

SOCIAL REFORM SERIES.

NO. 1.

On the History of Hindu Social Reform agitation and the proper methods of carrying it on.

It would seem audacious for an insignificant person like me to come forward and proclaim that I intend to preach, with my feeble voice and humble capacities, social reform—a rock on which the ship of many a daring sailor has ere this struck and capsized. Mr. Malabari the last and the most undaunted of social reformers has cried himself hoarse on the subjects of infant-marriages and enforced widowhood, and it is notorious that the cause of marriage reform has not practically advanced by a single inch for reasons the blame of which lies not a little at the door of the Hindu community. But with due respect and humble apology to such noble-minded men who have spent their time and energy in this thankless business, I may be permitted to point out that the methods, in which social reform has hitherto been advocated and attempted to be carried out, have been singularly defective. But at the same time I may say that the opportunities for success have till now been less favourable than such as the change of times and advance of education will place before any new worker in the field. It would be useful and not inopportune, therefore, to review the history of social reform agitation and to find out the proper methods of preaching it.

It will be generally admitted that the history of

social reform, as we now understand it, dates from, and has its origin in, the spread of English education in India. Hindu society took the crystalized form in which British rule in India found it centuries before its advent in this country, perhaps it may be affirmed in spite of the mist which hangs upon the chronology of ancient Indian history, that the growth of Indian civilization and Indian society had been arrested even before the commencement of the Christian era. Women were left uneducated and were looked down upon as an inferior race and as inherently immoral; the independence of women was abhorred and shunned as unnatural; feminine infants were destroyed in some cases as a disgrace and ruin to families; infant girls were claimed to wedded life before the possible rise of a mental awakening to the nature of marital relations; widows had to immolate themselves upon the funeral pyre of their husbands, or were condemned to life-long asceticism as human beings who had committed horrible sins in their former life and had to expiate them in this. This state of things which the advent of western civilization found in India must have existed for at least two thousand years before it attained that adamant rigidity which baffles all attempts to reform it. Buddhism which was mainly a rebellion against caste and Brahmanic ritual did not, I believe, much concern itself with the status of women. Jainism preserved and followed Hindu marriage customs; and the institution of female ascetics in both is not very different from widow asceticism practised by the Hindus. The invasion and subjugation of India by the Mahomedans, who were perhaps more brutal in the treatment of women, made the position of Indian women more miserable and added enforced seclusion to the already long list of their sufferings. The re-establishment of the Hindu ascendancy under the Peshwas, short-lived as it was, did not result to any degree in the amelioration of the condition of women, and if we except the religious reforms of Ramdas and Tukaram, the revival of Hindu ritual in greater splendour was perhaps

the only accompaniment of the political emancipation of Brahmins and their followers. Nor have I any strong faith in the assertion that the establishment of the Maratha rule was in any sense such political advancement as to render 'necessary' a concomitant social advancement. It was only after the awakening of the Hindu mind to the influences of western civilization that the equality of women's rights to social privileges came to be understood as possible and desirable.

The British Government has wisely pledged itself to the policy of non-interference with the social customs and religious beliefs of the different races of India. Although in repressing *suttee* or infanticide the Government of Lord Bentinck or Duncan endeavoured to stamp out actual crimes which were committed under the cloak of religious or customary sanction, yet, on the whole, the British Government has hitherto been singularly consistent in its policy of non-interference. But if the British Government wisely refrains from coming to the aid of social reform by means of compulsory legislation, it has, in its noble desire to fulfil obligations which only a philanthropic people can acknowledge towards a subject nation, thought it fit to extend the blessings of education, higher and primary, to the vast population of this dependency. The potent force of education or the awakening of the human mind to new modes of thoughts and the acquaintance with new institutions have revolutionized Government and societies. History affords us numerous instances of the enormous influence exercised by the ascendancy of new thoughts and the discovery of new regions of nature and its phenomena. The discovery of America naturally resulted in the exposure of some absurd notions of the Roman Church on the subjects of creation and the form of the earth. The revival of Greek and Latin literature was greatly instrumental in undermining the Catholic faith with its irrational superstitions. The thoughts of Hume and Locke, Voltaire and Rousseau on the dignity and equality of the human race, the origin of Government and the

