by Bhangis, but in most of the places, where they are not available, or would not be allowed to approach the house, water-closets are generally pit privies, in which foecal matter accumulates and vitiates sub-soil water. Of late, town municipalities have prohibited the construction of pit-privies, but no

vigorous steps are taken to close down the old ones.

The cooking rooms in almost all houses, even of the better class of people, are without chimneys for smoke to get out, and most of the women of the house who have to work in them suffer in their eye-sight. Another serious defect in most of the houses of the poor, and even in those of the better class people, is that they have no urinals and consequently open spaces near the houses or even sides of public streets are used in their place, which offends against decency.

Local conditions vary so vastly that it is difficult to say for a whole province whether house accomodation is sufficient

House-room and accomodation.

or otherwise, especially when houses are of various types as described above and the number of persons living in them is not uniform. Generally speaking however it may be said that house-room is not sufficient for the middle and poor class families, living in towns and cities, where houses mostly stand back to back on congested areas, with narrow and crooked lanes, and with lack of privacy. A special survey was made

in the City of Baroda in the Census of 1911, from which it was found that of the total number of houses 51 per cent had only ground floor, 41 per cent had only one storey, 7 per cent had two storeys and 1 per cent had more than two storeys. 59 per cent of the houses were owned by those who lived in them and 41 per cent were rented by tenants. There were on an average 3.47 persons in each house and 2.25 persons for each floor. A further inquiry instituted in connection with the Census of 1921 showed that taking a family irrespectively of its size, 28 per cent of the families lived in one room tenements, 57 per cent in houses with two to four rooms and 15 per cent in houses with 5 rooms, and over. It was calculated from this basis combined with the number of persons in each family that 20 per cent of the houses in the city of Baroda, were 'above comfort', 60 per cent 'in comfort' and 20 per cent 'below comfort'. Similar inquiry made in connection with the Census of 1931, has shown that the percentage of families living in one room tenements is now 39.2 instead of 28 in 1921. This may be partly due to the floods of 1927 which generally demolished the houses of the poorer classes; but the growing industrialisation of the city has

developed in Baroda, as also in Ahmedabad and other places the one room chawl system, which is responsible to some extent for the increase in the number of such tenements. What was attempted in the city of Baroda was of course an estimate framed from such materials as could be collected in a place like the capital city, but it may well be taken as a fair sample representing conditions in other places also. There is much room for improvement especially in towns and cities where rents have risen and the people with incomes below Rs. 100 a month have to suffer many inconveniences in tenements without proper light and accommodation, and without such conveniences as a lavatory or a bath-room. It is not uncommon for people to use their *otlas* as a sitting place, and for making *datan* and even for taking a bath. In the summer many people have to sleep in the open near the house and in most of the villages and towns people have to go to the fields for answering the call of nature.

The followers of both of Hinduism and Jainism are divided into castes and have their peculiar customs about marriage, divorce, and religion. These will be treated later on, in

separate chapters, but there are certain common features regarding family life which may conveniently be treated here.

Both the communities have a deficiency of females. Roughly speaking it may be said that there are nine females to ten males among the followers of both the religions. The proportion of females to males, is slightly higher in Kathiawad than in Mainland Gujarat, in South Gujarat than in North Gujarat and in some castes than in others. But on an average the number of females is less than that of males.

In all European countries except Bulgaria, Greece and a few others, the females outnumber the males. The excess of females is about 100 per thousand males. In India on the other hand, male population is generally in excess, there being about only 950 females per thousand males in the country as a whole. Taking the Bombay Presidency as a whole separately, we find that the number of females per thousand males is about 930. In the Madras Presidency, however, females are slightly in excess (31 per thousand) while in the States of Mysore (978)

and Hyderabad (968) the situation tends towards equality. In the Baroda State there are about 940 females per thousand males. These are figures for all religions together, but when we view the figures for different religions separately, we find that amongst Muslims also females are in defect, showing that religion has no direct influence. Viewing some Hindu castes separately, we find that, according to the Bombay Presidency Report for the Census of 1921, there were 772 females amongst the Lewa Kanbis, and 906 amongst the Kadwa Kanbis per thousand males in Ahmedabad, Kaira and Broach. The same difference was noticed in these castes in the Baroda State Census for 1911, 1921 and 1931, the corresponding figures for females being found to be 833 and 940 in 1911, 857 and 957 in 1921 and 872 and 977 in 1931.

The inequality of sexes has been explained by writers who have studied the subject on the racial or functional factor, which however is liable to permanent modification by (1) geographical or climatic conditions and (2) social customs. This latter seems, however, to be the most predominating cause for deficiency of females in Gujarat where girls do not receive

after birth that care which is given to boys. As in India, so in European countries there is an excess of males over females at birth (about 29 per 1,000). But in spite of the general excess of males at birth in European countries, there is an excess of females in the general population, the excess varying from 5 females in the case of France to 91 in Portugal. Similarly in India as a whole, in the Bombay Presidency and in the Gujarat districts also, the male population at birth is in excess of females. The question naturally arises, how it is then that while males are in excess at birth both here and in Europe, females eventually preponderate over males there, while they are in defect in this country. Regarding Europe, it is said that the excess of males at birth disappears at the age of 15 or earlier owing to the relatively greater mortality among males. At the higher ages, the proportion of females to males continues to grow owing partly to greater mortality amongst males and partly to migration. The reason for the greater mortality of males in Europe is that in early life, they are more delicate than females, while later on, they are exposed to various risks from which the females are immune.

About a hundred years ago, female infanticide was greatly responsible for the deficiency of females in the Lewa Patidar and Rajput castes in Gujarat. It was suggested by Mr. Findlay Shirras in his recent articles in the Times of India as if it still existed and could account for the paucity of females in these castes. Comparison however of the proportion of females per thousand aged 0-6 in the past three censuses shows that the female proportion in these ages is sensibly rising in the two castes among whom infanticide is said to have been once rife. The Rajput and Patidar proportions are almost the same as in other castes and whatever difference there is, may be ascribable to social and other conditions which are more or less common to all castes.

Among the possible causes of higher female mortality among Gujarati Hindus, the following may be mentioned:-

- (1) Neglect of female infants;
- (2) infant marriage and premature sexual intercourse and child-bearing;
- (3) a very high birth-rate;
- (4) unskilled midwifery;
- (5) abortion;
- (6) confinement and bad feeding of women at puberty;
- (7) the hard

life of widows; and (8) the hard labour which women have to perform.

(1) Neglect of female infants is the most potent cause in Gujarat for the higher mortality of female infants. In all castes, as a general rule, male children are desired and the birth of a female child is unwelcome. When a son is born, sweetmeats are distributed and *vadhamani* or good news is sent to friends and relations. On the other hand, nothing of the kind is done when a daughter is born. A girl is spoken of as a *patharo* or stone, and receives less attention than a boy. This is specially so amongst castes, in which the procuring of a bridegroom is a matter of considerable expense. This difference of treatment must doubtless be exerting great adverse effect, on female life. Fortunately owing to education and contact with the West the ideas of the people on the subject have of late much improved and in most of the castes, sons and daughters have begun to receive equal treatment and neglect of female life is gradually disappearing as a factor adverse to female infant life with the result that the propo-

rtion of females to males is rising and the number of both the sexes may be equal in course of time, if the other factors adverse to females also disappear simultaneously.

(2) Infant marriage and premature sexual intercourse and child bearing are also the principal causes of the greater mortality in the female sex among the Hindus. Though cohabitation does not, generally, take place immediately after marriage, once a girl is married, it does take place as soon as physical circumstances permit; and a large proportion of early marriage means a correspondingly high percentage of early consummations and of early births from immature mothers. This circumstance might therefore be naturally expected to exercise a very prejudicial effect upon the longevity and vitality of the female sex and even to be the cause of a considerable number of premature deaths amongst them; and statistics go to show that this in fact is actually so, especially during the ages of 15 to 20.

(3) Early marriage leads to high birthrate, and prematurely breaks down the constitution of the mother thereby producing greater relative mortality among females than in the other sex.

(4) Unskilful midwifery is also one of the main causes of high female mortality. The wife of the village barber is generally employed as a midwife and her bungling and blundering often entails permanent injury and in many cases diseases hard to cure.

(5) Young females living under enforced widowhood are exposed to temptations and sometimes have to undergo operations at the hands of quacks for abortion to conceal their shame, and thereby meet with an untimely death.

(6) There is no deliberate bad feeding of females unless when poverty necessitates it. But confinement within the house is, no doubt, a factor of great importance affecting female mortality. Females of the higher classes live confined in their houses, which are generally dark and ill-ventilated. They scarcely go out to enjoy fresh air, and thus fall victim to consumption and other diseases which carry them away in youth.

(7) The lot of Hindu widows is very hard. They have to live confined in a corner in the house and forego most of the pleasures of life, which tells greatly upon their health.

(8) Women, especially of the lower classes, have to perform very hard labour in the house. Except in a few well-to-do families, servants are generally not employed and females have to do all the household pounding, grinding and sweeping work. They have not only to cook, but also to cleanse the kitchen, and wash the pots in the scullery. They are required to draw water from the village well and bring it home in water pots on their heads. While on one hand, want of work spoils the health of females in the higher classes, on the other, in the lower classes, it is too much of work which ruins their constitution and prematurely sends them to the grave.

In addition to the above causes a great loss of female life is caused in Gujarat by the marriage among Hindus of grown-up males with very young females.

It is a matter of every day experience that a connection between a girl of thirteen or fourteen years and a man of thirty-five or above, proves fatal to the life of the girl. A widowed man marrying a girl of twelve after he has lost his first wife, soon loses her and another is brought into the house ; this also meets with the

same fate and a fourth is married when the man is past fifty and she is left a widow before she has arrived at womanhood or soon after. Sometimes negotiations for the new connection are entered into on the burning ground, while the deadbody of the old wife is being consumed by fire.

Male children are greatly desired by Hindus as indeed by Jains, Musal-
 Ceremonies for male children. mans and Parsis in Gujarat. If a married pair is not blessed with a male issue within a few years of married life, many expedients are resorted to in order to secure it. Charms given by Sadhus, Yatis and Fakirs are worn and vows are offered to goddesses (Mata) and saints (Pir). Among Hindus a special ceremony called *punsavan* or male making which was once performed soon after conception is now performed in the seventh month of the pregnancy. It consists of certain rites with offerings and spells of which the principal consists of dropping into the right nostril of the pregnant woman, a little juice extracted from a piece of the root of the bunyan tree (*ficus indica*).

the rapidity of lightening and struck him down with grief, probably for the loss of his money more than the loss of his bride. In another case, the bride was found to be married and her husband was alive."

"But public opinion is slowly awakening to the necessity of preventing this primitive sale into matrimony by the sanction of legislation. We noticed some months back a measure "to prevent the sale of bridegrooms in Baroda State territory." In that case the idea was obviously to prevent the poor agriculturist mortgaging his last holding or falling into the sowcar's clutches by incurring debt in order to marry his daughters suitably to their status in life. This system of buying the consent of the bridegroom is also largely responsible for the orthodox Hindu preference for sons, and the general dread of having daughters who would prove an expensive proposition to settle in life. This is also in part the cause of that peculiar inferiority complex which the many disabilities placed on the legal status of Hindu women have bred in them but which is now-a-days a diminishing quantity."

"The converse of this case has also obtained attention also in the State of Baroda where this

kind of legal reform is moving forward at a pace all its own. This was a bill brought in, about the end of last year, "to prevent the barter of girls in marriage," which prohibited the acceptance of money from the bridegroom or his people by the parents or guardians of the bride except in the form of ornaments and so forth presented to the bride in her own right. In reality both the conceptions of dowery and barter are off-shoots of the same germ ideas, and perhaps varied in different areas with the proportion of one sex to the other as well as the cultural environment and social conditions of life of the people."

Many terms of relationship, which are not differentiated in the English language, are differentiated in the local nomenclature, while there are no terms of relationship which are differentiated in English but not in the Vernacular. Whether it is a male or a female who is speaking, a paternal uncle is called *kako*, a maternal uncle, *mamo*, mother's sister's husband, *maso*, and a father's sister's husband, *phuvo*; a paternal aunt, *kaki*, a maternal aunt, *mami*, a mother's sister, *masi* and a

father's sister, *phoi*; a brother's son is called *bhatrijo* and his daughter *bhatriji*; a sister's son is called *bhanej* and her daughter *bhaneji* and a sister's husband, *banevi*. When a man is speaking a brother-in-law is called *salo*, if he is one's wife's brother and *banevi* if he is sister's husband. A sister-in-law is called *sali*, if she is one's wife's sister, *bhabhi* if an elder brother's wife and *bhojai*, if a younger brother's wife. When a woman is speaking, the husband's elder brother is called *jeth* and his younger brother *diyar*; she calls the wife of the former *jethani* and that of the latter *derani*. Whether a male or a female is speaking, a grand-father-in-law is called *vadsasro* and grand-mother-in-law, *vadsasu*.

Terms of relationship, while they have a definite connection, are

Terms of relationship used in a classificatory sense.

also used in a classificatory sense e. g. *bhai*, brother, *kaka*, uncle, *bapa*, father

etc., Those who are equal in age to the speaker are spoken of as brother if males, and as sister, if females; they are called uncle or aunt if they are of the age of one's father or mother; and if greater respect or closeness is to be indicated,

also as father or mother. Similarly, the words *dikaro* (son), *dikri* (daughter), *bhatijo* (nephew), and *bhatiji*, (niece) are used, as the case may be, by these elders.

Salo (wife's brother), *sali* (wife's sister),
sasro (father-in-law), *sasu*
 (mother-in-law) and
mamo (mother's brother)
 are used as terms of abuse.

Opprobrium attached to some terms of relationship.

The opprobrium that attaches to these words is due to the fact that to give a girl in marriage implies inferiority. He who is given a bride is believed to be a *kulin* or of a better family than he who gives her. *Banevi* (sister's husband) and *jamai* (son-in-law) are sometimes used in a way which would imply that the party spoken to is *salo*, *sali*, *sasu* or *sasro* as the case may be, of the speaker e.g. why do you beat your *banevi* or *jamai*?

A family may be large or small and it is difficult to determine even the average number of persons in a family. Taking however that there are as many families as there are occupied houses, and dividing the Hindu population by the

Size of family.

number of their houses, the average population per Hindu house in the province as whole is found to be about 4. The family, as a general rule, consists of the parents, sons married and unmarried, and the unmarried daughters. It continues joint so long as living together in harmony is possible. But, dissensions take place especially among the females, and grown up sons live apart so far as all domestic matters are concerned, though as regards property, there is, as a rule, no separation during the life time of the father.

The joint family system, had no doubt its advantages in early times in keeping the family property and the family strength united; but it has outlived its importance and is now doing positive harm. The Hindu joint family represents a primitive institution of which the chief characteristic is the superiority of the eldest male, the agnostic kinship and the resulting law of inheritance which excludes females from getting a share. Such an institution was common to many races and nationalities and had its origin in the necessity of that remote age. In fact each family was a state in itself and the powerful

opposition which the first Aryan settlers in India experienced from the aboriginal inhabitants made it necessary that the family should embrace as many persons as could be kept together. This explains the absolute authority vested in the eldest member of the family and the exclusion of women from inheritance. But under the changed circumstances of modern life it is no longer necessary. On the contrary its existence gives rise to a class of idle population and is producing incalculable evils to progress. It takes away all incentive to a sense of self-reliance and a desire to be independent. It is the cause of many a family quarrels and many vexations and worries to the earning member of the family who has to leave his own wife and children helpless because while he was alive all his earnings were eaten up by his brothers, nephews and cousins, who, in turn, most cruelly eject from their doors the destitute widow of their late benefactor. The joint family system degrades the position of women. Instead of ruling in the family as a queen commanding obedience and reverence, a Hindu woman is a drudging slave in it even during her husband's life-time and is left destitute after his death.

It is a happy sign for India's progress that this system is fast dying out. Fortunately for Gujarat, it is not so common in it, as in the Deccan and other parts of India. In Gujarat it is the general custom for sons to set-up separate establishments when their wives begin to bear children; and even when they still remain joint, the family usually breaks up on the death of the father. Moreover when the joint family system is in vogue, there is often a strong disruptive tendency owing to the quarrels among female members, the dislike of a man's wife to see a large part of his earnings taken for the support of others and her natural desire to be free from the control of her mother-in-law. Separation in mess often takes place while the family property is still held in common. This is specially the case amongst the landholding and trading classes. Hundreds of thousands of persons, not finding the family landed property or the family business sufficient for their maintenance, or not finding suitable occupation in their own village or town, have migrated to other parts of the country, and even to Africa, Fiji and other outside countries. Educated classes of Hindus,

largely fill the public services, learned professions and occupations of trade and commerce far away from their homes and it is obvious that such people cannot live together in the same place or that earnings of different members cannot be thrown together in a common stock for common support. The father is separated from the son; brother from brother, uncle from nephew and so on, each living in a place to which his avocation calls. The necessity of the modern times has been a great blow to the old constitution and spirit of the joint family. Even where a family remains joint, it often happens that the sons earn their living away from home and the members of a single commensal family may thus occupy two or three separate houses. The joint family shows a growing tendency towards disintegration owing to various new factors, such as the growth of individualism, the rise in the standard of living which makes it increasingly difficult for a large number of persons to live together, and increased migration due to the better means of communications afforded by the railways, steam-ships and motor cars. It is a matter for satisfaction that the Gains of Science Act recently passed in British

India and in Baroda will soon annihilate the joint family and will be a fore-runner of a number of on-slaughts which the system has courted for itself.

The head of the family—the father or senior member who earns the family livelihood—exercises authority over all the family members. His will is law to the family, to be obeyed by all the members. He consults his wife and his mother if she is alive, and also his brothers and cousins in all important family matters, such as betrothals, marriages, caste dinners etc. and generally respects their opinion, for fear that if he acts differently they may take it ill and keep themselves aloof from the festivities of the occasion such as joining a dinner, or a marriage party. The greatest consideration is shown by all the family members to its head. Women and even grown up sons have no independence and cannot do anything of importance without first obtaining his consent or approval.

The most striking feature in the occupation of the Hindu families is the immense preponderance of agricultural pursuits. Over two-thirds of the

total Hindu population are engaged in the exploitation of the surface of the earth for the production of raw materials. About 15 per cent of them are maintained by the preparation and supply of material substances; public administration and liberal arts are the principal means of support of about 7 per cent; and miscellaneous occupations like domestic service and unproductive occupations support nearly 7 per cent.

In Gujarat as a whole nine persons out of ten are supported by simple Rural occupations. village occupations which generally meet with all the requirements of ordinary rural life such as agriculture, labour, cattle breeding etc. A peculiar feature of Gujarat rural life is the way in which each village is provided with a complete equipment of artisans and menials and until the introduction of commodities from outside, such as machine-made cloth, kerosene oil, umbrellas and the like, it was wholly self-supporting. Most of the village occupations are hereditary. The potter's son becomes a potter, the barber's son, a barber, the shoe-maker's son, a shoe-maker and the like. The affairs of each

functional caste are regulated, as pointed in the chapter on Caste, by its own *panchayat*. Each of the village barber, potter, blacksmith, carpenter, washerman, *purohit*, etc. has his defined circle of customers, *gharaks*, within which he works and no one else can attempt to deprive him of his customers without severe punishment at the hands of the caste *panchayat*. The duties and remuneration of each group are fixed by custom and the caste rules prohibit a man from entering into competition with another of the same caste. The method of payment for professional services rendered by barbers, potters etc., consists in their taking a recognised quantity of grain, when the crop has been reaped and brought to the threshing floor. In addition to this, small cash payments or presents of clothes, etc., are made on particular occasions, e. g. to the barber and the *purohit* on marriage and death occasions. Cooked food is also occasionally given, especially on occasions of caste-dinners to the barbers, potters and others whose caste rules allow them to eat it and *sidha* (flour, ghee, rice, pulse, etc.) to the *purohit* and others.

The occupations of Hindu families living in urban area—towns and cities—differ greatly from those in the rural area. Actual cultivators are

Urban occupations.

more numerous in villages, while landlords are numerous in towns. The most common avocations of the residents in towns and cities are those connected with money lending, trading and the preparation and supply of material substances, especially food industries, textile industries and industries of dress and toilet. The persons engaged in public force, public administration, in learned professions and domestic and personal service are relatively far more numerous in the towns and cities than in villages.

Amongst the Hindus of the province of

Gujarat as a whole, in every

Workers and dependents.

100 persons about one half are workers and one

half are dependents, taking as dependents those only who do not in any way add to the earnings of the family. The proportion of workers and dependents in agriculture, the most common occupation, is almost equal to the average for the whole community. In every 100 persons supported by industries there is one less worker and one more dependent and in the trade there are ten less workers and 10 more dependents as compared with agriculture. The proportion of workers to dependents is

smaller in occupations connected with transport, public administration and professions and liberal arts.

In the Hindu community as a whole among 100 actual workers, about two-thirds are males, and one-third are females. The proportion of female to male workers is the highest in the villages where agriculture is the main occupation, and the least in the towns and cities, where females remain in the house and confine themselves to their domestic work of cooking and rendering help to their menfolk in such work as can be done within the home, such as sewing, spinning, selling fruits and vegetables etc. There are certain pursuits which are mainly in the hands of women, such as spinning, weeding, basket-making, rice-pounding, flour-grinding and dairy and ghee-making. The occupations in which females are engaged may be grouped into three classes—those which are followed by them independently without reference to the work of their male relations, such as flour-grinding, sewing, leaf-plate-making, midwifery, domestic service etc.; those which are supplementary to their husband's occupation, such as cotton

spinning, selling of fruits, vegetables, milk, fish etc. and dairy-making; and lastly those in which both the sexes work together, such as basket-making, field-labour, pot-making, sewing etc. The occupations which females follow either independently or as supplementary to some kindred employment of their male relatives are generally distinguished by their simplicity and the small amount of physical labour they involve.

Amongst the followers of industries of luxury, those who work in precious stones and metals are most numerous. They include *Sonis* (goldsmiths) who are to be found in towns and most of the villages, *Jadias* (tracers of designs on ornaments) and *Panchigars* (precious stone setters). Females are very fond of ornaments and whatever their position in life may be, they must have some ornaments of gold or silver for the adornment of their person. Some ornaments have come to be regarded as symbolical of married life and must always be worn by a female whose husband is alive. The goldsmiths have, therefore, a thriving business. They have a bad name in Gujarat for filching gold and for mixing metal.

The saying is "A goldsmith steals gold even out of his sister's ornaments."

The number of persons solely dependent on personal and domestic service is less than 2 per mille. Only a small proportion of Hindu families can afford the luxury of engaging servants for cooking, washing and other household work and the large majority have to depend upon the members of their household for it, or to get it by the casual services of others depending upon them. In most of the middle class families grinding and pounding work is done by those who maintain themselves by doing such work; the family barber washes clothes and cleanses pots; the Kumbhar or Bhoi fetches water; and the family *purohit* purchases vegetables, oil, sugar, etc. for them from the bazar.

In theory, each Hindu caste has a distinctive occupation, but it is not practised by all its members. Most of the castes have abandoned the narrow limit of the special occupations laid down for them by *shastra* and tradition. Only 5 per cent of the Ahirs follow their

traditional occupation of cattle-breeders or graziers and the rest are either agriculturists or field labourers. Only about 8 per cent of Bahrots are now bards and geneologists and the rest are cultivators, traders or labourers. The traditional profession of the Brahmans is priesthood, but in practice they follow all manner of pursuits. Many are clerks or cooks, while some are soldiers, lawyers, shop-keepers and even day-labourers. Anavala and Jambu Brahmans are mostly agriculturists. Audich, Deshastha, Koknastha, Khe-daval, Mewada, Modh, Nagar, Tapodhan and other Brahman castes have a small proportion following their traditional occupation of priests, but most of them follow other occupations, such as agriculture, trade, government service, domestic service, and general labour. Disaval, Kapol, Khadayata, Lad and other Vania castes mostly follow their traditional occupation of trade, but some of them have taken to other pursuits and are employed as clerks in private and government offices, and as lawyers, doctors and teachers. Only about 60 per cent of Kanbis and 70 per cent of Kolis are engaged in their traditional occupation of agriculture and agricultural labour, and the rest follow other occupa-

tions, such as industry, trade, labour and service. Less than 30 per cent of Bhavsars follow their traditional occupation as calenderers and dyers and the rest are traders, cultivators and general labourers. Only 50 per cent of the workers among Ghanchis are oil-pressers and the rest are shop-keepers, milk-sellers and labourers. Darji, Dhobi, Hajam, Kumbhar, and other artisans are more faithful to their traditional profession, but it is not uncommon to find a few of their number engaged in trade, agriculture or public and private service. More than half the numbers of Dheds still follow their old occupation of weaving and field and general labour; but some have become cultivators, traders and teachers. The decline of the weaving and cotton carding industries has been gradually diverting Khattris, Vanzas, Pinjaras and Tais to trade, labour and other pursuits.

There is a growingly large number of persons without employment.

Unemployment. Their education of the modern type creates in them a dislike for their hereditary occupations, and the clerical and simi-work for which they have qualified themselves

is not available. They therefore waste their time in hunting for service and prove a burden to their family. An economic revolution is going on and the people are gradually adjusting themselves to the altered conditions of life. There is yet a feeling of false pride which makes educated young members of some of the high Hindu castes prefer to starve rather than accept manual occupations. The dignity of honest labour is not yet thoroughly understood. A great change has, however, already taken place, and in the struggle for existence, there is a growing tendency to set aside old ideas of false dignity and to yield to necessity.

Gujaratis are, as a rule, home loving and unless absolutely necessary are reluctant to leave their ancestral home. Even when they go abroad in search of better livelihood than they can get in their own place, their exile is, as a rule, temporary. They usually return home from time to time and ultimately hope to return to and die in the village of their birth.

The Gujaratis are however adventurous and do not hesitate to go to distant places when

absolutely necessary to obtain a livelihood. Owing to the maritime position of the province and the frequent changes amongst its rulers many people, from Cutch, Kathiawad and Main land Gujarat had long before the advent of the British migrated to Zanzibar, Ceylon, Mauritius, Siam and other places outside India for purposes of trade and business. Many Brahman, Vania and Kanbi families had migrated to other parts within India itself, such as Khandesh, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Deccan and Madras for similar purposes. Since the establishment of the British rule, emigration from Indian States to British territory, or from one Indian State to another, has taken place on a large scale, on account of overcrowding or distress in one's native place and material or political advantages in the territory of migration. The ordinary course of such migration, which is of a permanent nature is as follows:—A family finds its ancestral land or business insufficient for its increasing numbers or is unable to obtain local employment for all its members and a son accompanied perhaps by a cousin or two goes off in search of land or work to places where he knows he can find them. He starts as a tenant or a clerk and

after a time, becomes an owner, and sends for his wife to join him in his new home. Her brothers and cousins follow her on the same errand which brought her husband to the place, knowing that there they will find friends. His sons look for wives and his daughters for husbands in the neighbourhood of the old home, and so a small colony is formed which serves as a nucleus for further migration. As time goes on, the colony expands, its numbers increase, migration ceases or assumes the reciprocal form, until at length, the ties connecting the colony with the people of the neighbourhood grow stronger and those with its original home relax and wives are no longer sought for at a distance. The instance of the Gujarati Vantias who have migrated to the Deccan or the Khedaval Brahmans who have migrated to Madras is to the point. Formerly, they used to go to their original home for the wedding of their children; but they have increased in their new settlement to such an extent that they can manage their marriage affairs there, and have now practically severed all connection with their original home.

About thirty or forty years ago, ideas of decorum as well as difficulties of locomotion did not permit males migrating from their birth district to take their wives with them. This feature was specially observable among Marathas, Rajputs, Lewa Kanbis and some other castes among whom the *parda* system is observed to a more or less extent. Those who migrated to other places for service or business had to live alone and to keep their wives in their native place. Western education and the convenience of easy locomotion afforded by railways have however now brought about a change in this custom, and now-a-days, there is a tendency among people who migrate from their home, even temporarily, to take their wives with them.

Taking literacy in the sense of ability to write a letter to a friend and to read the answer to it, it may be said that on an average among Gujarati Hindus 200 males in every thousand of the population of the age five years and over are literate; but the corresponding proportion in the case of females is only about 50. This propor-

Change of ideas regarding migration of females.

Literacy: General.

tion of literacy varies considerably within the different parts of the province. We can recognise various influences in this distribution, economic, political, social and religious. Thus literacy in the British districts of Gujarat and in the Baroda State, where there are greater facilities for education, both of boys and girls, is much higher than in the other States; and even in these other States, there are great variations. Census figures for the whole province for 1931 are not yet available, but there can be no doubt that the figures of literacy, both among males and females, in the last Census must have considerably increased over those of the previous one. In the Baroda State for which figures are available, male literates, have increased by 54 per cent and female literates have nearly doubled themselves within the last ten years. Literate persons now form 21 per cent in the State as a whole. Taking the sexes separately, one in three males, and one in 13 females (five years and over) are able to read and write. But these proportions vary in different age periods and in different localities and castes.

Literacy is higher in commercial and industrial tracts and in the large towns and

cities round which they lie, than in purely agricultural portions of the country. More than half of the Hindu and Jain traders, for whom literacy is essential for business, are able to read and write. Though, speaking generally, literacy is connected with social position, occupation is a strong modifying influence, so that the professional and trading classes to whom literacy is essential, naturally stand higher than those above them in social scale. The low position of the Rajputs in literacy, exemplifies this point. The extent of literacy in individual castes varies considerably in the different parts of the province and it is sometimes the case that persons of a high caste in one area are less advanced in respect of literacy than persons of a caste of lower rank elsewhere. It may however be said, speaking generally, that Brahman, Vania and artisan castes, stand higher in literacy than the cultivating and labouring castes in the same area.

Though the number of literate males and females throughout Gujarat is still small and their proportion very low among the more backward people of north Gujarat, Kathiawad and Cutch, the fact remains that there has been a steady advance in

Female literacy.

the education of both boys and girls during the last twenty years. The old idea that the education of women is unnecessary, unorthodox and dangerous is no longer the standpoint of the Gujarati Hindu population except in some backward parts, where the percentage of even male education is still very low. The custom of early marriage which limited the number of girls in schools and necessitated the withdrawal of the majority before they had a fair opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of letters, is slowly giving way; and with the progress of the general advance in male culture, the atmosphere becomes more and more favourable to real progress in the instruction of women. A considerable progress has been made by females even in higher education. In Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat and a few other places, where there are facilities for English education for girls, females take advantage of them to the full; and even in places where there are no separate schools for the higher education of girls, parents do not hesitate to send them to the ordinary boys' high schools; and it is this spirit for progress that has turned out some matriculates and even graduates among Gujarati girls, and

the percentage of literacy both among males and females is therefore sure to rise in the near future.

A broad dividing line formed on the observance of Brahmanical habits, divides the Hindus other than the members of the depressed class into two parts, an upper class led by Brahman, Vantias and a lower class led by Ghanchi Golas. The upper class includes Brahmans, Vantias, Kayasthas, Brahma-Kshatris, Rajputs, Kanbis and some craftsmen such as Sonis and Sutars. The lower class includes other craftsmen such as brick-layers and blacksmiths and gardeners, Kolis and personal servants. These may however raise their rank in their own circle by accumulation of wealth and stricter adoption of Brahmanical ways of living.

The depressed classes--Dheds--Chamdias and Bhangis--have no place in society outside their own community and are considered untouchables. The uncleanness which attaches to these castes would seem to be due to the work they live by rather than to the

character of the people themselves. The men and women are now hardly to be distinguished from the lower castes of craftsmen and peasants and accept in accents their language shows no perceptible difference from the Gujarati ordinarily spoken by the higher classes of Hindus. Chamadias rank below Dheds but both of them claim superiority over Bhangis. The houses of all the three classes are generally in a quarter of the village by themselves. They draw water from their own wells and where there are no special wells for them, they have to depend upon such water as is poured out from a distance into their pots by the higher classes.

During the last thirty years the condition of the depressed classes has undergone a vast change and their centuries old miseries have been greatly removed through the benevolent efforts of Christian missionaries who have established their missions in Surat, Baroda, Borsad, Rajkot, Ghogo and other places in Gujarat, and of the Arya Samaj, Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress, the British Government and the enlightened rulers of Indian States like the Maharaja Gaekwad. They have all done much in the past and are still doing their best to

remove their untouchability. The public schools, and offices are now open to them like other subjects. Much of their untouchability has disappeared, especially in towns and cities, and they have been taking their rightful place, like other citizens in Municipalities, Local Boards and Legislative Councils. They sit side by side with other Hindus, in schools, railway trains, buses, trams and theatres and no one objects to their presence near them on account of their untouchability. Untouchability has practically disappeared and is to be found to some extent only in villages. Members of the higher castes do not, as a general rule, yet associate with them socially but in this direction also a beginning has been made and cosmopolitan dinners are held in Bombay, Baroda, Ahmedabad and other places in which Antyajas and non-Antyajas dine together on terms of perfect equality.

The ordinary dress of both males and females in Kathiawad differs from that in mainland Gujarat. In the latter also there is a marked difference between the dress of the people of north Gujarat and south Gujarat. *Khadi* cloth

Dress: Men.

is the material mostly used in Kathiawad, while mill cloth is mostly used in mainland Gujarat. The head-dress generally consists of *phaliu* or *fenta* in Kathiawad, and also in north Gujarat, but of a turban, in south Gujarat. The way in which a turban or *fenta* is folded indicates in many cases the caste of the wearer or the part of the province to which he belongs. *Suwal*, trousers, is usually worn in Kathiawad, while *dhotis* are worn in mainland Gujarat. *Ketiu*, *kabjo* or *peheran* is worn as an inner dress while *angharkha*, coat, is used as an outer one. *Duppato*, scarf, about three yards long, by a yard broad, is worn as a scarf round the shoulders, or as a sash round the waist, mostly by the well-to-do classes. *Joda*, locally made shoes, are worn by all classes, but their shape differs in the different parts of the province. Those who cannot afford to have an *angharkha*, coat, put on only a *badan*, and those who cannot afford either, put on only *dhotiu*, except in the cold season when the upper part of the body is somehow covered either by putting on a *badan* or wrapping round it a *chadar*. A suit of clothes of better quality is kept in reserve to be used only on marriage and other festive

occasions, or when a visit is to be paid to a government official or some relative residing in some other place. Except among the rich, who have a reserve of warm clothes, the dress does not vary at different times of the year. In the cold season well-to-do persons wear a woollen coat instead of the *angarkha* and wrap a shawl over the coat. A well-to-do cultivator or artisan wears a *chofal*, or *chadar* instead of a shawl.

Like men, women in Kathiawad also put on a dress of coarser cloth than their sisters in mainland Gujarat. The ordinary dress of women in the province consists of a *sadi*, or *sallo*, *choli* or *kanchli*, bodice, and *ghagharo*, petticoat. The dress of the women in Kathiawad and Cutch is more loose than that of the people of mainland Gujarat. The fancy for ample folds is carried to such an extent in Rajput, Ahir, Koli and some other caste that cloth several feet long is sewn into several folds to form a petti-coat. Printed material for *sallo* or *ghagharo* is preferred to plain one and the bodice is generally of finer texture and if possible of silk.

The usual furniture in most of the upper class houses consists of *palangs* or *khallas*, cots, *hinchkas*, swing cots, *pallas*, wooden seats for sitting at dinner, *godadas*, beddings, *peti petaras*, boxes, small and big, for keeping valuables and clothings, *machis*, foot stools, and a carpet or mattress. Of late chairs, couches, safes, cup-boards, and other furniture of western type is used to a small extent by the rich and well-to-do, but it may be said, as a general rule, that even rich Hindus in Gujarat do not spend much on wooden furniture. The chief pride in a well-to-do Hindu family by way of house decoration is to possess and exhibit a large store of well polished brass and copper vessels neatly arranged in rows on shelves in some conspicuous place in the house and to have a good stock of *torans*, and embroidery work made by women of the house.

In the houses of the artisan, cultivator and other people in middle circumstances, the furniture consists of a few *godadas*, *godadis*, beddings, *khatla*, with string instead of *navar*, and a few cooking and drinking pots. The poor labouring

classes have a few earthen and brass pots, one or two *khallas*, and a few quilts and beddings, worth in all about two or three rupees.

Towns people generally rise between six and seven, except in the case of those whose work requires them to be up at dawn or who have vowed to bathe at an early hour. About half an hour it spent in cleaning the teeth with a *baval*, *Acacia arabica*, twig and in washing and dressing. After bathing Brahmans, Vantias and others strict in their devotions perform their morning worship at home or visit the temples for *darsan*. Soon after this the house-holder is ready to begin the business of the day. A trader or banker sits in the *kacheri* or sitting room of his house and transacts business; clerks or persons in government or private employ go to the market for the day's supplies; or if they can afford to do so send a servant to the market and amuse themselves at home with their children or in visiting friends; artisans who stay at home get ready their tools and begin to work; shop-keeper go to their shops; carpenters, bricklayers and other artisans and day-labourers

Daily life: towns
people: men.

employed in building and other jobs, work for an hour or two at home and then, after bathing and taking their breakfast, proceed to their work. With the greater part of townspeople their morning employment lasts upto ten or eleven o'clock, after which the mid-day meal is taken. After this those who can afford, take rest for an hour or two and all proceed to their work. At sun-down or from six to seven in the evening the business of the day is generally over, except in the case of merchants and traders, who in some cases continue to work till nine or ten. The evening meal is taken at about eight and after it some time is passed in talking and smoking or seeing friends. Ten to eleven P. M. is the sleeping time.

Only a few well-to-do keep servants for dome-

stic work, which is mainly

Women.

done by the women of the

house in most of the families. The morning is women's busy time. They rise earlier than men at five or six and begin their routine of work such as grinding grain, fetching water, sweeping floors etc. After day-break they set off with their vessels to the well, pond or river,

where they cleanse them, draw water, bathe and return home with their vessels filled. Women who have facilities for water in their own houses bathe and wash at home and fetch drinking water afterwards. After their finishing the fetching of the necessary quantity of water they prepare breakfast and first serve it to the men and children, and then partake of it themselves. After the breakfast is finished and the men have gone out for their various duties, and the children have gone to school the women are busily employed in cleaning the fireplace and the pots and dishes and in cleaning grain for grinding for the next day. In the afternoon when they have a little leisure they attend to their children by combing and anointing their hair and go to the temples or to their neighbours and friends for visits. In the evening they are again busy cleaning their lamps, preparing dinner and preparing beds. When there are several females in one household the harder work of grinding grain, cleaning vessels, fetching water and washing clothes, generally falls on the sons' wives, and the elder women and married daughters on a visit to their father's house cook and do lighter work. The wives

and other female relations in a rich man's house have very little household work to do. They spend their time in looking after their children, supervision over servants and in dressing themselves and in gossiping.

In villages in the busy season from June to October, men and women
 Daily life: rural: rise with dawn; fodder is
 men. thrown to cattle; the labourers, if they are to be employed, are called; and a light meal of *bajri* or *juwar* bread is taken with milk, curds, or butter milk. Then driving their bullocks before them and carrying their agricultural implements and tools, the cultivators set out for their fields. They remain at work till evening, but stop work for an hour or two for rest and their mid-day meal, which is brought to them by the women of the house. About sun-set they return to the village and after a meal of rice and pulse or *khichadi* and *kadhi* with *ghee*, they sit in their own veranda, or *deheli* or in the village *chora* and pass their time in smoking and gossiping till about nine or ten when they go to bed. When the field work is light from January to May, the greater part of

the day is spent in sauntering about in the village, sitting in front of their doors, visiting relations, making pilgrimages, reading books and hearing *kathas*. Sometimes the village is visited by *Bhavayas*, a band of strolling players, when the men of the village pass the night in watching the performance near the *chora* or in some other open space.

Women rise early in the morning. They have the cattle to feed, the cows and buffaloes to milk, butter to make, water to fetch from the wells, and in the busy season breads to bake for the early breakfast. When the men have left for the fields, they have to get ready the mid day meal for them and take it to the fields. Women of the poorer classes have, in addition, to work in the fields during the rainy season when weeding is to be done, and at harvest time when cotton has to be picked. In the household of a poor cultivator or field labourer, the women, besides working in the fields, have to take their dairy produce to the neighbouring town or carry loads of fire-wood or grass to the nearest market for sale.

Gujarati Hindus are as a rule vegetarians.

Food. Animal food is taken by the Rajputs and the people of a

few other castes, but even they usually partake of vegetable food, and use animal food occasionally. Agriculturists, artisans and working classes, generally have three meals, breakfast in the morning before going to work, a mid-day meal, and a third meal after return from work in the evening. The breakfast consists of the previous night's remainder of *bajri* or *juwar* or *kodra* bread and whey or now-a-days tea. The mid-day meal consists of bread and pulse, and the evening one of *khichadi* and *kadhi* and sometimes, *bhat-dal* and a vegetable or some kind of pickle.

Shopkeepers, traders, and government and other servants generally take two meals a day, the first between ten and eleven in the morning and the second between seven and nine in the evening. Jains generally take the evening meal before sunset. The morning meal consists of *rolla* or *rolli*, *bajri*, *juwar* or wheat bread, spread with *ghee*, *dal*, pulse, *bhat*, rice, and one or two vegetables in the case of the well-to-do. The evening meal consists of *bajri* or *juwar* bread or

puris or *vhakharis*, cakes of wheat flour, a cup of milk and a vegetable, or in its stead a *papad* or some kind of *athana*, pickle. Those who like also take rice and pulse, or *osaman*, pulse soup, in their evening meals in addition to the breads. A stock of *puris*, *ladus* and other preparations of wheat flour, sugar and *ghee* or some kind of parched grain is kept in store, for use in the afternoon when required or for the children. The food of a family in poor or middle circumstances differs from that of a rich one, in the curtailment of vegetables, *ghee* milk, rice and pulse. The food of the poorest classes consists of *kodra*, *bavto* or *banti* bread, *chhas*, butter milk, *kadhi*, whey boiled with flour and salt and chilies, or *bhadku*, a kind of porridge made of butter milk and *juwar* or *bajri* flour, boiled with a little salt. A portion of the food prepared in the morning or evening is set aside, for use in the evening or morning.

Tea drinking, which twenty years ago was confined only to a few of the upper classes in towns, has now become common, even among the lowest classes, and even in villages. It is taken

generally in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon also. Those who cannot afford to prepare it at home, purchase it from the tea-shops, which have sprung up even in villages. If a visitor comes, most people offer tea, not only at tea time, but also at whatever hour he calls. Along with *pan-sopari* and *huka*, or *bidi*, tea offering has become in Gujarat a recognised mode of reception.

A yearly store of grain, pulse, and firewood
 and a monthly store of oil,
 Supplies. *ghee* and spices is laid in,
 except by the very poor, or those who have no
 fixed place of residence. A fresh supply of
 milk and vegetables is brought from the market
 daily or at short intervals. Among well-to-do
 villagers their own cattle supply milk and *ghee*,
 while spices and miscellaneous articles are
 brought from the village shop-keeper or from
 the nearest town grocer.

Pan, Charica betel and *sopari*, Areca cate-
 chu, are used by those
 Pan-sopari. who can afford them, after
 meals, and also at other times, when they feel
 inclined to have them. They are also offered

to those who call as friends and acquaintances. Along with their *pan* and *sopari*, the rich eat cardamoms and other spices.

Tobacco is used in three ways. It is chewed alone or with *pan-sopari*;
 Tobacco. it is smoked either in *huko*, hubble-bubble, or in *bidis*, cigarettes; and it is taken in the form of snuff. Except a few Brahmans, Hindu males of all classes smoke tobacco; *Huko* is used everywhere, except in south Gujarat where generally *bidis* are used. *Huko* or *bidi* is offered to visitors. Women of the higher castes do not smoke tobacco in any form; but many among the labouring and untouchable classes smoke a *bidi*. The custom of taking snuff prevails among men and women of all classes. It is generally carried in small round wooden or tin boxes, about an inch in diameter and three-fourths of an inch deep. The snuff box is passed round for a pinch when men and more especially women, sit for gossip after a day's work, in some one's house or on the *olla*, raised platform, outside it.

Opium. Opium was once held in high respect by Rajputs, Kanbis, Rabaris, and Barots as the seal of hospitality and a great healer of disputes. Its use was common both in its solid and liquid form. In the solid state it was taken by those addicted to it in the quantity of a few grains, rolled into a pill and swallowed. Its liquid form, called *kasumbo* is made by dissolving it in water. Its use in both the forms was common in Kathiawad, and north Gujarat. But it has now become nominal, being used only on ceremonial occasions like marriage and that too to a much lower extent than before. This is due to restrictions imposed by education and the heavy price and strictness under which it is allowed to be sold by government, with a view to put down its consumption which is regarded as deleterious to health. Formerly opium was given to babies in the shape of *bal-golis* to make them sleep while their mothers worked in the house or elsewhere, but its use even in that form is not now so common as it was before.

Surat and Navsari are the only districts in Gujarat where the practice of drinking toddy prevails to a great extent among the artisans and lower classes of Hindus. On account of what they spent after it, though wages are high, their condition, both physical and material, is not so good as that of the Ahmedabad workmen of the same class.

Distilled drinks are of two kinds, those prepared in the country from Mahura flowers and those imported from Europe, such as spirits like brandy and whiskey and wines, like claret and port. Country liquor is used to a large extent by the lower classes of Hindus such as artisans, Golas, Ghanchis and Kolis, and the *saktas* or Vammargis. Foreign liquor was once in much use in south Gujarat when it was considered a sign of having received English education and of being of reformed habits; but there was soon a revulsion and happily for the province the evil practice has disappeared; but it is still used to some extent, secretly and in the privacy of their own or their friend's house, or

in hotels and restaurants by some of the upper classes who claim to be educated. Happily now, the use of both foreign and country liquor is on a decline, owing to the prohibition movement recently started in the country. Kathiawad uses very little of distilled and fermented drinks, and what little is used is now being given up owing to the same movement.

The preparations from hemp, *bhang*, *yakuti* and *ganja*, were once
 Hemp preparations. common in north and south Gujarat, but the habit is confined now only to *sadhus*, who are addicted to it. Only *bhang*, however is taken in summer or on some festive occasions and holidays by the higher classes of Hindus such as Jain Vania, Soni and others who use no other intoxicating drink and do not eat opium.

Social intercourse in the form of inviting a few friends of all castes
 Social intercourse. and creeds for dinner is rare. This is due to the caste system which requires that persons of different castes should sit apart and that no food which is not cooked by one's own caste people, or by those who are

not superior to him in the caste scale, can be partaken of. Food prepared by Brahman cooks, can be partaken by guests of all castes, but even here there would be a difficulty if the guest is an orthodox *Nagai* or *Prashnoia*. Even when there is a dinner or other social party, women, as a general rule, sit apart, and except in a few reformed and educated families, there are no mixed parties in which males and females dine together. With the loosening of the caste restrictions, social intercourse between persons of different castes has much increased of late. But so long as caste exits and caste dinners continue to be given, small social parties are not likely to be so frequent as may be desirable.

Gujarati Hindus are very fond of giving
 caste dinners in honour of
 some family event.

Though the feasting of caste-fellows is not enjoined by religion, custom in Gujarat has made such entertainments rather compulsory on some occasions, such as, a wife's first pregnancy, an investiture with the sacred thread, a marriage and a death. In addition to these, there are some optional feasts, given either to the whole

caste or to relatives, friends and acquaintances, such as on the anniversary of a death (*shradha* and *samvatsari*); on finishing a new house (*vastushanti* or home peace feast) to atone for the loss of life caused in its building; on performing a vow; on coming back from a pilgrimage; on completing some religious observance or *vrat*; on recovering from a serious illness; on a birth-day; on the birth of a son; on naming a son; on first shaving his head; and on first sending him to school.

Caste dinners are also given from the income from fines for breaches of caste discipline, from the income of funds dedicated for the purpose by some rich member, or from the sum raised by a special subscription. Special caste dinners are given by rich men anxious either to gain or keep up a name for liberality.

On the morning of the day fixed for the dinner, the family priest or some ladies of the family are sent round from house to house to ask the guests. Among the Brahma-Kshatris a Bhat and among Rajputs and Kolis, a barber invites the guests. All except those who on account of old age or mourning do not appear in

public, attend a caste dinner. Each guest brings his own drinking pot and cup. All are dressed in their best and are decked with ornaments either borrowed or their own. In the towns, most of the higher castes, have a *wadi* or caste dining hall, built at the cost of some one of their members or from funds raised by subscription. Elsewhere the dinner is given near the house of the host, and the guests sit in the open space near it or on the public road. Dinner is served on leaf plates except among the Jains, who use brass pots.

The expenses of a caste dinner vary according to the nature of the occasion and the number of dinners given and the number of caste people invited. Even to ordinary persons a marriage or death dinner costs from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500. Many people lead a frugal life, stinting themselves even of the ordinary comforts, with a view to lay by a sufficient amount for the performance of the marriage of their children or the obsequies of their parents. Those who have no money borrow it at a high rate of interest on the security of their ornaments, houses, lands and other property and remaining under the

load of a debt ruin their own and their children's prospects in life.

The mode of living of the people of all castes generally has undergone, during the last half a century, a considerable change, particularly in respect of their dress, style of dwelling and nature of food and furniture. Western ideas are gaining ever firmer hold of the educated upper and middle classes. The strong but cheap and durable brass lamps called *samais*, which were once in common use, have yielded place to Japanese or German lamps with fragile globes and glass chimneys. Castor-seed oil has yielded place to kerosene oil, and in lieu of or in addition to the *gadi-takia* of the old style, many houses have now a few chairs and a sofa of western pattern; and a writing desk in place of the old *bajat* or *chaurang*. Holders and steel-pens have displaced the old fashioned *kalam*s and the rough but strong Ahmadabadi paper has been displaced by the smooth and white but less durable paper of foreign manufacture. The old fashioned cloth-bags, *joranas*, have been displaced by steel boxes and leather trunks;

coats of western fashion have taken the place of *angankhas* and the old type big and heavy turbans are either reduced in bulk or superceded by skull caps and *fentas*; shoes made of red-coloured country leather and ornamented with brass eyelets and a long beaklike projection in the front are being rapidly displaced by black or tan western shaped boots and shoes, which in their turn are now being displaced by *champals*. The old practice of keeping only a tuft of hair on the crown of the head and shaving the rest clean is fast disappearing and the western fashion of wearing close cut hair over the whole head has come into vogue.

The change in female dress, though not much, is well marked. Heavy, durable and cheap country made *sallas* had yielded place to costly and foreign made silk *saris* or Manchester *gavans* but they in their turn, have given place to hand woven or mill made *sadis*. Indian made *saris* of *kinkhab*, or cloth of gold, once universally used on festive occasions, and lasting for years are fast disappearing. The *kapdu* (bodice) is being largely replaced by more decent-looking, but costly *cholis* and *polkas*. Heavy ivory

and wooden *chudas*, bracelets, have, in the upper classes, been displaced by machine polished gold bangles and light but fragile glass bangles. Silver *kallans* and *sanklas*, anklets, have either disappeared or are being displaced by lighter and finer ones. Many Hindu women are still to be found walking bare-footed, in all sorts of weather, but those living in towns and cities have now taken to putting on slippers, *champals* or shoes.

Within the last ten years the eyes of the people are opened owing to the *swadeshi* movement and there appears to be a tendency to prevent waste and revert to the old life of simplicity. The first attack is naturally made on articles of daily life, like clothing. The use of foreign made cloth is given up; spinning and weaving as a home industry is encouraged; and only home-made *khadi* or handloom and Indian mill made cloth is used. The dress is also much simplified. That of males consists of a *dhoti* or *surval*, a long shirt, a skull cap, and a pair of *champals*. Female dress remains the same, but the material used is either cheap *khadi* or handloom or mill made cotton *saris*, in place of the

costly ones used before. This movement for *swadeshi* and simplicity which is mainly due to economic necessity, is more visible in villages than in towns, owing to greater poverty in the former. Among other things it has done great good in removing at least the outward distinguishing marks of castes; such as a turban. With the white skull cap on the head all look alike whether Brahmans, Vantias, Kanbis, Rajputs or Kolis or of the artisan castes.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES.

(a) *Hinduism.*

Hinduism. The religion of the Gujarati Hindus includes such a variety of creeds and beliefs that it may be called an "Encyclopaedia of Religions". Starting from the Vedas, it has ended in embracing something from all religions and in presenting phases suited to all minds. It is all tolerant, all comprehensive, all absorbing. It has its spiritual and material aspect, its esoteric and extoteric, its subjection and objection, its rational and irrational, its pure and impure. It has one side for the practical, another for the severely moral, another for the devotional and imaginative, another for the sensuous and sensual and another for the philosophic and the speculative.

We have at the top of the ladder, a few known as vedantists, whose leading dogma

ekam eva adwitiyam, there is but one being without second, summarises their whole creed. According to them nothing really exists, but the one Universal Spirit called *Brahma* or *Parmatma* and whatever appears to exist separately from the Spirit is *maya*, a mere illusion; *Jivatma* or individual soul is identical with *Parmatma* or Supreme Soul, as microcosm with macrocosm; it is restrained from consciousness of its unity and from union with it by the resultants of its previous *karmas* or actions. So long as these remain attached to the soul as a resultant of its previous actions, it is doomed to wander in repeated incarnations from body to body. Only those souls in which the resultant finally vanishes attain *moksha* or emancipation. They lose all sense of individual personality by complete absorption, *savujya*, into the only really existing Being, who is wholly unfettered by action and without qualities of any kind (*nirguna*) and is called *satchidanand*, because He is pure life, pure thought, pure joy.

Popular Hinduism though supposed to accept this creed called *gnyana marga* or the way of true knowledge, adds to it, two other

inferior ways:—(1) *karma marga*, or path of religious rites, and (2) *bhakti marga*, or path of love and devotion to personal deities. Popular Hinduism supposes that the one Universal Being answers himself by illusionary appearances; and that all visible and material objects, good and bad, including gods, demons, demigods, good and evil spirits, human beings and animals are emanations from Him and are ultimately to be re-absorbed into His essence. Popular Hinduism is represented by the complicated system of polytheistic doctrines and caste usages which have gradually resulted out of the mixture of Brahmanism with Buddhism, and Jainism with non-Aryan creeds of the Dravidians and the Aborigines. Popular Hinduism is something very different from Brahmanism, though the one is derived from the other. It is like a huge irregular structure which has spread itself over an immense surface by continual additions and accretions. It has adopted much of the Fetishism of the Negrito inhabitants of Asia; it has stooped to the practices of the various hill tribes and not scrupled to encourage the adoration of serpents, rocks, stones and trees.

It has often been said that Hinduism never openly takes in new converts and that when they are admitted that is done on the fiction that they have been Hindus all along. Until recently, there were no known cases of admission into Hinduism of persons who had previously been Musalmans or Christians. The Arya Samajists, however, endeavour to secure the re-admission into Hinduism, of Molesalams, Matias, and others who were originally Hindu, but were subsequently converted to the Mahomedan faith. Not long ago, nearly 400 Musalman Rajputs were said to have been taken back into Hinduism in the Kaira district. At the Arya Samaj Conference held in January 1911 at the village of Ranoli in the Baroda district, some persons converted to Christianity were re-admitted in to Hinduism and were forthwith given Hindu names, and treated as Hindus by all concerned. Matias and Shaikhdas, who were originally Hindu Kanbis, who accepted Islam about 300 years ago, owing to the preaching of the Islami Saiyad Imam Shah, had been returning themselves at the Censuses previous to 1911 as Musalmans of the Pirana sect, have

Conversion to Hinduism.

since then reverted to Brahmanism, worship Hindu gods, go on pilgrimage to Benares, Dwarka, Dakorji, etc. and employ Brahmans for the performance of marriage ceremonies, and return themselves as Hindus in the Census. They have been re-admitted into Hinduism by the Aryasamaj, founded by Swami Dayanand Sarasvati and are recognised as Hindus.

So great is the influence exerted by caste rules on the daily life of the Hindus that the whole of their religion may be said to be centered in the caste observances and Hinduism and caste have become convertible terms. Strictness in the maintenance of caste is the only real test of Hinduism exacted by the Brahmans of the present day. In matters of mere faith, Hinduism is all tolerant and all receptive. No person who is not a born Brahman can become one, but any person can be admitted into the lower ranks of Hinduism, who will acknowledge the supremacy of Brahmans and obey the rules of caste. So long as a man observes the rules of his caste, he is at liberty to hold any religious opinion he likes.

The Hindus of Gujarat are divided into several religious sects which fall into two main categories; (1) those who advocate the rival claims of one or other of the great Vedic deities or of Puranic accretions to the orthodox pantheon such as Durga etc. and (2) those who deny the regular deities and prohibit idol worship. To the former class belong (a) the Shaivas or Smartas, (b) Shaktas or Devi Bhaktas, (c) Vaishnavas, and (d) the followers of minor deities such as Sauryas, Ganpatayas etc. To the latter class belong the followers of Kabir, Dadu, Santram, Ravi saheb, Dayanand Sarasvati and many others.

The Shaivas or worshippers of Shiva are mostly Brahmans and Gosais, but a large number of Rajputs, Kanbis, Bhats and Sutars also belong to this sect. They worship the deity under the name of Rudra, Shiva, Sadashiva, Shankar, Shambhu and Mahadev in their own houses as the family god, as also in the temples which are to be found in almost every village. Shiva is a god whose anger is dreaded and

whose favour is propitiated. His heaven is supposed to be in the *Kailas* where he dwells with his wife Parvati (also called Durga, Uma etc.) and his countless troops of servants (*ganàs*). The essential doctrine of Shaivism is the existence of a personal deity, the one existent and universal soul, *Parmatma*, with the individual soul, *Jivatma*. All nature is but a manifestation of the universal soul, takes its origin from that soul, and is eventually absorbed therein. In order to impress this doctrine upon the mind, a Shaiva is required by his religion to mutter every now and then, *shivoham*, i. e. I am Shiva. The daily worship is simple and consists in offering *chandana*, water, and leaves of *bili* (*Aegle Marmelos*) to the *ling*. In cases of anxiety or serious illness and evil planetary influences, prayers called *rudri* and *mitunjay jap* (death conquering prayer) are offered to Shiva in his temples. This consists of Brahmans pouring water over his *ling* and reciting the *rudra-adhyaya* or penegyric in honour of *Rudra*. It is recited 11 times in *rudri*, 121 times in *laghurudra*, 1331 times in *maha rudra* and 14641 times in *ati rudra*.

The Shaktas, or Devi Bhaktas give prominence to the worship of the female counterparts of Shiva, the goddess Devi, Durga and Kali, all consorts of Shiva. The worship of *shakti* or energy is inculcated in the *tantras*, and in the Brahma Vaivart Skand and Kalika Purans. A section of the Markandeya Puran, called Devi Mahatmya or Chandipath is devoted to the praise of Durga. It is read in Mata temples to avert the wrath of the goddess as also to secure happiness and prosperity even by those who call themselves Shaivas or Vaishnavas.

The Ramanuji sect, so called from the name of the founder, Ramanuj, a Tamil Brahman, was founded in the 12th century. Against Shankaracharya's *adwait*, or strict "monism" Ramanuj set up a theory called *vishishtadwait* or "qualified monism" maintaining (1) that individual souls are not essentially one with the Supreme soul, though He is their source and hence the soul after salvation enters into a relation of perfect heavenly service to Him and (2) that the supreme is not purely an abstract being, but

and amours narrated in the tenth chapter of the Bhagwat Puran in which he is represented as Bal Gopal, the cowherd boy who indulged in amorous dalliance with the frail milkmaids of Brindavan. Philosophically Vallabha held that the human soul, *jivatma*, was a spark from the divine essence, *Paramatma*, and though separated from, was yet identical with it. Unlike his sect-forming predecessors, Vallabh discountenanced all mortifications of the flesh and maintained that the body should be revered and not ill-used. Building on this basis, he introduced elements of pleasure and enjoyment in divine worship rejecting the austerity and hardship of the other sects and called his cult *pushti marga*, or cult of spiritual nourishment. He found many adherants among the Vania, Kanbi, Bhatia and other middle classes in Gujarat. Vallabha married and enjoined marriage and worldly life to his successors who are now known as Gosaiji Maharaj. There are seven seats, or *gadis* of this sect, each of which is presided over by the lineal descendants of the founder. There are subordinate establishments in most of the larger towns, where they are called *haveli* or palace.

Both mental and physical worship is prescribed for the followers of this creed. Mentally the image of Krishna is to be imagined as existing before the mind's eye and to be worshipped without rites or ceremonies. Physically the actual human image of Krishna is to be worshipped with pomp and ceremony. In their *mandirs*, temples, which are built like ordinary houses, without porch or spire, images of Shri Krishna in various forms are set on raised platforms and homage is paid by devotees at fixed hours every day. On holidays, the image is profusely decorated and seated on a richly carved dais or swung in fancy cradles of glass, ivory, or wood decked with flowers. Seven daily services or *darshans* are held. Thousands of devotees, males and females, flock to the Gosaiji temples and there are many who do not take their food if they have not been able to get a glimpse, *jhankhi*, of the Thakorji. The first *darshana* is called *mangala* and takes place at about six or half past six in the morning when the image is shown as rising from bed. The rest are:—(2) *shangar* at 8 A. M. when the image is richly attired; (3) *rajbhoga* at noon when the image is shown as taking a meal after returning from

cattle tending; (4) *utthaban* at 3 in the afternoon, when the image is shown as rising from repose; (5) *bhogasan* at 4 P. M. the afternoon luncheon; (6) *sandhya* or *arti* at about sun-down; and (7) *shayan* or *sen*, repose for the night after lamp light.

Initiation of a novice begins in childhood. The first instruction begins between the second and fifth year. The novice is taken to the Maharaja who repeats the formula *shrikrishna shayanam mama*, i.e. Shri Krishna is my refuge. After the child is made to repeat the initiatory prayer, the Maharaja passes round his neck a basil (*tulsi*) *kanthi* or rosary. A later and more important initiation, takes place after the eleventh or twelfth year and at or before marriage of females. After the second initiation, the votary is supposed to consecrate his *tan*, body, *man*, mind, and *dhan*, property, to the deity. The ceremony is called *brahma sambandha* or union with the Supreme Being and enjoins a total surrender of self to the deity. In practice this principle sometimes degenerates into great depravity; the worshippers regarding the Gosaiji Maharajas as incarnations of God pay to them the services

which they believe to be due to Him. Though the sect has no *sadhus*, some of the followers take the *samarpan* or dedicatory vow and do not eat food cooked for them by others. They are called *marjadi*. They do not ordinarily eat in metal vessels but use leaf-plates and obtain their drinking water in canvass covered receptacles.

The epicurean principles of the Vallabhachari sect led to the reform of Swaminarayan sect. the Vaishnav church early in the nineteenth century by Sahajanand Swami, a man of deep religious feelings and high morality whose sect known as the Swaminarayan sect, is at present of great importance in Gujarat and has a large number of followers among Brahman, Kanbi, Bhavsar, Charan, Darji, Ghanchi, Gola, Kachhia, Kathi, Koli, Mali, Rajput, Salat, Sathawara, Soni and Sutar castes. Sahajananda was born in A.D.1780 at the village of Chhapaya, eight miles from Ayodhya in the United Provinces. His parents dying when he was 11 years old, he became a recluse and knew the Bhagwatgita and Vishnu Sahasra Nama by heart. In 1799 he began to associate with a body of Ramanandi

Sadhus and in 1800 was initiated with the name of Sahajanand. He began to preach the Vishisht-adwait faith of Ramanuja with such effect that the then head of the Ramanuja body appointed him his successor. During his rambles, he visited Gujarat several times and, being offended at some of the practices of the Vallabhachari sect, preached chastity and purity of soul to be the key-note of his religion. By his preaching and his own exemplary life, he succeeded in making many converts, chiefly among the lower classes. When he knew that he had gained a sufficient ground, he boldly asserted that he himself was an incarnation of Krishna, born to restore the Vaishnav faith to its former purity. He died in 1830 at Gadhada in Kathiawad where his *padukas*, footmarks, are worshipped. Being a celibate, he adopted two of his nephews, one of whom was installed at Ahmedabad and the other at Vadtal. These descendants are the hereditary Acharyas of the sect. Though the Acharyaship is hereditary it requires a confirmation by a council of four Brahmacharis, four Sadhus, and four laymen, *satsangis*, before accession. If the Acharya does not behave properly he may at any time be deposed. Such

a course had to be taken at the Vadtal *gadi* about twenty four years ago, for the first time in the history of the sect.

The tenets of the Swaminarayan sect are embodied in a book called *Vachanamrit*, nectar of precepts, which is a treatise on all branches of religious philosophy. Their authoritative works are:— the Vedas; the Vedanta Sutra of Vyasa, as interpreted by Ramanuja; the Bhagwat Purana; three chapters of Mahabharat, viz., Vishnu Sahasra Nama, Bhagwatgita and Vidur Niti; and Vasudeva Mahatmya, a chapter of the Skanda Puran. The book which is usually read by the followers of the sect in their daily prayers is called *shikshapatrika*, a book of precepts embodying practical ethics. It prohibits the destruction of animal life, promiscuous intercourse with the other sex, use of animal food and intoxicating drinks and drugs, theft and robbery, blasphemy, false accusation, caste pollution, etc.

The ceremony of initiation begins with the novice offering a palmful of water near the feet of the Acharya saying, "I give over to Swaminarayan my mind, body, wealth and sins of (all)

births (*man, dhan ane janamna pap*)". He is then given the sacred formula, *Shri Krishna twam gatir mam*, i.e. "Shri Krishna, thou art my refuge." The novice then pays at least a rupee or half a rupee to the Acharya. Ordinarily every follower is expected to present to his Acharya a twentieth of his yearly income, while the more devout is expected to pay a tenth. Before taking his food, he is enjoined to worship an image of Sahajanand Swami which he keeps in his house along with the *shiksha patika*. He also worships his footprints on a piece of cloth and tells his rosary beads repeating his name. There is a Swaminarayan temple in almost every important town and village in Gujarat which is attended either in the morning or in the evening, or at both times, by all the followers. There are separate passages in the temples for women and also separate reading and preaching halls for them.

All the sect-makers from Shankaracharya to

Non-idolatrous sects. Swaminarayan were Brahmans and men of learning.

In Kabir and others of his type, we have men from the lower castes, unacquainted with Sanskrit,

showing a repulsion for caste and idol worship, seceding from Vaishnavism, and founding non-idolatrous sects on a basis of equality between man and man. They were greatly affected by the example of Islam in their disregard for caste and idol worship. They also promulgated a high moral code, declaring that life was a sacred gift of God and that the blood of men or animals ought never to be shed by his creatures. Great stress is laid on truthfulness and adoration is allowed to be paid to Vishnu or Rama, not as idols, but as names of one God.

Just as after the advent of the Musalmans, Hindu religious reformers like Kabir were greatly influenced by the monotheistic ideas of their religion, so in more recent times two movements known as Brahmō Samaj and Arya Samaj have been formed under the inspiration of Western education and Western thought. Many people belong to one or other of the great religions of the world, such as Hinduism, Mahomedanism, Christianity, etc. But there are a few who frame for themselves what are called *eclectic* systems. They do not

Recent theistic movement.

attach themselves to any particular sect but select from the opinions and principles of each what they think to be true and good. Such is the Brahmc Samaj of Bengal which has a few followers in Gujarat as Prarthana Samajists. And the same may be said to a certain extent about the Arya Samaj which now claims thousands of followers in Gujarat.

Like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj is a form of theistic Hinduism founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati about the year 1875. On finishing his Vedic studies, he was struck to find that the Vedas do not sanction idol worship, man worship, incarnation of god as man, animal sacrifice, child marriage, enforced widowhood, caste system based on birth, sole monopoly of the Vedic study by the born Brahmans, showy and meaningless ceremonials, miracles, *mitak shradha*, blind faith, and many superstitious beliefs which are generally known among the Hindus by the general name of *dharmā*. He set in right earnest to preach the monotheism of the Vedas taking as his motto "*Ekam ewa adwitiyam*" (there is but one Being without a

second). He wrote his well known discourses in a book form called the "Satyarth Prakash" (Light of Truth). He never divorced reason from religion but preached that what is irrational is not religion but superstition.

He framed the 10 principles of the Arya Samaj, in which he inculcated on his followers the mental worship of the One All-pervading, Intelligent cause of the Universe and the importance of the study of the Vedas. He made the Arya Samaj not only the "Vedic Church" for the Hindus but for all human beings, as is evident from his sixth principle, which says that the primary object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world.

The theology of the Arya Samaj is based on the Vedas and the Upanishadas. It upholds the performance of *hom*, or the sacrifice on grounds of the purification of the atmosphere. In their *homs*, Arya Samajists burn in strong fire sweet-scented vegetable disinfectants with clarified butter and saffron. Swami Dayanand Saraswati preached the *karmic* theory or in the words of Mr. Herbert Spencer, the law of

“Action and Reaction” and asserted the supremacy of self-exertion over fate; he held Sanyasis, Mahatma Sadhus, preachers, teachers, donors and unselfish workers in great respect. But no man could be the special favourite, messenger or incarnation of God according to the Arya Samaj.

The Arya Samaj holds merits or demerits of a person as the only constituting element of his or her social position or “*varna*”, but not his or her birth. It does not believe in caste or its divisions.

One of the best service rendered by the Arya Samaj is in directing charity to its right course. It has been able by utilising public charity to establish many important educational and philanthropic institutions like the Arya Kumar Ashram in Baroda. It is a strong advocate of female education and has started many girls' schools and boarding houses. For encouraging the study of Sanskrit, Hindi and modern sciences, the Arya Samaj has established *gurukuls*, like the one at Supa in the Surat district and a number of Sanskrit *patha-shalas*, and orphanages for feeding and educating

helpless boys and girls. It has also Widows' Homes which are doing good service in relieving the wretched lot of widows by helping them to marry persons of their own choice. It has got good many *upadeshakas* (missionaries) to carry on its mission, which is social and religious but has nothing to do with politics.

No account of the religious life and beliefs of the Gujarat Hindus would be complete without even a brief description of the *sadhus* or ascetics whose *seva* or service forms an important part of their daily devotion. *Sadhus* under various names and in the guise of one or other of the existing sects are to be found not only in the local monasteries at Dwarka, Dakor, Sidhpur, Karnali, Vadtal, Gadhada and other sacred places and the temples of the various sects in all the towns, but are also to be found roaming about in villages, either singly or in small parties under their respective leaders. Except during the four months of the rainy season they are on a move either in their own district or on a pilgrimage to the sacred places. *Sadhus* command the respect and even the superstitious veneration of the

people, who believe that they are possessed of supernatural power for good or evil. Pious Hindus desirous of securing the blessing of heaven have, in most of the towns and large villages, established *sadavarts* or charity houses, where any Sadhu can get some food. To the *Maharaj* or *Bapji*, as Sadhus are called, coming as a mendicant near their door, Hindu females readily give a handful of *lot* (flour) or cooked food if it can be acceptable to him. Those who can afford show a willingness to minister to Sadhus' wants under the belief that it secures great religious merit. Many humbly invite them to partake of a meal at their place or offer to provide *sidha* for the whole of their *jund* or body, when they are passing through their village. So great is the implicit faith placed by the Gujaratis in Sadhus, that Vagharis and other criminal tribes find a Sadhu's garb a good means of carrying out their depredatory designs.

There have been many distinguished

No religious preacher of note produced by Gujarat.

Gujarati Jain *acharyas*, but it is noteworthy that Gujarat has not produced any Hindu religious leader

of note. *Acharyas* from the south like Shanker,

Ramanuja and Vallabh, and from the north like Sahajanand Swami and Kabir have spread their faith in Gujarat. Before Mahomed of Gazni's invasion on Somnath Patan Brahmanism as represented by Shankaracharya was supreme in Gujarat. Jainism was confined only to few Vania castes. The faith of the people in Shaivism was, however, shaken when Mahomed could with impunity break to pieces the famous idol of Somnath Mahadev and carry away its treasures. This was the opportunity, first for Jain Sadhus and then for Ramanuj and for each successive Vaishnav preacher from the south or the north to extend their faith. The local sect makers like Kuberdas, Santram and Bhabharam were simply copyists and had been able to secure followers only on account of their personal high character. They were exponents of the non-idolatrous principle laid down by Kabir, but their beliefs and practices were tinged with Vaishnavism in one form or another.

The division of the Gujarati Hindus into sects is not a division into
 No sectarianism among Hindu sects. so many watertight compartments between which
 no communion is possible. There is no doubt

that a certain amount of hostility is felt by the leaders and the inner circle of devotees of some sects against the adherents of their rival sects. It is due to this that devout Vaishnavas of the Vallabhachari sect are careful that they do not pronounce the Gujarati word *shivavun*, to sew, least they may thereby indirectly utter the name of Shiva and show him reverence. The head of Shaiva sect, the Shankaracharya of Dwarka similarly shows hostility to the Swaminarayan and other Vaishnav leaders and the brawls between them some times result in legal notices, apologies and even criminal proceedings. But beyond these, lies the great mass of the people who, while showing special reverence to the god of their sect, their *ishta devta*, worship also the gods of the Hindu pantheon. A Shaiva Brahman, for instance, visits Shiva's temples and also Vishnu *mandirs* and Mata temples. A Vaishnav makes obeisance to the Rama or Krishna idols of his sect and also visits Mahadev and Mata temples; and similarly *devi upasaks* have no objection to reverence Mahadev or Krishna. The Gujarat Hindu is very religious and very tolerant. He worships not only his own and his people's gods, but also shows reverence to Musalman Pirs and

Christian *padris*. He abstains from insulting the religious feelings of others and avoids any thing that may bring upon him the wrath of any deity.

Hindu males paint on their foreheads
white or coloured marks
Sect marks. indicative of their sects.

Tripunda or three traverse streaks, painted with *vibhuti* (sacred ashes) or sandal paste with a round mark in the middle, or merely two round white marks distinguishes the Shaivas or worshippers of Shiv. Each Vaishnav sect has its own distinguishing mark. Ramanujis paint on their foreheads the *trifala*, three lines drawn upwards from near the meeting of the eyebrows, the central line red and the outer ones white, made with *gopi chandan* or white clay, procured from a tank near Dwarka in which, according to legend the *gopies*, milkmaids, drowned themselves on hearing of the death of their divine lover Shri Krishna. The Vallabhachari sect-mark consists of two red-perpendicular lines converging in a semi-circle at the root of the nose. The followers of Swaminarayan have a similar sect-mark, made with *gopi chandan* and

with a round red powder mark in the middle. Irrespective of sects, Hindu females mark their foreheads with a *chanlla*, a round red powder mark, which indicates that they are *saubhagya-vati* or with good luck i. e. have their husbands alive.

A Gujarati Hindu attaches the greatest importance to bathing. As Every-day religion. a rule he does not take his morning meal before having a bath which consists of pouring a few *lotas* of water on his person. After bath he worships his family gods or goddesses, or goes to the temple of his sect for the same purpose. The *darsana* in the temple consists simply of getting a glimpse of the idol and saying *je, je, je*, chanting *bhajans*, hymns, offering flowers and leaving a few coppers or a handful of grain in a plate kept for the purpose. The temple is visited also in the afternoon by those who are very devout. Whenever a Hindu is at leisure, or in a contemplative mood, he mutters the name of Shri Rama or Shree Krishna either alone or in company with their respective consorts, i. e. Rama Rama or Sita Rama, and Krishna Krishna or Radha Krishna.

He gives alms in the shape of a handful of rice, pulse or flour to Brahmans and Sadhus. He either sets apart a portion of his food or uses the remainder at his table for dogs and cows which wander about in the streets. He observes half a fast on every Monday or Saturday and a whole fast on every eleventh day in a fortnight. He feeds Brahmans and Sadhus, whenever he is inclined to accumulate extra merit. He goes on a pilgrimage to Dakorji, Narmadaji, Kalka Mata, Amba Mata and other places when he has taken a vow to do so, or whenever it pleases him to do so. He believes in heaven, or hell and transmigration of soul. His next life and his going to heaven or hell depend upon his actions in the present life. He hopes to better his position in this and the life to come by his devotion to his god, his *dan*, charity, to Brahmans and his *daya*, mercy, to men, cows, etc.

The places of pilgrimage owe their sanctity to their possessing the shrines of the gods or objects worshipped and as being places mentioned in the legendery lore. Such places are

Pilgrimage.

many, such as Sidhpur, Modhera, Behecharaji, Dwarka, Dakore, Chandod, Pavagadh, Ambaji, Unai etc. in Gujarat itself and Shrinathji, Gokul, Mathura, Benares etc. outside it. Of the places of pilgrimage in Gujarat, Dwarka, Sidhpur and Chandod, all within the Baroda State, are well-known throughout India. Dwarka is looked upon as a very holy place on account of its once having been the capital of Shri Krishna and at present possessing the shrine of Shri Ranchhodji and the *Sharda pith math* of the Shankaracharya and the Vaishnav temples in the island of Beyt in its neighbourhood. Sidhpur is looked upon as the only place in the whole of India where *shradha* can be performed, for the propitiation of the manes of a deceased mother. What Gaya is for the deceased father, Sidhpur is for the deceased mother. Chandod is situated on the sacred Narbada, ablutions in whose water are believed to cause the purification of sins. Large number of pilgrims, constantly visit these and other holy places, and provide a livelihood for the local Brahman priests who administer to them the necessary rituals and a number of Sadhus, beggars and other idlers who hang about these places. The Jains have their own places

of pilgrimage, such as Mount Abu, Palitana, Bhoini, Taranga, Girnar and Keshariaji in Gujarat itself and Samitshekharji and other places outside it. People have great faith in the merit to be attained by going on a pilgrimage and thousands flock to places of pilgrimage several times in a year, if they are near and once or more in their life, if they are very distant. In the old unsettled times, pilgrims used to go in bands called *sangha* with hereditary leaders called *sanghavis*. Railways and motors have now made pilgrimages easier, safer and less costly: but devout Hindus, especially Jains, still go on foot, expecting thereby to gain more religious merit.

(b) *Jainism.*

The Jain religion like Buddhism, is believed to have been originally an offshoot from Hinduism and many Jains still continue to consider themselves as members of the Hindu community, to marry with Hindus and to take part in their festivals. Jainism was founded by Parsvanath about two hundred years before Buddha. It was reformed and firmly established by a Kshatriya prince named Vardhaman or Mahavir who was born at

Vansali near Patana about 599 B. C. He is said to have been originally an erring man who by his own power attained to omniscience and freedom and out of pity for suffering mankind, preached the way of salvation which he had found. Because he conquered the *manus* in the human heart he became known as *Jina*, the victor, from which the term Jainism is derived. He is also called *Jineshwar*, Chief of the Jinas; *Arhat*, the venerable Tirthankar, the sage who has made the passage of the world; *Sarvagna*, omniscient, and *Bhagavat*, holy one. His followers were mainly Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The artisan classes were but little affected by his propaganda. The characteristic feature of this religion is that it rejects the authority of the Vedas and denies the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmans. It also declares its object to be, to lead all men to salvation, and to open its arms, not only to the noble Aryas, but also to the low born Sudra and even to the alien, *mlechha*. The Jains like Buddhists, deny the existence of a great creator and pay reverence to twenty-four *jin*as or perfect saints raised to the rank of gods. Parsvanath and Mahavir are considered to be the last two of these saints for the present *yuga*. The

disciples are divided into ecclesiastics and laity. At the head stands an order of ascetics called *yatis* or *sadhus*, and under them the general community of *upasaka*, "the worshippers" or the *shravak*, the "hearers." The highest goal of Jainism is *nirvana* or *moksha*, the setting free of the individual from the *sanskara*, the revolution of birth and death. The means of reaching it are, as in Buddhism, the three jewels, the Right Knowledge (*Satgnyana*), the Right Belief (*Sat-darshan*) and the Right Conduct (*Sat-chaitra*). The first Jewel, Right Knowledge, is the correct comprehension of the philosophical system which the *Jina* taught. According to the Jain doctrine, soul exists not only in organic structures, but also in apparently dead masses, in stones, in lumps of earth, in drops of water, in fire, and in wind. Virtue leads to the heavens of the gods or to birth among men in pure and noble races. Sin confines the soul to the lower regions, in the bodies of animals, in plants or even into masses of lifeless matter. The bondage of souls if they inhabit a human body, can be abolished by the suppression of the causes which led to their confinement and by the destruction of the *Karman* merit and sin. The final state is

the attainment to a knowledge which penetrates the universe to *keval gnyana* and *nirvan* or *moksha*, full deliverance from all bonds. The second jewel, the Right Belief, requires the full surrender to the teacher, the *Jina*, and the firm conviction that he alone has found the way to salvation and only with him is protection and refuge to be found. The third jewel, the Right Conduct, which contains the Jain ethics may be summarised in the words: not to hurt, not to speak untruth, to appropriate nothing to one's self without permission, to preserve chastity and to practise self-sacrifice, in special relation to thoughts, words and deeds.

Jainism was formerly supposed to be an outcome of Buddhism on the ground of similarity of principles, but materials have since been discovered in the *Budha sutras* themselves, which shows that it is quite as ancient as Buddhism. Jains hold the same tenets as the Buddhists regarding the sacredness of life, but differ from them in accepting the orthodox Hindu view of self-mortification by bodily penances. They believe in the separate

Jainism compared with Buddhism.

existence of the soul which the Buddhists deny. Souls according to the Jains may exist in stocks, stones, lumps of earth, drops of water, particles of fire, etc. Jainism also differs from Buddhism in that it admits its lay adherents into communion with the order and holds devotional services for them. Buddhism on the other hand gave its lay adherents no share in the monastic organisation and held no services for their benefit. Consequently when the Brahmanic revival of Shankaracharya came and was followed by Mahomedan persecution and the destruction of monasteries, Buddhism in India simply disappeared and became merged in the various Vaishnav sects which grew into prominence about the 12th and 13th centuries, while Jainism still survives as the religion of many of the Vania castes who represent the ancient Vaishyas.

Jainism is gradually drifting back into the current of Brahmanism

Hindu beliefs and practices among Jains.

which everywhere surrounds it and attracts it.

Jains observe Hindu holidays like *Diwali*, *Holi* and *Akhatrij* and have a sort of modified belief in the Hindu Gods, especially Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Ganesh with their consorts as being

subordinated to the Jinas. Representatives of these deities are sometimes observable in the precincts of their temples. They observe the caste system and sometimes claim to be regarded as Hindus though rejecting the Hindu Vedas. In actual practice, they celebrate most of the purificatory rites prescribed by the Brahmanical Shastras and employ Brahmans as priests for the performance of these as well as for offering worship to their Tirthankaras. Jains also mark their foreheads with saffron: a small spot as a sect mark in imitation of the Hindus. The schism from Hinduism does not operate as a bar to marriage or commensality any more than do differences which are admittedly only sectarian. Jain Shrimalis intermarry with those of their community who belong to the Vaishnava sect of Hindus. If a Hindu girl marries a man who is a Jain, she attends the Jain ceremonies when in her husband's house and worships the Brahmanical gods when she goes to visit her parents.

Jain beliefs and practices have largely affected the Hindus especially in kindness towards animal life. *Ahinsa paramo dharma*, non-killing is the highest religion, is now as

Jain effect on
Hinduism.

clean white clothes (Swetambaras) and eat out of dishes. They allow that women can attain eternal bliss. They do not as a rule wear the *janoi*, but when worshipping, throw the *rumal* across the shoulder in the position in which the *janoi* rests. This they call *uttarasana*. Their authorities are the 45 *Angamas*.

Which of the two sects represents the original and oldest followers of Mahavir, is yet undecided. Both persists in claiming the honour. Digambaris appear to be the orthodox sect as Anandgiri, who was a contemporary of Shankaracharya, mentions no other sect in his treatises. They revere the 24 Tirthankaras, but do not worship them. They worship the Deva, Gurus and Dharm, looking to the Tirthankaras as models and meditators, and in themselves objects of worship. The laity are at first taught to worship Tirthankaras; as they rise in knowledge and religious standing, they cease to do so. Gurus (*yatis*) only look on the Tirthankaras as examples to be followed. Digambaris do not adorn their images or fill their eyes with crystals, etc. In the case of seated images, the

right hand rests on the left. Hindu gods are not found in their temples, except Indra occasionally; and they do not employ Brahmans to officiate. They believe in 16 heavens. Their *gurus* go naked, and only eat from the hands of a disciple. They deny that women can attain eternal bliss.

About four hundred years ago, a section of the Swetambaris formed themselves into a separate sect, called Dhundia. One Lonkashah of Ahmedabad, who lived in 1643 A. D., and was employed in copying Jain manuscripts, found that there was no sanction for idol worship in the *sutras*, which contained doctrines quite different from those that were practised by the monks of the time. After having studied the *sutras* thoroughly, he cast off idol worship and proclaimed to the Jain community that the priests, who taught image worship, were hypocrites; and that it had no place in the *sutras*. He soon got a small number of followers. In spite of opposition from and persecution by the priests, Lonkashah succeeded in starting a new sect, which was nick-named by their idolatrous

enemies as Dhundia. This name is said to have been derived from their having had to search (*dhundvu*), their religious books for true knowledge, or from the fact that they always seek (*dhundhe*), carefully to remove all animal life from their path for fear of accidentally killing it. They have no images or temples at all, but worship the abstract ideal only of *dharm*, and follow men who have overcome their passions. They admit the good example of the Tirthankaras, but pay them no special respect. Their *gurus* are dressed in dirty white. They always carry a small broom of cotton fibre, with which to sweep all animal life out of their path and wear over the mouth a pad to prevent the mselves from swallowing any small insect. They live in monasteries (*thanak*). Women are treated on an equality with men as regards the *sidh* condition. These women (*sadhwis*) are celibates, dress in white, wear the pad and carry the broom, just as the *sadhus* do. They accept only 32 out of the 45 Angamas, and reject the commentaries (*Bhashya charitra*).

In order to distinguish themselves from the idolators—Swetambaris and Digambaris, the

followers of Lonkashah have been lately calling themselves Sthanakvasi Swetambaras. They strenuously resent the appellation of Dhundia, which they assert, has been given by outsiders as a term of reproach.

There are three classes of ascetics—Sadhus, Jain ascetic. Sadhwis and Gorjis. Any person may become a Sadhu. A Sadhu wears only two pieces of *bhagava* or ochre coloured cotton cloth but no head-dress. He does not allow the hair of his head, moustache or beard to grow. Except when enfeebled by age he does not shave, but after allowing his hair to grow for about six months, tears it out with his fingers or gets it clipped. He always carries his staff (*dand*) and brush, (*ogho*) and before he sits down, sweeps the ground to push insects away. He sleeps on a blanket and owns no property. He never kindles fire or cooks food for fear of killing any living thing, but begs cooked food from Shravaks. He enters those houses, only whose doors are open and on entering repeats the words *dharmā labha* (fruits of religion). The owner of the house lays before him *bhiksha*

or cooked food. When he has gathered enough for a meal from the different houses, the Sadhu returns and eats at the *aṣasara* or house for *sadhus*. Drinking water is collected in the same way. During the fair season, Sadhus are forbidden to stay more than five days in the same vilage and more than a month in the same town. But they are allowed to pass at one place the rainy season, that is, the four months from Ashadh Sudi 14th to Kartak Sudi 14th. The Sadhu's chief duties are to study and teach the Jain Shastras and to keep the *pañch mahavratas* or five main vows. They are: to refrain from *pranatiṣat*, life-taking, *murkhavad*, lying, *adattadan*, receiving anything without the knowledge of the owner, *maithun*, sexual intercourse, and *parigraha*, taking gifts not allowed by religious rules.

Sadhwis or nuns are recruited from religious Shravak women. A
 Sadhwis. Sadhwi wears one robe round the waist and another on the upper part of the body. Like the Sadhu, she tears out the hair of her head once in six months, carries *dand* and *ogho* and begs her meal and water.

A Gorji differs from a Sadhu in wearing white instead of red ochre clothes. Gorjis grow the moustache and hair of the head. Unlike Sadhus, Gorjis have no order of female Gorjis. Except a few who break the rules and cook rich food in their monasteries, Gorjis never cook but beg *bhiksha* like Sadhus. Any person may become a Gorji. At present most of them are sons of low-caste Hindus, or their illegitimate children, who are brought up by a Gorji. For this reason, they have sunk in estimation. Gorjis practise sorcery and magic and prescribe medicine.

Sadhus and Sadhwis belong to no *gachha*.

Gorjis and Shravaks are divided into *gachhas* or bodies. Each *gachha* has a spiritual head, called Shripujya, who is chosen from among the Gorjis of the same *gachha*, provided he was originally a Shravak or a Brahman. Shripujyas wear their hair and dress and beg in the same way as Gorjis, except that a Gorji sometimes brings his food and water for him with his own.

There is little difference in the entrance ceremonies for Sadhus, Sadhwis or Gorjis. The person who wishes to become a Sadhu goes to

Gorji.

Shripujya.

Initiation.

a learned Sadhu, and bowing at his feet humbly asks him to take him as his pupil or *chela*. The Sadhu finds out that the parents and relations of the youth are willing that he should become a Sadhu and that he has sufficient strength of body and mind to stand the fasting and other discipline laid down in the Jain scriptures. A lucky day is chosen for the initiatory ceremony. When the disciple is a man of means, the ceremony is performed at his expense. In other cases, the cost is contributed by the Shravak community, who are always pleased when additions are made to the number of their religious class. The ceremony is celebrated with the same pomp as a marriage. A procession starts from the house of the disciple, who is seated in a palanquin, with a cocoanut in his hand and passes through the principal streets. A female relation of the person to be initiated carries in her hand a *chhab* or bamboo basket with the articles required for the intended Sadhu. The procession passes outside of the town and stops below an *asopalo* (*Polyalthia longifolia*) tree, where the *guru*, who is awaiting the arrival of the procession performs the initiatory ceremony. The Sadhus form a circle round the

novice, and the laity stand behind. The novice puts off his old clothes except the waist cloth. He then plucks out the hair of his head or gets some one to do so, and puts on his new garments as a Sadhu. He is then given a new name, containing at least one letter of his original name. Camphor, musk, sandal, saffron and sugar are applied to his bare head, while the initiator repeats texts calling on him to observe with care the five prescribed vows, *panch maha vratas*. He is then supplied with the articles allowed to an ascetic by the Jain scriptures. They include five wooden pots or *patra* in the shape of deep dishes, a *dand*, about five feet long, a *ogho* or brush, which, while walking is carried under the left armpit and is used to sweep the ground. The ceremony is completed by the *guru* throwing *vas khes* or fragrant powder on the head of the new ascetic as he passes. He does not return to the town, but passes the night in the neighbouring village or in a rest-house outside the town. He comes back next morning and stays in the *apasara* or monastery.