theory of a political compact—these were some of the causes which led to the French Revolution—a revolution which swept out of Europe and not France alone, everything which was rotten and despotic in the old fabric of society and Government. Even in the department of science, a better knowledge of the primitive races, American, African, Asiatic and Polynesian, and of their religious notions, social customs, and physical aptitudes, has wrought an immense change in the philosophy of the world's creation and development, nay, has revolutionised even some of our own current beliefs and ideas. Upon the Hindu mind, accustomed to look upon the Vedas as the highest repertory of knowledge and exhausted in unravelling the splendid subtleties of their own philosophies, Western civilization, armed with its new science and religion whose watchword is liberty of thought, came in like flashes of lightening revealing new regions of rich and healthy thought, new objects and phenomena for meditation, unsuspected possibilities of religious and social institutions. The mind was dazzled, stunned, overjoyed, and converted. In the first delirium of delight it hankered after everything western, it admired and affected western dress, it loved and imitated western social customs and imbibed and even cherished some western vices. The formless deity and natural religion were enthroned supreme, the daring and the enthusiastic constructed a new religion of their own, the sedate and the prudent set to regenerate their inherited faith. The condition of women was pitied and their social and marital disabilities abhorred ; and while some extremists began to move in public in company of their wives and daughters just transplanted from the seclusion of a cage to flutter in open air, others laboured to found and promote female education and to improve the defects of Hindu marriage customs. Last in order, though not least in ardour, came the desire to enforce the equality or rather the equitability of political rights, the desire for political advancement, for franchise and representative government, the benefits of which could only be understood after a

sufficiently long period of a civilized and constitutional foreign rule.

The desire for religious, social and political reform may thus be said to have sprung up along with the spread of English education. Let us now trace the history of the activities of the Indian people in reforming and remodelling their social institutions, the subject with which we are immediately concerned.

The word social reform includes in its wide connotation various social aspects which may be sought to be improved or remodelled. The division of society in uninterfusable castes, the mode of succession to estates, the unequal distribution of wealth, the disabilities of women and many other subjects involving the social and semi-religious relations of man to man may well be included in the programme of a reformer desiring a complete reform of the whole society. What we are concerned with, however, and what I shall always refer to when I speak of social reform is the disabilities of women in their manifold character. The principal directions in which social reformers have hitherto applied their efforts to improve the condition of women are threefold : the education of women, re-marriages of widows and the prevention of early marriages. I shall reserve the subject of female education, its history, its defects and the proposals I have to make in this connection, to the last chapters of this work. The subject, although of first-rate importance, I propose to take after I have dealt with the now burning questions of infant marriages and enforced widowhood.

When we remember that in Bengal British rule and English education have had a longer run, (*i. e.*, for more than a century) than in any of the sister provinces of India, it is not too much to expect that the question of social reform should be first taken up in that presidency. Nor could the question have fallen on a more fertile soil. The Bengalee is pre-eminently a Hindu of vivacious spirits, keen perception and although orthodox to the bone, equally enthusiastic when perverted or con-

verted. In this province apostates from the orthodox dress, religion or society have always been many and zealous. But after the suppression of *suttee*, widow-remarriage was the only phase of social reform which was attempted to be handled by those moving spirits impregnated with new ideas who wished to reform but not to resign their ancient faith. Pandit Ishvar Chandra Vidyasagara, a venerable scholar, who yet lives, carried arms into the camp of the enemies themselves and sought to prove that widow-remarriages were not only not prohibited but distinctly sanctioned by the Vedas and the Smritis and that the restrictive texts were of a later origin and could be explained away. With the Shastric merits of the controversy we are not here concerned. The reformers who had some following in Bengal, adopted this view of the Shastras, the orthodox masses remained uninformed and sullen. But the reformers fought with the orthodox party and partially succeeded in their object.

But a mistake was committed by the leaders of the reforming party in having sought the interference of legal recognition of widow-remarriages for the *whole* of India. In other provinces education and advanced opinion had not made sufficient progress; and although the favourable views of those who had the legislative machine in their hands contributed to its temporary partial success, the eventual failure of legislation to help this particular reform brought out the weakness of the reforming party into strong relief with the real feeling of the orthodox masses and even threw back the cause of social reform for some years. At the same time the action of the Government was misrepresented and misconstrued into a desire to subvert the religions of India to an extent which has not yet been noticed by Government or any historical writer.

The Widow Remarriage Act XV of 1856, was passed on the 25th of July 1856. It distinctly clears its hands of the disagreeable necessity of propounding an authoritative interpretation of the sacred texts on the subject.

It recognized that the old law held widows, with certain exceptions, incapable of contracting a second marriage and the offspring of such marriage illegitimate and incapable of inheriting property. It conceded the validity of the old law as based not only upon the interpretation of texts but also upon long established custom. But it was an enabling act intended for those Hindus who believed that the texts properly interpreted did not countenance any such illegality or incapacity and who wished to disavow the wrongly founded custom. It also gave expression to the view of Government that the removal of all legal obstacles to the marriages of Hindu widows would tend to the promotion of good morals and to public welfare.