The religious temples of the Jains are of two classes, *apasaras*, Temples, idols and monasteries. monasteries and *dehras*, temples. They are built either by a single wealthy Shravak or by subscription. Shravaks are very liberal in the sums they spend on temples. A Shravak temple is always called after one of the twenty-four *Tirthankaras* or patron saints. The image of the chosen *Tirthankar* called *mulnayak* is set on a raised seat and on both of his sides, images of one or more of the *Tirthankaras* are placed and all are worshipped with equal respect. Below the idol of the *mulnayak* or in other niches or upper storeys images of Hindu goddesses are placed and worshipped with offerings of cocoanuts, betanuts and rice. Sadhus, Sadhwis and Gorjis rarely visit the temple and do not perform the daily *puja*, which is left to be done by paid servants called *pujaris* who are generally Shrimali Brahmans, Tapodhans, Malis or Kanbis. They live in *apasaras* which are quite distinct from temples. *Apasaras* are buildings with large halls without bath or cooking rooms. The Shripujyas and Gorjis live in one *apasara* and Sadhus and Sadhwis

in separate *apasaras*. In the Sadhu *apasaras*, Jain scriptures are daily read from 7 to 9 in the morning. Sadhwis like Shravaks come to hear scriptures, but sit separate from the men and listen from a distance. Sadhwis give instruction to Shravak women in their *apasaras*, but a Gorji or Shripujya seldom lectures or preaches.

Any Hindu who is not a flesh eater or spirit drinker is considered a fit temple servant. As mentioned before ministrants in Shravak temples are Tapodhan Brahmans, Bhojaks or Malis. A Shravak ministrant is never paid in money. Ministrants of other castes are paid upto Rs. 100 a year, in addition to the right of using fruit and other presents laid before the image by votaries. Jain temples are always closed during the night and as a rule, a lamp is not kept burning in them. Except in big temples where other servants are employed, the ministrant sweeps the temple, keeps charge of the temple vessels and performs the worship of the idol. With a piece of cloth tied round his mouth the ministrant first washes the idol with water mixed with

curds and then with plain water, and dries it with a soft cloth. He lays flowers before and over it and applies fragrant substances to its toe, ankle, navel, brow, heart, palm, shoulders, neck and crown; aloe sticks are burnt, and lamp are waved as *arti*. He then draws on a footstool, a *sathio* or half square with grains of rice and as sacred food places on it almonds, sesame and sweetmeats brought from a Shravak family. After this he unties his mouth and sits in the hall chanting prayers. The temples are closed at noon and re-opened again an hour or two before sun-set. Shravaks, both males and females, visit their temples in the morning and evening. Some males bathe in the temple and go through the same ritual as the ministrant. Women rarely do so, though they are not forbidden to do so. Shravaks place in front of the idol rice, flowers etc. They do not take anything in their pocket when visiting a temple, as on returning home, they cannot use it for any other purpose. Taxes or fixed payments are sometimes levied for the maintenance of Jain temples. Whatever money is laid before the idol is credited in an account book and spent in repairing the temple, paying the *pujani* and

buying saffron, aloe-sticks and other articles required for the daily worship. Temple management is entrusted to one or more trustees who are chosen from the *gachha* to which the builder of the temple belongs.

Jains are not only strict vegetarians, but also avoid eating vegetables which are many-seeded such as brinjals, or such bulbous and tuberous plants as potatoes, yams etc. On certain days called *parva*, the use of green vegetables is forbidden. Every family has a large supply of brass plates and wooden stools. The plate is set on the stool and two or three persons eat together from the same plate. Water is believed to be full of insect life. On ordinary days, it is carefully strained through a fine cloth and the sediment called *sankharo* is thrown into the well or river from which the water was taken. On fast days, Jains drink water that has been boiled within eight hours of the time of drinking.

Some Shravaks keep five and others twelve monthly fasts. The five fast days are the two-eighths, the two-fourteenths and the fifth of the

bright half of every Hindu month; the twelve fast days are the two-seconds, the two-fifths, the two-eighths, the two-elevenths, the two-fourteenths and the bright and dark fifteenth of every Hindu month. Jains ought to fast during the whole week of their *pachusān* holidays, but the rule is observed by a few only; almost all however fast on the last day. Sometimes, but rarely, a Jain Sadhu takes the vow of fasting to death. This is called *santharo* or sleeping. After fasting for some days, the Sadhu's body is constantly rubbed with a wet cloth. When he dies he is placed in a litter in a sitting posture and carried in procession with music to the burning ground. Now-a-days the vow of *santharo* is taken a day or two previous to death when all hopes of life are given up.

(c) *Popular beliefs and practices.*

Apart from the precepts of their religion, both Hindus and Jains hold certain superstitious beliefs and follow certain practices which they have long acquired from their contact with the aborigines of the country. These beliefs and practices are however fast dying

out, under the influence of education and contact with the West. But they are still followed by the large mass of the uneducated and especially by females, and a brief record of them has therefore been made here.

All Hindu gods and goddesses have offerings made to them, either daily or on special days.

Offerings.

Offerings are either bloody or bloodless. Blood offerings are made to goddesses by Ahirs, Bharvads, Bhils, Charans, Dheds and other low castes. Blood offerings are sometimes made even by high caste Hindus in fulfilment of a vow taken to avert or cure some family sickness or secure the favour of some goddess. Blood offerings are also made for general health and agricultural prosperity by the villagers as a body, or by a wealthy villager. Some high caste Hindus who scruple to kill an animal, simply lay before the goddess a live cock, sometimes with one of its legs cut off or an ear-bored goat and allow the animals to roam at large. With a sword they cut a pumpkin or sprinkle on the goddess the blood that oozes out by having the animal's ear lopped off or its body scratched with a knife.

Bloodless offerings consist of grains, fruit, flowers, and tree leaves. They are made both in every-day worship and on special days and differ for different gods. To the stone image of Shiva are offered the leaves of the *billi* tree (*aegle marmelos*). To Devi or Mata, Shiva's consort, all red flowers are offered, especially the *karana* (oleander). The flowers of *akdo*, swallow wort, cannot be offered to any god except Hanuman. To Vishnu in his form of Krishna are offered white flowers and basil (*tulsi*) leaves.

The Gujarati Hindus are very charitable, but their charity is not well regulated. They give alms, usually a handful of grain or flour to Brahmans, Sadhus and other beggars who visit their home, without caring to inquire whether they are deserving or not. *Sadavantas*, charity-houses, have been started by the rich for giving food to Sadhus, in almost all important towns, where those in the garb of a Sadhu, can get a cooked or uncooked meal. Lands have been set aside with a view to devote the income to be derived from it in feeding cows, dogs, and pigeons. But generally speaking nothing more is done

for the relief of human beings, than sinking wells, or making arrangement for providing drinking water to travellers during the summer months. Education and contact with the West have, however, within recent years, brought about a desirable change, and those who can afford to give in charity, usually give it for such laudable purposes as medical aid, relief of the blind and infirm, educational facilities for the poor etc. The sentiment of charity is deeply rooted amongst the people, but it not unfrequently leads to indiscriminate acts of charity which produce as much or even more harm than good. It seems essential therefore that the spirit of charity should be guided as far as possible by an intelligent consideration of methods.

All Gujarati Brahmans, except a few, who belong to the Swaminarayan sect are followers of Shiva, and almost all have household gods, whose worship some member of the family performs. The family gods are either some or all of the Hindu *panchayatan* or the group of five, viz., a stone *ling* of Mahadev, a stone *shaligram*,

Religious belief and practice of the different castes.

or a picture of Shri Nathji for Vishnu, a picture of metal image of Shakti, *Bhawani* or *Mata*; typifying divine energy; *Ganapati* and *Surya* or the Sun, or *Hanuman*, the Monkey-god. Their social and religious customs are chiefly, ruled by the Mayukh, the Mitakshara and the Dharma and Nirnaya Sindhu. They perform *sandhya* or twilight prayer at least once a day in the morning, count their beads and repeat the *gayatri* or sun-hymn. Priests and beggars are almost the only men who observe the regular fasts. As a rule, on Mondays and on the first and fifteenth of each month and on the great religious festivals, men visit Shiva's temples for worship. Women are more careful than men to observe fasts, but are less regular in visiting the temples. Family and village priests learn by rote the ritual required at the different every day ceremonies, but with a few exceptions, have no claim to learning. Like Gujarati Brahmans, most of the Dakshani Brahmans are Shaivas or Smartas. But they are more ceremonious, more scrupulous in observing ceremonial purity and keep more closely to religious rules than Gujarati Bhahmans.

Brahma-Kshatris keep the rules laid down for Brahmans—reading the sacred books, worshipping, meditating, repeating prayers, making offerings to the Sun and at meals putting on a silk cloth. Kayasthas mostly belong to the Vallabhachari sect, but some of them are Ramanujis and some Shaivas. Vantias are very religious and as a class are staunch adherents of the Vallabhachari sect to which they were converted about four hundred years ago. In south Gujarat, each house has a separate god-room. They worship daily at the Vallabhachari temples and in their houses. Instead of the sacred thread, both men and women wear round their neck a *kanthi* (basil thread necklace). They mark their brows with two upright lines of *kanku* (red powder), rub their eyelids and forehead with *gopichandan*, the yellow clay found near Dwarka, Gokul and Mathura, and imprint a seal dipped in sandal dust between the sectarian lines and on the temples, neck and arms. Bhatias are Vaishnav of the Vallabhachari sect and are very observant of religious rites. Like Vantias, they visit Vaishnava temples and worship in their houses the image of Vishnu in the form of Ranchhodji or Radha Krishna.

Luhanas are Vaishnavas of the Vallabhachari and Ramanuji sects. Their family goddess is Randel Mata and they are devout worshippers of Darya Pir, the spirit of the Indus. Rajputs do not differ from other Hindus in their religious observances and practices. Though many are followers of the Vallabhachari, Swaminarayan and Ramanuji sects, Rajputs from remote ages have been partial to the worship of Shiva. At the same time, they worship all Hindu gods and goddesses and their house shrines contain the images of Shiva, Vishnu, Ganpati and of the tutelary goddess of the clan. The Kathis worship the Sun and the Parajia Sonis worship the fire. Among other castes, such as Kanbis, Kolis Kachhias, and the agricultural and artisan castes, generally a striking feature is the great hold which comparatively modern cults called *marga* or *panth*, ways, have taken upon them. Of these, the chief are Ramanandi, Swaminarayan, Kabir-panthi, Bijmargi, Pranami, or Meheraj panthi, Ramsanethi, Dadupanthi, Radha Vallabh, Santrampanthi, and Shakta or Vammargi. Some time when they are between seven and eleven, both boys and girls are taken to the religious head or *guru*, who binds round the neck of the

novice a rosary of beads made of the stem of the basil plant. Besides a day's food, the *guru* receives about Rs. 2 as the initiation fee. If they fall sick, they take vow to feed a certain number of Brahmans, or not to eat milk, ghee or any other dainty or to put on a turban, till they have been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of their favourite deity. The untouchable and depressed classes, such as Dheds, Bhangis, etc. are very religious and honour most of the Brahmanic gods, but chiefly Hanuman, Ganapati, Rama, and Devi and above all, they revere the sacred basil or *tulsi* plant. As they are not allowed to enter them people of these classes seldom worship at the regular village temples or shrines. In some hut near their dwellings, they have an image of Hanuman or of Mehaldi Mata where, on holidays, they light a lamp or offer flowers. In front of their houses most of them keep a plant of basil or *tulsi* and inside some of them have an image of Mata, Hanuman or Ganapati. Those who can afford it, are fond of going on pilgrimage for worshipping Krishna at Dakore and the Mata at Pavagadh or Ambaji. They do not pass into the building but stand in the portico, bow as they catch a glance of the image

and present a few coppers to the temple servants.

A belief in demonology, sorcery, witchcraft the evil eye and omens is found more or less in almost all castes. Among religious practices, worship of ancestors, the elements, planets, the sea, rivers, animals, and plants is common to all. If the rain holds off till late in June or July

Rain worship. and a drought is imminent, efforts are made to induce

Indra, the rain-god, to favour the earth with showers. Wealthy men engage Brahmans to repeat prayers to the rain-god in a Shiva or Mata temple. Sometimes the outlet through which the water passes from the basin, in which Shiva's *linga* is set, is closed, and the women of the village keep pouring water on the *linga* till it is deep sunk in water. This pouring of water, intended to please Shiva, is repeated for eight days unless it rains in the meantime. Sometimes the people of a village quit the place in a body for a day and leave it *ujjad* or uninhabited and cook their food outside it. This which is popularly known as going out on *ujani*, or feast outside the town or village

is done, because by holding off rain, Indra wishes to lay waste the land, and by voluntarily quitting their homes, people believe that finding his wish fulfilled he would send rain. Sometimes a party of Koli, Vaghari or Bhil women walk in the street singing the praise of *Mehulo*, the rain-god. One of the party bears on her head a basket containing a clay frog, with three twigs of *nimb* tree stuck in it. The party stops at every house where the women pour a potful of water over the frog drenching the bearer and presenting the party with doles of grain.

The sea is worshipped by all high caste Hindus on every *Amavasya* day, particularly when it falls on Monday. Bathing in the sea is considered specially cleansing, because on that day the water of 999 rivers is believed to be brought into the sea by the spring tides. During the whole of the intercalary month, sea bathing is also held cleansing.

On Sundays, Tuesdays and on the 12th and dark 15th of every Hindu month and during the whole of the intercalary month, people bathe in

the rivers in the hope of their sins being washed away. The rivers which are considered particularly sacred in Gujarat are the Tapti, the Narbada, the Mahi and the Saraswati. The Kolis of Mahikantha call the Mahi a Mata and the feeling of awe for it is so great that, if made to swear by its name, no man will dare tell an untruth. The bones of the dead are thrown after cremation into the nearest river and in the case of the well-to-do are taken to the Narbada, the Saraswati or the Ganges. The Saraswati at Sidhpur is held very sacred and is much sought after by persons wishing to perform after-death ceremonies for women. The water of the Jumna is stored by most Vaishnavas who sip it after the daily worship is over. The water of the Ganges is dropped into the mouth of the dying in the hope that it will wash away all sins.

According to the Hindus, the Moon is a male deity and is respected by all lunar Rajputs who daily worship a representation of it. The non-Moon days or *Amas* of each month is unlucky for all undertakings and is observed as a day of rest by traders, shop-keepers and craftsmen. If it

The moon.

falls on a Monday, the day is sacred and people bathe in a river or pond and make gifts to Brahmans. On the bright second day of a month, *bij*, the moon is hailed by most high caste Hindus, particularly by traders and shop-keepers. After seeing the new Moon, people take care that the first person they look at is good and lucky. If their neighbours are not such, they look at a silver coin. The new Moon, *bij*, is held particularly sacred by all who belong to the Bijmargi sect which has many followers among Ahirs, Bhavsars, Bhangis, Darjis, Dheds, Golas, Kathis, Kolis, Luhars, Mochis, Rabaris, Rajputs and Sathwaras. Some Kolis bow to the new Moon and ask three blessings thus: *bijmavdi, chule tavdi, be godha ne ek gavdi*, i. e. "Mother Bij, give a cooking pan (that is daily bread), two bullocks and a cow." The bright fourths are called *Ganesh Chaturthi* or Canapati's fourth and the dark fourths are called *Sankashta Chaturthi* or trouble clearing fourth. The sight of the Moon on the bright fourths is considered unlucky and specially so, in the month of *Bhadarvo*. It is believed that any one who sees the Moon on that day will be falsely charged. After sunset, people shut all windows. If by chance any one

happens to see the Moon, he throws stones on his neighbour's roof till some one in the neighbour's house gets angry enough to abuse the stone-thrower, when the risk of the false charge of theft passes away. From this stone-throwing, the day is called *dagda choth* or "stone-fourth". The bright fifteenths or full-Moon, *punam*, are sacred to all *Matas* or goddesses. On particular full-Moons, such as the *Kartik*, *Paush*, *Chaitra* and *Ashwin*, the temples of the different gods and goddesses as also the sacred places on the river banks are thronged by pilgrims. The *Aso* full-Moon is called *Manekthari Punam* or the pearl-making full-Moon, for, it is believed that if a rain-drop on this night falls into the mouth of an oyster, it is turned into a pearl. Persons to whom the Moon is unfriendly wear a white diamond or a pearl ring or engage a Brahman to repeat a special prayer in his honour eleven thousand times to ward off his evil influence.

For twelve hours before a Sun eclipse begins
 and for eight hours before
 Eclipse. a Moon eclipse begins, no
 cooked food is eaten. Before the eclipse begins,

all water jars are emptied and the store of pickles and *papad* is carefully locked. All including the household gods are held to be impure so long as the eclipse lasts. The people explain this impurity by saying that *Rahu* was a Bhangi or sweeper and that his touch defiles the Sun and the Moon. During the eclipse, gifts are made to Bhangis who go from door to door shouting *karo dharama chhute grahan*, that is "Give gifts and the seizure will be loosened." When the eclipse is over, every one bathes either at home or in a river or in the sea. They fetch fresh drinking water, purify the house-gods by going through the regular daily worship and present grain or copper and silver coins to the family priests.

Among the Hindus the cow is particularly sacred. Her tail with the help of which they hope to cross the hell river (*Vaitarni*), is applied by people to their eyes or instead of the tail, they put their right hand on the cow's haunches and apply their hand to the eye. The gift of a cow, *gaudan*, is the noblest of gifts. It is generally made during the intercalary month or

Animal worship.

before a person's death. The cow to be given is decorated and the donor holding her tail in his right hand gives her to a Brahman. After the dead-body is burnt, a cow is milked on the funeral pile or her milk is poured over the ashes. High caste Hindu women perform *gautrat*, i. e. cow worship for their husband's long life and if a widow, to better her lot in the next birth.

The bull called *sandhio*, *akhalo*, or *godho* is Shiva's carrier and is held sacred. In a Shiva temple, there is always an image of a bull which is worshipped along with Shiva. On the *Dasara* festival, owners get their horses washed, mark their head with a *tila* and put garlands of flowers on their neck. Similarly bullocks are worshipped by Kanbis and other agriculturists.

The serpent, generally the *nag* or cobra is much dreaded and worshipped by almost all classes. In spite of its destructive nature, a cobra is never killed. When a cobra appears in the house, the people bow to it and pray it not to harm the inmates. At the most, it is caught, put in an earthen jar, and the jar is laid

in a lonely spot. The day held most sacred to serpent-worship is the bright or dark fifth of *Shravan*, called *nagpanchami*. On that day women worship the cobra or its image. When a person is bitten by a snake, an adept in curing snake bites is called. He gives charmed cow-dung ashes to be rubbed on the bitten part or while repeating some charm, ties knots on a thread. If the person is still restless, the adept dashes seven handfuls of water on the eyes of the afflicted and otherwise tries to force the snake to leave the body. Under the influence of the water or charm, the snake through the person bitten, tells why he bit the man. If the injury which prompted the snake to bite was slight, the snake agrees to leave his body; if the injury done was heavy, the snake persists in not leaving the body and the patient dies.

The trees and plants held in high reverence

are *darbha*, *ḍaro*, *piplo*,
Tree worship. *shami*, *tulsi* and *bili*. *Dar-*

bha is used in all religious ceremonies, both lucky and unlucky. A blade of *darbha* grass is held by the bride and bridegroom just before their hands are joined; and a blade of it repre-

sents the dead in the *shradha* ceremony. The *daro* (cynodon dactylon) grass is Ganapati's favourite offering. The day sacred to it is the bright 8th of Bhadrapad which is called Daro atham, when men and women drop water, flowers, red powder (*kanku*) and rice on it. The *piplo* (ficus religiosa) is believed to be an emblem of Vishnu and the haunt of *Munja*, the spirit of a thread girt and unmarried Brahman lad. The shami (prosopis spicigera) is regarded as Shiva's wife and is called *Vijayadevi*. The tree is held sacred by all Hindus but chiefly by Rajputs, because on it the Pandwas hung their arms when they were banished. The arms were turned into snakes and remained untouched till the owners came back to take them. By worshipping this tree on the *Dasara* day, Rama conquered Ravan, Vali conquered Sugriva and the Pandawas conquered the Kauravas. In worshipping this tree, people walk round it and while walking repeat verses telling how the tree purifies from sin, destroys enemies, cures diseases and ensures success. All Vaishnavas keep the *tulsi* plant in their houses. The Antyaja classes also hold it sacred and keep it in front of their houses. To get rid of barrenness, women walk 108 times

round the *tulsi* and *piplo* planted together. *Tulsi* leaves are believed to have great sin-cleansing power and a *tulsi* leaf is therefore put in the mouth of the dying. The *bili* (aegle marmelos) is planted near shrines and other holy places and is believed to be the home of Parvati, after whom it is called *Shivraksha*. Brahmans gain merit by repeating prayers sitting under its shade. The leaves of the tree are the favourite offerings to Shiva.

Fire is held in high veneration. It is used
 in burning the dead and
 Fire worship. in all sin-cleansing rites.

Offerings are made to fire in thread, marriage and pregnancy ceremonies. When a lamp is lighted in the evening and brought into a room, those sitting in it, make a bow to it and to each other. Sonis, Lohars, Kansaras and other artisans who use fire in their calling, make offerings of clarified butter and rice to their fire-place. The followers of the Kabir and Bijmargi sects who profess not to worship idols, hold the flame of a lighted lamp sacred, and make offerings to it, just as others do to their idols.

In the evening of the last day of the year, bankers and merchants perform *vahi-pujan* or book worship. New books for the coming year are piled on a wooden stool, generally in front of an image of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, lighted lamps are placed round them and flowers are strewn on the books. The priest repeats a prayer for the favour of the goddess on the next year's business and dipping his fingers in kanku makes round marks on the first page of each book. The worship ends by writing on the walls of the room, the words *Shri Ganeshayanamah, Lakshmi Matani Madat, Bhandar Bharpur*, "salutation to Ganesh; mother Lakshmi, help us; overflow our treasure chests."

Consecrated stones are held sacred by almost all classes of Gujarati Hindus. Most gods and goddesses are made of stone and when consecrated by prayers and offerings, become the dwelling place of some guardian spirit. Bhils, Kolis, Vagharis, Dublas and other wild tribes have no elaborate rites for making a stone fit to be the house of a guardian. With them, the

mere rubbing of a stone with red lead makes it an object of reverence. A red lead trident is painted on the trunk of a *nimb* or *piplo* tree and a heap of stones is piled at its root. Believing the place to be the dwelling of some god or goddess, passers-by show their reverence for it by adding a stone or two to the heap.

Among Hindus in Gujarat, tomb worship is not common. The few

Tomb worship.

tombs that are worshipped are those raised over the remains of a *sati*, that is a woman who burnt herself with her dead husband, of ascetics and of Mohamedan saints. Over the spot where a woman was burnt, a *devdi* or masonry platform used to be erected by the ruler of the land or by the members of her family. A stone is set on the platform which is sometimes canopied and on the stone are carved the Sun and the Moon and the figure of a woman with her right hand uplifted. The members of the *sati's* family visit her *devdi* generally on the dark fourteenth of Aso (october), daub it with red lead, lay a lighted lamp near it and offer a cocoanut and a robe to it. *Sati's* tomb is worshipped by barren women and by fever stricken people.

Masonry platforms raised over the remains of a Hindu ascetic are called *samadhi*, because the ascetic is believed at the time of death to be in a state of mental absorption or *samadhi*. A stone is set on the platform and on the stone a pair of footprints is carved. These *samadhis* are worshipped by disciples, daily or at least on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, *Ashad* full Moon or on the anniversary of the ascetic's death.

The *takiyo* or tombs of Musalman Pirs or saints are worshipped by middle and low class Hindus, when a vow taken in the saint's honour is to be fulfilled. The intercession and help of these Pirs are asked when a man's life is in danger, when a lost article is to be recovered, when the milk-yielding power of milch cattle is to be restored, when punishment is to be avoided and when epidemics, cholera, cattle plagues, snake-bite, woman's barrenness, etc., are to be cured. When the object is gained, it is ascribed to the saint's help and offerings are made to his tomb. During the *Mohornam*, the *taboots* or *tazias* which are models of the tombs of Hassan and Hussain are held sacred by Marathas, Rajputs, Vagharis, Kolis, Dheds and other low class Hindus. Brahmans, Vania and some other high

caste Hindu boys are dressed by their parents as *fakirs* and made to live on gifts made by friends and relations. In fulfilment of a vow, some pour water, throw themselves on the road and with a cocoanut in their hands roll in front of the *taboots*; some pass and repass under them, some walk a considerable distance with their faces turned towards the *tazia* and some paint themselves as tigers and bears.

Epidemics are believed to be caused by a goddess or Mata whose wrath requires to be appeased by offerings. The ceremony with which these offerings are made is called *shanti* or quieting rite. It is performed by a whole caste or by the people of a street or village, near a goddess's temple, in the market place where four roads cross or in a street. *Shanti* ceremonies are also performed when the rainfall is scanty, when the fields are attacked by locusts, when a child is born under an unlucky star or on an unlucky occasion, such as when a marriage is beset with obstacles. After the offerings are made, the end of the street or of the market place are festooned with cocoanuts and *nimb*, *asopalo* and

mango leaves with, at each end of the festoon, two earthen pots one over the other.

Disease both in its milder endemic form in which, it is generally present and in its fiercer epidemic form which breaks out from time to time, is believed to be due to spirit possession. Endemic diseases are believed to be caused by the unfriendly influence of some planet or of some god or goddess or of some evil spirit. Epidemic diseases are believed to be caused by the anger of some goddess. If a disease is caused by the unfriendly influence of some particular planet, a Brahman is engaged to offer prayers to it and articles sacred to it are used or are given away in charity. If it is caused by some god or goddess, prayers are repeated in his or her name and his or her favourite offering are made to them. If it is caused by the influence of some spirit, offerings are made to the tombs of Musلمان saints and charmed articles are worn on the arms or neck. The shrines usually frequented by the sick are at Behecharaji in the Chanasma taluka of the Baroda State, Miradatar near Unja, Ambaji in the Danta

State and Kalka Mata in the Panch Mahals. Epidemic small-pox is believed to be presided over by a goddess called *Shitala Mata* and endemic small-pox by a god called *Saiyadh Kaka*. Both are propitiated by parents, especially by mothers, once in a year to protect their children.

There is a widespread belief in spirits, *bhuts*, and spirit possession, *valgan*. Spirits are of two kinds, *gharna bhut* or family spirits and *baharna bhut* or outside spirits. The influence of the family spirit is confined to the house or family to which it belongs. It does not trouble outsiders. A family spirit is generally the ghost of a member of the family who died with some desire unfulfilled or whose after-death ceremonies were neglected or improperly performed. Married women are very liable to be possessed by the spirit of their husband's deceased wife. To guard against it, a second wife always wears round her neck a gold ornament called *shokya-paglu*, the deceased wife's foot-print which is sometimes marked with mystic letters or figures. Family spirits are quieted by performing special

after-death rites. The chief outside spirits are (males) *Jhand*, *Jin*, *Khavas*, *Shikotar*, and *Vir*, and (females) *Chudel*, *Jhampadi*, *Jogani*, *Meldi*, *Pari*, *Shikotari*, and *Vantri*. Of these female spirits, *Jampadi*, *Meldi* and *Shikotri* are the favourite goddesses of most of the low-caste Hindus, like Bhangis, Dheds, etc. who avert their evil influence by offerings. The favourite haunts of these spirits are burning grounds, *pipal*, or *babul* trees, wells, empty houses, etc. They are said to enter the bodies of those who annoy them by committing a nuisance in, or otherwise defiling their abodes, and by leaping over the circle within which offerings are laid for them, at the crossings of four roads. The days most favourable for spirits to enter human bodies are all Tuesdays and Sundays, the *navaratra* festival which lasts for nine days in *Aso Sud* and the dark fourteenth of *Aso*; the hours of the day when they are most likely to enter are sunset and midnight.

When a person is believed to be spirit possessed, a little of cow-dung, chillies, mustard, an iron nail and live charcoal are placed on a

Exorcism.

bell-metal plate. Over these articles, a bell-metal cup is turned with its rim down and over the bottom of the cup, a mixture of cowdung and water is poured. The plate is then waved over the head of the sick seven times by a Woman. If after some time, the cup sticks to the plate, the spirit is believed to have left the person and to have gone inside the cup. Sometimes charmed threads supplied by some exorcists are tied to the wrist or the neck. Sometimes Brahmans are engaged to repeat sacred verses in a goddess temple. If the spirit is a weak one, it gets frightened by one or more of these processes and leaves the victim. If it is a strong spirit and cannot easily be got rid of, an exorcist is sent for. He is called a *bhuvo* and may be a Brahman, Khatri, Rabari, Bharvad, Vaghari, Koli or a Bhil. He may also be a Jain Gorji or a Musalman Fakir or Molvi. Exorcists are said to gain their power of scaring away spirits by mastering spells, *mantras*, which force spirits to become their servants and obey their orders. An exorcist goes to a burial ground alone at midnight on the dark fourteenth of *Aso*, (*Kali-chaudas*), every year and unearthing the body of a low-caste Hindu, mutters the *mantras*, sitting

on the corpse. When he is consulted, the exorcist's first care is to ascertain whether the sick person suffers from spirit possession or from some other disease. This is done either by the Hindu method of counting grain or the Musalman method called *hajrat* of examining the reflection of a lighted lamp in a liquid. The Hindu exorcist gives a member of the sick person's family some rice, wheat, *juvar*, or *adad*, a nail, a piece of charcoal, seven clods of earth, seven particles of salt and a copper coin. These are wrapped in a piece of cloth, waved seven times over the head of the sick and the bundle is tied to his sleeping cot. On the next day which must be a Sunday or Tuesday, the bundle is opened and the exorcist takes a pinch of the grain from the bundle. The grains are arranged in twos and if one grain remains over, it is called *vadhavo* and shows that the spirit is in the sick man's body; if no single grain remains, there is no spirit in the sick man. If by this process the sick man is found to be possessed by a spirit, the exorcist first tries mild measures, and if they fail, harsh measures to dislodge the spirit. He drives an iron into the threshold of the house and gently brushes the sick man's

face with a peacock's feather or a *nimb* twig, all the while exhorting him to speak out. He forces the sick man to swing his body from side to side and to speak out the name of the spirit which has possessed him. Sometimes a whole night passes without any result, and the operation is repeated on the next night. A fire is lighted, a few chillies, mustard and cumin seeds, salt, dung of a dog or a monkey and a piece of leather are dropped into the fire and the fumes blown through the sick man's nostrils. To impress the sick man with his superhuman powers, the exorcist beats his own back with an iron chain. When the sick man is thus teased and annoyed, he, that is the spirit supposed to be in him, replies to every question put by the exorcist, gives his name, explains why and how he entered the sick man's body, and after a solemn promise from the sick man's friends and relations to satisfy his demands, agrees to return to his old haunts.

Almost all classes of Gujarat Hindus believe that the result of every undertaking is foreshadowed by certain signs and hints. The business of

Omens.

the day will prosper or fail according to the nature of the object first seen after waking. The objects which the people are most anxious to begin the day by looking at, are the household gods, the *pīpal* tree, the basil plant, a Brahman or a cow. Unless the signs are favourable, no new work is undertaken. If the first signs are unfavourable, people sit down and await the appearance of favourable signs. Kolis, Bhils, and others of the depredatory classes wait for the appearance of good omens on the village outskirts, and if they do not appear, put off their starting on a plundering raid from day to day. The goodness or badness of signs is determined by the appearance of certain living and lifeless objects in a particular form, in a particular way and in a particular state. An armed man, a cavalier, a mace-bearer, a school boy, a cultivator returning from his field with his plough, a barber with his bag, a musician with his instruments, a mali or gardener with a basket of flowers, a woman with two water pots filled with water on her head, a cow on the left, a horse neighing to the right, etc., are considered good signs, Eating of curds before going on a journey is considered

lucky. A journey is avoided to the north on a Sunday, to the north-west on a Monday, to the west on a Tuesday, to the south on a Thursday, to the south-east on a Friday and to the east on a Saturday. Among bad signs are a physician, a goldsmith, a black-smith, a pregnant woman, a widow, a buffalo, a camel, a goat, a cat, a woman carrying three pots, sneezing etc. A man who is cat-eyed or who has no hair on the breast or upper lip is considered unlucky. The popular saying is ; *makadmuchho ne manjio, jene haide nahi val, te nar jo samo male, to nishche jano kal*, i. e. it is a sure sign of ruin if on the way you meet one who has reddish mustaches, who is cat-eyed and who has no hair on the chest.

A part from the all-pervading physiolatry and superstitious beliefs briefly described in the preceding pages some essential doctrines of Hindu philosophy are well-known to almost all the Hindus and, passing like a rich heritage from father to son, have reached even the illiterate and ignorant masses. They promote virtuous living, discourage world-

Common philosophical beliefs.

liness and teach resignation in their existing troubles. The first and the foremost among these is the belief in *lakshachorasi avatar* or the transmigration of soul. It is a general understanding that while earthly desires remain unextinguished and while earthly passions continue to exist, the human soul is subject to be reincarnated again and again until finally emancipated from all mundane hopes and affections. The second belief is that the circumstances of each embodied existence are the result of the works done in the previous existence; and that souls, according to their actions, may enjoy happiness in this world or in heaven and on the other hand suffer punishment on this earth or in hell reserved for evil doers. *Karyan karma bhogavavana chhe* or "as you will sow, so you will reap", is an axiom which even a rustic believes to be applicable to this life and the one to come. Consequently, he believes that he must bear his miseries if any in life with patience and it is to his present and future welfare that he should live rightly and free himself from all carnal desires so as to ensure his early release from rebirth and to effect his union with God.

Gujarati Hindus are kind and charitably disposed, and a good part of their earnings goes towards charity. Certain charitable works such as the construction of commodious and well apportioned rest houses and *dharamshalas*, such as are to be found in all places of pilgrimage such as Dwarka, Ambaji, Behcharaji, Dakore and other places, digging lakes, sinking of wells etc. are considered works of piety. Amongst Jains the building and repairing of temples are considered to be works of great piety. Gujarati Hindus give alms to all those who come to their door for begging. A large number of idlers in the garb of Sadhus, Brahmans and beggars are maintained by their charity. But their charity is inorganised and indiscriminate and leads to many abuses. The Jains have some kind of organization for the regulation of their charity which maintains proper accounts of the receipts and spends the money received only on approved items. There is a considerable waste in feeding cows, pegions, dogs, ants and other animal and insect life, but there is nothing like misappropriation among the Jains. Among the Hindus there is practically no organization for enforcing

proper use of charities and of supervision over them, and most of the money received in temples is spent by the holy recipients in any way they like, mostly after their personal comforts and pleasures, and in giving *prasad*, feeding *sadhus*, and building unnecessary buildings. So much is wasted after misguided charities that if properly used, many educational and medical institutions of high order can be maintained from the annual income of the capital amount.

A good reform has been made by His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad in this direction in the Baroda State. Formerly *khichadi* (mixture of uncooked rice and pulse) was indiscriminately given to all Brahmans, and on Shravan *Ekadashi* and other holidays, cash presents, *dakshana*, were given to all Brahmans without inquiring whether they were deserving or not. This led to many abuses and encouraged idleness. The Maharaja, therefore, took the bold step of stopping these indiscriminate distributions and diverted the money to the encouragement of Sanskrit learning, to the relief of the really poor and destitute, and to the maintenance of a Poor House for helpless destitutes in the City of Baroda. An Act called

Sarvajanik Sanstha Nibandh has also been passed for the supervision and control of religious and charitable institutions in receipt of cash and land grants from the State. It is necessary for the leaders of Hindu society elsewhere in Gujarat to see that similar action is taken in the rest of province not only for the proper regulation of State grants for charitable and religious purposes, but also for private charitable grants and contributions in the name of religion and charity, to whomsoever made.

CHAPTER V.

CASTE.

The most recent as well as the most comprehensive definition of a Caste. caste is that given by Sir Herbert Risley in the India Volume of the Census of 1901. " A caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families, bearing a common name, which usually denotes or is associated with a specified occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional calling, and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. A caste is almost invariably endogamous in the sense that a member of the large circle denoted by the common name may not marry outside that circle, but within the circle there are usually a number of smaller circles, each of which is also endogamous. It is not enough to say that a

Brahman at the present day cannot marry any woman who is not a Brahman ; his wife must not only be a Brahman, she must also belong to the same endogamous division of the Brahman caste.”

Gujarat is pre-eminently a land of castes.

In no part of India are its sub-divisions so minute, as in Gujarat. When Mr. Borradaile, collected information regarding the custom of the Gujarat Hindus in 1827, no less than 207 castes which did not intermarry were found in the city of Surat alone. In the census of 1901 the number of castes in the whole province, who neither interdined nor intermarried was found to be no less than 315. If all the sub-divisions who may eat together but do not intermarry were added the number would be considerably larger.

This minuteness of division in Gujarat may be assigned to various causes. When the Aryans entered Gujarat first by way of Rajputana, or the Aravali passes from

owing to admixture with foreigners.

the Punjab, and afterwards by the Malva and Dohad route from Bengal and North-East, the aborigines who occupied the plains retreated to the mountains; they are still found, in their primitive condition, in the hilly and forest tracts of the Navsari and Baroda districts of the Baroda State as also in the neighbouring British districts and the States of Bansda, Dharampur and Rajpipla. They are the *kaliparaj*, or the dusky people called *dasyus* in the Vedas. Above the *kaliparaj* come the Kolis. They form an intermediate layer between the *kaliparaj* and the rest of the population called *ujlivarana* or bright coloured people. They are half Bhils, half Brahmanical, and have in some parts intermingled with the *ujlivarana*. The earliest traditional kings of Gujarat were Bhils or Kolis. Semi Rajputs still take their wives from Kolis, and a large section of the Kolis of the Kadi district, in which is situated Anhilwad Pattan, the ancient capital of Gujarat, are called Thakardas or lordlings. One section of the Kolis which is looked upon as the most respectable, is called *talbada* or *talpada* from Sanskrit *sthalodbhava* or soil born, and may be descendants of the *nishadas* of the Ramayana. Above the *kaliparaj* and Kolis are the *ujlivarana*

who are supposed to represent the Aryans. They consist mainly of the Brahman, Vania, Rajput, Kanbi, Barot and craftsman castes. The *ujlivarana* classes worship Brahmanical gods, preserve a social fabric based on Brahmanical rituals and customs and generally forbid widow-marriage. Many aboriginal customs have, however, crept in among them, and there can be no doubt that a large portion of them must have been recruited from the early people. Besides practising polygamy and widow-marriage, many *ujlivarana* castes show a leaning towards animism, and believe in demonology, sorcery and witch-craft. In addition to this, there has been a great mixture of foreigners with the Aryans in Gujarat. The large sea-board which Gujarat, including Cutch and Kathiawad, possesses, has, from very ancient times, attracted, for purposes of refuge, trade, or conquest, a large number of foreigners from Arabia, Persia and Africa. This foreign element received large additions during the centuries before and after the Christian era from hordes of central Asian Kushans, Hunas and other tribes.

Infusion of foreign blood has taken place in all the Aryan classes in Gujarat. The foreigners were either absorbed by the existing castes, or formed new castes for themselves. The division of almost all the Vania castes into *Visa*, full and *Dasa*, half, and a further division of some into *Pancha*, quarter, shows the proportion of outside intermixture. The Oswal Vanias were originally Rajputs who on their conversion to Jainism gave up fighting for trade. About the Anavala Brahmans, there is a tradition that Rama, on his return from the conquest of Ceylon halted at a place called Patarvada in the hills of Bansda, and failing to find the necessary number of local Brahmans to perform a sacrifice collected eighteen thousand of the hill tribes and made them Brahmans. The Bhatia and Luhana castes have sprung up from the tribes of Turk and Afghan origin and have only recently adopted the leading rules of Hindu life. The fairness of Gujarat Dhed and Chamars or leather workers and their Rajput surnames suggest that these classes must have been largely recruited from defeated original settlers.

The three separating influences of calling, marriage and food are still at work in Gujarat forming new castes. The cleanliness or dirtiness of the calling, the acceptance of marriage within or without a caste or of widow-marriage and strictness in excluding forbidden food, not only form new castes but also determine their social status. For instance a section of Kolis left off their traditional occupation of menial labour and took to the making of bricks. They came to be known as Dalwadi or Talvari, that is cutters, because they dug ponds and made bricks. This new and honourable profession gave them a high social status, and in course of time, they came to be known as a new caste of Kolis. They now call themselves Rajputs and have severed all connection with the other Kolis.

Some new castes are formed by those who, ashamed of their low origin in their days of prosperity gradually conceal it, and assume a better name in its place. The first stage for a number of people who discover in themselves some quality of social distinction is to refuse to give

their women in marriage to other members of the same caste, from which nevertheless they continue to take wives. After a time, when their numbers have increased and they have bred women enough to supply material for a *jus connubi* of their own, they close their ranks, marry only among themselves and pose as a superior sub-caste of the main caste to which they belong. Last of all they break off all connection with the parent stock, assume a new name which ignores or disguises their original affinities and claim general recognition as a distinct caste. The Kadia-Kumbhar caste of Navsari is an illustration of the first stage. Being in better circumstances than their caste-brethren, they first gave up their traditional occupation of pot-making and took to brick-laying or carpentry. After some time they ceased giving their daughters in marriage to the pot-making Kumbhars, but continued to take wives from them. They thus became a superior section of their caste and came to be known as Kadia-Kumbhars or Sutar-Kumbhars. Recently they have broken off all connection with the potter caste and neither intermarry nor eat with its members. The next move will probably be

to drop the qualifying term, Kumbhar, and to pass themselves off as simple Kadias or Sutars, and nobody will know that they were originally Kumbhars. The Luhars of the City of Baroda, formerly formed one sub-caste of the Luhar caste. But it has recently split into two sections, the *Rupaghada* or silversmiths and *Lodhaghada* or ironsmiths. The *Rupaghadas* having assumed a higher social position on account of their working in silver, refuse to associate with the *Lodhaghadas*. They interdine, but do not intermarry with them, and form, to all intents and purposes, a new sub-caste. In the same way some Luhars, iron-smiths, who work as carpenters, call themselves Luhar-Sutars and not simply Luhars. They have not yet broken with the iron-smiths, but there should be no wonder, if they do so, as the profession of a Sutar is considered to be of a higher social status than that of a Luhar.

While their religion does not sanction caste, the Jains in Gujarat follow
 Caste among Jains. the caste system just in the
 same way as do the Hindus, and it is to them a
 greater force even than religion. When Jainism

was first propagated, it was not insisted that the converts to its doctrines should give up their castes. There are certain castes such as the Agarval, Oswal, Porwad and Shrimali Vanias, some of whose members are Hindus while others are Jains. The Hindu Vanias are called Meshri while the Jain section is called Shrivak. When one section of a caste is Jain and another Hindu, intermarriage takes place between them : for example between Dasa Shrimali Meshris and Dasa Shrimali Jains or between Meshri and Jain Porwads. Individual members of a caste who accept Jainism as their religion continue to be its members along with those who follow Hinduism. Thus some members of the Lewa Kanbi, Bhavsar, Anjana Kanbi and such other castes who have adopted Jainism as their religion continue to be members of their caste. A Vaishnava girl married into a Jain family attends the Jain temple, *apasara*, when at her husband's house and worships the old Brahmanical gods when she visits her parents. In spite of their religious differences, the social customs of Shrivaks and Meshri are much alike. The religious classes of the Jains—Gorji and Sadhu—are ascetics and take no part in birth, marriage or

other ceremonies. These social ceremonies are therefore performed with the help of Brahmans who do not suffer in their position because they act as priests to Shravaks.

Every census brings a crop of applications asking that this or that community may be relieved of its previous census name and given a new one, or may be removed from the group in which it was included previously and advanced to some higher position. Thus in the census of 1921 Brahmabhats claimed separation from Barots or Bhats, and recognition as a sub-caste of Brahman; some Luhars and Valands claimed to be Panchal Brhmans, and Nayee Brahmans respectively and Barias now want to be classed under Rajputs and not under Kolis. Such claims are almost invariably accompanied by copious quotations from the *shastras* and by commentaries full of fanciful statements and false analogies backed up by vicious *sylogisms* such as this: the Vaishyas are traders, we are traders; therefore we are Vaishyas.

As a general rule all the members of a caste

Rigidity of rules of endogamy and commensality.	including the sub-castes eat together but inter-marriages are permitted only within the limits of the sub-castes. The restrictions
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on intercourse increase as one goes from the top to the bottom of the caste system. The Brahman, Vania, Rajput and Kanbi castes must marry their girls within their caste or sub-caste, but they may eat together within the large circle of their whole caste and, with a few exceptions, even with the tribes from which their different castes are formed. A Lewa Kanbi will not marry his daughter outside his own group, but he will have no objection to marry his son with the daughter of a Uda Kanbi, if her dowry is satisfactory. But the artisan and depressed classes are more strict, both with regard to food and marriage. The Bhavsar caste (dyers), for instance, has three sub-castes which neither eat together nor intermarry. There are eight sub-castes of Darjis, who also neither eat together nor intermarry. Of the six divisions of the Ghanchis, Modhs and Sidhpuris rank highest, the other divisions eating food cooked by them while they do not eat food cooked by the other four. None of the six divisions intermarry. Kansaras belong to four divisions, Champaneri, Maru, Shihora and Visnagaras. Except that Visnagaras eat with Champaneris, none of the four divisions, eat together or intermarry. The Valands (*Hajams*) belong

to four main divisions, Bhatia, Limachia, Maru and Masuria or Matakia of which the Limachias rank the highest. These last allow Bhatia Valands to share their *hukka*, but will not eat with any other division. None of the divisions intermarry, nor do they eat together; but all will eat food cooked by a Limachia.

The traditional occupation of the castes for generations has given them certain traits, which distinguish them from other people. There are many sayings in Gujarati about the various castes which go to illustrate their traits and to give an estimate of the opinion in which they are held by the general public. A free translation of a few of them, for the more important castes, is given below :—

“ If a cat can keep in its belly rice-pudding a barber can keep a secret.”
 Barber. (Refers to his inherent nature of disclosing the secret of others).

“ By putting on a cap, (i. e. by becoming a *bava*) you have three advantages – no taxes to pay, no compulsory labour to undergo, and all

will call you a *bava* (i.e. father,), and you will easily support yourself.” (Refers to the utter freedom of the ascetic, from the troubles which beset a householder).

“ If you have not seen a *bhut*, see a Bharvad.” (Refers to his frightening appearance).
Bharvad.

“ A Bhat is always garrulous.” (Refers to his speaking certain things unnecessarily). “ Bhats, Tentas (Garasias) and sickles are always bent.” (Refers to their crooked nature and behaviour).
Bhat.

“ A Bhathela’s mouth was opened with a hatchet.” (Refers to his fondness to use foul language). “ He is a donkey’s son who trusts a *bhut*, a Bhathela or a tailless serpent.” (They are so treacherous.)
Bhathela.

“ A Brahman, a he-buffalo and a dog—these three are always jealous.”
Brahman.

“ If one Tilva (Brahman) is killed, a hundred Tilvas (Brahmans) can be fed.” (Refers

to the hatred in which the lower castes hold them.)

“The abode of Brahmins is known by people moving about with short diggies and pits in their stomach.” (Refers to their scanty clothing and half starved appearance).

“The Audich caste is a veritable sea.” (Refers to its being so large that one can easily pretend to be one of the caste.)
Brahman-Audich.

“Foolish is the tribe of Mewadas, they earn little but dress like beaux.”
Brahman-Mewada.

“A Modh, a Mewada and a black ant will destroy their own kind.”
Brahman-Modh. “A Modh, even when on death bed will try to kill a Shrimali.” (Refers to the animosity between the two castes.)

“Better to have white leprosy on your forehead than a Modh (Brahman or Vania) in your neighbourhood.”

“A Nagar will never speak the truth. If he does, his *guru* must be a fool.”
Brahman-Nagar.

“ A Nagar bride is open for inspection (before selection). (Refers to her unquestionable beauty).

“ Nagars, crows and cocks are discreet.”

“ You must have a jarful of money before you can get a Nagar bride.” (Refers to the heavy expenditure to be incurred by the bridegroom).

“Among quadrupeds, a *Kolu* is a rogue and
Dhed. among bipeds a Dhed.”
(Refers to the roguery of
Dheds).

“ A Ghanchi is the Satan' sbeadstead.”

Ghanchi Soni.

“If you have not seen a thief, see a Soni.”
Goldsmith. (Refers to his skill in fil-
ching gold and silver even
though keenly watched.)

“ It is not advisable to irritate a Jat in a
Jat. forest, fire in summer, a
Turk (Musalman) in a
kasba, and a Bakal (Vania) in a bazar.” (Refers
to their strength in the respective places).

“ A Kachhia has cheated even god.” (Refers to his cunningness.)

“ A Kanbi is the supporter of scores of
 Kanbis. people, but himself is supported by none.” (Refers to his power of producing staple corn which is essential to sustain life.) “ There is no giver like Kanbis.” (Refers to their generosity). “Matias, Anjanas and Marus are a little better than Dheds.” (Refers to their mean living and behaviour.)

“ One Kathi is equal to a hundred Vanias.”
 Kathi. (Refers to his valorous nature.)

“ Holi holidays have arrived and the Koli
 Koli. has nothing with him.”
 (Refers to his living from hand to mouth and utter disregard for the future.)

“ Where five Luhars meet, everything is
 Luhar. spoiled.” (Refers to their uncompromising nature.)

“ Even if a cord (string) is burnt, the
twists remain.” (Refers to
Rajput. the feeling of vengeance
burning in the heart of a Rajput even though
fallen.)

“ Thakores are gone and Thags have taken
their place.” (Refers to the disappearance of
the old good Rajputs and the existence of the
present mean ones.)

“ A Tailor, a goldsmith and a weaver are
birds of the same feather.”
Tailors, Goldsmiths (Refers to their similarity
&c. in dexterous filching).

“ Even God cannot detect a tailor, gold-
smith and a weaver.” (Refers to their dexterous
filching).

“ A tailor’s to-night and shoe-maker’s to-
morrow.” (Refers to their procrastinating
habits.)

“ A Lad is a dried up tree and Dave
is a sharp axe.” (Refers
Vania-Lad. to hard-heartedness and
stinginess of Lad Vanias and their *gōis* (priests)
respectively.)

“ A Vania is a foresighted.”

“ A Vania will not call a spade, a spade.”
 Vanias in general. refers to his timidity and cunningness).

“ Damn the face of a Baj, a Lad and a Khedaval.” (Refers to their unsociable nature.)

“ Vanias are liberal-hearted in spending after marriage processions.”

“ Even God has no anxiety for a Vania and an ass.” (He is able to take care of himself.)

Caste is a social rather than a religious institution. The Jain religion does not sanction caste, and yet many Jains follow the caste system like Hindus. So long as a man submits to the various rules and restrictions of his caste, he may believe or disbelieve what he likes in religious matters without in any way injuring his social position. Even beliefs in Muslim Saints and Pirs, as also in the Aga Khan is tolerated as long as it does not openly come against caste practices. In the last two decennial censuses of India, some persons returned themselves as agnostics or atheists, and yet regarded themselves as being none the less as members of their castes.

Considered from the industrial point of view, the occupational castes have played the part of trade guilds and helped in the preservation of ancient arts. A caste may be looked upon as a co-operative society, in full working order. It forms an effective agency for the suppression of immorality and vice, and is useful in the support and relief of its destitute poor; it has kept alive for ages the doctrine of the dignity of the hereditary priesthood; and it has been the efficient practical means of safeguarding Hinduism, and of maintaining its principles, traditions, and customs, against religious reformers within its own body, and also against the aggressions of alien religions.

It is generally supposed in Gujarat that abstinence from meat is an essential condition of Hinduism. But according to all authorities, the Brahmans and other twice-born used meat in the Vedic times. The flesh of five species of five-clawed animals is permitted to be eaten in the Dharma Sutras,

Caste and occupa-
tion.

Caste and Animal
food.

and even beef is allowed by Apastamba (1-17, 30, 37). Most of the sacrifices of the old Vedic religion were animal, those killed by suffocation for the purpose being goats, sheep, cows or bulls, and horses. It is impossible that the idea of offering meat to gods could have originated, unless men themselves liked and used it. But the influence of Buddhism and of Jainism threw discredit on the practice; and those who re-edited Hindu Law in the fourth century of the Christian era and later—the writers of the Smritis of Manu and Yajnyavalka—lay down the old permissive precept, but hedge it round with so many restrictions that it amounts to prohibition. In modern times, the Brahmans of Bengal, Mithila, Kashmir and Sindh, do use meat, while in provinces which were for a long time under the influence of Buddhism and Jainism such as Gujarat, even the lower castes abstain from it.

There are numerous restrictions imposed on the conduct of a man by the unwritten, and now in some cases even written, law of his community. These vary greatly not only in different

parts of the province but also amongst the different social strata. In some respects the higher castes (Brahman, Vania) are more particular than the lower ones (Gola-Ghanchi) but not in others. Some rules are only recommended to be observed, while others are mandatory and must be followed, on pain of fine or even excommunication. The following are some of the principal caste restrictions :—

(1) Marriage must be performed not only within the caste but also within the sub-caste. Almost every caste is divided into a number of smaller groups, who will marry only among themselves, and who will on no account give brides to, or take them from, other groups.

(2) A man must not eat food cooked in water by a person of a caste which is considered to be lower than his own. Thus a Vania can eat food cooked by a Vania or a Brahman, but if he eats food cooked by a Kanbi, a Koli or a member of any other caste socially inferior to him, he loses his caste. Some Brahmans, the Nagars for example, do not eat food cooked

even by other Brahmans. If they do, they lose their caste. But food cooked in *ghee*, or in milk, by one of a lower caste, may be eaten by those of a higher caste without any defilement.

(3) All castes, except the untouchable,

Water. may draw water from the same well either in metal

or earthen pots without causing any defilement. But the untouchable classes are not allowed to draw water except from wells specially provided for them. Where no special wells exist, they have to wait at a distance from the village well and take such water as may be generously poured from a distance into their vessels by people of the clean castes. A new and unused earthen pot may be used for bringing water for Brahmans and other high castes, but if it is once used by a member of a lower caste it can be used only for members of that caste, and for all others who may eat food cooked by him in water. A metal pot, however, even though used by a man of one caste may be used for another of the higher caste, after being cleansed with a little earth and water. High caste Hindus are not particular in Gujarat about the caste of the

person fetching their water as in the Deccan, where Brahmans do not drink water fetched by a non-Brahman. They use water fetched by even Kumbhars or Kolis. In villages, some Brahmans drink water from a leather bag and in some of the Shravak Vania castes in Pattan, water is supplied to householders by *pakhalis* in leather *masaks*.

(4) In theory, but in theory only, each caste has a distinctive traditional occupation.

The traditional occupation of the Brahmans is that of a priest or a teacher, but in fact there are Brahman clerks, cooks, soldiers, shopkeeper, agriculturists and even day-labourers. In this there is nothing new. In the list of Brahmans given by Manu (Law of Manu 111, 151, 166) whom a pious householder should not entertain at a *shradha*, we find physicians, temple-priests, sellers of meat, shop-keepers, usurers, cow-herds, actors, singers, oilmen, keepers of gambling houses, sellers of spices, makers of bows and arrows, trainers of elephants, oxen, horses or camels, astrologers, bird fanciers, fencing masters, architects, breeders of sporting

dogs, falconers, cultivators, shepherds, and carriers of dead bodies. Some occupations are considered socially degrading, but a man who chooses to follow them does not thereby lose his caste unless it is irreconcilable with the rules of his caste as regards food; for instance, a Brahman or a Vania can not become a butcher.

(5) The sacred thread is habitually worn
 Sacred thread. by all Brahmans, Agarval
 and Bam Nagar Vanias,
 Bhatias, Luhanas, some classes of Sonis, Maru
 Kansaras, Vaishya, and Mewada Sutars,
 Sompura Salats, Brahma Bhats, Khattris (weavers) and Garodas or Dhed-priests. The result of failure to wear a thread, in those castes which habitually wear it, would be excommunication; but now-a-days no notice is generally taken for such neglect.

(6) The influence of Jainism has rendered
 Flesh-eating. most of the Gujarat castes
 entirely vegetarian. Only
 a few of the higher castes, such as Rajputs and Marathas, and some of the lowest castes, such as Dheds and Bhangis, eat the flesh of goats,

sheep or fowls, and fish of all kinds. The eating of animal food in castes in which it is prohibited would result in excommunication. Cows and peacocks are considered holy and their destruction is resented even by non-vegetarian Hindus.

The evils of caste have been vividly depicted by His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwad in his inaugural address at the Eighteenth National Social Conference held at Bombay in September 1904. Caste prejudicially affects the whole range of social life. It hampers the life of the individual with a vast number of petty rules and observances which have no meaning. It cripples him in his relations with his family, in his marriage, in the education of his children and his life generally. In the wider sphere of life, in municipal or local affairs, it destroys all hope of local patriotism, of work for the common good by thrusting forward the interests of the caste as opposed to those of the community, and by making combined efforts for the common good exceedingly difficult. It intensifies local dissensions and diverse interests, and obscures great

national ideals and interests which should be those of every caste and people, and renders the country disunited and incapable of overcoming its defects or of availing itself of the advantages which it should gain from contact with the civilisation of the West. It robs us of our humanity by insisting on the degradation of some of our fellow-men who are separated from us by no more than the accident of birth. Again, it is the most conservative element in our society and the steady enemy to all reform. Every reformer who has endeavoured to secure the advance of our society has been driven out of it by the operation of caste.

In their original conception caste restrictions

Caste distinction
originally not so rigid
as now.

were not so rigid and so
minute as they subse-
quently became. There
are cases on record of the

passage of a person from one caste to another in olden times. The history of Vishvamitra, a Kshatriya becoming a Brahman is familiar to every one. Gargya, the son of Shini and Trayyaruni, Kavi, and Pushkararuni, the sons of Darilakshya, all Kshatriyas became Brahmans,

as did Mudgal a son of Bharmyashav also a Kshatriya. There is no authority whatever in the hymns of the Veda for the present complicated system of castes. There is no law to prohibit the different classes of people from living together, or from eating and drinking together; and no law to prohibit the marriage of people belonging to different castes. Mr. Bhattacharya, late Professor of Sanskrit in the Presidency College, Calcutta, and Mr. Tagore, Professor of Law, have shown that there is overwhelming evidence in Sanskrit texts that in those days intermarriage among the different castes, which were based simply on occupation, was of a very frequent occurrence. The innumerable subdivisions that have arisen within the four great original castes have no justification. By these much social friction is caused and petty walls of sub-division are set up; jealousies and rivalries have taken place of the ancient cooperation for general good. The circles for intermarriages have become too restricted and local and unimportant customs have become fossilized into religious obligations making social life run into narrow grooves and cramping limitations tending to provoke rebellion and exasperate

feelings of irritation. It is a hindrance to the creation of a national spirit among such exclusive materials and to induce those who are accustomed to such narrow horizons to take a broader view of life. While a man of one of the four orders in the old days felt himself to be an integral part of a nation, a man of a small sub-caste has no sense of citizen spirit and tends to be a sectarian rather than a patriot.

Class distinction prevailing in Europe and elsewhere is distinguishable from the Hindu caste distinction. Social distinctions exist amongst all nations, but nowhere are they so rigidly observed, as amongst the Hindus. In modern Europe there are numerous gradations, from the landed aristocracy to the unskilled labourer, and social intercourse is practically confined to persons of approximately the same social standing; but there is no hard and fast boundary between one gradation and the next. The different strata gradually merge, the one into the other; and it is possible for a successful man to raise himself, or at least his children, from the lowest to almost the

Caste and class systems compared.

highest circle of society. Moreover, the spirit of exclusiveness has no external sanction. Each individual is free to decide for himself. He can choose his associates and even his wife from the classes beneath him without any outside interference. People who do not approve of his choice may hold aloof from him, but he incurs no special penalties. The Hindus, on the other hand, are divided into an immense number of entirely separate social groups or castes, the members of which are compelled to abstain from eating with or marrying persons belonging to other groups. Their conduct is guided and circumscribed by an infinite number of rules regarding marriage, religious and social recemonies, eating and drinking, and the like.

It is obvious that when each caste is exclusive with regard to food and drink, there can be very little social intercourse between the members of the different castes. A man who wants to entertain his friends must call a Brahman cook, and if one of the party happens to be a Nagar Brahman, none but a Nagar cook would do. Even with the proper arrangement for a

cook, the food cannot be eaten by all the guests at a common table but each must sit apart. A person of a lower caste would have to sit at a distance which would be quite humiliating, and if a non-Hindu is in the party, he would not only have to sit apart at a great distance, but he would be served from other dishes specially set apart so as not to cause pollution. For these reasons, there are very few mixed parties; and interdining intercourse between persons of different Hindu castes or non-Hindus may be said to be practically non-existing. When such is the case with the Gujaratis themselves, social intercourse with Europeans is quite out of question. Apart from the difficulties due to caste, the mode of living is quite different among both. Squatting on the ground, and eating of only vegetable dishes without knives and forks would be a feat which few Europeans would care to perform.

Within the last forty or fifty years education, foreign travel and contact with foreigners have brought about many changes in some of the caste restrictions. The change is most perceptible in the distinctive caste

Modern disintegrating tendencies.

dress. *Peherans* and *angarkhas* have yielded place to European fashion shirts and coats; and the *pagadi* or head dress to skull caps, *fentas* and even solas and felt hats. Collars and ties have come into fashion among the educated and half educated of the new generation. The practice of shaving the head and keeping a small tuft of hair on the crown of the head (*chotli*), which was the distinctive sign of a Hindu, has been discarded and the practice of having close cropped hair has been the fashion of the day. But during the last ten years the movement for *swadeshi* started by Mahatma Gandhi there has been a revolt against foreign fashions which has led to the adoption of an uniform Khadi dress consisting of a skull cap, a *peheran* or shirt and *dhoti*. This uniformity of dress makes it impossible to distinguish a Brahman from a Vania or a Patidar from Antyaj and has given at least outwardly a blow to the distinctive caste system. Formerly one could at a glance guess the caste of a Hindu from his peculiar dress, but now the change in his exterior has been so great that it becomes difficult to find out not only his caste, but also whether he is a Hindu, Parsi or Musalman. Caste restrictions regarding food and pollution

by touch are also being broken down owing to the spread of western ideas and the improved means of communications.

Promiscuous travelling now prevails throughout the country, and Brahmans and other twice-born sit and take refreshment in contact with *shudras*, outcastes and *mlechhas* on the levelling benches of the railway carriages conveniently closing their eyes to the contamination which such contiguity involves. Like the railways, public hospitals, jails, law courts and such other institutions ignore the claims of caste within their walls. In the public schools and colleges persons of all castes including Antyajjas sit together in the same class-room, join in the same games on the playground and often reside and eat meals together in boarding houses attached to some of them. Thirty years ago, Nagar and Shrimali Brahmans could not eat food which was not cooked by a member of their own caste. Now many of them employ in their houses cooks from the Khedaval, Modh, Audich and other Brahman castes. Though this is not unknown to the other members of their caste it passes unnoticed. Thirty years ago, Deshastha,

Koknastha and other Deccani Brahmans would not drink tea or water, when members of other non-Brahman castes were sitting on the same carpet with them; now most of them do so without any hesitation. Thirty years ago in the dinner and other parties given at the Palace by His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwad or in the Baroda Sayaji Vihar Club, Brahmans used to sit separately with their *abotias* only on their person; but now all sit at the same table with their full dress and without the least idea of pollution by touch and partake, according to their choice, of vegetable or non-vegetable dishes, served by servants of any caste. Every year hundreds of Hindus visit Europe for purpose of study or trade or for mere pleasure. While there, they set aside the restrictions of the caste system in which they were reared. When they return home, they are readmitted into their caste without performing any or only a nominal penance. Observing caste restrictions in food is really never with them what it once was and yet no notice is taken of their doings. In the garden and other parties which are now a-days becoming common in towns, Brahmans, Vantias, and Shudras, partake of refreshments from the same buffet. Drinking

of aerated waters prepared by non-Hindus has become fashionable, and it is a matter of everyday observance that tea or coffee from a Goanese refreshment room-keeper at a railway station is preferred to the inferior stuff hawked by Brahmans. Biscuits manufactured by Huntly and Palmer and other western manufacturers are freely partaken, and when doctors advise, there is no hesitation even in taking chicken soup or egg-mixture. There are many educated Hindus who deliberately break through the rules of caste when it suits them to do so, and many apparently orthodox Hindus enjoy in convenient European hotels in Bombay, Baroda, Ahmedabad and elsewhere and in the houses of their European, Parsi or Mahomedan friends, a hearty meal of forbidden food cooked and served by Mahomedans or Dheds. But in their own homes the fear of giving offence to their more orthodox elders leads them to formally observe the established rules and proprieties. So long as they do this their laxity elsewhere is condoned. Brought up in seclusion and without much education, the females in some families are tenacious of the old observances and restrictions and regard any departure from them with disfavour.

There have been recently, however, signs of a great change in their ideas of orthodoxy among many high caste Hindu ladies. Following the example of other advanced communities, Hindu females of the educated classes appear freely in public, and the restrictions of the caste system, so far as ordinary social intercourse is concerned, are hardly observed. The uneducated masses, though more conservative than the educated few slowly but steadily imitate their example in these matters and a great change for the better is visible. But this is not enough to destroy the caste system. Its preservation depends more upon the strict observance of its marriage rules than upon the rules limiting the persons with whom food may be partaken. It is, however, a matter for some satisfaction that a small beginning has been made even with regard to inter-caste marriages. Marriages between persons of different sub-castes of the same main caste, are more common than marriages between persons of different main castes. The former are condoned with the exaction of a fine, but the latter are visited with excommunication and it is those only who have the moral courage to face it that perform them. A good beginning has however

been made and the inconvenience now felt to secure a suitable bridegroom for one's daughter or a bride for one's son, from the narrow caste circle, is sure to increase the number of such unions.

With the exception of a few tribal castes such as Rajputs, Kathis and Lewa Kanbis all the functional and other castes have caste *panchayats* or standing caste committees which deal as a matter of course with all breaches of caste rules and regulations. The primary object of the caste panchayat, was to regulate matters relating

to the calling followed by
the caste, but as all the

Caste panchayats.

members following an occupation, were generally of one caste, the panchayat gradually assumed the power of regulating caste matters also. In each caste panchayat there is a headman, two or three leaders or foremen who hold their office by hereditary right. The headmen of the Vantias and other influential castes are called *Sheths*, and those of the poorer or less influential ones are called *Patels*. When the regular heir to the dignity is unfit to hold the post from physical or mental weakness, he retains the title,

though the actual power is exercised by some other member of his family. Although theoretically all the members of the caste have a right to take part in the deliberations of the caste panchayat along with the headman and the leaders, it is only a few whose personal qualities have gained their influence that actually do so; and as none of the rest disputes their opinion, caste authority virtually rests with this inner cabinet.

Apart from the caste panchayat, there is a general guild for the whole town and including all castes. It is called the *Mahajan* or Town Council. All trade guilds or caste panchayats are subordinate to the *Mahajan*. The *Sheths* and *Patels* of the different occupational castes in a city or town are its members. The President who is called *Nagar Sheth* is usually a *Vania*. Theoretically all the occupational castes ought to be represented in the *Mahajan* but in practice the lower castes such as *Luhars*, *Suthars*, *Golas*, *Ghanchis*, etc., are ignored and only the *Vania* and other higher castes form the *Mahajan*.

Constitution of Mahajan.

The jurisdiction of a *nyat panchayat* or caste committee extends over those who belong to that particular caste within a particular area. The members of the caste may all be in one town or may be distributed in different towns and villages, in which case the territorial jurisdiction of the committee extends to all those towns or villages. Generally speaking the territorial limit of a caste committee is limited to the territorial group or circle within which the children of its members are married. It takes cognizance of all matters whether social or professional which concern the caste, e. g., fixing rates of wages, hours of working, holidays, punishment for breaking castes rules, giving permission to marry a child outside the limits of the area fixed for contracting marriages, granting divorces, etc. Like the caste panchayat the Mahajan or town council was primarily intended as the highest authority in matters of trade only, but it also arrogated to itself jurisdiction over caste questions and became, as far as Hindu traders are concerned, the supreme authority in matters of caste also. A person dissatisfied with the order of his caste, may

appeal against it to the Mahajan and the decision of the Mahajan becomes law both to him and to his caste panchayat. Orders for *Nagar ujani*, or feast in the whole town, for strikes and for closing shops on the death of a member of the ruling house or some great man are given by the Nagar Sheth.

A clear idea of the relative authority of the caste panchayat and the Mahajan will be formed by the following instance:—

Some years ago, the carpenters' rate of wages was six annas nine pies in the city of Baroda. The carpenters' caste panchayat raised it to 14 annas. The Mahajan interfered and directed the carpenters to keep the old wages. But they would not agree and the Mahajan therefore ordered that no one should employ their services. This lasted for a month when the carpenters had to give in, and the Mahajan fixed their wages at $8\frac{1}{2}$ annas, and the working hours from 8 a. m. to noon and from 2 to 6 p. m. It also prohibited them from working overtime in morning though they were allowed to do so at night.

Each caste panchayat has its priest and each Mahajan has a *kotwal* or *gumasta*, whose duty is to collect the members of the panchayat or Mahajan, as the case may be, when they are wanted. It is only wealthy guilds who employ a gumasta or a salaried clerk. Ordinarily the work of getting the members together is done by the caste priest or by the village *kotwal*. They receive no regular payment but are entitled to certain perquisites and gifts on marriage and other occasions. When there is a caste feast the *kotwal* is given a dinner. In some places he is paid seven pice by the bride and bridegroom.

Every caste committee or Mahajan has a place appointed for holding meetings. In former days, the meeting place of the Mahajan was generally the place where the custom duties were collected. Now-a-days, the Mahajan meets at the residence of the Nagar Sheth, while a caste committee ordinarily meets at the residence of the Sheth or Patel (headman). But when the question for decision is important and a large

Servants of the panchayat.

Place of meeting.

gathering is expected, the meeting place is some temple or *dharamshala*. Poorer classes to whom these places are not available hold their meeting under the shade of some banyan or mango tree in the open *maidan*.

When any one has a complaint, he gives information to the Sheth or Patel of his caste, and the Sheth or Patel after fixing a suitable day and hour sends word through the caste priest to the other caste *panchas* and all the members of the caste to meet him on the appointed day and hour. The party complained against is also given information to be present. All the members of the caste are entitled to be present on the meeting day. But if the question to be decided is not a very important or interesting one, very few attend. The elders under the guidance of the president take evidence, examine witnesses, hear what the accuser and the accused have to say and give such decision as to them may appear proper. The whole proceeding except the final order is oral.

The breach of a caste rule is ordinarily punished with a fine. Thus if a mason or a carpenter works overtime or accepts lower wages, against

the rules of his guild, he is fined Rs. 51. If he takes up work left unfinished by his fellow craftsman, before his reasonable demands are satisfied by his employer or establishes himself in a village where another member is already settled, all communication with him is stopped till he yields and acts according to the wishes of his guild. Similarly when a marriage is contracted outside the *gol* or circle, marked out by the caste or betrothal is broken or any other social act forbidden by the caste is done, the delinquent is fined and if the offence is very serious, such as taking as a wife, a woman from another caste, he is excommunicated. When this happens nobody can eat, drink or smoke with him. A sentence of excommunication is often commuted to one of fine only, when the offender, unable to bear the excommunication, surrenders himself to the mercy of his caste, promises to behave in a better way in future and gives up the cause which necessitated his excommunication. When the conditions imposed by the panchayat are duly fulfilled, the delinquent is let go with a fine only and is also required to provide a feast for his caste people who, by partaking of it in his company, i. e. eating and

drinking with him publicly, testify that he is re-admitted to the privileges of the community. When a fine is inflicted, it is generally readily paid; for, refusal to pay it, is generally followed by excommunication. For trifling breaches of caste rules, a humiliating apology, change of the sacred thread or lighting a lamp in a temple, suffices. If the person excommunicated is poor distribution of *patashas*, sweets, is accepted in place of a caste dinner or he is called to join a dinner party given by some one else.

When a man is excommunicated his fellow castemen sever their connection with him so completely that

Nature of the penalty of exclusion from caste.

- (a) nobody eats, drinks or smokes with him,
- (b) he is not invited to any caste dinner,
- (c) he cannot obtain brides or bridegrooms for his children,
- (d) even his own married daughters cannot visit him,
- (e) he is not helped even at the funeral of a member of his household,

- (f) the caste-priest and even his own barber and washerman refuse to serve him, and
- (g) in some cases he is debarred access to public temples.

The following extract from a vernacular paper from the Navsari district (Navsari Patrika of 14-8-10) will serve as an illustration of the working of a caste panchayat :—

“ The caste panchayat of the Modh Ghan-chis, residing in the 35 villages between Surat and Daman, assembled in the Ashapuri Mata at Navsari on the 13th August 1910. It was called at the instance of one Valabh Ratanji of Abrama, who wanted permission from the caste to marry a second wife in the life-time of the first one who is weak in mind. The expenses of lodging and feeding the Panchayat in Navsari, which amounted to Rs. 600 was borne by the applicant, but the permission solicited by him was not granted as the alleged ground was found, upon inquiry, to be not satisfactory. In this panchayat meeting, the following orders were also passed :—

- (1) No female of the caste should offer her services for doing manual labour. If this order of the Panch is transgressed, the delinquent will be fined Rs. 151.
- (2) No one should pay more than Rs. 150 as *palla*, Stridhan, to the father of the bride. If more is found to have been paid or accepted, both the parties will be fined Rs. 100.
- (3) When marriage with a widow is performed, she should be given ornaments worth Rs. 300. If more is demanded, she will be fined Rs. 301.
- (4) He who uses liquor on marriage occasions will be fined Rs. 50."

If the caste sentence was unjust or unnecessarily harsh, the accused Appeal. formerly appealed to the Mahajan. The appellant to the Mahajan would neither eat nor drink nor move from the Mahajan Sheth's house, until his complaint was heard and he was given relief. The Mahajan Sheth followed the same procedure as that of the caste

panchayat in calling a meeting of the Mahajan and gave a decision which was binding both to the appellant and his caste. But Mahajans do not now interfere in caste matters, and their authority in social matters is now a mere matter of history; but in business matters, they still exercise the same control as before.

Appeals over the decision of the Mahajan were made to the ruler of the land and if he found it unjust he could set it aside. But now-a-days no such appeals are made or entertained and the dissatisfied party's only remedy is the civil court having jurisdiction.

The caste panchayats of artisan classes have generally no source of revenue except occasional fines for breaches of caste rules. Some castes levy a tax on marriage booths and have other sources of revenue also. The amount of income from fines and other sources is usually spent in a caste dinner, or if it is too little for a dinner, it is put by until enough money has accumulated. Expenses for caste vessels, repairs to caste *wadi* or *dharamshala* and such other common objects are also incurred from the balance of the communal fund if any.

The Mahajans in towns and cities formerly had many sources of income. In addition to fines imposed for breaches of guild rules, they levied many petty imposts, such as a tax on the import and export of the principal articles of trade, sales and mortgages of houses, marriage booths, etc. Even now a considerable income is derived from the auction sale of the right to keep shops open and do business on holidays. The amount thus collected as well as the fines go to the upkeep of the local *panjra pole* or home for sick and old animals. In some places, money paid by Shrivak Vanias goes to the *panjra pole* and that paid by Meshri Vanias goes to their temples. If the funds are large, a considerable part of them is also spent in *sadavarts* that is, distribution of food to *sadhuis* and other mendicants, *parabs* or places for the supply of drinking water to travellers, *visamas*, or road resting places, *parabdis* and such other works of charity.

Caste rules are rigidly observed in those castes which have standing committees or *panchayats*, which regulate both caste and trade questions. Kanbis, Kolis, Rajputs and other tribal castes,

Influence of panchayat on caste observances.

having no standing committees are lax in the observance of their caste rules. Among them when an important caste question crops up and its settlement is necessary, the leaders of the community call together a meeting of the whole caste or that section of it with which it has marriage relations, in some central and convenient village or place of pilgrimage and pass such resolutions as may be approved by the general sense of the meeting. But owing to the absence of a standing caste committee and the vast area over which the caste population is spread, such resolutions are never effectively carried out and lead to further sub-divisions in the caste. As the village headmen are generally Kanbis, all the members of this caste are called Patels. The absence of a standing caste committee in the "Patel" caste has grown into a proverb: "*Patel no koi Patel nahi*", i. e. there can be no headman in the headmen caste. In the same way, Garasias who are generally Rajput land-holders and Kolis who are cultivators, have no standing caste committees. A man is more his own master and less under the control of his neighbours. The result is that there are fewer restraints on marriage, food etc.

Young Patels, who have been lately going to Europe for prosecution of their studies, quietly rejoin their caste after their return, without anybody calling upon them to make *prayaschit* (penance). No notice is taken of their conduct, even when they openly transgress the caste rules about food. This has given rise to the proverb "*Kanbi nyat baharo nahi ane Garasio gozaro nahi*", i. e. a Kanbi is never an outcaste and a Garasia is never polluted.

CHAPTER VI.

MARRIAGE.

There is a wide contrast between the marriage customs of Europe and India including Gujarat. The most striking fact one notices in Gujarat, as indeed in the whole of India, is the universal prevalence of the married state. In Europe sentiment and prudence hold divided sway, and the tendency on the whole is rather towards a decline in the number of marriages. In India neither of these motives comes into play. Religion on the other hand, which in the West makes in the main for celibacy, throws its weight in India almost wholly into the other scale. A Hindu must marry and beget a son (*putra*) to save him from hell (*put*). He must also see that his daughters are not left unmarried at puberty, for to do so would not only bring social obloquy on his family but subject him

and his ancestors to damnation. While marriage is obligatory it is hampered by numerous restrictions. In Europe the field from which a man can choose his wife is practically unlimited. The restrictions based on consanguinity are few and marriages are generally determined by the free choice of the marrying parties. There is no restriction on widow-marriage. The later period of life at which the people enter into wedlock coupled with the greater equality of age on the part of husband and wife reduces the period by which the wife on the average survives the husband, and there are no child-widows. In Gujarat, however a Hindu must marry within his own caste and outside the circle of those who are related to him within seven degrees.

Universality of marriage, early marriage and enforced widowhood are the three prominent features of Gujarati Hindu marriage customs. A marriage is not a civil contract but a religious sacrament essential and irrevocable. It is obligatory for a father to obtain a husband for his daughter and the most awful penalties are prescribed in the *shastras*, if a girl should attain puberty while yet unmarried. We may find perhaps a few males, who, owing to some

deformity or scarcity of brides in their caste, have not been able to marry, but we will very rarely find a female who has grown old without being married. The proverb says: *Doso kunvaro mare, pan dosi kunvari mare nahi*, i. e. an old man may die unmarried but an old woman would never.

Marriage, according to the Hindu Law, is a holy union for the performance of religious duties. It is not a contract; the mere fact therefore that a marriage was brought about during the minority of either party thereto, does not render the marriage invalid. The marriage of Hindu children is brought about by their parents and usually the children themselves exercise no volition. But the marriage of a lunatic is not valid; and a marriage brought about by force or fraud is altogether invalid.

The primary duty, and the co-relative right of giving a girl in marriage rests with the father. But where the father has deserted his wife and daughter, the mother can give the daughter in marriage without the consent

Who can give in marriage.

of the father. The rule established by the decisions of courts is that a marriage which is duly solemnized and is otherwise valid, is not rendered invalid, simply because it was brought about without the consent of the guardian. But a marriage, though performed with the necessary ceremonies may be set aside, if it was brought about by force or fraud.

No marriage is valid if it is made between persons of different castes or between persons related to each other within the prohibited degree of relationship, according to which a man cannot marry a girl if their common ancestor being traced through his or her father is not beyond the seventh in the line of ascent from him or her, or if their common ancestor being traced through their mothers is not beyond the fifth in the line of ascent from him or her. In other words, descendants upto the seventh degree through males or females of paternal ancestors upto the seventh degree, and descendants upto the fifth degree, of maternal ancestors upto the fifth degree, are excluded from eligibility for marriage, as being *sapindas*.

There were in Vedic times intermarriages between the four original castes—Brahmans, Kshatrias, Vaisyas and Shudras—with certain restrictions. A Brahman could marry a Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Sudra woman and a Kshatriya could marry a Kshatriya, Vaishya or Sudra woman and so on. And the issues by all such marriages were legitimate and the wives were considered duly married. Such a marriage was called *anuloma*, proper alliance. But if a woman of a higher caste married a man of a lower caste, it was *pratiloma* or a misalliance. But though reprobated such marriages were not unlawful. The marriage of Devayani daughter of a Brahmin priest, Shukracharya, with Yayati (a Kshatriya king) was never questioned. When and how the old custom disappeared has a long history into which we need not enter here. We have the fact that in the present day endogamy or the custom of “marrying in” which forbids the members of a particular caste to marry any one who is not a member of that caste, prevails among all the Hindus. A man must marry not only within his caste but also within his sub-caste, if it is divided into sub-

castes. Further restrictions on the selection of brides and bridegrooms are placed in most of the Brahman, Vania, Kanbi and artisan castes by *ekdas* or solemn agreements by which the caste members, residing within a particular area called *gol* or circle, are restricted in giving and taking in marriage to the circumscribed field of their caste-men living within that area. People living in villages are anxious to wed their daughters to dwellers in towns; while the town people avoid giving their daughters in marriage to those who live in villages. These tendencies lead to uneven results and to remedy these, *ekdas*, or solemn engagements binding their members not to marry their children outside their circle, even among the members of the same caste or sub-caste, have been devised and have to be followed on pain of excommunication or at least payment of a heavy fine. The result of all these tendencies has been to multiply, even within the limit of a caste, the number of groups within which marriages are restricted. For instance, the Modh Vanias are divided into *Adalja* from *Adalaj*, *Goghava* from *Gogho* and *Mandalia* from *Mandala*. Each of them is further sub-divided into *Visa*, whole, and *Dasa*,

half, a division common to all Vania castes including even Jain Vanias. These again are split into later local sections, such as *Ahmedabadi* and *Khambhati*, with the result that all the sub-divisions dine together, but for purposes of inter-marriage, the Modh Vanias have about twelve separate groups. In addition to their local sub-divisions of *Vadnagara*, *Visnagara*, *Sathodra*, etc., each Nagar caste has a *grahastha* or laymen class and a *bhikhsuka* or priestly class between which marriages are not allowed. The constant creation of these separate conubial groups has been doing great harm, both moral and physical, to the people by narrowing the circle of selection and creating unnecessary difficulties, in securing brides or bridegrooms. Realising these evils social reformers have been advocating for more than 50 years the fusion of sub-castes and the introduction of *roti-vyavahar tyan beti vyavahar* i. e. inter-marriage with those with whom one can dine, that is in the whole caste. But though the propriety of the reform is admitted very little action has been taken to carry it out. How difficult it is to move Indian society to effect a social reform, is well illustrated by what had happened in the Deccan. The Deshastha,

Koknastha and Karada Brahmins who could interdine but could not intermarry, were, many years ago, allowed to do so by one of the Shankaracharyas; and yet it took many years before action followed the edict. There are over eighty Brahman castes in Gujarat. They can interdine, a fact from which a feast given to all Brahmans, has come to be known as *chorashi* i. e. feast to the 84 kinds of Brahmans, and yet they are exclusive of each other in marriage. The disintegrating influence of the creation of separate connubial groups has not escaped the notice of social reformers. But they wisely refrain from advocating intermarriages between members of different castes for the present and lay stress on the necessity of proceeding gradually and commencing with the smallest groups. They confine their efforts at present to the domain of the practical and direct them to the bringing about of intermarriages between the sub-sections of the chief castes now existing. Their ultimate object is however to bring about intermarriages among all the primary castes who interdine but do not intermarry. Their efforts have already been fruitful to some extent. Within

the last twenty years a few instances of inter-marriages among some Vania sub-castes, both Hindu and Jains, have taken place, and from the acquiescence rather than opposition with which they are now received, it is hoped that such marriages will be general, in all castes, in the near future.

Exogamy or the practice of "marrying out" further restricts the circle within which Hindu marriages can be celebrated. It forbids the members of a particular group in a caste, usually supposed to be descended from a common ancestor or associated with a particular locality, to marry any one who is a member of the same group. While endogamy restricts intermarriage in one direction by artificially creating a number of small groups within which people must marry, exogamy brings about the same result by artificially expanding the circle within which they can not marry. In addition to this no two members of the same *gotra* or *shakha* can marry among Brahmans and Bhats. Among Rajputs, members of a clan are forbidden to marry within the clan, as all the members of a clan are believed to be the children

of one common ancestor. The dread of marriage among "relations" is sometimes carried to a strange extreme. As all Jadavs are in theory of the same stock, members of that great clan, whether Jadejas, Chudadamas or Bhatias, ought not to intermarry. A Jadeja should not marry a Chusasama, although the tribes separated in very early times. As far as can be ascertained Gujarati Rajputs have one hundred and three surnames. In Surat and Broach most Rajputs have lost all trace of their clan. Some of the sub-clans are so large and so long established that they have the importance of separate clans. And yet instances have occurred of marriages being annulled when it was found that the clans of the bride and bridegroom were divisions of the same stock. Among Lewa Kanbis, in Charottar, a girl cannot be married to a boy living in the same village; for, although there may be no prohibited relationship between them, all those living in a village are believed to be the descendants of a common ancestor, and marriage between children of the same ancestor is considered disgraceful.

Another custom among the Gujarati Hindus is that of hypergamy or the practice of "marrying up", which forbids a woman of a particular group to marry a man of a group lower than her own in social standing and compels her to marry her in a group equal or superior in rank. It is most notable among the Anavala, Audich and Khedaval Brahmans, and the Rajput, Lewa Patidar, Maratha Kshatriya and Brahma Bhat castes. The different *kuls* or families of the same caste are not treated with equal consideration. Certain families are considered *kulin* or of good birth, either from some honour conferred on their ancestors by the ruler of the land or from the benefits conferred by them on the caste. The *kulins* marry their daughters only in their own circle, but have no objection to take wives from families of inferior rank, provided they get handsome dowaries which range from a few hundred to several thousand rupees. Among the Marathas families belonging to groups such as Kadam, Bande, Bhosle, Pawar, Nimbalkar etc. whose ancestors rose to power during the Maratha ascendancy will not give their daughters in marriage to Marathas of a lower social standing.

It is always an object of solicitude to the parents of a female child that they should procure her marriage with the scion of a so called noble family, although that family might have been reduced to poverty and the bridegroom being illiterate and unworthy of her hand there could be nothing but misery in her lot by such an alliance. To wed her to a bridegroom properly qualified but of inferior rank in the caste scale is considered disgraceful.

The custom of hypergamy leads to several unusual practices. Husbands are at a premium in the upper groups and become the object of vigorous competition; the bride—price of early usage disappears and is replaced by the bridegroom price, now paid among most of the higher castes. The rich get their daughters married above their rank; poor people are driven to reckless borrowing or in the last resort to other means if they would avoid the disgrace of letting their daughters grown up unmarried. There are unhappily several ways of redressing the unequal proportions of sexes and putting artificially straight what has artificially been made crooked. One approved way for the parents is to make no attempt to keep

alive, if not to actually murder, all female infants except those for whom they can make sure of finding husbands. A father who marries his daughter to a *kulin*, has not only to pay a handsome dowery with his daughter, but also to provide her and her children every year with their wearing apparel. He has to share in the marriage expenses of his daughter's daughters, and to make cash payments to his son-in-law's parents and other relations, when they visit his house and on occasions of rejoicing or mourning. He has to take care that his son-in-law or his relations are in no way displeased, for their displeasure may possibly result in his daughter being troubled or discarded. The *kulin* having their own girls as also those from the lower grades in the castes available for marriage, not only do not allow their widows to marry, but also sometimes practise polygamy. The custom of hypergamy has ruined several families with many daughters in the castes which practise it. It has forced them to mortgage their lands and to incur debts beyond their means of repaying.

Of late years there has been some change in the attitude of the Gujarati Hindus towards the *kulin* in their castes. This is partly due to feelings of revulsion brought about by the unreasonable and ever-increasing demands of the *kulins* themselves and the misery which the girls married in their families have to suffer, and partly to western education, which inclines parents to select educated and well-to-do husbands for their daughters in preference to the mere *kulins* who are not unfrequently both ignorant and pauper. Within the last 20 or 30 years the Anavalas, Lewa Patidars, and other castes in which hypergamy prevails are looking towards the *kulins* with feelings of less regard than before and have resolved to marry their girls only in their own social circle and to look more to education, pecuniary circumstances and fitness of the bridegroom than merely to his belonging to a particular family.

Though the *shastras* permit polygamy, Brahmans and Vanias are, as a rule, monogamous; Vadnagara Nagars are strictly monogamous.

Among them on no pretext can a second wife be had in the life of the first. But some Brahman castes, such as Audich, Anavala, Tapodhan, etc. and some Vania castes, such as Deshavals allow polygamy. In all other castes polygamy is allowed and practised to some extent. Amongst those who are considered *kulins*, a second marriage was performed some years ago on the slightest pretext. Caste people quote instances of *kulin* Rajputs, Patidars, Anavalas, and Audichas in straightened circumstances having married again and paid off their debts from the dowery received with their second or third wife. As a general rule, however a second wife is not taken, unless the first is barren, gives birth to daughters only or is afflicted with some incurable disease. In a few castes, such as Ghan-chis, etc. permission from the caste panchayat is necessary before a second wife can be married in the life-time of the first. But in most of the castes no such permission is necessary and a second wife may be taken merely at the caprice of the husband or on such flimsy grounds as the father of the wife delaying in sending her to her husband or not providing her with sufficient clothes and ornaments. Sometimes it is

the first wife who goads her husband to marry a second one when she herself is barren, or when her children do not live. But here also there has been a great change in the people's ideas about propriety of things and it may safely be said that now monogamy is the general rule and polygamy the exception and that also in a very few cases when a second wife is taken to beget an heir.

The Aryan society of the Vedic period presents the institution of marriage in a form which recognised female liberty and the dignity of womanhood in full, slight traces of which are seen in the old Sanskrit marriage ritual, which is still recited and in the ceremonies which are blindly performed without understanding what they mean. Woman's freedom and dignity were vindicated and in the Kshatriya caste especially, liberty to choose her husband in the form of *swayamvara*, or marriage by free choice, so well illustrated in the stories of Sita, Damayanti, Rukmini and Draupadi, was widely allowed. Marriage took place in all castes at a comparatively mature age, and the re-marriage of widows was not looked upon as disreputable.

No early marriages
in Vedic time.

Later on, there was a revulsion of feeling and the Vedic institutions were practically abandoned or ignored and in their place usages grew up which brought in infant marriages and enforced widowhood. The change to a system of infant marriage seems to have taken place at a very early date. According to Baudhayana, a girl who is unmarried when she reaches maturity is degraded to the rank of a *Shudra* and her father is held to have committed a grave sin by having neglected to get her married. This rule is common in all the law-books and many of them go further still and fix a definite age for the marriage of girls. According to Manu a man of thirty should marry a girl of twelve and a man of twenty-four, a girl of eight. Later writers fix the higher limit of age in such cases at ten years or eight years and reduce the lower limits to seven, six and even four years for girls. What induced people already practising a rational system of adult marriage to abandon it in favour of a rigid and complicated system of infant marriages? In the nature of things no confident answer can be given. One can only surmise

that the growth of the patriarchal power of the head of the family must have been adverse to the assertion of independence on the part of its female members and more especially to their exercising the right of choosing their husbands for themselves. Where family interests were involved it may well have seemed simpler to get a girl married before she had developed a will of her own than to court domestic difficulties by allowing her to grow up and select a husband on her own account. The gradual lowering of the position from the ideal standard of Vedic times and the distrust of their virtues induced by the example of the pre-matrimonial license set by the Dravidian races must also have had its effect and, a girl would be married as a child in order to avert the possibility of her causing scandal later on. Apart from these general causes a powerful influence must also have been exerted by the institution of caste and the custom of hypergamy which limits the possible husbands for girls and compels the parents to endeavour to secure appropriate bridegrooms as soon as possible. The commands of the *shastras* for early marriage based on the necessity created by this peculiar institution, must

have also powerfully affected the bent of the people. It being essential among the Hindus that a girl should marry within the narrow circle of the caste or sub-caste, it is obviously desirable, at least among the families of higher status, that the matter should be settled before she is old enough to form an attachment with some one with whom she cannot be married. The earlier the matter is taken in hand, the larger is the field of choice. If the father defers the arrangement for a husband, he may find that all the eligible boys of the proper age have already been appropriated and that he must put up with one who for his daughter is either considerably older or younger or her inferior in social position. When the custom of infant marriage had once been started under the pressure of social necessity by the families of the higher groups in a caste, a sort of fashion would have been set up and blindly followed through all the grades. The practice of infant marriage has spread much further and taken root more deeply among the lower castes, than its social complement, the prohibition of widow remarriage. Both customs, the positive as well as the negative have been borrowed from the

higher castes and are regarded as paths leading towards social distinction.

Many hard things have been said of infant marriage and the modern tendency is to assume that a population which countenances such a practice must be in a fair way towards great moral degradation, if not to ultimate extinction. But much of the criticism is greatly exaggerated and is founded on considerable ignorance of the present conditions and future possibilities. Now the first point to realise is that in the different parts of Gujarat infant marriage prevails in two widely different forms, one of which is at least free from physiological objections. Even when marriage is performed at an early age, it has one redeeming feature in most of the castes, viz., that cohabitation generally does not take place before sexual maturity. The newly married girl is sent to her father-in-law's house for a few days, just to become acquainted with her new relations; but unless she has reached maturity or her husband is a widower, she is not allowed to meet him. Within a few days she is taken back to her father's house and stays there till

she is fully grown-up and her father is able to provide her with the ornaments, clothes and cash, customary in the caste. No ceremony is necessary among the Gujaratis before the girl is sent to her husband's, but among the Deccani Brahmans, the *rutu shanti*, or menses quieting ceremony is performed when the girl begins to menstruate, after which she is considered to be fit for cohabitation with her husband. Till then she lives as a virgin in her father's house. No one who has seen Kanbi, Koli, Rajput, Bharvad or other women lifting their heavy water jars at the village well is likely to have any misgiving as to the effect of their marriage system on the *physique* of their race. It is only in a few castes, and these are generally higher ones, that there is absence of that healthy sense which impels parents to keep their girls at home until they are fit to bear the burden of maternity. It is only among such people who permit the bride whether mature or not to be sent to her husband's house immediately after the wedding and among whom consummation takes place before puberty that the evils of early marriages are visible; and the most striking proof of it is that most of them have the ap-

pearance of wanting vigour both of mind and body, the greatest sufferers being the poor girls who have to enter into matrimony before their bodies are properly developed. The progeny of such parents also could not be otherwise than sickly, equally harmful both to the individuals concerned and the country generally, in the interference with education and in crushing out of all spirit of enterprise.

Another remarkable thing is that although husband and wife, who and not necessarily have been married in their unhappy infancy, without any voice in each other's selection, generally live in Gujarat a happy life. The married parties content themselves with the idea that they have got what was destined for them, and must make the best of their lot which is not in their hand to change. As stated by Sir Herbert Risely in his Report-of the Census of India, 1901, page 432, "excluding the poetical view that that marriages are made in heaven, two working theories of the institution are at present in existence: one which leaves marriages to make themselves by the process of unrestricted courtship and another which requires them to be

made by the parents or guardians of the persons who are to be married. The first, which may perhaps be called the method of natural selection, is accepted and more or less acted up to by all Western nations except those who follow the French system of *marriage de convenance*. The second, a system of avowedly artificial selection, is in force, with some exceptions, throughout the East and assumes its most rigid form in Hindu Society. For all Hindus, except the relatively small number who are influenced by European ideas on the subject of marriage, the bare idea that a girl can have any voice in the selection of her husband is excluded by the operation of three inexorable sanctions—by ordinances of the Hindu religion, by the internal structure of the caste system and by the general tone and conditions of social life in India. Religion prescribes that like the Roman bride of early days, a Hindu girl shall be given (*tradita in manum*) by her father into the power of her husband; caste complications demand that the ceremonial portion of the transfer shall be effected while she is still a child; while the character of the society, the moral tone of the men, the seclusion of the

women and the immemorial taboo and conventions of family etiquette render it impossible that she should be wooed and won like her European sister." In spite of this it is remarkable that in such unions love usually does come, as readily after marriage as before, provided that opportunities for falling in love with the uneligible man are avoided; and husband and wife are not less devoted to each other than in the Western society where marriages are made after love making.

More than sixty years ago Social Reform Associations had been started in Ahmedabad and other places and through their efforts, the evils of early marriage and enforced widowhood had been brought home to the people. This and the spread of western education brought about a change of feeling against early marriages among the upper classes. But the masses remained unaffected and the evil showed no sign of abatement among them. It was therefore that in 1884 Mr. Malbari convulsed the Hindu society with his celebrated Note on Early Marriage and Enforced Widowhood. He denounced the custom with his usual

vigour and earnestness and succeeded in creating a lively and permanent interest in the subject. This resulted in the Government of India Act on the Age of Consent under which sexual intercourse by a man even with his own wife under 12 years of age was made an offence. Soon after this Mr. Manmohan Ghose, a Bengali gentleman, put forward a proposal that a general law should be passed for British India declaring that no marriage shall be valid if either of the contracting parties at the time of celebrating their marriage is below twelve years. The main argument put forward by him in support of his proposal was that so eminent a Sanskrit scholar as Dr. Bhandarkar had held that there was nothing in the Hindu scriptures to make it obligatory upon a Hindu to marry his daughter before she is twelve. But the movement for legislation was not supported by the country as a whole and nothing came out of it. Unless a social matter comes within the pale of the criminal law, the British Government follow the policy of non-interference. In their celebrated Resolution of 1886 they have declared: "When caste or custom lays down a rule which is by its nature enforceable in the civil courts,

but is clearly opposed to morality or public policy, the State will decline to enforce it. When caste or custom lays down a rule which deals with such matters as are usually left to the option of citizens, and which does not need the aid of civil or criminal courts for its enforcement, State interference is not considered either desirable or expedient." This view of its position, laid down by the British Government, was not approved by the late Mr. Justice Ranade and other ardent advocates of social reform. In one of his speeches Justice Ranade said :—"The State in its collective capacity, represents the power, the wisdom, the mercy and charity of its best citizens. What a single man, or a combination of men, can best do on their own account that the State may not do; but it cannot shirk its duty if it sees its way to remedy evils, which no private combination of men can check adequately, or which it can deal with more speedily and effectively than any private combination of men can do. In these latter cases, the State's regulating action has its sphere of duty marked out clearly. On this and on this principle alone can State action be justified in many important departments of its activity,

such as the enforcement of education, sanitation, factory legislation and of State undertakings like the postal service, or subsidies given to private effort in the way of railway extension and commercial development. The regulation of marriageable age has in all countries, like the regulation of the age of minority, or the fit age of making contracts, been a part of its national jurisprudence and it cannot be said with justice that this question (infant marriage) lies out of its sphere."

One objection commonly urged in British India against all such legislation is that the Government should not interfere with the social and domestic institutions of the people and that any such interference would be a breach of the Crown's guarantee of religious neutrality and that the necessity for reform and the measure of its advance must be left to be determined by the people themselves. But such considerations need not deter rulers of Indian States to legislate in such matters if they are satisfied that such a measure is necessary for the good of their people. It was therefore that

Legislation in Baroda.

His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III had the boldness to take the earliest steps by legislation to prevent Infant Marriages in the Baroda State, which forms a major part of Gujarat. In 1904 was passed, the most important social enactment, the Infant Marriage Prevention Act, which for a time ruffled the thought of the people of the State. The avowed object of the Act was to ameliorate the physical condition of the people, especially of the future generations, by raising the marriageable age. The evils of child-marriage were patent to all, but few dared to go against the current of the prevalent popular opinion. It was expected that to such persons this measure would serve as a buoy to swim across the torrent of public opinion which in itself was sure to ultimately lose much of its force and thus render the help of this buoy quite unnecessary. The draft of the Act, when published, strongly agitated the public mind both within and outside the State, and it was also widely criticised. The opposition, however, appeared to centre round the question of marriageable age, which in the draft was fixed at 14 for girls and 18 for boys.

In deference to this opposition and especially as it was the first measure of its kind H. H. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad was pleased to reduce these ages by two years and agree to make some other modifications in the original Bill with a view to make it less obnoxious to orthodox communities. As finally passed, the Act defined a minor girl as one who had not completed her twelfth year and a minor boy as one who had not completed his sixteenth year. If the parents or guardians of a minor girl, whose age was above nine, desired to get her married, they must apply to a tribunal consisting of the local Sub-judge and three assessors of the petitioner's caste. If the tribunal was satisfied that in the event of the marriage not taking place on the date proposed, it would probably not take place at all or not within one year of the bride attaining her maturity, or that the parents or guardians of the girl were not likely, owing to old age or infirmity, to survive until she came of age, and that she had no other guardian, or that inevitable difficulties of a similar nature were likely to occur, it could grant permission for the marriage to take place. If the Sub-judge disagreed with the assessors the case was to be

referred to the District Judge whose decision was final.

The Baroda Infant Marriage Prevention Act of 1904 had its good effect in educating public opinion and in gradually raising the marriageable age of boys and girls. But twenty-five years' experience of its working having showed that further and more drastic legislation was necessary, the old Act was amended by Act No. 23 of Samvat 1985 (A. D. 1929) which forestalled the recent legislation in British India known as the Sharda Act which, in the age limit, goes further than it. This amendment retains the minimum marriageable age of boys and girls at 16 and 12 respectively as before but declares marriages void in cases in which the age of the bride or bridegroom is less than eight years on the day of marriage. Moreover persons bringing about marriages in which either party is below eight years of age are liable to the punishment of simple imprisonment not exceeding one month or a fine of Rs. 500 or both; and persons who perform the marriages of girls below 12 and of boys below 16 years of age are liable to a fine upto Rs. 500. This is a bold step in advance

of Hindu Law which regards such infant marriages as valid and holds that once a marriage is performed it is always valid except when there are special circumstances to nulify it, such as the use of force or fraud. An amendment raising the marriageable age of girls to 14 and of boys to 18, to bring it in conformity with British India Legislation is before the Baroda Legislature and will soon be Law.

British Indian Legislature which, though
and in British India. alive to the evil effects of
child marriages, did not
deem it expedient to interfere by legislation in
such a social institution of the people, before the
reformed legislative Council came into existence
in 1920, now began to take a different view
owing to the development of public opinion in
condemning it. Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarada, a
member of the Legislative Assembly introduced
in February 1927 a Bill, the object of which was
to regulate the marriages of children amongst
Hindus by prohibiting the marriages of girls
below the age of 12 and of boys below the age
of 15. Quoting from the Census Report of India,
1921, the Rai Saheb pointed out that there were

in India "612 Hindu widows who were babies not even twelve months old, 498, between 1 and 2 years old, 1280 between 2 and 3, 2863 between 3 and 4, and 6758 widows under 5 years of age, making a total of 12,016 widows under 5 years of age. The number of Hindu widows between 5 and 10 years of age was 85,580 and those between 10 and 15 years, 2,33,533. The total number of widows under 10 was 97,596, and under 15 was 3,31,793." The gravity of the situation could be easily realised when it was remembered that out of every 1000 Hindu married women 14 are under 5 years of age, 111 below 10 and 437 under 15 years of age. This means that a little over 11 per cent of the Hindu women are supposed to lead a married life when they are below 10 years of age; i. e. they are mere children and that nearly 44 per cent of them lead married lives when they are less than 15 years of age, i. e. when they are not yet out of their teens and before they have attained true and full puberty and are physically utterly unfit to bear the strain of marital relations. After discussion, during which there was a general support for the principle of fixing an age limit below which a marriage should

be declared void, the Assembly decided to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. Some alterations were made and the Bill came up again before the Assembly on January 29th 1928. But, since the last discussion on the Bill had taken place, another Bill for raising the Age of Consent had been referred to a committee which had been formed to examine and report on a question which was intimately connected with the subject of child marriage. It was therefore decided that it would be unwise to proceed with the child marriage Bill until the Assembly was in possession of the Report of the Age of Consent Committee. Ultimately when this report came up, it was found that the age for marriage, and the age of consent required to be raised not only for the Hindus alone but for all the communities, and finally the Child Marriage Restraint Act (XIX of 1929) was passed which came into force from the 1st of April 1930. Under its provisions it is an offence to marry a girl below the age of 14 and a boy below the age of 18, and those who aid or abet it are liable on conviction to imprisonment which may extend to one month or a fine upto Rs. 1000 or with both. In order that the

provisions of the Act may not be misused to serve private grudge, it is provided that the complainant shall deposit Rs. 100 along with the complaint which should be made to the District Magistrate or Presidency Magistrate having jurisdiction and not to any subordinate magistrate. It is too early to form any opinion about the effect of this Act. But it is sure to be good. So far there have been very few complaints, as relations and other interested parties are not likely to make them. But the question has been taken up by the Social Reform Associations formed in Ahmedabad and other places, and by the Yuvak Mandals (Youth Leagues) formed in most of the towns and important villages, who do their best to bring the delinquents to book by undertaking to make complaints on their being satisfied that the provisions of the Act have been violated.

These legislative measures, and more especially spread of education and Western ideas, have created a general revulsion of feeling among the educated Hindus of all castes in Gujarat, against marrying their children while they are children.

Present day attitude.

Those of them among whom widow marriage is prohibited are especially careful to defer the marriage of their daughters to as late a period as possible and thus to minimise the danger of a life long misery. Others who cannot get suitable husbands for their daughters or a wife for their sons have perforce to defer their marriages, which naturally raises their marriageable age. Educated boys and girls also object to their marriage till their education is finished and they are able to earn their livelihood and set up their own house. Educated and grown up boys also claim their right to make their own selection after seeing the eligible brides personally, and ascertaining their educational and other qualifications. These are yet beginnings but their result is perceptible; and it is not unusual to come across Hindu boys of the age of 18 and over, or girls of 16 and over, who are unmarried. Their number is slowly but steadily increasing. The disastrous consequences both to the individual and to the race from the evil custom of early marriage are now and then brought home to the people by Social Reform Conferences, which have now become yearly institutions in connection with the Indian National Congress

and are also held at certain intervals in most of the castes. Monthly and quarterly periodicals published by the Audich, Modh, Anavala, Lohana, Kadwa and Lewa Patidar and other castes are also devoted to the cause of social reform. Considerations of economy in marriage expenditure e.g. by marrying two or more girls of a family at one and the same time, or securing a good alliance, e. g. by marrying a child in a respectable family sometimes impels even those who understand the evils of early marriage to resort to them, but such cases are now rare; and so far as the upper classes are concerned, child marriages may be said to be a thing of the past. Not only have child marriages disappeared from the educated and upper class Hindus, but there have been even a few instances of caste restrictions also being set aside. Intermarriages between different sub-castes have now become common and are viewed with sympathy rather than opposition and are condoned by a small fine without excommunication. There have also been a few cases in which even caste restriction is set aside, and girls of Nagar Brahman or Brahma Kshatri castes have been married to young men of the Bania or Kayastha castes. Such bold

action meets with excommunication and requires great moral courage on the part of the parties and their relations to face it. But education and the grown up age of both boys and girls foster a feeling of personally selecting one's partner in life and inter-caste marriages are bound to be more general than they are at present. The difficulties under which reformers laboured on account of the restrictions placed by Hindu Law, both as regards the field for selection, and the necessary ceremonials for a marriage to be legal, have been removed by legislation both in British India and in the Baroda State by the passing of Civil Marriage Acts, which marks an advanced step in social legislation and legalises marriages under contractual forms unfettered by any ceremonial or caste scruples enjoined by old Hindu Law. Thus there is no legal objection against intercaste marriages and the small beginning for drastic reform that has been made by a few bold and courageous pioneers is sure, within a few years, to be followed by others, and gradually become the rule, rather than an exception as it is now.

It is only among the ignorant and backward lower classes who allow widow marriage as a

rule and among whom the misery of enforced widowhood is not in their calculation as it is in higher castes where it is prohibited that child marriages are still performed. Indeed soon before the Sharda Act was to come into force, thousands of such marriages had been performed with a view to evade its provisions. This was due mainly to the insistence of illiterate and ignorant females. Weddings are legitimate occasions of rejoicings and festivities and the ignorant masses are glad to have the opportunities they afford, for the display of their wealth in giving caste dinners as early as possible. But it is the females in the family who are particularly anxious to marry their children as early as possible so that they may get a daughter-in-law to domineer over in the house or a son-in-law to pour out their affection on. The occasion of a marriage also gives them an opportunity to display their jewellery and rich dresses, and so they urge on the males to bring about an early consummation of their wishes. Among the lower classes therefore, there is yet a resort to the practice of child marriage. But so far as the upper classes are concerned early marriages may be said to be a thing of the

past. It is not unusual for girls even over 18 or boys over 20 to remain unmarried among them. That old time is gone when the only care of the parents, especially of girls, was to marry their children as early as possible. Now they think of their education first and marriage afterwards. The example of the higher classes, spread of education and the deterrent and educative effect of the legislative enactments to restrain child marriages are sure to have their good result at an early date, even on the lower classes.

The practices of different castes with regard to the consideration for marriage are different. In some castes, such as the Lewa Kanbis, Anavala Brahmans, Rajputs and Marathas, the bride's father has to pay dowry to the father of the bridegroom; in others such as several Brahman, Vania and artisan castes, the bridegroom's father has to pay bride price to the father of the bride, and in others again such as Valmik Kayasths, no money passes between the parties. In some of the lower circles neither bridegroom price nor bride price is paid, but marriage is agreed upon simply on the

understanding that a counter marriage will follow. This is called *sata lekhada* or giving a girl in marriage on the agreement that the bridegroom's sister or some other female relative will be given in marriage to the bride's brother or some other near male relation. The practice of the bride's father giving money to the bridegroom is looked upon as a preferable arrangement, while that of the bride's father receiving money from the bridegroom's father, *kanya vikraya*, is looked upon as sinful. But the party who has to pay and the amount he must give, depends generally speaking, on the demand and supply of brides and bridegrooms and this is again determined to a great extent by the existence or other wise of the custom of hypergamy, widow-marriage and the like. Where girls are paid for, their price depends on their age, and their value rises higher as they approach maturity. Some parents, especially in Kathiawad, allow their girls to grow up, simply because they may fetch a high price from some grown-up bachelor or rich widower in the matrimonial market. In the functional castes, among whom widow remarriage is allowed, a widow of mature age, who is expert in household work and family

business, has to be paid for more than a virgin who is younger, but less experienced in household work. It is the pride of marrying girls in so called *kulin* families which is mainly responsible for the ruinous dowries; and it is the *ekdas* and other caste restraints and the scarcity of girls which are mainly responsible for the baneful custom of giving bride-price. Social reformers have been exposing the folly of both the evil customs but so far, without any tangible results.

The marriage customs and ceremonies of the different Hindu castes differ much from one another, but there are certain essential matters, which are more or less common to all which may be noted here. Proposals of marriage emanate from a house of lesser pretensions, and the father of a bride who seeks to ally his child to the blue blood of a more distinguished *kul*, must balance the scales with gold. If the families are considered to be on an equality, more money than is customary in the caste is not demanded on either side. The five commonest arrangements are :—(1) the bridegroom settles a

Betrothal.

certain sum on the bride called *ṣallu*, which becomes a part of her *stridhan* or dower; (2) the bridegroom receives a portion with the bride; (3) the bridegroom pays a sum of money to the bride's father; (4) no stipulation is made about dowry or portion; (5) the marriage is agreed upon on the understanding that a counter alliance will follow. Of these arrangements, the first is the commonest among Anavala and Audich Brahmans, Lewa Patidars, Rajputs and Marathas; the second is found among some Brahman, Vania and other castes among whom there is a scarcity of brides; the third is common among some high caste Brahmans, artisans and other castes; the fourth is found among a few castes like Luhanas; and the last, *sata tekhdā*, is adopted to gain brides for men of low family or *kul*, or for those who cannot otherwise secure them. Betrothal used to take place as a general rule some years before the actual marriage, with a view to secure an eligible bride or bridegroom. But now it does not take place so early. When a betrothal is found to be free from any objection in the higher castes the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom are compared, and if the astrologer finds no object-

ion, the girl's father chooses an auspicious day for the betrothal and sends his family priest to the house of the intended husband to make the formal announcement. The priest is fed and is given a rupee or two as a present; and as a sign of joy, the boy's father distributes sugarcandy among his friends and relations. In some castes, the family priest or a relation is sent previous to betrothal to see, by personal interview, that the bride is neither blind nor lame nor afflicted with other bodily defects, and that she is in every respect eligible. Similar inspection is also casually made of the bridegroom. From the time of the betrothal to that of the marriage, presents of sweetmeats etc., are sent on Holi and Diwali holidays from the house of the bride to the house of the bridegroom; and, sometimes, from the house of the bride-groom to that of the bride. The general rule is that a betrothal once made cannot be set aside, but the practice in different castes varies. Among some castes such as that of Lad Vantias and Luhanas, a betrothal cannot, under any circumstances, be set aside; among some it may be avoided by the payment of a fine to the caste, while among Nagars and Lewa Kanbis,

the offer of a better match is considered a reason enough for breaking the betrothal and returning the presents received. Among these differences, one general rule prevails that if either of the parties to be married becomes maimed or an invalid, the other is freed from the promise. Formerly among some Rajputs, if the betrothed bridegroom died, the girl who should have been his wife was treated as his widow, and considered incapable of entering into a new married state. But now a betrothed bride is not so treated and may marry on the death of her affianced.

No rule prevails regarding the duration of time between betrothal and marriage. Astrologers are called for to point out the day indicated by the stars as propitious for the marriage. The fixing of the marriage day which must fall between the eleventh of *Kartik Sud* (October–November) and the eleventh of *Ashad Sud* (June–July) rests with the girl's father. For marriage purposes every twelfth year, *Sinhastha*, when Jupiter is in the sign of Cancer, is avoided. After the day is fixed, great preparations are made on both

sides. The house is freshly coloured and white-washed, *papad* and *vadi* (wafer biscuits) are made for use on the marriage days and a booth is built in front of the house. Letters of invitations called *kunkotri* from their being sprinkled *kunku* (red powder) water are forwarded to their kindred and friends by the parents of the bridegroom and the bride. About five days before the marriage, Ganapati is installed and worshipped in the houses of both the parties and then the *mandwa* making ceremony is performed. A hole, about six inches deep is dug in a corner of the booth. The parents and in their absence some near relations with friends and relations sit near the hole and throw into it red powder, milk curds, betelnut and a copper coin. A piece of the *samda* or *khijda* tree (*Prosopis Spicigera*) about a foot long is set up in the hole. One or two days before the marriage day, a ceremony in honour of ancestors and to propitiate the planets, *grahashanti*, is performed at the houses of the bride and bridegroom. On the marriage day the women of the boy's and of the girl's families go separately to a potter's house with music, worship his wheel with red powder and flowers and bring home earthen pots to be used

in the marriage ceremonies. The bride and the bridegroom, each at their houses, are then rubbed with *pithi*, a mixture of oil, turmeric, camphor and some other fragrant substances. On the marriage day at the bride's house a space, generally in front of the entrance door of the house, about four feet square, is enclosed by four posts, one at each of the four corners. At each of the corners, three bamboos are set in the ground leaving between them a space of about eight inches, and round the three bamboos a red string is tied. In the space between the three bamboos, seven decorated earthen pots are piled, the largest at the foot, and the smallest at the top. In the square between the four piles of pots, which is called the *chori*, the bride and bridegroom sit and the ceremonies are performed. The bridegroom seated in a palanquin or on an elephant or a horse and now-a-days some times in a motorcar is brought to the house of the bride's father. *Dholies*, drummers etc. head the procession. Following them come the bridegroom's male relations and friends, then the bridegroom and then the female relations and friends singing songs, bring up the rear. The bridegroom holds seven betel leaves, seven

betelnuts, a cocoanut and a rupee in the hollow of his hands joined together. To ward off the influence of the evil eye, the sister of the bridegroom sits near him and waves a cup containing salt over his head. When the house of the bride is reached, the procession stops, the bridegroom alights from his horse or palanquin and stands on a wooden stool, just outside of the doorway. Here he is met by the bride's mother who makes a *tilak* on his brow, pulls his nose and shows him a miniature plough, a grinding pestle, a churning stick and an arrow. The object of these ceremonies seems to be to drive away the spirits which may have come into the booth along with the bridegroom. A ball of cowdung ashes is then thrown towards each of the four quarters of heaven. Two small earthen pots full of curds are held mouth to mouth, waved seven times round the bridegroom's body, and set on the ground. The bridegroom puts his right foot on the pots, breaks them to pieces, and enters the marriage hall, *mandwa*. He is then led to the square, *chori*, where he sits on a wooden stool, and with the help of the family priest, worships Ganapati. The parents of the bride then wash the bridegroom's great toes with

milk, curds, honey, sugar and clarified butter. After the worship is over, the bride dressed in ornaments and clothes, presented to her by her father or mother's father, is brought in and placed, by her mother's brother on another stool opposite the bridegroom. A piece of cloth is stretched between the bride and the bridegroom. The Brahmans recite luck-bringing verses, and the family priests watch a water-clock or time-keeper shouting at intervals of a minute or two *savadhan* or "Attention, the time is near." When the propitious moment comes, the hands of the bride and bridegroom are joined, the cloth between them is snatched to one side, the hems of their robes are tied together, *varmala*, marriage garland of cotton thread, is thrown over their necks and the musicians strike up music. Then the relations and friends make presents to the bride and bridegroom. In the middle of the square, *chori*, a sacrificial fire is lighted. The brother of the bride then comes to where the fire is lighted, holding a winnowing fan with barley and sesame, and drops into the hands of the bride and bridegroom four pinches of barley and sesame. Then the bride and bride-groom, throw along with clarified butter

the barley and sesame into the fire and again walk round the altar. This is repeated four times. Then the bride and the bridegroom seat them-selves on the stools, the bride on the bridegroom's left, and feed each other with four morsels of coarse wheat-flour mixed with clarified butter and sugar, prepared and served by the bride's mother. The bridegroom and bride then worship Dhruva and the constellation of the Great Bear enjoining each other to be as constant as it. Then the bride and bridegroom, in front of the family deity inside the house, play at odds and evens each in turn holding some coins in a closed hand and the other guessing whether the number of coins is odd or even. Luck in this game is taken an omen of luck in the game of life. The winner of the game is supposed to be the ruler of the house. If the bride and bridegroom belong to different places, the bridegroom's party goes to the place of the bride's father and stay as his guests for two or three days. If the bride is grown up and is to be sent immediately after the marriage to her husband's house, she is sent away on an auspicious day in company with her husband to her new house. The bride's mother worships the

carriage sprinkling sandal-dust and flowers on one of the wheels, and laying a cocoanut in front of it as an offering to the carriage that it may carry them safely. When the carriage moves, the mother gathers the pieces of the cocoanut and lays them in her daughter's lap. No one from the bride's house goes with the party. It consists wholly of the bridegroom's friends and relations, the men walking in front of the carriage and the women walking behind singing songs. When the procession reaches the bridegroom's house the bride and bridegroom with the ends of their clothes tied together step out of the carriage and stand in front of the doorway on a wooden stool. The bridegroom's sister bars the entrance until she receives money presents from the bridegroom. They are then led into the house by the bride-groom's mother, and taken to bow before the family-deity, and again before the god they play at odds and evens to see which of them is the luckier. This ends the marriage ceremony. Caste dinners are given at the house both of the bride and the bridegroom on the marriage day or on some day before or after the marriage. The relations of the bridegroom have a right to dine at the

bride's house, but the relations of the bride do not dine at the bridegroom's house.

There are several curious marriage customs peculiar to particular castes. The following are some of them:—

(1) A curious custom of celebrating marriages in the whole caste on one day, once in every nine, ten or eleven years, was common amongst the Kadwa Kanbis and though recently relinquished by the reformed party in the caste, is still followed by a small section of the community. Once in every nine, ten or eleven years, certain Brahman priests and astrologers with two headmen of the caste in the town of Unja in the Mehsana district of the Baroda State go together to worship *Umiya mata*, the patron goddess of the caste, who has her temple in the town. Their object is to find out the propitious year for holding marriages in the caste. After worship, lots are drawn and, according as the lot falls, the year in which it falls or the following year is declared the proper time. When the year is known, the astrologers name a special day which generally comes in *Vaishakh*

(April-May). For the sake of those prevented from sickness or other cause, a second day is chosen about a fortnight later than the first. As soon as the days are fixed, Brahmans start to spread the news in all places where the people of the caste reside. As another period of nine, ten or eleven years must elapse before regular marriages can again take place, every family provides all its unmarried members with suitable matches. Formerly children about a month old and sometimes even unborn children were married. It sometimes happened that no suitable husband could be found for the daughter of a house, and as before the next regular marriage day she would reach a marriageable age, some special arrangement was required to get her married immediately. To meet this difficulty two practices had been introduced. According to one of these, on the propitious day, the girl was married to a bunch of flowers. The flowers were then thrown in a well or river, the parents of the bride bathed and the girl, now a widow, could, at any time, be married according to the simple *natra* or second marriage form which can take place at any time. The other practice was on he

propitious day, to induce some married man for a small money present, to go through the ceremony of the marriage with the girl and to divorce her as soon as the ceremony was over. The girl could then, at any time, be married according to *natra* form. These curious practices have been given up under the reforming effect of education and the Infant Marriage Prevention Act passed by the Baroda State so early as in 1904. But even when they are practised the infant marriage among the Kadvas are really speaking betrothals. The married bride remains in the house of her father, and it is only when she reaches puberty, that the bridegroom goes to his father-in-law's house with a party of his relations to bring her to his house. Caste dinners are given on this occasion, and this rather than the day of the first ceremony has the character of a real marriage day. How this custom of holding periodic marriages on a certain day in the whole caste arose is shrouded in mystery. It may be due, perhaps, to economy of time and money which is of great value to a busy agricultural community like the Kadwa Kanbi caste. Periodic marriages save time, and the custom of having

them on the same day in the whole caste dispenses with the necessity of caste-dinners, as in each family there is very likely a marriage, and consequently its own feast.

Education, the efforts of social reformers in the caste and the penalties to be incurred under the Baroda State Act for the prevention of infant marriages have created a feeling against this ancient custom, and the efforts of the leaders to do away with it and to introduce the custom of holding marriages every year as in other castes have been greatly successful. The reformers succeeded at first in bringing about a split in the community; one section adhered to the old and time-honoured custom, while the other and more advanced resolved at first to reduce the marriage period to five years, and finally to do away with it altogether, and to perform marriages every year as in the other castes.

(2) Like the Kadwa Kanbis, Bharvads celebrate their marriages only once in twelve, fifteen or twenty-four years on a day in *Vaishakh* (April-May), and all the Bharvads of the neighbouring places hold their marriage in the same place. The richest Bharvad among those who

wish to get their daughters married, buys the ground where the marriages are to be celebrated. This is necessary because, the ground cannot be used a second time for marriages, but is kept a pasture and an ornamental wooden post called the marriage pillar is set up on it and preserved to show that the ground had been used for the performance of marriages. Shortly before the marriage hour, the several brides with their relations and one Brahman priest meet in the booth. At the hour fixed for the marriage all the bridegrooms come to the booth one after another and are received by the wife of the man who bought the ground and paid for the booth. In receiving each bridegroom, the hostess shows him a miniature plough, arrow and churning stick. Then each bridegroom sits by the side of his bride. The pair then walk round the post and offer it a cocoanut kernel. They are next taken to the *chori* where the hems of their clothes are tied together, and they walk round the fire which is lighted in the middle. This completes the marriage ceremony. The host feasts the assembled Bharvads for three days and repays himself by leving a fee of Rs. 12½ from the father

of each bridegroom. This old custom has also almost disappeared and marriages are generally performed every year.

(3) Among Rajputs the bridegroom may go personally to the bride's house for marriage or may send his *khandu* or sword as his representative. As by sending the sword, the bridegroom escapes expensive presents to Bhats, Bhavayas and other beggars, the practice had formerly been common, but is not so now, being resorted to only when the bridegroom is of a much higher social status than the parents of the bride. When this old and trouble and expense saving practice is to be resorted to, the bridegroom sits in a chariot with a sword and a cocoanut and passes with music and a company of friends and relatives as far as the boundary of his village. There he alights leaving the sword and cocoanut in charge of a maid servant, who takes his place in the chariot. The procession marches to the bride's village and is welcomed at the boundary by the girl's party. After the usual formalities, the maid servant with the sword sits on a stool and the bride sits on another opposite her in the marriage booth, and all the ceremonies are gone through, as if

the owner of the sword himself was present for his marriage. Two or three days after the sword marriage, the bride is sent to the bridegroom's house seated in the chariot with the maid who brought the sword. When the bride's party reaches the village boundary, the bridegroom goes to receive the bride and when he reaches her carriage the maid servant leaves her seat and the bridegroom takes her place and escorts his bride home.

(4) The marriage customs of Brahma Kshatris differ from those of Brahmans and other high caste Hindus. On the marriage day, in the presence of a company of the bride's friends, the bridegroom stands at the central square of the marriage hall and looking down into a large earthen pan full of water, touches with the point of his sword four saucers hung over his head from their reflection in the water. This seems to be a relic of the *matsya vedh* or fish test, in accordance with which the suitor of a Kshatriya maiden had, from the reflection in a pond water, to shoot a fish hung over his head. Unlike other Hindus, the bride is dressed in loose Mahomedan-like trousers and is seated in a closed palanquin or *balai* set in front of the

house. The bridegroom walks seven times round the palanquin, the bride's brother at each turn giving him a cut with *karena* (oleander) twig, and the women of the family throwing showers of cakes from the windows. He retires and while mounting his horse, the bride's father comes out, and giving him a present leads him into the marriage hall.

(5) It is unlucky for a man to have married three times, and when a man, who has lost two wives, wants to marry a third one, he goes through a mock marriage with an *akada* bush (*catotropis gigantia*), so that his next wife may be his fourth and not the third as she otherwise would be. The marriage is called *arkavivaha*. Among the lower classes the bridegroom simply carries a little doll in his pocket when starting for his new marriage, so that it may represent his third wife and the one that he is going to marry may be the fourth one.

(6) A widower has to present to his new wife a *shokya pagalu*, i. e. a neck ornament with marks to represent the feet of his first wife. This the new wife wears on her neck, so that the spirit of the first wife may not trouble her in life.

(7) In castes among whom widow marriage is allowed a bachelor cannot marry a widow. Such a marriage can take place only if the bachelor first marries the *shami* tree (*prosopis spicigera*) and then the widow.

(8) *Kanyadan*, that is giving a girl in marriage, is considered a very meritorious act. Well-to-do people render pecuniary help to poor persons to enable them to celebrate the marriage of their daughters. Some well-to-do childless Hindus desirous of obtaining the full merit of *kanyadan* celebrate a mock marriage between the image of Vishnu and the *tulsi* (basil) plant. The childless pair, who own the *tulsi* plant, act as the bride's parents. The image of Vishnu belongs to a friend, who with his wife acts as the bridegroom's parents. On the bright 11th of Kartik or on a day fixed by an astrologer, the image is taken in procession to the *tulsi* plant. The male owner of the image, with the image in his hand and the female owner of the plant with the basil pot near her, then go regularly through all the Brahmanic marriage rites. The owner of the plant presents gold and silver ornaments to the image, the

owner of which also receives cash presents as the bridegroom's parent.

The marriage ceremonies, are intended to signify that a wife and husband, become, by their marriage a *dampati*, or two masters of the house; the gods gave the bride to the bridegroom for house-keeping; their union was as permanent and eternal as that of the Earth and the Heaven; and that she thus became his life long companion. But being recited in the Sanskrit language, the ceremonies are not understood by the wedding pair who do not know the language. Moreover very few of even the *purohits* who perform the ceremonies, really understand them, as generally they are also ignorant and have merely committed the verses to memory. The ceremonial is also long, owing to additions of unnecessary details. Some times it so happens that a marriage ceremony commenced at 10 P. M. ends at 4 A. M. on the next day. Steps have therefore been taken by the Arya Samajists and some other reformers in Ahmedabad, Surat, Baroda and other advanced places to have the marriage ceremonies recom-

Reform in marriage ceremonies.

piled, with a view to retain only the original and essential part, to have it translated in the Vernaculars and to do away with the unnecessary part due to subsequent additions by the presiding priests. In the progressive state of Baroda, His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad has in this connection passed legislation which is sure to have a far reaching effect in removing abuses. The Hindu Purohit Nibandh Act 2, of 1915, enjoins a Hindu *purohit* to pass an examination test, and prohibits a person to act as a *purohit* at a Hindu religious ceremony without a certificate of having passed the test. The Hindu marriage Amendment Act (1928) makes it obligatory on a *purohit* officiating at a Hindu marriage to translate the essential *slokas* and *mantras* to the bride and bridegroom in their mother tongue with a view that they should understand clearly the heavy responsibilities enjoined by the marriage sacrament. Breaches of these directions by the officiating priest are made punishable with a fine. A Hindu marriage is generally regarded as a sacrament and hence inviolable. But the Maharaja with a view to alleviate the life long misery of married persons who cannot live happily together, has recently passed

the Hindu Divorce Act, (Act 22 of 1931) which gives all Hindus domiciled in the State the liberty to have their marriage dissolved under certain circumstances. (For further particulars see Chapter VIII.)

Closely connected with the performance of marriage ceremonies is the question of its expensiveness. In addition to the presents to the bride and bridegroom and their relations in cash and kind, the caste dinners, the vain display and processions not merely strain the resources of the parents but in many cases absolutely bring about their bankruptcy. Even those who cannot afford, borrow at heavy rates of interest and bring upon them a life long misery and even upon their heirs. It is the marriage expenditure which makes girls so undesirable. Caste conferences are therefore held from time to time and attempts are made to pass resolutions to minimise expenditure as far as possible. But such resolutions are often transgressed by those fond of display at any cost which is a great pity. For the extravagance in marriage expenditure no blame attaches to the *shastras*. It is the custom and the innate vanity of man

which is responsible for it. There being no difficulty about the *shastras* to be overcome in this matter one would have thought that reform in this direction would have been more easily accomplished than in the marriage age and rituals. But except in matters of some small expenditure such as simplicity in wedding dress, the curtailment of the number of guests and the number of feasts to be given to them which have been brought about under the reforming influence of local *yuvak sanghs* and Youth Leagues, no substantial change is noticeable in the real matter of high expenditure, such as dowry, bride price, ornaments to be given etc.

Formerly there used to be *kajodas* or unequal matches especially among castes practising hypergamy, such as Lewa Patidars, Anavalas etc. When a boy of the same age as that of the girl was not available in the social circle from which he was required, the girl was married to one who may be her junior in age by some years. This naturally resulted in such matches being unhappy in the end, and are now

no longer made. The importance of the bridegroom being senior in age to the bride, by about four or five years or at least not being junior to her is understood, and as a rule is followed.

But there is another kind of unequal matches, an evil of no lesser magnitude than child marriage, which still prevails, and will prevail so long as widow remarriage is not freely allowed. It is the evil of grown up persons—generally grown up widowers, or persons in whose caste brides are scarce or very costly—marrying with very young girls. It is a matter of every day experience that such a marriage proves fatal to the life of the girl. A widowed man marrying a girl of twelve after he has lost his first wife, soon loses her and another is brought into the house; this also meets with the same fate, and a fourth is married when the man is past fifty and she is left a widow before she has arrived at womanhood or soon after. Sometimes negotiations for the new marriage of the widowed husband are entered into, on the burning ground, while the dead body of his previous wife is being consumed by fire. It is a great shame that people who disallow widow remarriage even when the poor woman is of

tender age, themselves negotiate their remarriage immediately after losing their wife. It is a matter however for some satisfaction that here also public opinion is getting strong against such inhuman practices and the displeasure with which they are viewed by public opinion is steadily bringing about their decline.

It is rather strange that in Gujarat a husband does not name his wife nor does a wife utter the name of her husband. If one wants to call the other he or she does not do so by the other's name but uses such expressions as "do you hear," "so and so's mother", naming the child. The belief is that death would be caused or other harm would result if one of the couple called the other by his or her name. Among most of the castes, the wife does not appear before the husband in the presence of elders or strangers. It is only when they are alone that husband and wife can talk to each other, and as soon as an elder in the family, e. g. an elder brother, father, mother, etc. comes up, the wife covers her face and hurriedly withdraws. A young mother or father cannot talk to or even

look towards their own children in the presence of elders. The idea is that so long as elders are alive, the children are theirs and not of their immediate parents, and it would be want of respect on the part of the latter towards the former to do anything that may signify the contrary. This sort of false decorum is now disappearing under the influence of education and contact with the West; and the practice is growing up of wife and husband naming each other, appearing together and caressing their children, even in the presence of their parents who wisely encourage them to do so.

A great change has taken place within the last thirty years. Old ideas of false decorum are disappearing under the influence of Western education, and parents are taking ever-increasing interest in their own children and husbands in their wives. Thirty or forty years ago people who left their home for service or business elsewhere, could not take their wives with them. To do so was looked upon as immodest. Wives were left at home and visited only occasionally during Holi or Diwali holidays. These ideas

have now become obsolete and a man can take away his wife with him, whenever and wherever he likes. The custom of *laj kadhavi* or covering the face, and remaining in *parda* before elders is fast disappearing among the educated. Married women of almost all castes now appear in public and take their proper place in social and other functions along with their husbands. The charm for ignorant and pauper bridegrooms from the so called *kulin* families has given way under reason and good sense, the result of education and of sad experience of the parents of brides, married in worthless *kulin* families; female education is making a rapid stride, and the outlook of both, the brides themselves and their parents is widened; the pinch of difficulties for securing suitable husbands for daughters from one's own caste or sub-caste is being felt and has already led to the giving of girls not only outside the sub-caste, but also in a few cases even outside the main caste. The unnecessary ceremonials, processions, feasts etc., on weddings are being discarded by

many sensible people. The moral courage and good example set by these pioneers is having its good effect, and it may safely be predicted that the defects now existing in the matrimonial system of the Gujarati Hindus are sure to disappear in the near future.

CHAPTER VII.

WIDOW MARRIAGE.

As stated in the last chapter, when a Gujarati Hindu loses his wife, he can marry again. He may, in some castes, marry a second wife even in the life time of the first wife. In some of the castes, parents anxious to wed a grown up daughter, calculate upon securing as a husband for her, a married person whose wife may be seriously ill; and immediately after her death, proposals are made to her husband for his second marriage. There is no decent waiting and second marriage is planned, by some persons even while the body of the first wife is being consumed by fire on the funeral pyre. And yet these heartless persons who generally belong to the Brahman-Vania castes claim superiority over the other castes who are so just and humane as to allow remarriage of their women

folk who have the misfortune to lose their first husband. Really speaking superiority should be in the reverse order.

Though prohibited among the Brahman-
 Vania castes, widow mar-
 but allowed among riage is allowed among the
 other castes. Rajputs, Kathis, Marathas,
 Kanbis, as also among all the artisan castes.
 But the higher families even among these castes
 do not, as a rule, have recourse to it as such
 marriages are considered undignified. It is this
 feeling and a desire to raise their social status
 by adopting Brahmanic practices which have
 led a section of the Kanbis, known as *kulins*
 (Patidars), Marathas, Sonis, Sutars and others
 among whom widow remarriage was
 allowed and who used to practise it, to put a
 stop to it about a hundred years ago. Infant
 marriage and enforced widowhood, practised
 among the Brahman-Vania castes, is, looked
 upon as a hall mark of good birth and high
 social standing; and some sections of the lower
 classes consequently adopted them to raise their
 status in their own castes and thus brought
 about in their upper strata an evil which origi-

nally did not exist among them. The force of this habit of imitation has been so deep rooted that though the Brahman-Vania castes have practically given up infant marriages, the lower classes still perform them and it will take long before they will give them up under the stress of education and social legislation. Prohibition of widow marriage is still in force with all its vigour among the higher classes as also among the lower ones who have adopted it in imitation of them.

Prohibition of widow remarriage was unknown in Vedic times. The late Dr. Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar in his "Social History of India" quotes a verse from the Atharva Veda Samhita, in which the wife of a dead *agnihoti* is reported to have been raised from the funeral pile by a promise of remarriage. This verse is one of the indications contained in the Vedas about the existence of the practice of widow remarriage in those days. The learned Doctor has pointed out many other authorities one of which is to be found in the Aitareya Brahmins, in which it

Widow remarriage allowed in early times.

is said that "one man may have many wives, but one woman cannot have many husbands *at one and the same time*". This last expression implies that she can have many husbands at different times. The remarried woman was called *punarbhū* and the word occurs in the Atharva Veda and in the Metrical Smrities.

That a widow had the right of remarrying is placed beyond the shadow of a doubt by several Smrities, the most important of which are the works of Manu, Narada and Parasara. The Mahabharata furnishes several instances of widow marriage. Ulupi, the widowed daughter of a patriarch of the Naga tribe, was given in marriage by her father to Arjun. Another instance is furnished by the story of Nala and Damayanti. After having been abandoned by her husband in the forest, Damayanti found her way to her father's house, and after long waiting for him in vain, contrived a plan for finding him out. With the help of learned Brahmans and the consent of her father, she advertised that in consequence of the disappearance and probable death of Nala, she was going to make a second choice of a husband for herself. The

third illustration is furnished by the Padma Puran and refers to the unfortunate daughter of a king of Benares, who was married no less than twenty times, it being her peculiar misfortune that as soon as the marriage rites were performed, the husband so married died. But though this happened over and over again, her father with the consent of the Brahmans of his Court solemnly gave her in marriage as often as she became a widow.

The causes which favoured the growth of the custom which forbids widows to marry again were thus summarised by the late Sir Herbert Risely in the Census Report of India for 1901, paras 704 to 707:—

How it came to be prohibited.

Prohibition of widow marriage unknown in Vedic times.

“ For the ultimate origin of the prohibition of widow marriage among the higher castes we must look back, far beyond the comparative civilization of the Vedas, to the really primitive belief that the dead chief or head of the family will need human companionship and service in that other world which savage fancy pictures as a shadowy copy

of this. To this belief is due the practice of burning the widow on the funeral pile of her dead husband which is referred to as an "ancient custom" (*dharmā purana*) in the Atharva Veda. The directions given in the Rig Veda for placing the widow on the pile with her husband's corpse, and then calling her back to the world of life, appear, as Tylor has painted out, to represent "a reform and a re-action against a yet more ancient savage rite of widow sacrifice, which they prohibited in fact, but yet kept up in symbol." The bow of the warrior and the sacrificial instruments of the priest were thrown back upon the pile to be consumed; the wife, after passing through the mere form of sacrifice, was held to have fulfilled her duties to her husband and was free to marry again. A passage in the Rig Veda quoted by Zimmer shows that in some cases, at any rate, the widow married her husband's younger brother (*devar*); and it is not unreasonable to suppose that her obligations in this respect were very much what we now find among the castes which permit widow marriage."

"At this point the historical record, such as
 Causes of its revival. it is, breaks off, and conjecture alone can divine
 the precise motives which induced the Brahmans

of a later age to revive that custom of primitive savagery, which their ancestors had expressly condemned. Closer contact with more barbarous races, the growth of the sacerdotal spirit, the desire, as Sir Henry Maine has suggested, to get rid of the inconvenient lien which the widow held over her husband's property, may all have contributed to this result. But when widow sacrifice had been thus re-introduced, it is *prima facie* unlikely that it should have been enforced with that rigid consistency which distinguishes the true savage; and, in fact, the texts prescribed for the widow the milder alternative of a life of ascetic self-denial and patient waiting to join the husband who has gone before. According to some authorities, they also recognize, though as a less excellent path than the two former, the alternative of re-marriage."

"I will not attempt to enter upon the contro-

Considerations of property, of spiritual benefit, of sacramental doctrine.

versy as to the precise meaning of the passage in Parasara's Institutes, on which the modern advocates of widow marriage rely, still less to discuss its applicability to the present age of the world.

It seems more profitable to state the causes, which irrespective of isolated texts, would in any case have favoured the growth of the modern custom which forbids the widows of the highest castes to marry again. Some, at any rate, of these causes are not far to seek. In the first place, the anxiety of the early Hindu law-givers to circumscribe a woman's rights to property would unquestionably tend to forbid her to join her lot to a man whose interest it would be to assert and extend those rights as against the members of her husband's family. At the same time the growth of the doctrine of spiritual benefit would require her to devote her life to the annual performance of her husband's *shradh*. Technical obstacles to her remarriage also arise from the Brahmanical theory of marriage itself. That ceremony being regarded as a sacrament ordained for the purification of women, and its essential portion being the gift of the woman by her father to her husband, the effect of the gift is to transfer her from her own *gotra* or exogamous group into that of her husband's. The bearing of this transfer on the question of her remarriage is thus stated by an orthodox Hindu at pages 276-77 of the *Papers relating to Infant*

Marriage and Enforced-widow-hood published by the Government of India :—

“ Her father being thus out of question, it may be said that she may give herself in marriage. But this she cannot do, because she never had anything like disposal of herself. When young she was given away, so the ownership over her (if I may be permitted to use the phrase) vested then in the father, was transferred by a solemn religious act to the husband, and he being no more, there is no one to give her away; and since Hindu marriage must take the form of religious gift, her marriage becomes impossible.”

The argument seems academic, but in the atmosphere of pedantry which pervades Indian Society an academic argument is as good as any other.”

“Some influences must also have been exerted in the same direction by the competition for husbands resulting from the action of hypergamy. Widows certainly would be the first to be excluded from the marriage

Influence of hypergamy.

market, for in their case the interests of the individual families would be identical with those of the group. The family would already have paid a bride-groom-price to get their daughters or sisters married, and would naturally be indisposed to pay a second, and probably higher, price to get her married again. The group, in his turn, would be equally adverse to an arrangement which tended to increase the number of marriageable women. Members of the higher castes, indeed, have frequently told me that these reasons of themselves were sufficient to make them regard with disfavour the modern movement in favour of widow marriage. For, said one of them, we find it hard enough already to get our daughters married into families of our own rank, and things will be worse still if widows enter the competition with all the advantages they derive from having got over their first shyness, and acquired some experience of the ways of men."

The advocates of prohibition of Hindu Widow remarriage know that it is unnatural, and therefore to make widows less attractive, disfigure them by shaving their

Illtreatment of widows.

heads, do not allow them to wear ornaments, put on fine clothes, and appear in public. Widows are generally confined to the house and are not allowed to take part even on festive occasions. Their property is taken away by chicanery and fraud and they are made to eke out a miserable living. As a general rule Hindu widows are patient in their sufferings and bear their hard lot with resignation to the will of God. They pass their time in household drudgery, going to temples, reading religious books, making pilgrimages and generally lead a pure and pious life. In spite of this, cases do happen of a widow being betrayed by a designing person which brings disgrace to her and to her family; one sometimes hears of a widow having eloped with a paramour and reads in the newspapers of the dead-body of a newly born child found in a municipal dust-bin, or such similar place and the offence traced by the police to a widow living in the neighbourhood. In spite of all this, it is really strange that the old and primitive custom of the prohibition of widow marriage, which is the root cause of all these evils, is allowed to be continued in this twentieth century by Gujarati Hindus claiming to be of high castes.

Ideas of equity and justice to women, the example of other communities which allow widow marriage, and the harm done to the Hindu community by prohibition of widow remarriage, especially when they have a deficiency of women of marriageable age among them, have brought about a reform movement to permit widow marriage which has already been legalised by legislation. But the reformers have to meet opposition not only from the orthodox among males, but also those among women themselves; and very little use has so far been made of the facilities for remarriage given by law.

Strange as it may seem, it is sometimes not generally liked by women themselves who, owing to their ignorance and the long established mentality of their destiny, hold in check the reformers who strive for their upward march. The grim reality of this proposition has been too often proved in the history of widow remarriage. The famous Rajput prince Jayasing II of Jaipur attempted to introduce widow remarriage in his kingdom

and his efforts would have been crowned with success, but for his own widowed mother who mockingly insisted on her own remarriage taking place before that of any of her widowed subjects! The story of the celebrated Maratha Chief, Parasharam Bhau's daughter illustrates the same truth. He had a young daughter named Durgabai who was given in marriage at the very tender age of 9 to a scion of the Joshi family. The young bridegroom died of small-pox fever while yet the marriage festivities were not over. The brave old father was so moved by this calamitous termination of his fond hopes to see his daughter blessed that he wrote to the Peshwa at Poona tendering the resignation of his command of the army and expressing a determination to retire from the world. The Peshwa who knew the value of the man and felt with him in his sufferings assured him that he need not despair for he would try to find a remedy for his sorrow. The Shankaracharya of the time was referred to, but as he had a personal grudge against Parasharam Bhau, he answered that he would have nothing to advise by way of giving comfort to a man who was worse than a *yavan*. The Peshwa therefore

wrote to the Benares *pandits* who sent a reply to the effect that the *shastras* favoured the re-marriage of a girl like Durgabai widowed in infancy. On receipt of this reply the Shankaracharya also thought wise to yield. But the opposition came from Parsharam Bhau's wife who expressed her readiness to bear with her daughter's bereavement than see a new innovation introduced. Parsharam Pant was much surprised at this opposition of his wife and declared that what he did was solely with a view to console her and if she wished for no consolation he had nothing more to say.

As yet it is only a few of the educated among both the sexes, that favour widow marriage in Gujarat. The vast majority of all the higher castes strongly oppose it. Widows themselves do not want it, unless they are very young and have no children, and have formed no attachment. In such cases if the parents are not agreeable to their wish they have to run away from their home and seek the help of the reformers—some society for the encouragement of widow remarriage or the head-quarters of the local Arya Samaj—who render them the necessary help for the performance of the marriage.

Widow marriage has become a question of social necessity in Gujarat. The number of females being smaller than that of males, and there being a prohibition against widow marriage, many persons in some castes have perforce to remain for life without wives. Consequently some widow remarriages have recently taken place as a result of this necessity. Some years ago, when the Maharaja Gaekwad was on a tour of inspection in the districts a number of petitions were received by His Highness from old bachelors of Shinor, Savli, Baroda, Pattan and Navsari praying that widow-remarriage should be made compulsory, and that those widows who did not remarry should be heavily fined. The petitioners recounted the hardships widows have to suffer and, in addition, their own hardships in having to remain bachelors, owing to the paucity of virgin brides in their castes. The applicants from Shinor regretted why the Maharaja did not make widow remarriage compulsory when His Highness had made such a thing as education compulsory. Such petitions show that a feeling in favour of

widow remarriage is awakened in the hearts of some of the Gujarati Hindus. Neither His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwad to whom the cause of social reform owes much for its advancement nor the British Government can make widow marriage compulsory as desired by these people, but both have made it permissive by passing Widow-remarriage Acts. Under their provisions any woman who has become a widow, may remarry with the consent of her guardian if she is under 16, and of her own free will, if above 16. Such a remarriage is no bar to her acquiring rights of inheritance as a widow or mother in her new husband's family.

Some years ago a cloth merchant of Ahmedabad married a widow of his own caste. For this wrong he was forthwith excommunicated. No one was to have any trade dealings with him; no one was to marry any of his children; no temple was to admit him; and when he died no one was to carry his body to the burning ground. He was a ruined man and had to leave his native place to find employment in a distant city. On the other hand even if he had

Present-day attitude.

openly lived with a prostitute no notice would have been taken. Some years ago a few men in good positions like Dr. Bhandarkar of Poona, and a few others had the moral courage to permit the remarriage their widowed daughters. More examples of this kind would have produced a powerful influence, but few had the moral courage to take the risk involved. The present day attitude towards widow marriage may be summarised in the words "passive sympathy on the part of the educated and blind opposition on the part of the ignorant." Eloquent speeches are made at all the annual Social Conferences for ameliorating the hard lot of widows, and Associations have been formed in some of the principal cities for encouraging the remarriage of widows. Under their auspices a few widow marriages have been performed in the past, but the subsequent treatment of those who led the way serves as a warning rather than an example to others. The married pair is not only outcasted but harassed in a variety of ways, and the promoters of the marriage remain aloof clinging to their castes. Few castes have yet resolved to give up their custom of enforced widowhood; and so long as the

advocates of the cause of widows have not the courage to band themselves together and defy their ignorant and illiterate castemen by taking the risk of separating from them, their efforts, however laudable, are not likely to bring about any satisfactory result. A distinguished student of sociology has said :— “The Indian is distinguished from the European by his lack of personal independence. He is afraid to stand alone or to do anything of which his society disapproves.” This is one of the reasons why even the advocates of social reform sometimes fail to put their views into practice. It is true however that educated Gujaratis sympathise with the hard lot of the widows of their community and a few instances of widow remarriage now and then take place. Movements to support widow remarriage have come into existence through the efforts of *yuvak mandals* in some places, but the conservative opposition to them is so strong that the result upto the present may be said to be insignificant. As stated before, the remarriage of Hindu widows is facilitated by Government by removing by legislature the disqualification attached to it under old Hindu Law, but the attitude of the

people has rendered the law almost a dead-letter. Under the auspices of the Widow Remarriage Associations in Bombay and Ahmedabad and the Arya Kumar Ashram in Baroda, a few widows and widowers or bachelors either of the same or different castes remarry, but they suffer so much persecution at the hand of their relations and their caste, that in spite of their support, few have the moral courage to face the opposition and hardship which such a reform involves. There can be no doubt however that a wide spread sympathy is created for widow marriage and the justice which it stands for; and it may safely be predicted that the small activity already started in favour of it, will, in due course of time, achieve its aim and widow marriage will be common at least in those castes and sub-castes which have a scarcity of girls and in consequence of which many of their members have to remain without a wife, or to pay exorbitant price to get one. As a matter of fact the necessity for permitting widows to marry is now being recognised by such castes; and some of them have already passed resolutions to permit widows to marry under certain restrictions. The latest instance

is that of the Dasa Porwad Vanias of Surat who in November 1931 passed a resolution to permit widows of their caste to marry after one year of their previous husbands' death, if they are not more than 30 years in age, have no children by their deceased husbands, agree to return to their family the ornaments and other property received from them and their new husbands are members of the same caste

Apart from permitting their marriage there is great room for giving Proper treatment. proper treatment and showing kindness to widows. It may be allowed that a plain dress is becoming in a widow at least for a time. But the shaving or cropping her head should be discontinued. As the late Sir Madhavrao said:-

“If the poor widow is to be divested of anything dear to her let your sympathy delay the thing, as long as possible especially if she is young. Let not a pie of her money or a particle of her jewellery be misappropriated. Protect her against fraud and deception from any quarter. Neither yourself nor any member of your family should borrow anything from her lest it should

not be returned and she be too delicate in feeling to ask for its return. Give her sufficient simple food and sufficient simple clean clothes. If she fall sick arrange kindly for her comfort and medical treatment. Let her freely mix with all other members of the family and partake of their comforts and pleasures as far as may be." Let all "plead for the widow" and seek to put an end to customs which are a disgrace to the country.

The ceremony relating to the performance of a widow marriage in the castes among whom it is allowed is not so elaborate as that of a first marriage. Remarriage (*natra*) is generally performed at night. Lewa Kanbi and such other comparatively higher castes employ Brahmans who perform some short ceremony, while Kolis and such other lower castes neither employ Brahmans nor perform any ceremony. It is sufficient among the latter, for the widow intending to marry to put on the clothes and bangles given to her by her future husband and then enter his house with a pot of water on her head. Rice is sprinkled over the

Widow remarriage ceremonies.

newly married couple, who in company with a few friends, partake of sweetmeats. Among the higher castes, the future husband goes to the widow's house with his friends and relations, gives a sum of money to the father of the widow as bride-price and returns home after the ceremony is performed. Here also rice is sprinkled over the newly-united pair. On the completion of the ceremony a feast is generally given to the caste people by the parents of the widow-bride. A Tuesday or a Sunday is generally selected for solemnising a widow's marriage.

CHAPTER VIII.

DIVORCE.

Under Hindu Law marriage being a sacrament and not a civil contract, cannot be revoked; **Divorce not allowed:** and though a woman convicted of adultery may be deprived of her status and turned out of her caste, divorce, in the ordinary sense of the word, is an impossibility. This according to modern idea is regarded as very hard and leads, in some cases, to life long misery, when husband and wife, married in infancy and without their own selection of each other, differ in temperament and treat each other cruelly. Among the higher castes such as Brahmans, Vantias, Patidars etc, if the husband does not like his wife he may marry a second wife, if a second marriage is allowed in his caste. But a wife cannot do so and must eke out a miserable life with the husband whom she does not like and who treats her cruelly. This makes domestic life miserable,

especially to the poor woman who has the misfortune to have been wedded to an unworthy husband.

But in this respect as also in widow marriage the lower castes are except in the lower castes. more sensible than the higher ones. Divorce, *chheda chhutko*, or release, is allowed by custom in most of the lower castes, such as Gola—Ghanchis, among whom widow marriage is also practised. Adultery and disagreement between husband and wife are the usual grounds of divorce. But though allowed divorces are rare, even among the lowest classes. A divorced wife is in the position of a widow and can contract a second marriage but the children by the first husband remain with him. Among Barots, Kanbis and other higher castes, a husband may divorce his wife but the wife is not allowed to divorce her husband. Among Kachhias, Ghanchis and other artisan castes permission of the caste *panchayat* is necessary before a divorce, either by the husband or the wife can be granted. Among Kolis a husband can divorce his wife simply by making a formal

declaration to that effect. A Koli woman can also divorce her husband but she has to return the *palla* or dowry settled on her at the time of the marriage. Marriage ties are broken among the depressed classes on the slightest ground. Among the animistic tribes husband and wife can divorce each other even merely from fancy. Among the Naikdas if a woman deserts her husband and goes to live with another man, he has to pay her first husband Rs. 16. A married Bhil woman taking fancy to a man may go and live with him if he is willing to pay her first husband his marriage expenses.

With a view to remedy the evil of a life long misery suffered by the Brahman, Vania and other higher castes owing to their inability to get themselves relived from an unhappy marriage, His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the pioneer of social legislation in Gujarat, has recently passed a Divorce Act (Act 22 of 1931), which gives all Hindus, domiciled in the Baroda State, whatever may be their caste, the liberty to dissolve their marriage, if there are certain

circumstances as laid down in the Act to justify it. In the preamble it is stated that "the Parsis, Mahomedans and Christians are at liberty to dissolve marriage according to the law applicable to each of these communities. The Hindus in the present time are not allowed by any law to dissolve marriage; divorces are allowed by custom only in certain communities. It appears however that they were allowed by scriptures even in the higher communities in ancient times; but in course of time people lost sight of the fact and there is a traditional belief prevalent in certain communities that there can be no divorce among the Hindus. People at a certain stage of social progress suffer mentally the evil effects of traditions and sentiments because they have not the courage to remove the defects of such traditions and sentiments or they do not know how to do it. This Act is enacted with a view to give healthy facilities to the Hindu society and to promote its happiness. It contains provisions for filing a suit for the dissolution of marriage. But the communities in which divorces are allowed by custom will be at liberty to dissolve marriage according to their customs; only such dissolutions will have to be registered in courts."

The Act which is called the "Hindu Divorce Act" came into force on

Provisions of the Act: the 10th of August 1931.

It applies to Hindus and the term Hindu includes (1) Jains, (2) Buddhists and (3) Sikhs. The word "court" in the Act means the Taluka Civil Court (Munsiff Court) and in the cases in which a minor is a party, the District Court. Courts have the power to exercise jurisdiction only in the following cases:—

(1) (a) In suits for dissolution of marriage, if the husband and the wife are both domiciled in the Baroda State at the time of the suit. The jurisdiction of the court under clause (a) is not affected by (1) the residence of the parties, (2) the State or country of which they are subjects, (3) their domicile at the time of the marriage, (4) the place of marriage, or (5) the place where the cause or action has arisen ; provided that (1) when the husband (a) deserted his wife or (b) so conducted himself that the wife was justified in living separately from him and (2) the parties were domiciled in the State till the time of such desertion or conduct and (3) the husband thereafter acquired another domicile, but the wife has continued to be a resident of the State,

the court has jurisdiction to dissolve the marriage in a suit instituted by the wife.

(2) In suits for nullity of marriage if the marriage was celebrated in the State.

(3) In (a) suits for (1) judicial separation and (2) separate residence, if both the parties are resident and (b) in suits for restitution of conjugal rights if (1) both the parties are resident or (2) the party against whom relief is sought is a resident of the State at the time of the institution of the suit.

A major husband or wife, or in case of minority, their next friend
 Dissolution of marriage. may bring a suit for obtaining a decree of dissolution of marriage upon one or more of the following grounds :—

If the husband or wife against whom the suit is brought

- (1) has disappeared for seven years ;
- (2) has become a recluse ;
- (3) has been converted to the Christian, Mahomedan or some other religion;

- (4) is guilty of cruelty;
- (5) is guilty of desertion without reasonable cause of his wife or her husband, as the case may be, for more than three years after cohabitation has commenced;
- (6) has been addicted to the use of intoxicants for more than three years and thereby is unable to fulfil the marital obligations;
- (7) commits adultery. (section 9/1)

A major wife or in the case of her minority her next friend may bring a suit for dissolution of her marriage on the following grounds, in addition to those mentioned in section 9/1:— If the husband be (1) impotent at the time of the marriage and at the time of the suit; (2) or be in the habit of committing unnatural offence (Section 9/2).

A major husband or in the case of his minority his next friend, may bring a suit on any one of the following grounds, in addition to those mentioned in subsection 9/1 :—If the wife

Additional grounds for wife to bring suit.

Additional grounds for husband to bring suit.

(1) was pregnant at the time of marriage by a person other than her husband and (2) that fact was not known at the time of marriage to the husband, or if he is a minor to his parents or guardian marrying him; or (3) marries a second time in the life time of her husband (Section 9/3).

In such suits the ground or grounds upon which the claim to bring the suit is founded are to be clearly stated in the plaint; and when the husband brings a suit on the ground of adultery of the wife, the person with whom the adultery is alleged to have been committed is to be made a co-respondent unless his name is unknown to the plaintiff in spite of his having made efforts to discover it, or he is dead, or when the plaintiff knows of no particular person with whom adultery has been committed. Similarly when the wife brings a suit on the ground of adultery by the husband the woman with whom the adultery is alleged to have been committed is to be made a co-defendant.

Suits for divorce are to be heard by the courts in the presence of Jurors. jurors who are to be two persons of the caste and one person from outside the caste, or if the parties so desire, three persons of the caste and two persons from outside the caste (Section 15/1). The court is to record the opinion of the jurors on issues of fact and the opinion of the majority of the jurors is to be deemed as the opinion of all (Section 15/3). If the court differs from the opinion of the jurors, it is not to deliver judgment but to refer the case as recorded to the court next higher to it for the settlement of the particular issues in dispute (Section 15/6). Such higher court has to deliver judgment on such issues after hearing the parties and to forward it to the referring court which pronounces its final judgment and decree accordingly.

A suit may be brought for declaring a Nullity of marriage. marriage to be null and void on the ground that the defendant was suffering from leprosy or any other loathsome disease or was totally deaf,

dumb, blind, lunatic, idiot or converted to another religion and the fact was concealed from the plaintiff or his or her guardian and was not ratified after knowing it. When a marriage brought about by force or fraud or within the prohibited degrees is annulled, the children begotten before the decree are to be considered legitimate and are to enjoy right of inheritance. (Section 19)

A husband or wife may, instead of presenting a suit for dissolution of marriage present a suit for judicial separation. of marriage present a suit for judicial separation on any one or more of the following grounds in addition to those provided in sub section 1 of Section 9 :—(1) that the wife or husband suffers from leprosy or such other loathsome disease; (2) that the parties have ceased to co-habit as husband and wife for more than three years on account of incompatibility of temperament; (3) that one of them has become a lunatic after marriage and no hopes of recovery exist; or (4) has married a second wife in the life time of his wife or her husband (Section 22). A wife may, instead of presenting a suit for judicial separation, present a suit for separate residence on one or more of the above grounds.

The Baroda Divorce Act having come into

No cause to fear
evil consequences from
the Act.

force only recently, it is
too early to determine its
effects upon Hindu society.

While on one hand the reformers have hailed it as a blessing, the orthodox look upon it as a misfortune, sure to ruin the peace and happiness of Hindu homes. But their fears are groundless. It is not likely that suits will be filed for divorce or separation without proper grounds. In the communities in which divorce is allowed, such as Musalmans, Parsis and Christians, divorces are asked for only when all the private efforts for change to better life have failed and further peaceful and happy living is rendered absolutely impossible. Even in the case of the Hindu lower castes among whom divorce is allowed it is sought only when absolutely necessary. At the decennial census the divorced are enumerated as the widowed and so it is not possible to determine the number of divorces but it cannot be large.

The Act has been hailed with joy and satisfaction by Hindu women not only within the Baroda State but outside it also.

Women fully approve of the Act.

Meetings have been held in Baroda, Navsari, Ahmedabad and other places to thank the Maharaja Gaekwad for the bold step he has taken in passing it; and in a well attended conference of the women of Kathiawad held on 31st of October 1931 at Amreli for social reform and spread of female education, a resolution was passed fully approving of the principles underlying the Divorce Act which gave to women and men of the higher Hindu castes the right to free themselves from unhappy unions. It was also resolved to thank the Maharaja for the boon conferred. One of the speakers, named Chandanbehen, spoke very freely and fluently in favour of the Act, and among other things said that under the restrictions imposed by the old Hindu Law, women had been the greatest sufferers in matrimonial and property matters; that when domestic life was made unbearably miserable owing to the misconduct of husbands, the real sufferers were their wives who, as a last resort, had to end their life by falling into a well, by burning their

clothes saturated with kerosene, or by taking opium; that husbands expected their wives to be Sitas and Savitris, even at a time when they themselves were not like Ramas and Satyawans; and finally that thanks to the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad, males too would now have to behave like these noble souls, or else their wives will have their own remedy open to them.

It is the continuance of a man and a woman as husband and wife in spite of either of them not deserving to be so continued, which is the real cause of the quarrels and ugly scenes, which often take place and cause them life long misery. It would be better for both of them and the Hindu society in general that on proper grounds they should have the right to be separated from each other. This is just what the Baroda Act gives them and it may be said with confidence that this bold measure will prove to be a great boon and a blessing; and it may be hoped that it will soon be adopted elsewhere and be an all-India law.

CHAPTER IX.

PREGNANCY AND CHILD BIRTH.

No ceremonies are performed by Gujarati Hindus when a female first menstruates. *Garbhadhan* or foetus-bearing ceremony, which according to the Vedas ought to be performed on this occasion and was once performed, is now neglected, and is nominally performed along with the *simant* ceremony in the seventh, eighth or ninth month of the pregnancy. Among Deccani castes, however, a ceremony called *rutu shanti* or menstruation appeasing, is performed. As soon as a girl first menstruates sugar is distributed among all relations and friends as a sign of joy. The girl is seated in a room specially decorated and friends and relations come and present her with fruits, flowers and sweetmeats. On the fourth day, she is bathed and her lap is filled with five fruits each of the best kind. Within fifteen days, *garbhadhan* or foetus-bearing ceremony is performed in which the gods

are prayed to see that she may conceive and beget a child in due course of time.

A woman in menstruation remains impure for three days among the higher Hindu castes. She keeps herself confined in a room and does not show her face to her husband or any elder male relations. She bathes on the fourth day and joins her husband. Lower castes, such as Golas, Ghanchis, Kolis, Dheds and Bhangis are not particular about impurity attaching to this circumstance.

Barrenness is looked upon with feelings of great uneasiness by Hindu females. A barren woman is called *vanjhani*, which is a term of reproach. To see the face of a barren woman is considered unlucky. In the *Okha-haran*, or Abduction of Okha, one of the most popular poems in Gujarat, it is related that Banasur and his queen were seated in the early morning at a window of their palace of Shonipur, on the coast of the ocean when a Bhangi who came thither to sweep the road beheld them and averted his face from the sight of the royal pair. The king and queen called him to them and demanded the

cause of this behaviour. He said, at first, that being of so low a caste he was afraid that if he showed his face to them he would be put to death; but on being pressed to tell the truth and assured of pardon he confessed that he had averted his face from them because they were childless persons and to behold them at that hour was ominous of misfortune. The queen was very much distressed, and wept bitterly. She said that her palace without a child cradle in it seemed to her like a *gosai's* monastery or funeral ground and she entreated her husband to procure the boon from Shiva. Banasur repaired to Kailas and devoted himself to austerities of so great severity that Shiva had to persuade his wife Parvati to relinquish Okha, one of her children, to the supplicant monarch to be brought up as his own daughter. A Gujarati Hindu woman tries to get rid of her barrenness by a variety of means. If it is believed to be caused by the anger of some god or goddess, she quiets them by prayers and by giving them their pet offerings or taking vows. If the barrenness is due to the unfriendly influence of some planet, she engages a Brahman to repeat prayers in its honour and fasts on the day sacred to it. If the

disease is spirit caused, she walks 108 times round the *pipal* tree (*ficus Religiosa*) on a non-moon Monday, pours water at its roots and winds a cotton thread round its trunk. Women are also said to try to get rid of their barrenness by pricking a neighbour's child on a Sunday or Tuesday with the point of a needle or by secretly cutting a tuft of the hair of its head. Some are said to swallow an unclipped betal-nut after keeping it for some time under the cot of a woman in labour or to secretly tear a piece out of the clothes of a pregnant woman or a woman in child-birth, an act which, when discovered, causes uneasiness to the woman and her relations, as it is believed to cause the child's death or the pregnant woman's miscarriage. Sadhus, Jain priests, Musalman fakirs and others are consulted and charmed water given by them is drunk, or an amulet is tied on the left elbow of her neck by a childless woman.

The Vedas prescribe 16 *sanskaras* or purifying rites, of which three only viz., *simant* or pregnancy, *upanayan* or thread-girding and *vivaha* or marriage, are preformed by the Brahmans and other high

Rites during pregnancy.

caste Gujarati Hindus, and only the first and the third by Vantias, Kanbis, Rajputs, artisans and other castes. The first Vedic rite, *garbhadhan* or foetus-bearing, the second, *pumsavan* or male making, the third, *anavalobhana* or longing soothing and the fourth, *vishnubali* or guardian pleasing, are performed together at the *simant* or hair-parting ceremony which is performed in the seventh, eighth or ninth month after the first pregnancy. Among the Kanbis, Rajputs, artisans and some other castes, the *simant* ceremony consists in the *kholobharvo* or lap-filling and the *rakhadi-bandhavi* or guard-binding ceremony. On an auspicious day in the seventh month of a first pregnancy, the husband's sister binds round the woman's right wrist a silver ornament called *rakhadi* or guard and receives a money present. The pregnant woman wearing rich clothes sits on a stool and an *akhanda sobhagan*, a married woman who has never lost a child, drops into her lap five pounds of rice, a cocoanut, five betal leaves, five cloves, five cardamoms, five betal-nuts, five lotus seeds, ten flowers and a rupee. The pregnant woman falls at the feet of her mother-in-law, to whom she hands over the articles

dropped into her lap. Among Brahman, Vania and some of the artisan castes, like Kansara, more elaborate ceremonies are performed. The pregnant woman goes to bathe at a relation's, and while coming back walks in the public streets, on cloth specially spread and under a moved cloth canopy. In front of her husband's house, an altar is made, a fire is lighted and offerings of clarified butter are made with *mantras*. The husband and wife take their seats near the alter and after worshipping *Ganapati*, a *sankalpa* or resolution is made to perform together all the pregnancy rites from the *garbhadhan* or foetus-bearing to the *simantonayan* or hair-parting. Then the ceremonies are performed one after another. In the *pum-savan* or male-making ceremony a piece of the root of the banian tree (*ficus indica*) or a little *daru* (*cynodondactylon*) is crushed and the juice dropped into the right nostril of the pregnant woman.

Caste dinners are given in the Brahman, Vania and artisan castes on the occasion of first pregnancy ceremonies. They cost from a

couple of hundred to about fifteen hundred rupees according to the status of the party in the caste. In some castes they are voluntary, but in others they are obligatory and even those who have no means, have to give them with borrowed money.

A great deal of attention has been given in recent years to the study of child mortality.

Infant mortality. Studies of statistics of the various countries of the world show that there is a close co-relation between the rate of infant mortality and the size of the family owing to two distinct sets of factors, physical and economic. On the one hand the vitality of the mother and through her the life of the child appear to be affected by the age at which child-bearing begins and the number of births (or pregnancies) and especially the spacing of births; on the other hand the health of the infant is closely allied with the circumstances frequently associated with large families, viz. poverty, congestion, malnutrition, insanitary surroundings and the improvidence and ignorance of the parents. All these unfavourable circumstances to infant life exist, to

a more or less extent, in the different parts of Gujarat and about one-fifth of the number of children born, die before the age of one year.

Though unnecessary expenditure is incurred willingly in giving pregnancy dinners, no provision is made in a great many homes for the coming infant nor for the mother during and after labour. This is due partly to habit, partly to superstition and in most cases to poverty and ignorance. The majority of confinements are carried out by ignorant, untrained *dais* and a large number of deaths is due to puerperal fever due to the direct infection at the hands of such untrained midwives. The room in the house in which delivery takes place is often dark and airless, the walls dirty and the corners full of cobwebs where dust lodges. The floor is only of mud which is difficult to keep clean and free of dust. The walls may also be of mud and even if they are whitewashed it is not considered necessary to have this freshly done before the confinement. The furniture of the room is often dusty and dirty and unnecessary articles are left to lie about, such as bundles of beddings etc.

The evils of neglect of sanitation and proper care of the patient are, of late, being understood through the teachings of Baby Weeks, which are held in most of the towns, and efforts of lady doctors in charge of the maternity hospitals which have been opened in most of the towns through the donations of philanthropic persons and the help of Government; and there is a growing tendency to give up the customary pregnancy dinners and to take advantage of such maternity hospitals and trained midwives where they are available.

A pregnant woman generally goes to her father's house for her confinement. She is not allowed to draw water from a well or do any other heavy house-hold work. She keeps herself confined to the house, and does not appear before the elder male members in the house. About two months before delivery she is not allowed to eat things which cause much of heating in the stomach, i. e. chillies, oil etc. After delivery she is not allowed to eat things which are cooling or cause windiness. During the first few days after delivery she is

given a decoction of oil, ginger and such nutritious food as *shira*. Molasses is given in preference to sugar and *ghee* instead of oil. The new born babe is laid on a wooden stool close to the mother's cot. For two days it is given a cotton wick soaked in molasses water to suck and on the third day is put to the mother's breast. The mother remains secluded for about 40 days among Brahmans, Vanias and other high castes and for a shorter period varying from 10 to 20 days among the lower classes. As Bharvad children are born when their parents are moving from place to place, no seclusion is observed at all; similarly among most of the nomadic tribes, who are strong and healthy, the mother delivers, puts the child in her basket and moves on without being either sick or sorry.

In most of the Brahman-Vania castes the exact hour of birth is carefully noted with a view to having a horoscope prepared. In the Gola-Ghanchi castes, this is rarely done.

If a son is born his feet are smeared with *kanku* and their imprints are taken on a piece of paper which is sent along with a letter of the

Horoscope.

Vadhamani.

good news, *vadhamani*, to the father and his relations and there is a rejoicing among all the relations and friends. The bearer who is generally the family priest or barber is entertained and given a cash present. The *vadhamani* letter is generally written as follows :—“ Sister so and so on such a day and hour has given birth to a son, a turban-wearer. His horoscope promises well.” If the child is a girl, the expression used is “ a daughter, a veil-wearer.” The reason for this addition was that in all places originally people wrote (as some write even now) only consonants omitting vowels, so that without the further description the word *dikaro* (son) might be read *dikari* (daughter) and vice versa. If the child is a girl there is no rejoicing especially among the Rajput, Patidar, Anavala and other castes, amongst whom heavy expenditure has to be incurred to procure for her a suitable husband. But education and social reform have brought about a change in this feeling and even in these castes the birth of a girl is regarded as the coming of *lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth, in the family.

On the sixth night is performed a ceremony called *chhathi* or *shasthi puja*; this is the worship of the goddess sixth. On the same night *vidhata* (Fate) is supposed to write on the child's forehead, the chief events of its coming life. A wooden stool covered with a white piece of cotton cloth is placed in the mother's room and close to it is set a lamp fed by clarified butter. Six small heaps of wheat or rice are laid on the stool and a betel-nut and a copper are set on each heap. A picture of *shasthi* is drawn on the cloth with red powder and near it are laid a reed pen, inkstand and paper for the goddess to write with. The new-born child is laid near the mother's cot and both the child and mother are marked with red powder. On the morning of the seventh, all the articles are removed and given to the family priest, except the cloth which is dyed black and made into a jacket for the child.

The *nama karma* or naming ceremony takes place on the 12th day after birth or on some lucky day after the fortieth. The father's sister gives

the name which has already been fixed upon. It should begin with one of the letters which is assigned to the sign of the Zodiac in which the moon may be at the time of the child's birth. It is the privilege of the father's sister, *phoi*, to name her brother's children and to get a present for the same. The child is laid on a white sheet with seven *pipal* (*ficus Religiosa*) leaves and seven betal-nuts. The four ends of the sheet are raised by four children and the child is rocked four times before which it is named. This ceremony is gradually falling into disuse and the name is now mostly given by the mother without any ceremony. Among Brahmans, the *nama karma* ceremony is performed along with *upanyan* or thread-girding ceremony. Formerly the names given to children were very simple such as Nathu, Bechar, Waghji, Samal etc. (to boys) and Kashi, Dahi, Ganga etc. (to girls); but now a days educated mothers adopt such names as are used in Sanskrit works and are adopted among the Bengalis, such as Ashoka, Praful, Shiris etc. (for boys) and Shakuntala, Vimala, Devayani etc. (for girls).

Botan or weaning ceremony which is now performed only in a few Brahman families corresponds to *anna prashana*, the tenth Vedic rite. It is performed in the sixth or eighth month after birth in the case of a boy and in the fifth or seventh month in the case of a girl. *Khira*, a preparation of boiled milk with rice and sugar, is laid on a rupee and given to the child to lick by the maternal uncle or some other near relation. A child continues sucking at its mother's breast till it is from 10 to 15 months old. Among the lower classes, a child is allowed to suck even longer.

Chaul or *chuda karma*, head shaving ceremony, is the eleventh Vedic rite and takes place on some auspicious day either in the third or the fifth year of the boy or at the time of his *upanayan* or thread-girding. Among Brahman castes, it is generally performed at the time of *upanayan*. Among Vantias, Kanbis, Kolis and the artisen castes who do not wear the sacred thread, shaving is performed only if a vow is taken to do so, in the temple of the family goddess

or some other goddesses well known in Gujarat such as Bahucharaji, Ambaji, Kalka or Ashapuri. The boy is seated in his mother's lap and the father taking a razor crops off a tuft of the boy's hair. A barber who is in readiness then shaves the head clean. The hair is collected by the father's sister and thrown into a well or river.

Upanayan, literally 'taking before (a preceptor)' is the initiation or thread-girding ceremony among the twice-born Hindus. It was in olden times, performed before sending a boy to a preceptor for study. After being invested with the thread, a boy became a *brahmachari* or student, left his father's house for that of his preceptor's and did not return before he was from 20 to 25 years old and had finished his studies. His maternal uncle then came to him and persuaded him to return under a promise that he would marry him with a suitable bride. Now-a-days the ceremony is a mere formality and is performed at any time between the fifth and eleventh year. Instead of being looked upon as a preparation for study, it is now looked upon merely as conferring fitness for marriage. Some of the early

rites such as *jatkarma* or birth rite, *nama karma* or naming, *anna prashana* or food tasting and *chuda karma* or shaving which are neglected to be performed at their proper time, are performed as a formality along with the *upanayan*; and after *nishkramana* or house-leaving, the maternal uncle brings the boy back to his house, after he has, as a formality, gone away a few yards.

The cotton thread for the *upanayan* or *janoi* as it is ordinarily called, is spun by a maiden or a Brahman and is ninety-six times the length of four fingers. It is first folded into three and again trebled and the folds are held together by a knot called *brahmagranthi* or Brahma's knot. The *janoi* is thrown over the left shoulder, passes round the right hand and is kept suspended.

Many twice-born castes entitled to wear *janoi*, have neglected to do so and now only Brahmans, Bam Nagar Vanias, Prabhus, Mathur Kayasthas, a few Rajputs, Marathas, Brahma Bhats, Bhatias, Khattris, Luhanas, Tragada and Parajia Sonis, Gujjar, Mewada, Pancholi and Vaishya Suthars, Targalas and Garodas do so. Under the preaching of the Arya Samaj, Lewa

Kanbis and other Vaishya castes have now introduced the practice among them. Castes who, though entitled to wear the sacred thread, do not ordinarily do so, put on a strip of cloth to represent it on occasions of *graha shanti* and *shradha* ceremonies.

Instead of the Brahmanic thread, Vantias, Kanbis and other twice-born as well as most of the *shudra* (lower) castes such as Kolis, and artisans put on a *kanthi*, rosary of beads, made of the stem of the basil plant. Sometimes, when they are between 7 and 11 years old, both boys and girls are taken to their *guru* (religious preceptor) who binds the rosary round the neck. Both *janoi* and *kanthi*, are now considered unnecessary by most of the Western educated, and there is a tendency not to wear them, except for show to the orthodox. But the investiture ceremony has not been given up even by such reformers.

Illiterate and ignorant Gujarati women believe in the efficiency of charms to ward off evil and to keep their children well. They also believe in the influence of the evil eye. The

Superstitions regarding illness of children.

two chief guards against it are iron articles and black articles. To turn aside the evil eye, children wear a necklace of square copper or silver plates. On these plates numbers are marked whose total when counted horizontally, vertically or diagonally always comes to the same figure, either 15 or 20. Some-times the child wears *bajarbatu*, that is lightening guard or a tiger's tooth or claw set in gold and strung through a thread. Whenever a child goes out, a lamp-black mark is made on its right cheek or behind the right ear. In order to determine whether a child's sickness is the result of the evil eye or some other cause, live charcoal is put on a bell metal plate. Seven mustard seeds, seven particles of salt, seven *adad* grains, a pinch of clay, a small nail or a needle, a piece of black cloth and some *val* are waved seven times over the child's head and thrown into a plate. On the plate a cup of bell-metal is turned rim downwards and when it becomes red-hot, the mother prays that the evil eye, whether it belongs to its parents, members of the family, strangers or thieves of the road, the place where four roads meet, the village or its boundary or a mad or unclean woman, a witch or any one else may confine it-

self within the cup. After muttering this prayer a pot of cowdung and water is waived round the child's head and poured over the cup. If the cup sticks to the plate the evil eye which caused the child's sickness has gone into the cup. If the cup does not stick, the child's illness is believed to be due to some other cause.

Children are, as a rule, vaccinated; but the belief in the small-pox god, still exists. Small-pox including measles (*ori* or *gobru*) and chicken-pox (*achabada*) is called *sitla* when it is epidemic and *saiyadh* when it is endemic. Epidemic small-pox is believed by the Gujaratis to be presided over by a gooddessa called *sitala mata* or small-pox mother, and endemic small-pox by a god called *saiyadh kaka* or *balia kaka*, i. e. small-pox uncle or powerful uncle. To protect their children, mothers propitiate *sitala mata* once in a year, on the bright or dark seventh of Shravan (August), which is the day sacred to her. As small-pox is believed to be caused by heat, artificial heat is avoided as much as possible on that day and all the members of a family bathe with cold water and eat cold

food cooked on the previous day, when a child is actually attacked with small-pox, *balia* or *saiyadh kaka* is propitiated by a visit to his stone image which is kept in a Mahadev or Mata temple or under a *nimb*, *samadi* or *varekhada tree*. Among Kolis, Bhils and other forest tribes, the small-pox stone is kept near their other objects of worship. One of the most reputed stones of small-pox god in Gujarat is in the village of Por, near Itola in the Baroda State. The small-pox god is visited on the seventh, fifteenth or twenty-first day after the appearance of the disease on a Sunday, Tuesday or Thursday. No medicine is given to the child. The sight of a woman in child-birth or in her monthly sickness, or any person in black and of any person of unclean castes is believed to be very injurious to the child. It is therefore protected from strangers' gaze and its cot is strewn with *nimb* leaves to avert the ill-effect produced by the shadow of a person of an unclean caste accidentally falling on it.

The spread of education and especially of female education has vastly changed the old ideas about the efficacy of charms. Many females of the present generation, especially in the upper

classes in towns, have no faith in the influence of the evil eye and do not even know the old superstitious method of warding it off. The benefits of vaccination are understood and when the vaccinators appointed by Government and Municipalities go about on their beat, women willingly bring their children for vaccination and in a few cases, even for revaccination.

From early childhood the nose of girls, and the ears of both boys and girls are bored for the purpose of putting on ornaments. Gujarati women do not put on a nose-ring, *nath* or *vali*, like their sisters in the Deccan but only a *kanta* of gold, with or without pearl and diamond fastenings. Rings are worn by children of both sexes on the ears. But there has been a great change for better of late in this custom. Very few people bore the ears of their boys; and the number of bores on the ears of girls is confined only to the lobes for putting on ear-rings of modern type. Educated women have even discarded the custom of wearing *kanta*, nose-ring, and many of them do not at all bore the nose or ears of their children of either sex.

CHAPTER X

DEATH.

When age or infirmities warn a man of the near approach of death, he is enjoined by the *shastras* to perform *deh-shudhi prayaschit*, expiatory penances, for the purification of his body. One who wants to perform it sends for one or more Brahmans skilled in the Vedas. He bathes, dresses himself in wet clothes, and fasting circumambulates the seated Brahmans and prostrates himself before them. He then asks for forgiveness of the sins, whatever they may be, which he has committed from his birth to that hour "in childhood, in youth or in old age, be they secret or open, wilfully or unwillingly committed, whether of thought, of speech or of act, whether small or great". After this the Brahmans prescribe fastings and penances and also that most effectual of all pious actions, the feeding of Brahmans.

Deh-shudhi prayaschit is usually performed by pilgrims on their arrival at the sacred spot and by those who seek re-entrance into their caste. The common belief is that if a man should die, leaving the *dehshudhi prayaschit* unperformed, it becomes the duty of his heir to perform it in his stead at the time when he performs his obsequies, and if he neglects this sacred obligation both the father and son descend to the pits of hell.

It is a common belief, happily no longer shared by the educated, that on the road to the city in which Yama, the king who judges the dead, keeps his court, is a river called Vaitarni, the means of crossing which must be provided while one is alive in this world. This can be done by giving a cow, or cow's worth in cash, to a Brahman as a gift. The ignorant and uneducated believe that the animal precedes the deceased and allowing him to grasp its tail, enables him to cross the river and reach *swarg*, heaven. *Gowdan*, gift of a cow, for this purpose is therefore made by them. With the cow a copper brass vessel is presented to be used in

milking it. Garments for the use of the departed spirit are also to be presented at the same time, along with a pair of shoes, a ring, an umbrella and seven kinds of grain. The cow and an image of Yama are worshipped and the gifts are presented to the priest, the giver holding in his hand the tail of the cow with some sacrificial grass and basil leaves.

When a Hindu appears to be at the point of death, a place on the ground is prepared by smearing it with cow-dung and strewing it with sacrificial grass, sesamum and barley. The dying man is stripped of his ornaments if any and clothes except a *dhoti* or waist cloth in the case of a man and a robe and bodice in the case of a woman; the hair of his head except the topknot and on the face except the mustaches are removed and the body is washed with water. The body is then laid upon the place which has been prepared, with feet pointing towards the south and head towards the north. A silver coin is placed in the right hand and a Brahman is called to receive it from the hand of the dying and close by, is set a lighted lamp fed with

clarified butter. If they have or can get any Ganges water the relations pour some drops into the mouth of the dying and lay in his mouth a leaf of the *tulsi*, basil (*Ocimum sanctum*) and some curds. The relations and friends gather round the dying and until life is gone repeat the words "Shri Ram". If the dying person is a woman whose husband is living her cheeks and forehead are smeared with red pigment.

When death takes place, friends and relations go outside and sit in the verandah weeping. The Weeping, and wailing. The news of the death spreads and the caste people and friends come for the funeral. When near relations come, they cry out from the farthest end of the street "O, father, O, brother," etc. as the case may be. The women stand in a circle near the door bewailing the deceased and singing a funeral dirge, beating their breasts in sad accompaniment of the measure. The dirge, which consists of unconnected exclamations of grief is sung by one or two women, while the rest join in chorus. The following which is a part of one translated by the late Mr. A. K. Forbes, for his *Rasmala*, bewails the death of a young man recently married:—

Alas ! alas ! without the village the wail resounds,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! this is Ramjee's anger,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! with blood the clouds have rained,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! its bounds the sea has abandoned,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! the home-leaving bride is plundered,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! Yama Raja's plunderers have come,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! they have slain the bridegroom-king,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! his *mundup* has been cast down,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! the vessels of his *choree* have been
 broken,

Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

Alas ! alas ! his life has been treacherously stolen,
 Voi ! the valiant, alas ! alas !

In north Gujarat and in Kathiawad the breast beating is most severe, the nearest relations using such force that through exhaustion some of them fall insensible. When the beating of the

breast is over the women sit and wail covering their faces with their robes. Each woman either laments for the deceased or for her own dead children or relations. The alternate breast-beating and wailing is repeated each time a fresh female mourner reaches the house. Both the breast-beating and wailing are stopped by the intercession of an elderly woman whose entreaties are generally respected. If the deceased has left a wife she sits in-doors in a corner with her face covered, bewailing her misfortune.

A perceptible change has taken place, during the last twenty years, in the system of breast-beating and wailing among the Gujarati Hindus. Many of the new generation, both males and females, consider it as unnecessary, degrading and harmful and neither practise nor allow it. There is now, generally speaking, only such weeping and mourning as is natural among relations and friends on such sad occasions.

While the women are wailing, two or three men fetch from the market

Funeral. two bamboo poles, coir or *munj* ropes and pieces of bamboo and if the deceased is a married woman, a silk or cotton

robe and a red thread called *nadu*. The pieces of bamboo are fastened to the poles by coir ropes at short intervals. In some castes cocoanuts are tied at the four corners. The bier thus made is taken inside the house, the body is laid on it and tied to it by coir ropes and shrouded with a silken or cotton robe in the case of unwidowed women or with a shawl or a cotton sheet in other cases. The bier bearers, bathe among the Brahman castes and dress in silk or in wet waist clothes. The bier is raised on the shoulders of four of the nearest relations and is borne forth feet first, preceded by one of the nearest relations carrying an earthen or copper vessel with fire and dry cow-dung cakes. The relations and friends follow bare-headed and silently; sometimes one of the party cries to the rest, as they move on, to call the name of Rama, "*Ram bolo bhai Ram*", to which others reply in chorus, "*bhai Ram*", brother Ram. The women follow the funeral procession to some distance, and then go to the village or town tank for a bath and after bathing return home, and wait till the funeral party, *daghus*, return from the burning ground.

On their way to the burning ground, the funeral party halts at a fixed place when the bearers of the corpse reverse its position and hence-forth carry it head foremost. When the burning ground is reached, which is usually on the bank of a river or a tank, the bier is laid on the ground and a funeral pile is erected with logs of wood or cow dung cakes. The logs are of sandal or other costly wood if the deceased is very rich and of babul wood mixed with a few sandal wood pieces, in the case of an ordinary man, and only babul or other cheap fuel in the case of the poor. When half of the logs are piled, the body is removed from the bier and laid upon the pyre with its head to the north. The religious part of the ceremony is then performed by the son or other nearest relation and in the case of a married woman by her husband except when the husband is likely to marry again. After this the corpse is covered with additional fuel heaped upon it. When the pyre is complete the chief mourner lights a bundle of grass and passing three times round the pyre, puts fire into the mouth of the corpse and lights the pyre. The care of the pyre is

Cremation.

left to a few of the more experienced of the party and the rest of the mourners go to a distance and sit, talking until the body is consumed. As soon as the cremation is finished the ashes of the dead are collected from the pile and are cast into the river water, or if no stream is at hand they are deposited in a pit dug for the purpose and sprinkled with water. He who lighted the pyre collects small pieces of bones and carries them home with the object of throwing them into a sacred river such as the Ganges or the Narbada. In some castes these pieces of bones are laid on the spot where the head of the body rested. At the spot of the cremation of a rich man a cow is milked and the milk is sprinkled round.

A child's funeral does not differ from the funeral of a grown up person. The exception is a babe of less than eighteen months who is slung in a hammock like shroud from a bamboo carried by two men or is borne on the shoulder of the chief mourner and accompanied by a few of the nearest relations and then buried with less ceremony than that in an ordinary funeral.

Ascetics and low caste people who cannot afford to pay for fuel for cremation are generally buried.

After cremation or burial, the mourners perform ablutions and wash their clothes; and they and the friends who have accompanied the corpse to the burning or burial ground rejoin once more at the house of the deceased and then disperse to their own homes.

Relations residing in places other than the town or village of the deceased are informed of the occurrence of death by a letter, called *chithi*, or *kalotri*, black letter, which used formerly to be forwarded with a special messenger of the Bhangi caste, but is now forwarded through the nearest Post office. The cover is superscribed with the words "*ashubha chhe, lugada utarane vanchajo*", "bad news, strip before you read". The object of this superscription is to avoid inconvenience, for the person who receives such intelligence is held to be unclean and the dress he wears is defiled and he must therefore take a bath after knowing the bad news.

On the day her husband dies the widow
breaks her bracelets and
Mourning. on the tenth day after
the funeral causes her head to be shaved.
Contrary to the general rule, a young widow is
allowed to wear her bracelets and her hair until
she is about thirty years old. Then on the
occurrence of a death among her near relations,
or on her going on a pilgrimage to some sacred
river, her bracelets are broken, her head is
shaved and she begins to wear the sombre
clothes of a widow. In ordinary cases when
the widow is a grown-up woman, for a whole
year she mourns seated in a corner of the house,
living on coarse food and never leaving the
house, since no one should see her. So long as
she lives she takes no part in any happy
gathering for her shadow is considered unlucky.

The time of mourning as regards relations
other than the widow varies from one month to
a year according to the age of the deceased and
the degree of relationship. But widows or aged
parents mourn their dead children or widowed
daughters all the days of their life. Members
of the same family stock who are younger than

the deceased have their heads and mustaches shaved on the tenth day after a death. They abstain from festivals and from certain kinds of food, and dress themselves in white and put on a black or white turban. For twelve days, the son or the person who lit the funeral pile covers his head with a scarf, until on the thirteenth day his father-in-law or some other relation presents him with a new turban.

It is believed that the soul of the deceased sits for twelve days on the eaves of the house and for its use pots of water and milk are set on the roof. On each of the ten days after a death the chief mourner offers a rice ball or he offers ten rice balls all at once on the tenth day. On the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth day *shradha* or memorial rites are performed, and afterwards monthly on the day of the month on which the death occurred, and yearly on the anniversary. A separate *shradha* is performed on one of the fifteen days assigned to *shradhas* in the month of *Bhadrapada*. A man of the *Ravalia* caste is fed daily, for some months or a whole year and the family priest is liberally

paid. On the thirteenth day the family priest is given a *sajja* or cot, and a cow. The cot includes bedding, metal pots, fruits and vegetables and costs from 10 to 200 rupees. With the cot is also given a cow, or its nominal worth in cash, as a carrier to cross the *Vaitarni* to heaven.

As a part of the *shradha* on the twelfth day, a caste dinner is given; Caste-dinners. some give an additional dinner as *masia*, on the 15th or some subsequent day. These caste dinners were, and still are, in most of the castes, compulsory and have been one of the principal causes of indebtedness among the people; for they must be given even when there are no means, with borrowed money. But of late there has been a repulsion to eat such funeral feasts. Owing to the movement started by reformers there has been a tendency not to give them; and even when they are given few except children attend to eat them.

Another social reform, which has taken place of late, is regarding Reform. the removal of compulsory mourning and the beating of breasts by females.

When the news of death reaches relations and close friends residing in other places, it is the custom for them not merely to write a letter of condolence and sympathy but to pay a personal visit, however great the distance and however inconvenient it may be to do so. It is not merely the relations who come but they bring with them as many of their friends—males and females—as possible and especially so when the dead person is a young man or a son-in-law. The males and females who are supposed to come for condolence and sympathy reach the house of the deceased weeping and beating their breasts, and the mourning and breast beating that took place on the day of the death is repeated on the occasion of each of such visits. Instead of being a visit of condolence and sympathy, it thus becomes a visit for making the life of the persons visited more miserable; and the visitors themselves are put to unnecessary expense and trouble. There has, therefore, been a movement to stop such *kans*, or so called condolence visits and send instead, a letter of condolence, or at the most to pay a quiet personal visit by only those who are nearly connected. Sensible persons while

informing their friends and relations of a death in their family, request them not to come for *kan*, mourning visit, and inform them that all sorts of such customary mourning and weeping have been stopped. As there can be no weeping or mourning, when *Shiva* or *Garud Puran* is recited, they also engage a reader, who for nine afternoons reads either of these sacred books, which tells of the fate of the soul in the next world. On these occasions men and women can break the usual caste rule about weeping and mourning and quietly hear what is read out and explained. At the end of the days of mourning the reader is paid from Rs. 5 to 25. Many stop mourning as a matter of reform even without arranging for the reading of *Garud Puran*.

The old idea of mourning, weeping and beating breasts by females in public streets, taking a large party for *kans* to the house of the deceased, performing *shradhas*, giving caste-dinners etc. have undergone a great change,

within the last twenty years. A death, especially that of an old person, is treated as an ordinary occurrence, without unnecessary display of grief or mourning. Instead of *kans* only letters of condolence and sympathy are written by friends and relations and the ruinous expenditure after funeral feasts is considered unnecessary and is being given up in most of the castes.

CHAPTER XI.

FESTIVALS.

Gujarati Hindus follow the Samvat era. The year is divided into three seasons, the *shialo* or cold season, the *unalo*, or hot season, the *chomasu*, or the monsoon. The first of these comprises the months of Kartik, Magashar, Posh and Maha; the second, those of Faghan, Chaitar, Vaishak and Jeth; and the third, those of Ashad, Shravan, Bhadarvo and Aso. Each month is again divided into *Sud* and *Vad*, in the former of which there are Moon-light nights.

The festivals of the Gujarati Hindus are mostly connected with their religion. The chief is the *diwali*, which occupies the three last days of the month of Aso. Of these the first is called *dhan terash*, or the day for worshipping wealth. In the morning, after ablution, after having

The next day which is also the last of the Samvat year is *diwali*, so called from the lines of lamps which are more brilliant and general than on the preceding two days. Bankers and merchants spend *diwali*, the last four days of the Gujarati Hindu year, in settling their affairs. The accounts are drawn up ready to be signed by the different persons who have dealings with the bankers. While the old accounts are being balanced, a set of new books has been bought and after four o'clock in the afternoon of the last day of the year, Brahman priests are called to the *pedhi*, office, when the banker, his clerks and many of his friends meet to worship the books. The ceremony is called *vahi pujan* account-books worship. The new books are piled on a wooden stool, generally in front of *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth, lighted lamps are placed round them and flowers are strewn on the books. The priest repeats a prayer for the favour of the goddess on the next year's business and dipping his fingers in saffron or *kanku*, makes auspicious *svastika* marks on the first page of each book. On that page as also on the walls of the rooms, the words, *Shri Ganeshayanamah, Lakshmi mata ni madat, Bhandar*

bharṣur, meaning “salutation to the great Ganesh”, “Mother Lakshmi help us” and “Over flow our treasure chests” are also written with saffron and *kanku*-water. The *puja* takes about half an hour and when it is over presents are distributed to Brahmans, and gifts made to relations, dependents, brokers and friends.

The first day of Kartak is the new year's day. It is the day on

New year.

which King Bali was made

to give universe to Vishnu and himself to abdicate. Before the birth of Krishna it was the practice of the cowherds of Gokul to worship Indra on this day. On one occasion Indra got annoyed and showered heavy rain. Krishna therefore stopped his worship and substituted that of mount Govardhan. It is therefore that the Hindus of present day erect model of mount Govardhan with cooked rice in their Vaishnav temples on the new year's day. It is called, *ankot*, heap of grain, and is worshipped after placing upon it, a flag, a few sprigs of trees and some flowers. The village astrologer reads before the assembled villagers, his *vartaro*, forecast, of the happenings during the new year. Gambling is considered auspicious on this day

as the story runs that Shiva played with Parvati and lost everything.

The trading classes open new account books on this day. They sprinkle the first page with *kanku*, and head it in some such fashion as the following, making a few fictitious entries, for good luck, of articles used on festive occasions :—

“ Praise to Shri Ganesh. Shri Sardaji is true. Shri Ambaji is true. Shri Bahucharaji is true.”

“ In the year of Vikram 1987, on the first day of the bright half of Kartik, being Saturday in Shri Vadodara, Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad is ruling, his heir apparent is Shri Pratapsingh Raje and R. B. V. T. Krishnamachariar is Dewan. This book is the account book of the present writer Sha Motichand Surchand. ”

Dr.	Cr.
Kanku $\frac{1}{2}$ sher	Kanku $\frac{1}{2}$ sher
Sugar $\frac{1}{2}$ sher	Sugar $\frac{1}{2}$ sher .
Betal $\frac{1}{4}$ sher	Betal $\frac{1}{4}$ sher
Nutmeg 7 shers	Nutmeg 7 shers

Early in the morning, Vania boys go about the streets for sale of *sabras*, salt, as it is considered a good omen to begin the year with the purchase of a little salt. All householders purchase a pice or two worth of it. People put on their best clothes and go about to their friends' and relations' houses to wish them a happy new year, make obeisance to their elders, and get their blessings.

Bhai bij, the second day of Kartik, is reserved for friendly greetings between brothers and sisters. It is said that *Yamuna* often asked her brother *Yama*, the god of death, to her house to dine but he evaded. At last moved by repeated entreaties he went to her on this day and was bathed and sumptuously treated. He was pleased and bid his sister to ask for a boon. She said that it was her wish that he should come to her to dine every year on this day and should grant happiness to all those who respond to their sister's call and accept this day's feast. He granted the request and that is why all brothers are well treated on this day by their sisters, who in their turn receive presents, *bhai pasali*, from them.

Kartaki ekadashi, on which the sacred basil or *tulsi* is married to Vishnu, falls on the 11th day of Kartak. It is considered specially meritorious to fast on this day because the gods who had gone to sleep on the 10th of Ashadh awake on this day. Baths in the rivers, visits to temples, gifts to Brahmans and prayers to the God Vishnu are made on this day.

Dev diwali, comes on the 15th or fullmoon day of Kartak. Shiva destroyed the demon Tripura on this day and the gods celebrated the victory by letting off fire-works and illuminating their abodes. In memory of that day Hindus do the same every year and call it *Dev diwali* or God's Diwali. On this day fairs are held at Sidhpur, Chandod, Vautha and other places which are visited by thousands as holiday makers.

On *Utran* or *Sankrant*, which falls in the month of Posh, young persons fly kites and householders give to Brahmans sesame balls, sugar cane, vegetables, etc., to obtain religious merit.

death, at the hands of Shri Krishna, of a giantess, *holika*, who on her death-bed asked for the favour of a festival in her name. On the full-moon day of Falgun, a hole is dug at the entrance of every street and a castor-oil plant is transplanted into it. Grass, cowdung cakes, and other fuel are heaped round the plant and a bon-fire is made. People throw *gulal*, a red powder, at each other and play out-door games all night. Next day, which is called *dhuli padvo*, (from *dhul*, dust) people of the lower orders throw dust at each other and all sorts of improper expressions are vociferated in the streets. During recent years a great reform has taken place, and all the improprieties connected with the Holi festival have disappeared and sports and songs have taken their place, and the festival has become an occasion of real and wholesome enjoyment.

On the 1st of Chaitra begins the *puja* of Rama Navami. the birth of Rama, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Every evening *kathas* or sermons are delivered by professional *kathakaris* in temples dedicated to Rama, until the ninth day when, as

soon as the sun reaches the meridian, the birth is celebrated with great eclat. In the *kathas* prominence is generally given to stories from the Ramayan.

On the full moon day of Chaitra is celebrated the birth day of Hanuman Jayanti. Hanuman, the Monkey God, from which the day is known as *Hanuman Jayanti*.

Akhatrij or Akshaya Tritiya comes on the third day of the first half of the month Vaishakh. Akhatrij. of the month Vaishakh. On this day oblations are offered to deceased parents. A pot full of water, a fan and a pair of shoes are given to Brahmans, so that they may reach heaven for the use of the dead father during the hot season. This day is considered lucky by cultivators to begin their field operations by taking manure to the fields.

Goyro, or the worship of *Gauri*, which lasts for four days, is held on the 12th day of the bright half of Ashad, the first month of the monsoon season. In celebration of this day, little girls,

between the ages of five and ten years prepare an earthen image of *Gauri* and dress it up in clothes. On either side they set a vessel full of earth in which they have sown wheat and juwar. On the twelfth as soon as they get up they go to the river bed or tank of the village to bathe. Returning from thence they proceed to some place where all the little girls of the village or quarter of the town are assembling and thence the whole party proceeds together, singing songs in praise of either their deity, Shri Krishna or their temporal master, the lord of the village, to the house of some Brahman to whose care the image of Gauri has been entrusted. They now worship the goddess with the sixteen prescribed ceremonials, making her presents which fall as perquisites to the Brahman. The mothers or elder sisters of the girls at this time prompt them to ask a boon of the goddess and the children one after the other say "Gor ! Ma ! grant me a good bridegroom." From the Brahman's house they return home worshipping on their way a sacred basil plant, a cow, a well and lastly the threshold of their fathers' house. The young votaries of Gauri are bound to eat once only during the day but this rule they comply

with in form only for they go on eating so long as they have not risen from their seats. At four in the afternoon, the girls again assemble decked out in as brilliant a manner as the means of their parents permit and they now set forth to worship all the *devs*, one after the other. The day is generally concluded by these juvenile holiday makers at the village tank beside which they romp until sunset. One of their great amusements is to strut about in procession, beating their breasts, in imitation of what female mourners do at a funeral and cry out "Alas Dada, alas alas! or perhaps for the obnoxious Dada, they substitute a chief with whom theirs is at enmity or some other unpopular person. The night of the last day is passed remaining awake and on the next day the *goyro*, the wheat and juwar stalk, is thrown into the village pond or river. Betrothed girls receive at the time of this festival presents of clothes, sweets and other articles from the house of their intended bridegroom.

On the fifth of the second half of the month
 Nag Pancham. Shraavan, the people of
 Gujarat prepare a white
 surface on some wall in the interior of their

house, and paint on it in black a picture of *Shesh Nag*, the snake supporter of the Universe. They worship this figure with all the prescribed forms and address the snake-king, "Sire, be propitious to me" in the hope of securing his favour for the ensuing year. The festival is called '*Nag Pancham*'.

The next day is called *Randhan Chhath* or
Randhan Chhat. cooking sixth, and is devoted to the preparation of food for the seventh, *Sitala Satam*, the day dedicated to *Sitala Devi*, or
Sitala Satam. the small-pox goddess and *Tadhi Shir*. The goddess is supposed to wander about on the day among the ovens of the householders on which account no fire must be lighted for fear of offending her.

Succeeding *Sitala Satam* is the *Janmastami*
Janmastami. or the birthday eighth, the day of Shri Krishna's birth. This is a fast day. The birth of the god took place at midnight on this day, and wherever a temple of Krishna exists they perform on this night all the ceremonies usual on the birth of a royal infant. The image of *Bal Krishna* is

rocked in a cradle; music is sounded before him and gifts are liberally bestowed. At the supposed hour of birth the temple is crowded with worshippers.

The fifteenth of the bright half of Shravan is called *Balev*, or Bali's day, being the anniversary of the contest between the Raja of that name and Vishnu in the incarnate form of Waman. Brahmans on this festival, proceed to the sea, river or tank side and perform the rite called *dehshuddhi*, or bodily purification, for the cleansing of their sins, committed during the year. They next worship the seven sages, the ancestors of the Brahmanical race and Arundhati, their consort, to represent whom they make eight figures of sacrificial grass. At this time they change the *janoi* or sacred thread which they have used during the year. They break the old *janois* and throw them in sea, river or tank water. The preceptor of the Brahmans now binds upon their arms a red or yellow bracelet made of silk or cotton with or without artificial pearls, called *rakhadi*, which is said to have been originally used as an armlet

against a disease which used to be prevalent, about this time of the year. The Brahmans return to the city or village and bind similar bracelets upon the wrists of their *yajamans*, patrons and friends and receive presents in cash or kind, from them.

On the 4th of *Bhadrapada sudi*, comes the *Ganapati choth*, or Ganesh day, when the deity is worshipped in the form of a clay figure representing a human body with the elephant's head, brought by some to their house in great pomp and worshipped daily till it is taken out on some convenient day upto the bright 14th of that month and drowned in sea, river or tank water. From the primaeval attributes of this deity he seems to represent the harvest festival. He is called *mushak vahan*, rider on a rat, but the word *mushak*, comes from a Sanskrit root which means a thief. The title therefore implies that he is riding over the thief of the field (field rat). The food offered to Ganesh connects him with the harvest, as it consists of balls, called *modaks* made of wheat flour, sugar and the kernal of the cocoanut, all in season at the time of the

festival in the month of Bhadrapada. As society advanced, Ganesh seems to have obtained rapid promotion and came to be styled *sidhidātā*, the giver of success, an ideal in the production of *good* crop. He was also styled *vignahartā*, the remover of difficulties, which is the peculiar power of a bumper crop. Thus success in every undertaking began to be attributed to him. *Modak* is prepared in every house and pieces of it are thrown about in its corners for rats to eat.

It is a peculiar superstition that to behold the moon on the night of *Ganesh Choth* is unlucky and that whoever does so is sure to get into some trouble in the course of the year. The evil may however be averted by shutting oneself in one's house and closing all the windows; those who for whatever reason have been compelled to go out of doors and happen to see the moon, throw stones at a neighbour's door or upon his roof in order that he may abuse them, and that this may avert more serious consequences of the bad luck!

On the fourteenth of Bhadrapad Sudi the Ganpati image is carried out in great pomp and noise in a palanquin or on an elephant to the

river or tank side. A Brahman bearing the image with him walks into the water until he is nearly out of depth and then drops it into the stream and swims to the bank. Ganapati processions are not so common in Gujarat as in the Deccan and elsewhere. They seem to have been introduced after the advent of the Marathas, and are becoming more and more popular. *Ganeshotsav* is held for about a week and is utilised in recreation and giving lectures on religion, social reform etc. Clash between the Hindus and Muslims, when the procession is passing by a mosque, which is common now—a days, took place in former times also. There is on record the occurrence of such a clash, in Hijari 1177, that is about a hundred and seventy-four years ago in the city of Surat when the Marathas had first taken out such a procession in that city.

The fourteenth of the bright half of Bhadrapada is called 'Anant Chaudash' or the joyful fourteenth. The name is however originally derived from, Anant, one of the titles of Shesh Nag, the supporter of the world. Vows for almost

any purpose are made to Anant. They must be kept for fourteen years, but the observance is apparently not very burdensome, consisting merely of the wearing of a bracelet of red string with fourteen knots in it, on the upper part of the right arm. Vishnu must be worshipped at the time of taking the vow and an offering must be presented to him of dishes, the names of which are of masculine gender. The bracelet is changed every year and on the termination of the fourteen years the votary performs the *udyapan*, a ceremony which releases him from the vow and which consists of performing a fire sacrifice and making of different grains, a mansion for Vishnu, upon which he places copper cups containing cocoanuts. The *dev* is invited into the mansion and the usual acts of worship are performed.

On *Rishipanchmi*, the fifth of *Bhadarva sud*
 Rishipanchmi. women in imitation of the
 Rishis of old, eat only wild
 grain, that is grain which is not cultivated with
 bullock labour and give a copper cup and some
 fruits to Brahmans.

The *navratra*, or festival of nine nights occupies the period from the first to the ninth of the bright half of Aso and is consecrated to the family goddess. On the first day the devotees of the goddess having carefully whitened a sufficient surface of a wall within their houses, paint upon it with vermilion, the trident, which is the emblem of the goddess. In front of it they build a model of her dwelling which being usually on a mountain top or amidst forests, is represented by a heap of earth sown with wheat and barley and surmounted by a metal water vessel with a cocoanut on it. The goddess is now, by the first of the sixteen acts of worship 'invited' to occupy her temple. An earthen vessel pierced with numerous holes and containing a light is placed near the trident and in villages on a *garbo*, a wooden stand, on which lamps are placed in some open space. Round the *garbo* people walk or dance clapping their hands and singing songs. In towns women sing songs, *garba*, in some open place near a house, and the householder who arranges for such a *garba*, distributes *patasas*, (sugar drops) brass cups, or other presents, *lahanis*, to the females taking part in the

garba. A lamp fed with clarified butter is kept burning day and night before the goddess during the nine days of the *navaratra* and a member of the family who abstains from eating grain, while so employed watches continuously to replenish the lamp and to worship the sacred emblems. The family priest reads the *Devi mahatmya* which contains a description of the exploits of the goddess.

On the eighth day, *havan*, fire sacrifice, is performed in the temple of the goddess, and in some temples of importance, like Ambaji, Kalka and Bahucharaji, animal sacrifices are made to the goddess by the Kolis and Rajputs for the benefit of their sick children. On the ninth day the mound of earth in which wheat and barley have by this time sprouted is removed to the river or tank bed and drowned in the water. The vessel which contains the lamp is placed in front of the *mata's* temple.

The day immediately succeeding the
Dasara. *navaratra* is the *dasara*
or tenth day, a festival
which commemorates the entrance of the
Pandavas into *Vairatnagar* as well as the

destruction by Rama of the giant Ravan, King of Lanka. As Arjun and his brothers worshipped the *shami tree* (*Mimosa sama*) and hung up their arms upon it, the Hindus go forth in procession to worship that tree on the *dasara* day, and break and throw at it, the *rakhadi* which had been tied to their wrist on the *Balev* day. As they return home, they take a few leaves of the tree, which they distribute among their friends as 'gold' as a mark of good luck. They also join together in bands, brandish their sticks and spears, gallop the horses, run races with their carriages and enact in other ways the part of an army taking the field. Ruling chiefs and rich persons who have elephants, horses, bullocks &c. caparison and decorate them on this day. Books, arms and accoutrements are worshipped; and generally speaking *dasara* is considered such an auspicious day that on it, married girls are sent to their husband's house for the first time after their marriage, and children are put to school to begin their educational career.

Visiting the temples, fasting, feasting, alms giving and merry making are the chief features

of the Hindu festivals; and are still to be seen in full force in villages. But in towns and cities, especially among the educated, a change is noticeable showing less interest in their religious and social significance.

The Jains follow the *diwali* and *holi* holidays of the Hindus; and have also their own exclusive Jain holidays, festivals and holidays. The most important of the Jain holidays are the *ṣachusan* or *ṣaryusan*, meaning the sacred season. The Swetambaris observe it on from the twelfth of the dark half of Shravan to the fifth of the bright half of *Bhadrapad*. The Digambaris observe it for fifteen days from the fifth of the bright half of Bhadrapad to the fifth of the dark half of the same month. During these holidays, Shravaks observe fasts and visit all their temples in the village or town several times during the day. They also visit the *apasaras* where Sadhus read and explain the *kalpa sutra*, one of their forty-five religious books. *Padikmana* or more correctly *parikraman* ceremony which is like a confession, is also performed by a body of persons together. A Shravak wishing to per-

form the ceremony goes to the *apasara* of his *gachha* with a *katasan* or seat of woollen cloth eighteen inches square, a *mohopati*; or mouth-fillet, and a *chavlo* or brush. He sits on the woollen seat, and holds the *mohopati* before the mouth with the right hand and puts the brush by his side. The brush is used to brush the seat and his person whenever he has occasion to stand up or sit down. When all have taken their seats, an oath called *samayak*, binding each person to be attentive is given. The Sadhu of the monastery then recites certain verses praying that all sins as regards animal life committed knowingly or unknowingly by the congregation may be pardoned. The ceremony ordinarily lasts for an hour, but on the last day of the *pachusan*, it lasts for three hours. Before it breaks up, the meeting is daily served with *patasas*, and with *ladus* on the last day. On the day following the *pachusan*, images of the Tirthankaras are taken in procession round the town. During these holidays, fishermen and butchers are sometimes induced by money payments to give up fishing and slaughtering animals.

CHAPTER XII.

AMUSEMENTS.

Both in villages and towns, Gujarati Hindus, when free from their daily work, generally pass their time in meeting in some places of common rendezvous near their house, such as *khadki*, *olla* or *osari* and pass their time in gossiping till they go to bed. Females sit in their own circle and males separately in their own. It may be said, for most of the elderly people, that they have no game spirit in them; not that there are no games in Gujarat; there are both indoor and out-door games, but very few except children and youths play them.

Amongst indoor games may be mentioned *santa-kukadi*, hide and seek, *adko-dadko*, *nisami* (stair-case), *under-biladi* cat and mouse etc.

played by children; and *sogtha baji*, *setrung*, *bizique*, *sat-dav* and other card games etc. played by grown up persons.

Out door games played by children in the street or in open spaces near their houses are ball throwing, kite flying, top turning, *bai bai charni* and *sat-tali*, *moidanda* etc. and *gadi-dada*, *kharopat*, *kho-bhillu*, *jad-pipli* etc. played in open spaces by grown up persons. Among these kite flying is the most popular with all from boys of seven to elderly youths. Paper kites are made of many shapes and sizes. During the kite flying season, before and after Makar Sankrant, there is a rage after the sport. Of two or more prize fighters he who flies the highest wins. At times there are regular kite fights; the two combatants in the sky are brought into contact after a good deal of military manoeuvre, one taking the offensive and the other standing on defence and that which is torn, broken, pinned to a roof or drowned into a well, a pond, or otherwise damaged is set upon by the street boys from whom the owner will exert his utmost to save his kite.

There are no special out-door games for women. Cricket, tennis, badminton, foot-ball and hockey have been added to the list of out-door games, after western education and are generally played by school and college students and by those who are members of some club. A few women in towns who can afford to do so play badminton or tennis.

Shooting big and small game is confined only to a few ruling persons—chiefs and jagirdars—who can afford the luxury and find facilities to indulge in it.

Educated persons in towns and cities have begun to realise the importance of recreation and amusement and go out for a drive or walk in the morning or evening. They have also opened their clubs wherein they play tennis, billiard, or cards. Those who can afford also go to theatres and cinemas. But the number of such people is yet small and is to be found only in towns. The vast majority of people even in towns usually continue the drudgery of work in their business premises till late in the evening, and after their return home take

Cinemas, theatres
etc.

their meals, pass some time in idle gossips and go to bed when they feel drowsy. But even such people cannot be said to be

Festivals. without any amusement at all. Their principal days

of amusement are their religious festivals, such as *diwali*, *holi* etc. which have been described in the preceding chapter.

Gujarati Hindus are very fond of temple visits and reading religious

Reading of sacred books. books. Whenever they have spare time they prefer

to devote it to visiting a temple or reading a religious book. They are also very fond of hearing *kathas*, religious discourses, by learned Sadhus, *shastries* or *puranis*, readers, who discourse orally or read from the Bhagwad Gita, Ramayan, or Bhagwat, and explain the meaning in a popular way. These recitations are given in some temple, or in some well-to-do man's house. The recitor is engaged sometimes by all the householders in a street and sometimes by a single rich householder. When a reciter is engaged by all the householders he sits on one of the verandas, the hearers squatting on the road or

on the opposite veranda. When he is engaged by one man the reader is given a raised seat in the host's house and is surrounded by a company of the host's friends. Sometimes the reader is engaged by some one who has made a vow to read certain holy books, and sometimes he offers to read without being asked, trusting that his hearers will give him something for his trouble. These readings take place either in the morning, or in the after-noon, or at night from eight to twelve o'clock. The street meetings are always at night. Sometimes the reader is alone and sometimes he brings two or three men, one playing the guitar, *tamburo*, one beating the drum, *nargha*, and a third the cymbal, *manjira*, or *jhanjri* or a *man*. When the reader is alone he generally accompanies himself by striking a ring against a hollow thin-mounted copper pot. Before the reading begins one of the chief hearers worship the reader, rubbing his brow with sandal-dust, throwing flowers over his head and a flower garland round his neck, and offering him some fruits or sweetmeats and a handful of grain. Especially when the elevenths and dark fifteenths fall on Mondays, other hearers pay what they can in money or grain either be-

fore or after the reading. When the reader has been worshipped he begins to read, at times altering the story by interesting, humorous or coarse tales to suit the taste of the audience. The lecture lasts for about two hours when the congregation breaks up. These readers are often good rhymesters enlivening Hindu mythology with local and other touches that cause much merriment. A course of reading generally lasts for a fortnight to four months. During this time the reader is asked to dine or is presented with uncooked food, by different hearers on different days. When the course of reading is over some of the chief hearers join in giving the reader a substantial dinner, a head dress, some clothes, and from Rs. 50 to Rs. 200 in cash. In villages the reader is given grain instead of money. After the gifts have been offered a procession is formed, the men walking in front singing *kirtans* or thanksgiving songs, then the reader driving in a bullock or horse carriage, and the women in the rear singing songs. During the months from Ashvin fifteenth to Kartik fifteenth (October–November) and on all elevenths, especially the elevenths of the four rainy months, all who can afford it but cannot go out employ

readers in their houses and do not break their fast until the reading is over.

Bhats and Charans are not only family geneologists, but also story-tellers.

Story-tellers.

They periodically visit them and amuse them by reciting their family history which is interspersed with verses or ballads which are chanted in musical cadence to the delighted audience and are then orally interpreted with illustrative anecdotes or tales. Sometimes they recite stories of the warlike deeds of Rajput chiefs' fore-fathers, sing in praise of the living, or tell old legends and tales of hair breath escapes.

Taragalas or Bhavayas, that is performers of *bhavai* or comedies,

Actors.

are Hindus who have their home in north Gujarat, but wander about in the whole of Gujarat to make their living by performing *nataks* or religious dramas as well as *bhavais* or plays of common belief. They pass the rainy months in practising and in learning new parts and pieces. At the close of the rains both men and boys leave their homes in companies or *tolis* of fifteen to thirty.

Each company has its head or *naik* by whose name it is known. They move about the province with their stage property, clothes, false jewels and where there are no railways travel in carts. They have no theatres and perform in open places in the outskirts of towns and villages. When a company of Bhavaiyas visits a village the Patel and other leading men raise a subscription from 20 to 50 rupees. In some places the people exercise the right of calling on the *Bhavaiyas* to entertain them in return for the assessment-free-land they enjoy. The performances of *bhavayas* were very popular, even in towns, before the advent of the drama in modern theatres; and in villages they are still very popular, and men, women and children throng to the place of performance. The performance begins at about 9 P. M. and lasts till day-break.

In Kathiawad when Kanbis, Ahirs and other agriculturists have leisure the men go through a stick dance, *dandya ras*, moving in a circle and striking at each other with sticks; women of the Ahir and other castes dance in a circle

to the sound of the drum, *dhol*. These amusements take place on occasions of marriage also.

Gujarati women are fond of music and sing songs on all marriage and other festive occasions. In *Garbas*. the *navaratra*, the first nine nights in the bright half of *Aso*, and also when they have leisure, they amuse themselves by singing *garbas*, moving in a circle with graceful movements of the body. A few oil lamps are placed on a *garbo*, lamp-holder, in the centre of an area, close to which are placed a virgin pair—"a bonny youth and a maiden faire". About these a body of from twenty to sixty women of all ages circle round and round taking up a refrain, and often repeating in chorus, a verse sung by one, and at times, two women, keeping time to the clap of hands. In other places, especially in temples, males sing *garbas*, swaying backwards and forwards and keeping time by their howls and hand clappings.

The art of music is highly developed among the Hindus of Gujarat as elsewhere. *Music*. Women sing songs on marriage and other festive occasions; but it is not considered proper for ladies to sing or play in company of

males. Hence singing before males has been monopolised by dancing girls and other professional hirelings in whose hands a noble art has degenerated into an ignoble tradition. Professional singers are engaged during holidays, festivals and other entertainments. Some of them are, no doubt, honest men and women but as a rule the *nautch* girl puts her art, as she puts her person, to the basest use; and consequently there is an anti-*nautch* movement started by puritans and *nautchas* are not so common on marriage and other festive occasions as they once were. Now-a-days females are less scrupulous than before to sing in mixed gatherings.

While females are fond of singing *garbas*,
 Bhajans. males, especially in villages,
 are fond of singing *bhajans*,
 songs in praise of God, and religious, charitable
 and moral life. There are regular *bhajan-mandalis*, in some places, who meet at night, after finishing the evening meal, and to the accompaniment of some musical instruments like an *ektara*, and cymballs, chant *bhajans* till late at night, and derive great pleasure and instruction from the pursuit.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PERSONAL LAW OF THE HINDUS.

In matters relating to Succession, Inheritance and Marriage, the followers of both Hinduism and Jainism, follow what is called Hindu Law, except in so far as that law has been altered by legislative enactments. In its origin it was not a law in the sense in which we now understand the term, that is, a law passed by the sovereign power such as the modern Contract Act, Penal Code etc. which are applicable to all its subjects whether Hindus, Muslims, Parsis or Christians. The notion that every law is a command of the sovereign was never associated with the old Hindu idea of law. The Hindus regarded their law, the *dharmshashtra*, as ordinances or commands not of any sovereign power but of the supreme ruler of the universe—commands which even the sovereign power, the king, was bound to obey. As obedience to the law implied only obedience

to the Divine Will it never wounded the pride of even the most absolute despot and the thought never occurred to the mind of the old Hindu kings that they could, if they chose, alter or abrogate any of such laws existing in their time.

The three main sources of Hindu *dharma* or law are:— (1) Sruti, (2) Sources of Hindu Smriti and (3) Custom. Law.

The Srutis include the four Vedas. The Smritis are recollections handed down by Rishis or sages of antiquity. Of these the three principal are:—(1) Manu, (2) Yajnavalkya and (3) Narada. The Smritis do not agree with each other in all respects. The conflict between the Smritis gave rise to commentaries, *nibandhas*. The commentaries profess to interpret the law laid down by the Smritis and their interpretations have been accepted as authorities in the provinces where their authority is recognised. The Mitakshara, which is a commentary on the Code of Yajnavalkya, is subdivided into four minor schools of which the Vyavahar Mayukh is considered as the over-whelming authority in Gujarat.

In the old Hindu law all rules of human conduct and every sphere of social and even political relationship were grouped under the wide purview of religion; and so the subject of Law, *vyavahar*, was treated as if it was an integral part of religion and ethics, *dharma*. The distinction drawn by modern jurists between municipal or positive law and moral or ethical law was not observed in the early Hindu Jurisprudence. The whole body of rules relating to the life of a Hindu in relation to his civil conduct as well as to the performance of religious duty was included in the general name of *dharma-shastra* or religious ordinances and even to this day the Hindus in Gujarat look upon their personal law as originating from God and not from any temporal power, and meekly submit to it in spite of its not being suited to modern conditions and generally speaking oppose any attempt to modernise it as a sacrilege.

When the government of the country passed to the hands of the Modern amendments. Mahomedans the new rulers refrained from interfering with the civil laws of the Hindus, and thus in spite of mighty political revolutions effected in India, the Hindu's

idea of law and the rules which regulated his domestic life remained unchanged. Till lately the same had been the case under the British Government and also the Indian States. In pursuance of their policy of non-interference with the personal laws and social and domestic institutions of the people, the British Government, as well as Indian States refrained from any direct interference with them, except in a few cases when required for interests considered to out-weigh merely religious susceptibilities. Thus both the British and Baroda Governments have passed the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act (British No. XV of 1856; Baroda Act of 1901) which validates the marriage of a Hindu widow not-withstanding any custom or religious precept to the contrary and enacts that the issue of such a marriage shall be deemed legitimate and the rights of the widow to inherit in her father's family shall be unaffected. The Freedom of Religion Act (British Act No. XXI of 1850 and Baroda Act of 1901) removes any disabilities which would otherwise attach by force of any law or custom to a person, who becomes a convert to any other religion or who who is excommunicated, in the matter of acquir-

ing interest in any property by way of succession or in the matter of vested interest which he might have acquired at the time of such conversion. The Civil Marriage Act and amendment Act thereof (British Act No. XXX of 1923 and Baroda Act of 1908) legalises marriages under contractual forms unfettered by any ceremonial scruples enjoined by old Hindu Law. These laws have been adopted by other States in Gujarat; and many other changes have been made by the legislature to suit modern conditions, but it is not necessary here to refer to them all. Mention however requires to be made of a very bold step taken in Baroda by codifying the rules of Hindu Law after making in them such amendments as were considered necessary. The theory of the divine origin of Hindu Law has thus been set aside by its codification in the form of a modern Act—a step which British India hesitates to take under the fear that such action may arrest its further growth and may also wound the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus. Undaunted by such fears which should have no place if a vigilant eye is kept for amending the code from time to time in accordance with popular opinion and

progress of society, His Highness Maharaja Gaekwad, Sayajirao III, with his usual progressive policy ordered the preparation of a codification of Hindu law so early as in 1904. This has been successfully carried through and it is no longer necessary for people in Baroda to wade through complicated old text books, all the essential principles having been embodied in a few simple rules. Codification does not necessarily stop the growth of law. A code of law gives a good workable material on which such reforms as may be deemed necessary could easily be engrafted as has been done in Baroda from time to time after the codification of Hindu Law. Social necessities and social opinions are always in advance of law and the agency through which law in modern times is brought into harmony with society is legislation. Thus though old Hindu Law does not permit divorce, modern ideas require it and therefore in Baroda is passed an Act called the Hindu Divorce Act (Act XXII of 1931). The Hindu marriage is generally recognised as a sacrament and hence inviolable but now, under this Act those domiciled in the Baroda State can divorce their wives or husbands under certain circumstances

even in those castes in which divorce is not allowed by Hindu Law. (For further details of the Baroda Divorce Act see chapter VIII).

Consanguinity is the guiding principle for determining the right of inheritance under the Mitakshara School. The joint and undivided family is the normal condition of Hindu society. An undivided Hindu family is ordinarily joint not only in estate but also in food and worship. The Mitakshara recognises two modes of devolution of property, namely survivorship and succession. The rules of survivorship apply to joint family property; and the rule of succession to property held in absolute severality by the last owner. Males succeeding as heirs whether to a male or a female take absolutely; but females succeeding as heirs whether to a male or female ordinarily take a limited interest in the property, that is to say they cannot make a gift of the property, or sell it except for a legal necessity recognised by Hindu Law. On their death the property will pass not to their heirs, but to the next heir of their husband, that is his brother.

Principles of succession,

A widow who is unchaste at the time of her husband's death is not entitled to inherit him; but once her husband's estate is vested in her, it is not divested by her subsequent unchastity. The following physical and mental defects exclude an heir from inheritance:—

Exclusion from inheritance.

- (a) Blindness, deafness and dumbness, provided the defect is both congenital and incurable.
- (b) Want of any limb if congenital. This excludes the case of a person who is lame or has no nose or tongue. It also excludes the case of congenital impotence.
- (c) Lunacy, which need not be congenital, but exists when the succession opens.
- (d) Idiocy, provided it is complete and absolute.
- (e) Leprosy, when it is of such a virulent type that it is incurable.

The disability is purely personal, and does not extend to the legitimate issue of the dis-

qualified heir. Nor does it extend to his wife or widow. Property which has once vested in a person by inheritance is not divested by a subsequent supervening disability. A disability which excludes a person from inheritance also excludes him from a share of the joint property on partition. But the disqualified heir and his wife and children are entitled to maintenance out of the property which he would have inherited but for the disability.

The only property that can be divided on a partition is co-parcenary property. Separate property cannot be the subject of partition, nor can such property which by custom descends to one member of the family to the exclusion of other members, e. g. a Raj or principality. Provision must first be made for debts which are payable out of the joint family property, personal debts of the father not tainted with immorality, maintenance of the dependent female members and disqualified heirs and the marriage expenses of the unmarried daughters. Every co-parcener is entitled to a share upon partition and every adult co-parcener is

entitled to demand and sue for partition of the co-parcenary property at any time. A mother cannot compel a partition but if a partition does take place between her sons, she is entitled to receive a share equal to that of a son in the co-parcenary property.

A Hindu may dispose of by gift or will his separate or self acquired property, subject in certain cases to the claims for maintenance of those whom he is legally bound to maintain. A Hindu female may dispose of her *stridhan* by gift or will subject in certain cases to the consent of her husband. A widow may in certain cases alienate by gift moveable property inherited from her husband though she cannot dispose of it by will. A gift once completed is binding upon the donor and it cannot be revoked by him, unless it was obtained by fraud or undue influence.

The liability of the heir of a deceased Hindu to pay the debts of the deceased is limited to the extent of the assets inherited by him from the deceased. The heir is not personally liable

to pay the debts of the deceased not even if he is a son or grandson. But the undivided interest of a co-parcener may be attached in his life time in execution of a decree against him for his personal debt; and where sons are joint with their father and debts have been contracted by the father in his capacity of manager and head of the family for family purposes the sons as members of the joint family are bound to pay the debts to the extent of their interests in the co-parcenary property.

The liability of a Hindu to maintain others arises in some cases from
Maintenance. the mere relationship between the parties independently of the possession of any property. In other cases it depends altogether on the possession of property. A Hindu is under legal obligation to maintain his wife, his minor sons, his unmarried daughters, and his aged parents whether he possesses any property or not. The obligation to maintain these relations is personal in character and arises from the very existence of the relationship between the parties. The manager of a joint Mitakshara family is under a legal obligation to

maintain all male members of the family, their wives and their children. On the death of any one of the male members he is bound to maintain his widow and his children. The obligation to maintain these persons arises from the fact that the manager is in possession of the family property. An heir is legally bound to provide out of the estate which descends to him, maintenance for those persons whom the late proprietor was legally or morally bound to maintain. The reason is that the estate is inherited subject to the obligation to provide maintenance.

As stated before Hindu Law has been, to some extent, amended by Amendments called legislation to make it suitable to modern conditions of life. But many changes yet remain to be made in it. The rules of Hindu law regarding succession and inheritance, made at a time, when a son was considered to be of greater importance than a daughter, and when the family as a rule was joint, are not quite suited to modern conditions of life. Old Hindu Law does not recognise sex equality and

does not give women their just rights in succession and inheritance of family property. A comparison of women's rights to inheritance under Hindu Law with those under Christian, Mahomedan and Parsi Laws shows that under Hindu Law women are not properly treated.

Hindu Law illiberal
to women.

Mothers are not only not-entitled to claim a share of their own accord in their deceased husband's property, but even when they get a share on the sons dividing the family property, the share that they get is hedged round with so many restrictions to safeguard the interests of reversioners that their share is really not a share but some thing given with a life interest in lieu of maintenance. Even when a woman succeeds to the property of her husband who has left no issue, she has only a limited interest in it, and has to leave the corpus of the property in tact for those distant relations of her husband, who never cared for him or for her during their life-time and even during his last illness. As a daughter a woman is completely at the mercy of her father and father's relations, and gets generally no share in his property however extensive it may be that he has left

behind him. The joint family system has practically taken away all the rights of the widow and the daughter and has reduced them to the condition of mere dependents. Even if there be no male issue, the interest of a deceased co-parcener devolves on the other co-parceners and the widow only becomes entitled to maintenance and residence in the family house while the daughter is only entitled to maintenance and to be married from the family property. Even the right of residence and maintenance is not recognised as creating any legal charge on the property; and can be defeated by the disposal of the property by other co-parceners, which may reduce a widow to a condition of abject helplessness.

It is well known that old ideas of the propriety of things in matters of inheritance linger long, and are hard to change, and so the idea of primogeniture based on the old Feudal System in English Law continued till recently. It was only in 1925 that the English Law regarding landed property was radically changed by the various statutes passed in 1922 and after, under the initiation of the late Lord Birkenhead, and all

the inequalities, disabilities and complexities that existed were swept away. The new law abolished the inequitable rule of primogeniture and declared all children, whether sons or daughters as the heirs entitled to inherit in equal shares, in the intestacy of their parents, and thus did away with the preferences on the score of sex and age, and laid down a uniform rule of succession for all of them. It finally uprooted the ugly disabilities of married women that lingered despite the various laws passed to remove them, and thus put females on an equal footing with males as regards the ownership over their property. Subject to the rights of her father and mother in each other's property, a daughter inherits the property of her parents along with her brother, her share being equal to his. Subject to the rights of husband and wife in each other's property, if there be no issue of the intestate, his mother inherits the whole property along with his father in equal shares, and in default of the father she inherits the whole property. In default of the parents, sister succeeds to the property along with her brothers, their shares being equal. So also does the aunt with the uncles in equal shares.

Under the Mahomedan Law, women can possess property and have absolute power of disposal over it. There is nothing like joint family system among the Mahomedans and nobody acquires any interest in the property of others by birth. The shares of the heirs both according to the Hanafi and Shia Law are definite and ascertained, and vary according to the existence or otherwise of other heirs. According to Hanafi law, daughter, widow, mother, sister, and aunt are recognised heirs along with the males; and there is no disability attaching to sex. Succession according to the Shia law is with some variation to the same effect, all heirs, including females, having definite shares.

Among the Parsis, when the intestate leaves a widow and lineal descendants, each son gets four shares, the widow gets two shares, and each daughter one share. When there are no lineal descendants, but there are parents or either of them living, the widow takes $\frac{1}{2}$, and the parents jointly take the other half. So also when there are only relatives on father's side, she takes $\frac{1}{2}$.

and the relatives get $\frac{1}{2}$. A daughter inheriting property from males along with her brother takes $\frac{1}{4}$ of that of her brother's share, but when she inherits the property of a female, she gets an equal share with the son. In default of the lineal descendants, the mother inherits the property along with the father of the deceased. If the father and mother are alive, the father's share is double of that of the mother.

The Indian Christian women under the Indian Succession Act of 1925 hold property with absolute right. The chief sources of acquiring property are inheritance, marriage settlement, gift and personal exertions. They also get some property under the marriage settlement which the husband and wife may enter into. The males have absolute power of disposal by will. A widow succeeding along with the lineal descendants gets $\frac{1}{3}$ share, the latter getting $\frac{2}{3}$, and gets $\frac{1}{2}$ share in default of any lineal descendants, the other half going to the kindred. If there be no kindred, the whole property belongs to the widow. A daughter enjoys the right of inheriting her father's property, and her share

is equal to that of her brother. The daughter of a predeceased son or daughter gets the share of her parents. So long as the father is alive the mother cannot inherit, but if he is dead and there are also brothers and sisters of the intestate, the mother and each living brother or sister succeed to the property in equal shares. The children of a predeceased brother or sister get the share of their parents. If there be no brother or sister or child of either sex, the whole property belongs to the mother. A sister inherits along with her brother in equal shares, when there is neither father, nor mother, nor lineal descendants.

The Hindu Law of inheritance is quite unsuitable for women under the present changed conditions of Hindu society. The

Unsuitability of Hindu Law at present.

whole idea of women's position in Hindu social life and their ability to take their place in society independently of any question of sex has radically changed during the last thirty years. This is due primarily to the contact with the West where women are held in high respect, and to the movement for female education. The resultant change is so complete that to determine

in what spheres women may enter more or less equally with men is not so difficult as to determine in what they should restrict themselves in the interest of society. People's ideas about the inferior position and status of women in society, and the consequent inequality in their rights have undergone vast changes from what they were before; and women themselves now seem to be wholly dissatisfied with the inequitable provisions in law concerning them. They raise their voice against them, all over the country. They have formed themselves into associations, and hold meetings, and pass resolutions to the effect that the present inequality in law regarding their inheritance and other rights, should be promptly removed. Hindu males have also shown their sympathy towards them and have espoused their cause as can be seen from the resolutions passed in this respect in the Social Reform conferences. Even the Baroda Prajamandal session held in Baroda in 1929 adopted a resolution which condemned the present low status of women under the Hindu Law and urged on His Highness' Government the desirability of appointing a committee to inquire into the question of women's rights and remove the hard-

ships they have been labouring under. The law based upon notions of bygone ages does not suit the present age; and its unsuitability is prominently marked out by leading lawyers and reformers like Mr. M. R. Jayakar, Dewan Bahadur Harbilas Sharda and others who take keen interest in the question. There is also an active propaganda all over the country to alter the law so as to suit the modern day ideas, and raise women from the inferior position assigned to them under Hindu Law.

His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III who is always prepared for amending Hindu Law whenever necessary, having noticed from discussions in the press and on the platform that the difference in the rights of inheritance enjoined in the Hindu Law between males and females requires to be harmonised with the improved status of females, brought about by education and other ameliorating influences, was pleased to appoint a committee, with the writer of this book as its Chairman, (a) to examine the question of property rights of women under Hindu Law and (b) to suggest amendments, if any, called for under modern conditions, for removing de-

fects in the existing law. The Committee has, after a full inquiry, submitted its report and proposed certain amendments, which are now under the consideration of the Baroda Government and when passed into law will remove many of the hardships, which Hindu women, and especially Hindu widows have to suffer at present, with respect to their property rights.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN.

The position held by the Aryan women in the Vedic period was a most honourable, nay exalted one. Without any unhealthy restrictions on their actions, females were allowed freedom in society. They were on a footing of perfect equality with their husbands. The Hindu wife was considered as the intellectual companion of her husband and his friend and helper in life; she was honoured by him and her supremacy in his home was absolute as wife and mother. She was trained to be a helpmate as well as a devoted wife to her husband. In numerous places we find mention of wives joining their husbands in the performances of sacrifices. Then there is the picture of cultured ladies, some of whom were themselves *rishis* and composed hymns like men. They often distinguished themselves in

Position of women
in Vedic times.

science and in the learning of the time and had also a certain amount of influence in politics and administration. They attended great assemblies and freely mixed with men in society. Not only were child marriages unknown, but a woman in ancient India had a voice in the selection of her husband. She chose her husband out of many suitors. She had a right not only over property acquired by her, but also over that acquired by her husband, and was treated in all respects on a par with man.

How a wife was regarded in those good old times, may be gathered from the following description of a wife given in the Mahabharata:—

“A wife is half the man, his best friend;
A loving wife is a perpetual spring
Of virtue, pleasure, wealth;
A faithful wife is his best aid
In seeking heavenly bliss;
A sweetly speaking wife is a companion
In solitude; a father in advice;
A mother in all seasons of distress;
A rest in passing through life’s wilderness.”

During the Vedic period women were treated almost on a par with men. Their right to acquire property was not merely indicated

but was also protected against violation. At the time of marriage the husband was asked to promise that he would not prevent his wife from acquiring property. When the wife went to the husband's house she was said to be the owner of the household property along with the husband. The Vedic injunction by the father of the bride to the bridegroom " धर्मेच कामेच अर्थेच भवान नातिचरे इमाम् " (you should not prevent her from acting meritoriously, from acquiring wealth and from performing virtuous acts) and his reply " नातिचरामि " (I shall not prevent) clearly shows her right to property. Various passages in the Vedas and Vedic rituals confirm this view. Of these I quote only one, the benediction on the bride while starting for her husband's house:—

संराज्ञी श्वशुरे भव, संराज्ञी श्वश्रुवान भव
ननान्दरि संराज्ञी भव, संराज्ञी अधिदेवेषु.

(i. e. Be a queen to your father-in-law, mother-in-law and all other members of the family.)

Now when we compare the present position of Hindu women with that which they enjoyed in the Vedic times, we find they are still looked upon

Present position.

as *ardhangis*, the half self of man. In order that the ceremony of giving away a girl in marriage, *kanyadan*, may be complete, the *ardhangi* must take part in it. If owing to any cause—death, illness or unavoidable absence—she is not able to be present at the sacrament, a piece of cloth or something else is placed by the side of her husband to represent her, and to show that he by himself is only an incomplete individual and cannot perform the most important function of life unless and until joined by his wife. The wife's presence with her husband is essential in all social and religious ceremonies. In the worship of household gods, the baths in the sacred rivers and other duties ordained by religion or sanctioned by social usage, no ceremony is complete unless the wife joins her husband in its performance. Hindu women's right to property acquired by them, is respected even now, as it was in the past, though it is much reduced and limited, with regard to inheritance. The evils of *purda* though real, are much exaggerated. It is not correct to say as some ill informed people do, that Hindu women are prisoners in the *Zenana*, and their condition is a pitiable one. Even in Rajput

families where strict *purda* is observed women have freedom, respect and happiness, and their seclusion cannot be called captivity. Hindu women are still respected as in the past, as mothers, and wives and are treated with consideration in household affairs. They themselves are kind mothers and obedient and loving wives as before.

But in spite of all this, it cannot be denied that there has been
Degradation. some degradation in the position of Hindu women, compared to what it was in the Vedic times. They are married in childhood, kept in seclusion to a more or less extent and are considered unfit to inherit property and to be educated like men.

The question naturally arises that when the women of the Vedic period enjoyed property and other rights, how did they come to lose them subsequently. How did it happen that men who treated them as their compeers became so demoralised as to disregard the rights of their wives and daughters? How did the women of the Aryan household allow such demoralisation to creep in? The answer is that they had the

rights in the Vedic times but they lost them gradually afterwards. Their fall began with the migration of the Aryans to the south and culminated with the warfare with the aborigines on the plains. In the cold and comparatively peaceful regions of the north, where the Aryans lived in the Vedic period, men and women had developed social conventions and property rights. But when they migrated to the plains, it was only a handful of them that could reach the distant valley of the Indus and still more distant Gangetic plains and it became a matter of the greatest concern to this tiny group of Aryas how best to protect themselves from the onslaughts of the aborigines. Incessant warfare became the daily feature of life. Women who could not take part in the brutality of such conflicts naturally took a secondary part in the society of those times. It was also impossible for them to move in freedom since there was ever the danger of their being carried away by the aboriginal hordes against whom the Aryans who were but a handful, were as far as possible on the defensive. It was only to be expected therefore that at such a stage of society the Aryan women would keep themselves to their homes,

and that men would dominate society and decide all questions. Physical valour became the most predominant virtue and the increase of man-power the all absorbing problem of the Aryan household. Men, and still more men, were needed to fight the aborigines, while women were a source of anxiety and an object of protection. Women could only be of help in keeping the home and in producing more and more sons. Whenever a girl was married, the gods were invoked to bless her with ten sons. Sons and grandsons, uncles and nephews, distant agnates and cognate male relatives all were prized and treated with preferential regard, women receding the while quietly to the background. They naturally took a place subordinate to men and for a time ceased to gather together with men round sacrificial fires, and confined themselves to the home. Still another circumstance added its weight against women. Whenever the Aryans by reason of their superior skill and intelligence gained a victory, they captured the defeated men and women and assimilated them into their society. The men were treated as a subordinate caste and the women were treated as "*dasis*" or maids of household.

The *dasis* were an additional source for getting sons in the Aryan family. Slowly thus the non-Aryan idea of polygamy and *niyoga* entered the Aryan mind which laid the axe deep at the root of women's high status in society. A man could take as many women as he pleased; and a woman should beget children if not by her husband at least by his brother or some relation of his. Women were gradually losing esteem and the only function for which they were prized was the production of children and therefore came to be married in their infancy. Society was so much in need of men that if a woman was barren it allowed her husband to supplant her and marry another. Men became all powerful and injustice to women followed in its wake. The period of conflict was so long and the demoralisation of the Aryans so complete that when society was again at peace, women were no-where in the intellectual field. Then came the Smriti period, with its endeavour to further limit the rights of women. In this as also in the literature of the Buddhistic period we see the first signs of change. Women as a class were debarred from studying the Vedas, though there seem to have been exceptions and

Buddhism accepted spiritual equality between the sexes. Monastic disparagement of women mingles in Manu and other writers with expression of respect. The idea of wifely duty as typified in Sita predominates over the idea of helpmate. Seclusion seems to have become gradually stricter and widow re-marriage was looked upon with disfavour. But women were still educated and on the whole respected and treated with regard so far as their social rights were concerned; but not only no attempt was made to free them from the many disabilities already forced on them, but a positive propaganda was launched to curtail their property and other rights still further. The Smrities were very harsh on women's rights. Women were regarded by them as being on a par with slaves, and were declared to have no right of inheritance, no personal independence, as being immoral and criminal by nature, fit to be protected not for their own sake but for the sake of preserving the purity of the lineage. They had always to be subservient to men's interests and after the death of their husbands they had no purpose in life, and were enjoined to burn themselves with the deceased.

Thus gradually the position of women in Gujarat, as in the whole of India, declined till about 1000 A. D. when women's subordination to men became complete. It was the Mahomedan conquest of India which finally completed the degradation in the position of Hindu women, the result being a seclusion which led to a complete cramping of their intellectual faculties, owing to the absence of even that education which contact with and observation of the world imparts.

The generality of people are still guided by the precepts taught in the *Manu Smriti* that women should be kept in a state of subjection all their lives and should never be allowed to become their own mistresses. The belief has become ingrained with them that a woman belongs to her father first, and then to her husband to whom she is given away for ever; and even after his death she is not free, for her sons have a right to order her about. Women are married very early and have no voice in the selection of their husbands. They are allowed no time when they can prepare themselves for their marriage. They have no educa-

tion worthy of name; and their education after marriage, even where, it is possible, is nothing like education which an unmarried girl can receive when most of her time is at her disposal. The husbands also suffer from the want of education of their wives, and the custom of early marriage; for while an unmarried husband is free to devote all his time to his books, one who has married must also attend to his wife and children and is consequently troubled by household matters, at a time when he should have nothing else to care for, except his education. Betrothals are often made by comparing horoscopes only and therefore when husband and wife grow older and their characters develop, it often happens that in spite of their implicit belief in destiny the boy and the girl sometimes prove a very ill-assorted couple with natures as different as the two poles and both have unhappiness and misery in life. There cannot be, and often is not that elevated wifely companionship which is necessary for a happy married life when one of the pair is educated and the other is not.

Another evil from which a Hindu woman suffers is want of independence at home. Very often her spirit is broken down and crushed by the treatment which falls to the lot of a daughter-in-law from her husband's family. Like an English husband who has to be in dread of his mother-in-law living in his house with her daughter, a Hindu wife has often to be in constant dread of her mother-in-law, who in her turn is afraid of the daughter-in-law gaining too much ascendancy over her son and seizes every opportunity to breed discord between the two which causes them unhappiness. The poor girl's drawbacks are pictured in the worst colour before her husband. Naturally her spirit is soured and embittered and in extreme cases she ends her life by falling into a well or setting fire to her clothes. Fortunately such cases are rare but owing to such ill-treatment, the daughter-in-law in her turn rapidly descends to the level of her mother-in-law, perhaps in her turn to tyrannise over her daughter-in-law when she gets one.

The custom of seclusion, which, with some castes such as Rajputs is very stringent, mutilates social life and makes its current dull and sluggish by excluding the brightening influence of women. In some of the castes a woman has to cover her face before those males who are older than her husband and generally speaking she does not appear before them. The idea of modesty is carried so far that she can see even her husband only at night when the whole house is asleep and with the lark she must bid adieu. If one is sick, it is considered immodest for the other to be at the bedside in the presence of elders. Daughters and their husbands and sons and daughters-in-law cannot sit together even in the family circle. In some castes like Patidars, females are not taken by males with them in *jan*, marriage parties, on their son's wedding. Females dine separately from men both in the family and in caste dinners. A Hindu woman cannot mix freely in society and therefore does not get that wide knowledge of life which acquaintance with the world imparts. Gossip is her only recreation and her life is made up of contemptible nothings.

The lot of a woman who has the misfortune to be widowed is most miserable. A man who loses his wife can marry again, but a woman who loses her husband cannot do so, except in some castes in which widow remarriage is allowed. Throughout her existence a widow has to lead a life of hardship. On the day of her husband's death, she has to break her bracelets and on the tenth day after the funeral, she has to cause her head to be shaved in those castes in which remarriage of widows is prohibited. A widow cannot make the usual red powder mark, *chanlla*, on her forehead. She must put on plain dark garments and live on coarse food. For one year after the death of her husband, she has to mourn sitting in a corner of the house. Then she goes to her father's house to leave off mourning. After this she is allowed to move about and go out of the house. But so long as she lives, she takes no part in dinners or other happy gatherings, for a widow's shadow is deemed unlucky. She generally passes her time in working as a household drudge in her father-in-law's house and in hearing *kathas*, visiting temples

and performing pilgrimages. If she wishes to live apart, she is given a room in the house and an allowance in cash or kind sufficient only for the bare necessities of life.

The greatest impediment to the advancement of Hindu women, is their want of education, a want which is the chief cause of the defects noticeable among them viz., little influence over their husbands, inability to bring up children properly, superstitious beliefs, absorption with trifles and passion for jewels. It is now over sixty years, since some schools for girls were opened in Gujarat. Their number has steadily increased and so has the number of literate females. But in spite of that, the number of literate females in Gujarat as a whole, is not more than 5 in a hundred. 95 females out of a hundred are still illiterate, taking literacy in its modest definition of the ability to write a letter in one's mother tongue and reading a reply to it. This cannot be called satisfactory and vigorous efforts require to be made for popularising and spreading female education. The main difficulty arises from the women themselves. Most Hindu women have

grown so accustomed to the low position they have been made to occupy for centuries that they are loathe to change it. It is sad to say it but it is nevertheless a fact that many of them do not desire education. They have so long been kept in ignorance and darkness that it has become a habit with them. It is now for the educated men and women to show them by various means, by advice, by reading, by association, by meeting and by mixing freely in society that education of females is necessary and that not only the young but even the old among them can be educated. In this connection much can be done and is being done to some extent by the educated husbands of married women by sending their girls to school and also by teaching their wives the value of education and by constantly reading or explaining to them passages from the best authors; and thus creating in them a liking for education.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the people of Gujarat have begun to realise the injustice that has been done to their women and the harm that is being caused to them by keeping them ignorant and secluded. A reform movement has

Progress.

already been started and is gradually making itself felt. Fifty years ago there was a great prejudice against the education of women in Gujarat. It was feared that education and the consequent freedom implied therein would turn their heads and cause them to lose their balance. But such fears have proved to be groundless. Devotion to their husband, modesty, kindness and courtesy, which are the characteristics of Gujarati women even when they are uneducated, have remained and even improved after their education; and there is now no opposition to female education even from uneducated parents. The opening of schools for girls by government both in British India, and progressive Indian States like Baroda, Bhavnagar etc., the good example of the higher castes in sending their girls to schools and the generous help of the rich in offering scholarships, prizes etc. to school-going girls, social reform conferences and the exertion of benevolent institutions like the Gujarat Vernacular Society and the Christian Missions have all combined to bring about in towns and cities a slow but steady change for the better in the sentiments which were previously felt regarding the education of

women. Many Hindu parents now realise that their daughters have no chance of securing a suitable husband if they are not properly educated. Bride-grooms who are now generally grown up and have a share in the selection of their wives are not satisfied with their mere vernacular education. They want their future wives to be educated in English also. Sensible parents whose number is daily increasing, therefore take great delight in seeing that their girls attend schools and acquire knowledge, not merely in the vernacular schools but also in English schools, wherever they are available. Even after their marriage the husbands of many girls try to continue their studies in the hope of enabling them to be their real companions. Special libraries have been opened for women in many of the towns and important villages and *yuvak mandals* take great delight in taking books to the houses of women who may wish to read them. Women are gradually being taken out of seclusion and allowed to move freely into society. Ladies Clubs have also been formed in several places and are attended by ladies of all communities for social intercourse and mutual improvement. Women freely accompany their husbands in social gatherings and

even to their clubs. To what extent education has benefitted women can be gauged from the fact that many of them freely join the colleges and English classes opened at Baroda, Ahmedabad, Rajkot and other places. Girls are given education not only in the vernacular schools, but also in High schools and colleges by those who can afford to do so, and there are already several Gujarati Hindu graduates in Arts and Medicine. *Puuda* and backwardness have been set aside to such an extent for being trained as school mistresses, nurses, and social workers that in the recent national movement for picketting foreign cloth and liquor and toddy shops, women, even from villages, as *desh sevikas*, took a very prominent part, which is mainly due to the new spirit brought about by their emancipation and education. Child marriage is fast disappearing among the educated classes of all castes, and widow remarriages are advocated and sometimes fearlessly performed by those wishing to do so. Education and example have created in the women themselves a spirit of service for their country; and on the whole such a change for the better has come over the position of women that one may be justified in

saying that the time is not far distant when women will occupy the same high position which they occupied in the Vedic times and which at the present day their sisters occupy in European countries.

Women in India, as a whole are rapidly advancing in culture and in society life. As observed by Mr. K. N. Kini, in "India", the quarterly journal of the Hindustan Association of America, the great leaders of India have been vehement supporters of women's rights. The most outstanding movement in India to day, which is of singular importance and great promise for the future of the nation, is the annual holding of the All-India Women's Conference, when educational and social problems affecting the welfare of women are discussed by their representatives from all parts of the country without reference to caste, creed, religion or colour. Within five years it has assumed gigantic proportions and has actively working branches in all the British Indian provinces and the progressive Indian States, whose governments have sympathetically promoted their activities. Not only is their propaganda conducted in the

cities but they are now gradually reaching the vast masses in the rural areas as well. The more enthusiastic members visit women in their homes and seek their co-operation and sympathy and enlist them and their daughters as members of the great organization. Recently many hopeful signs have appeared. The growing enlightenment of the people is tending to break down the old prejudices; women themselves seem less satisfied with the customary illiteracy of their mothers and grandmothers; female education and co-education in the primary classes have already attained somewhat impressive dimensions; schools and colleges for women are on the increase; women are being encouraged to take up physical training, games and vocational education and perhaps, best of all, the propaganda in this excellent cause is wide spread. As Her Highness the Maharani Saheba of Baroda once said:—"A noteworthy feature of this achievement, in contrast with the experience of other countries, has been the sincere co-operation of men and the absence of any very serious opposition from the sterner sex. As a result of man's encouragement, we find women as honorary magistrates, councillors, senators, and on various committees for executing the nation's work."

CHAPTER XV.

SOME ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

It is obviously impossible, in the absence of reliable statistics, to make any exact estimate of the average annual income per head of the Gujarati Hindu population. It was estimated in 1901 during Lord Curzon's viceroyalty for all classes in the whole of India to be Rs. 30 per head. The early years of the century witnessed an appreciable economic progress and in 1911 Mr. Findlay Shiraz, as Director of Statistics, estimated it to be Rs. 50 per head. This was however a period of rising prices. One may compare it with the estimates made by Sir Josia Stamp who reckoned the average income on the eve of the Great War as £ 50 in Great Britain, £ 72 in the United States of America, £ 30 in Germany and £ 6 in Japan. Figures regarding the annual income of the people of India are not conclusive especially

Extreme poverty.

with reference to figures for other countries. Progress since the War has continued but at a most retarded rate. On the lines of an inquiry made in 1923 in the Bombay Presidency Profs. Shah and Khambhatta estimated that in real income there had been a gain of 3s. 2d. or Rs. 2-2-0 only since the pre-war period. The most optimistic of the estimates gives £ 8 per head per year. This average, based on varying grades of income, shows that there must be a large number of persons below the average, barely above the starvation line and it is obvious that there must be millions who are living on an extremely low standard judged by any criterion. One has only to look about him to realise the vast amount of appalling poverty in India from the starved and stunted bodies of the people, thread-bare rags on their persons, and the dilapidated houses in which they live that he sees round about him wherever he goes, especially in villages.

No regular economic survey has been made
Economic survey. in the past about the
family budgets of the
Hindus residing in any particular area. It

would be a very laborious and expensive undertaking even for a single village or town; and for a whole district or province it would be extremely difficult if not impossible. Several general inquiries for ascertaining the income and expenditure of persons, following a particular calling like agriculture in a single place have been made. For instance an inquiry into the family budgets of workmen in Bombay was conducted under Mr. Shirras by the Labour Office in 1922. A similar inquiry for agriculturists of a village in the Deccan was made by Dr. Harold Mann, and in the Baroda State by its Development Department. An inquiry of a general nature was made for the first time by the late Mr. Sedgewick in connection with the Census of 1921, when he was in charge of the Census of the Bombay Presidency. It was an inquiry made with the help of honorary correspondents, chosen from the people themselves, who were to make their own inquiry into the details of actual income and expenditure and put down the result under certain broad heads. No particular known families were selected for inquiry but either a whole village or a definite quarter of a village or the whole of some street

or quarter of a town was taken and particulars were collected for every family in the area chosen, so as to secure fairly correct information regarding the income and expenditure of families of all grades in society. Due allowance was made for the tendency to minimise income and exaggerate expenditure, for when a man is asked for particulars about his financial position human nature induces him to make it out worse than it is. I remember that years ago, when as a revenue officer in the Baroda State, I had an occasion to inquire into the indebtedness of Bhadran kasba, almost every one, including many whom I personally knew to be well off, reported that he was very heavily indebted, for fear that I might have some sinister motive in making the inquiry, such as increasing the rates of land assessment or the income tax.

In the inquiry instituted by Mr. Sedgwick income was taken as net income, after deducting cost of cultivation, business expenses

etc. but not taxation which was provided for under expenditure, and was divided into the following heads :—

Compulsory.

Voluntary.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Food. | 6. Education. |
| 2. Clothing. | 7. Medicine. |
| 3. Rental. | 8. Other voluntary. |
| 4. Ceremonies, charities, etc. | |
| 5. Other compulsory. | |

Four tables were designed for the tabulation of the results. Table I, gave annual net income by classes that is the number of families in which the per capita income fell within certain class limits. The per capita income was obtained by dividing the net income of a family by the number of members in the family without distinction of age or sex; places with a population of less than 10,000 were taken as rural and those having a population of 10,000 and over were taken as urban. The following extract from the four tables, shows the results for Gujarat, in which 1387 families were examined:—

TABLE I.

Annual net income.

Class.	Income in rupees.	No. of families examined.
I	0- 25	12
II	25- 50	159
III	50- 75	327
IV	75-125	441
V	125-175	218
VI	175-225	83
VII	225-275	57
VIII	275-325	27
IX	325-375	16
X	375-425	15
XI	425-475	2
XII	475-525	13
XIII	525-575	1
XIV	575-625	7
XV	625-675	1
XVI	675-725	...
XVII	725-775	1
XVIII	775 and over	7

TABLE II.

Ratio of expenditure to income.

Percentage of expenditure to net income.	Number of families.
188 per cent and over.	25
163 to 188 p. c.	9
138 to 163 „	35
113 to 138 „	140
88 to 113 „	740
63 to 88 „	336
38 to 63 „	90
13 to 38 „	9
Below 13 per cent.	3

TABLE III.

Extent and distribution of indebtedness by classes.

	Actual Numbers.				Percentage.			
	Classes I-III per capita income Rs. 0-75.	Classes IV and V Rs. 75-175.	Classes VI-IX. Rs. 175-375.	Classes X to XIII Rs. 375-and over.	I-III.	IV and V.	VI-IX.	X-XVIII.
Not in debt.	234	398	143	38	47	60	78	81
In debt.	264	261	40	9	53	40	22	19

TABLE IV.
Distribution of expenditure by Heads.
GUJARAT.

Main Head.	Detailed Head.	Urban.				Rural.			
		Classes.							
		I to III.	IV and V.	VI to IX.	X to XVIII.	I to III.	IV and V.	VI to IX.	X to XVIII.
Compulsory.	1 Food.	67·8	61·5	47·5	40·6	72·1	65·3	53·5	(49·4)
	2 Clothing.	16·9	16·9	15·0	13·2	13·1	12·1	12·1	(11·9)
	3 Rental.	2·6	3·1	4·3	4·7	1·2	1·8	3·2	(2·0)
	4 Ceremonies, charity, etc.	4·6	4·8	8·6	11·8	3·6	5·1	9·4	(12·9)
	5 Other.	3·3	5·3	9·6	9·9	5·3	7·3	6·9	(3·5)
	Total Compulsory...	95·2	91·6	85·0	80·2	95·3	91·6	85·2	(79·7)

Voluntary.	6 Education.	1.4	1.9	3.8	2.5	0.5	0.7	0.8	(7.9)
	7 Doctor's fees, etc.	0.4	0.6	1.7	1.6	0.1	0.7	1.0	(1.5)
	8 Others.	3.0	5.9	9.5	15.7	4.1	7.0	13.0	(10.9)
Total Voluntary ...		4.8	8.4	15.0	19.8	4.7	8.4	14.8	(20.3)
Number of families examined ...		319	524	145	45	175	151	30	2

are literate in the sense of being "able to write a letter to a friend and read the answer." More than eighty males and 95 females in a hundred of the population of each sex are illiterate. Taking urban and rural population separately the proportion of literates in both the sexes is smaller in villages than in towns. Though illiteracy is not the same thing as ignorance, and the experience and wisdom of the farmer is transmitted orally from father to son illiteracy does remain a stumbling block in the way of progress. Living in a world of superstition, unable to read and decipher the simplest written calculation, the ignorant villager falls an easy prey to the trickery of usurers and landlords.

There are hundreds of thousands of idle persons, beggars, monks
Mendicancy. and other "holy-men,"
in villages, towns and cities who are not needed there and whose up-keep is a charge on the economic resources of the people and forms a real burden on society. In a different class are the priests. Through daily demands, through gifts at the temples and through largesses at the time of pilgrimages and religious festivals, they

extract enormous sums from the poor as well as well-to-do. This is an expenditure that hits the poor particularly and is a sheer waste.

The average Indian expectation of life is 24 years; the same figure for Disease. the British Isles is 54.

The physical life of most of the workers—the villagers no less than the townsmen—is sub-normal. Most of them never know what health and vigour mean. The All India Conference of Medical Research Workers which met in 1926 recorded in a formal resolution its belief that the annual deaths from preventible diseases amount to 5 or 6 millions; that every individual loses two or three weeks every year through these diseases; that the loss of efficiency from preventible malnutrition and disease is not less than 20 per cent; and finally that while today 50 per cent of the infants reach wage earning age, the proportion might easily be raised to 80 or 90 per cent. Of the preventible diseases the most deadly are malaria and the anæmia caused by the hook-worm, a parasite engendered by insanitary habits. Malaria accounts annually for about a million deaths, disables permanently weakens another 2 millions and causes about 50 million

cases of sickness which ought to be, (but seldom are) in hospitals. Surely Gujarati Hindus must have their proportionate share in this. With money and organisation these diseases could be wiped out. But the majority of people being fatalists and superstitious trust in charms and vows for the cure of diseases. Safe-guards against sickness such as cleanliness, pure water, wholesome food, and sufficient clothing are neglected, either owing to ignorance or false economy. When a man dies, hundreds of rupees are spent after his funeral obsequies and caste dinners, but when he is ill, practically nothing is spent to restore him to health !

The peace and security that now prevails in the province has caused a more or less complete disappearance of hoarding, so common in less settled times. There are however still to be found, here and there, people who think that the only means by which the safety of their property may be assured is to bury it in the ground. Occasionally one hears of a Brahman beggar or a widow who has stored away money and valuables. But as a general practice hoarding is now rare. There is really not much to hoard; and moreover people

have begun to understand the advantages of investing their savings, if any, in joint stock companies in cities and towns and in the Postal Savings Banks, which are opened in most of the villages.

All classes invest a part of their savings in ornaments. Not only women and children, but sometimes even men are to be found heavily loaded with ornaments. There is a strong desire, especially on the part of traders and merchants to keep one-third or at least one-fourth of their wealth at hand in a portable form, lest the chances of their trade might go against them. Labourers and artisans, if they prosper, melt down the whole or a part of their savings into ornaments; and all purchase such ornaments as are absolutely required by their marriage or caste rules, even by contracting debts. These rules, however, necessitate no small outlay and ornaments worth thousands of rupees will be found in the families of Vantias, Brahmans, Bhatias, Luhanas and other wealthy classes. No accurate estimate of the amounts of money thus tied up in an unproductive way can be made, but it must no doubt be considerable. If these sums could

be invested in co-operative and other banks, they would become doubly fruitful instead of being sterile as now.

The great majority of the population are thrifty and of a saving disposition. But their saving, which is often made at great personal sacrifice and by stinting even in the necessities of life, is often squandered in a few days in giving caste dinners, on marriage and death occasions, or some domestic ceremony. Even those who have no saving of their own borrow money at exorbitant rates of interest for such wasteful purposes. The most indebted, because the most improvident classes are the Garasias, Kathis and the petty land owners. Of the cultivating classes most of the Kanbis, Thakardas, Kolis and Ahirs are steeped in debt. They frequently stand in need of money for seed, plough, bullocks and social functions such as weddings and funeral feasts. The artisan classes are industrious and intelligent but are obliged to borrow to defray the cost of their expensive weddings, funerals and pregnancies. A larger number of craftsmen having no capital of their own require advances for the purchase of raw

material and the terms on which they obtain them from the local money lender are commonly regulated by some special understanding of a ruinous nature to the borrower. The variations in local usages are almost endless but a few examples may be given to indicate their general character. Dyers receive plain cloth on free credit provided payment is made for it within a period varying with the custom of the locality from two to six months; in case of failure to pay interest is charged, at nine to twelve percent. Dhed weavers are supplied with yarn by the Vania himself but it is booked as an advance, on the market price, of from 1 to 8 annas per Rs. 5 according to the term fixed for payment and are charged 12 to 18 percent a year as interest. The poorer cultivators—Kanbis, Thakardas and Kolis—are entirely in the hands of money lenders. From them they obtain provisions and seed and at Diwali pay back from the harvested grain what they have borrowed with an additional 25 percent of *bajji* and 50 percent of *juwar*. The provisions supplied are also paid for in cash, the money lender crediting the cultivator with the market price of the grain. In some cases the money lender meets the State

demand and takes the whole of the crop, part of which he advances again to the cultivator for food and credits his account with the balance. This system gives the lender many opportunities of defrauding an illiterate debtor who has no means of checking the price which the money lender has allowed for his grain. The poorer husbandmen seldom free themselves from the money-lenders' yoke. Most loan transactions are accompanied by the payment of a premium which goes by the name of *vataav*, discount, *mandaman*, a fee for booking the debt, or *kothali-chhodaman*, a fee for opening the money bag. These incidental items make even heavier the burden of debt.

The law and practice of dividing land, equally among the sons on the death of the father constitutes one of the greatest difficulties in improving agriculture. It leads to another handicap, viz. that of excessive fragmentation of land. This is due to the necessity of having lands of different quality apportioned in some way fair to all the holders. Sub-division and fragmentation together result therefore in millions of tiny fields, in

Excessive sub-divisions and fragmentation of land.

some parts as low as half an acre, one-fourth of an acre, one-tenth of an acre, and in some cases even less. The result is that the cost of cultivation much increases, and the yield much reduced.

The use of cow dung for fuel deprives the soil to some extent of the manure which it requires. Waste of fertilizers. The loss due to it is not much and the difficulty of getting fuel gives some excuse where the practice is followed. But there is no excuse, other than that of a sentiment for making no systematic attempt to conserve and utilise night soil, bones etc. which are rich in fertilising properties.

Gujarat had many excellent breeds of cattle, like the Gir buffaloes and the Kankrej cows; and even now it has some fine cattle. But indifference towards maintaining the purity of their breed and good qualities, has brought on deterioration. Vast numbers of starved cattle of poor stocks and diminutive size pick up a living as best they may, when the common pasture land will yield no more, from the stubble, the weeds on the fallows and even by raiding the crops. In Cattle supply.

spite of her sanctity the cow is not valued and often leads a miserable existence. More care is bestowed on female buffaloes, valued for their milk and upon the oxen used for ploughing and draught; but unwanted *padas*, he-buffalo bull-calves are allowed to starve to death. Aged beasts which in other countries are slaughtered are under religious sentiments of *ahinsa*, maintained and cause a drain on the economic resources of the country. It is estimated that India as a whole maintains 67 cattle for every 100 acres sown, while Holland has only 38 and Egypt 25. India may greatly increase her wealth and with it the happiness of her animals when she can bring herself to slaughter useless beasts and conserve the available food for those that remain. If better bulls for breeding are used 5 to 8 thousand lbs of milk per head can be obtained during the period of lactation from cows which to-day yield very little.

Virtually nothing has been done to help
Marketing. the peasants with the
marketing of their produce
and they remain the prey of rapacious middle
men who are often usurers also. A serious result
of continued custom lies in the lack of unifor

mity of weights and measures. Not only do they differ in different parts of the province, but even differ in smaller areas. The mere fact of difference might not in itself be worth noting except that it is taken advantage of by buyers and sellers especially in dealing with ignorant people. The Royal Commission on Agriculture thought this matter important enough to say in their report that "we consider the matter of such importance that we recommend that the Government of India should again undertake and investigate into the possibility of standardising weights and measures throughout India and should lay down general principles to which Provincial Governments should adhere to, so far as possible without undue interference with the local trade customs."

Insects, parasites and other diseases of plants and animals take their toll, and in addition Losses in crops. there are huge losses from wild pigs, jackals, monkeys, rats and other pests, owing to the prevailing unwillingness, due to religious sentiment, to destroy them. There is also a great loss from stray, cattle and the cows and other

animals of Rabaris and cattle breeders, who habitually let them loose to feed upon the standing crops and against whose attack the ignorant and unorganised agriculturists are helpless.

The efforts of the agriculturist who form 80 percent of the population are not employed to the best advantage in the production of wealth and there is a large amount of preventible waste. There is of course no reason to suppose that where work must be done the peasant fails to do it. But during a long period of the year, varying considerably in different parts, the agriculturist has to remain in idleness owing to want of irrigation and other facilities to raise crops. This period was estimated by the Royal Commission on Agriculture as two to four months; and in addition to it there is much under-employment at other times.

When they have no farm work to do, some Hindu cultivators and their families add to their income by engaging themselves in some subsidiary industry such as butter-making, spinning, weaving, basket-making, rope-making etc. But there are some other industries such as

Idleness.

Home industries.

poultry rearing, sericulture, lac-making, honey making etc. from which they can make additional income; but as these involve the taking of life, their religious sentiment does not permit them to undertake them, and they thus lose a good source of adding to his income.

In spite of the many defects social, moral and material, that still remain, it cannot be denied that there has been an awakening among Gujarati Hindus to better their lot. The awakening is not confined to Hindus alone but has come to all communities and over the whole country. Changes that were considered impossible at the beginning of the century have now taken place and are rapidly advancing. Many of them are yet prophetic but that they are prophetic is a great thing. The attitude towards women and their education and in fact towards education in general, the attitude of young women toward life and their position in society, the increasing desire among people living both in urban and rural areas, by the reading of newspapers, to become cognizant of what the world is doing and thinking, are all recent but real. Even the pernicious caste system is showing cracks. It will take a long time to break,

but even in villages the lorry is having its effect on caste relationship. India to-day is highly self-conscious, with the nationalist sentiment running at high fever, and shows signs of its determination to play its part in the modern world. Reform is in the air of India. The day of conviction has come and what was formerly confined to mere talk is now being realised, slowly but steadily. High and low, politically minded and otherwise, the educated and the half educated are all convinced that if India is to come to her own, it must be through the removal of the abuses, social, moral and material, from which its people suffer.

In breaking down the old superstitious beliefs and practices and inaugurating social reforms Rural reconstruction, towns and cities have naturally taken the lead, owing to education and contact with the West, but their example has not much influenced the villages wherein the majority of the population live. Real Gujarat is to be found in villages and it is there that a vast field for reform exists. It is there that a very large number of males and females are illiterate, and suffer the most

from superstitious beliefs and practices, fostered by ignorance. Various schemes of rural reconstruction have been made recently, under official and non-official auspices, and if worked in a proper spirit of service, are sure to have their beneficial effect. But, unfortunately the new interest in rural India has not, till now, been accompanied by sufficient study of local conditions nor by the formulation of an adequate programme. But when one considers the number of persons to be reached, the immense variety and extreme complexity of the difficulties to be met, he need not despair at the slowness of progress. The various departments of Government—Agricultural, Educational, Medical and Health—are doing a wide range of service, but are handicapped in the development of their programme by lack of funds; and though somewhat bureaucratic in their methods have so far done some significant service in the diffusion of knowledge of scientific agriculture and the spread of the co-operative movement. The non-official agencies that work for social reform in towns have lately directed their attention to villages and work mainly for sanitary improvement, medical relief, and promotion of education by opening

schools and libraries. In this uplifting work the contribution of the various Christian Missions established in Gujarat has been great. Individual Missionaries long ago began helpful service of economic relief among villages, and the uplift of the Antyaja, Bhil and other depressed classes. Of late, they have also begun the work of village reconstruction as is evidenced by their conferences held during recent years on ruralwork; and the character and the findings of these conferences are further evidences of their new purpose to advance the village work. As Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said "the future of India will be decided not in her cities, but in her villages." He was of course referring to political issues, but his statement embraces also the whole range of economic and social progress. Of all the leaders of India, this great figure is the chief protagonist of rural betterment. He has been particularly vehement in his denunciation of untouchability and earnest in his championship of the rights of the out-castes and of the village people generally.

In spite of the prevalence of the talk about rural reconstruction and the sporadic efforts that are being made here and there to solve the problems of village people, there is a sad lack of men who are properly qualified for the work. There are no doubt individuals who have convictions and clear headed vision and are giving their lives fully and freely to the cause of uplift. But instead of a few men like Amritlal Thakkar and Motibhai Amin, who think deeply about these questions, hundreds like them are necessary. The chief opportunities for service to the villager are in the field of education, sanitation and co-operation and all of these agencies are such as would afford ample work to those who may wish to do it.

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