Even at this distance of time a careful reader of that Act will discern the traces of a very fierce opposition to the same, by orthodox India. Two difficulties which usually beset the marriages of widows and which are solved, if I am right, in other countries and societies, in a manner most favourable to the widows, are settled by the code congenially to the spirit of Hindu Law and the feelings of the orthodox party. The remarrying widow has under the Act to give up all claims and all inherited property in the family of her previous husband or his lineal successors and her position has been ominously described by declaring that her interest in her husband's property ceased as if she had then died. The custody of children by her former husband is also transferred from her to his nearest male relative. Thus two of the most favourite objects of human affection, property and progeny, were taken away from the remarrying widow who might, if she chose, sacrifice motherly affection and worldly affluence in order to indulge in the legal satisfaction of her desires. The reformers in vain cried that the law was guilty of the moral iniquity that while the widow who satisfied her desires in a legal and temperate manner, was deprived of inheritance, the widow, who polluted the bed of her husband by admitted fornication, remained in the enjoyment of his property. I

will not here discuss the propriety of the solution of the difficulties, which usually attend widow remarriage, as contained in Act XV of 1856., viz. whether widows should be allowed the benefit of the property of one husband and the society of another, and whether children are better placed under the protection of selfish guardians than that of step-father. It will suffice here to observe that the Act of 1856, while it barely legalizes widow-remarriages, has deprived the widow of two of the greatest pleasures in life.

The Act also contains stringent provisions against the forward zeal of social reformers who, not unlike some missionaries, often disturb the peace of families by inducing young girls to remarry before they are able to understand their real welfare. The remarriage of virgin minor widows without the consent of the father or in his absence a series of natural guardians, is declared voidable and the abettors or procurers of such marriage liable to imprisonment not exceeding one year or fine or both. Salutory as the provision appears to be, reading between the lines it is plain that either the fears of oppositionists were recognised and disarmed or that it was considered necessary that such intermeddlers required to be specially noticed and provided for.

Legislation might validate widow remarriage, but could not or would not punish social persecution. The lot of the remarrying widow, unenviable as it was under the Act, was made still more miserable by the contempt and aversion with which she was treated by the society, whose conservative opinions were not yet shaken to any considerable degree. She could not mix with her kind on festive and religious occasions and nothing can be more galling to women than this ostracism. She could not secure husbands for her daughters and wives for her sons. She was not visited by the priest who ministered to her religious wants in the hundred and one ceremonies which are performed by Hindu women; and the Act remains a standing illustration of the futility of permissive or even compulsory legislation which is not

preceded by popular feeling all the due *eclat* of a the conduct of Government. The invitations were issued by dangerous and discontenting famous seven : (1) enumeration of the various cause. Ranade; (4) Bhide; tiny of 1857, the careful historian; and (7) Gadgil; religious fears of Hindus and Mahom marriage was duly by the false reports of cartridges greba and in the pre-hogs' fat, how a desire to subvert the religrs, rich mer- was imputed to the British Government. his splendid d it from respectable persons who lived in of moral those troublous times that in village discussions ans- sire of the Government was often proved by malcon- ents by a reference to the Acts of XXI of 1850 and XV of 1856, both of which were immediately anterior to the mu- tiny. It was argued that widows would be forcibly remarried and men forcibly converted and that both would suc- ceed in the enjoyment of property notwithstanding that they were, according to the Shastras, apostates and so in- capable of inheriting the estate of an orthodox Hindu. The visit of some of the Native Princes of India to Cal- cutta about the same time gave currency to the report that they were also pressed and desired to give the same facilities to the remarriage of widows and the conversion of Hindus in their own States.

The passing of the Widow Remarriage Act seems to have gratified the zeal and exhausted the energies of the social reformers in Bengal, where the cause of the widow or the infant wife was not again taken up in any active or systematic manner. But the cudgels were taken up by their friends in Bombay soon after and against the old orthodox party who had been but partially vanquish- ed in Bengal. In 1886 the late Vishnu Shastri Pandit began by publishing in his paper the *Indu Prakash* a translation in Marathi of Ishwarchandra's work *Vidhava- vivaha*. A controversy soon began to rage fiercely in which the reform party spoke through its organ the *Indu Prakash* and showed indefatigable research and promptitude in answering the objections raised by the orthodox party and published in its own

sittings in the spacious hall of the Dixit Wada in Poona. The venerable Shrimat Shankaracharya himself was present to give finality to the decision and to lend dignity and awe to the spectacle. Indeed it was a spectacle which it was a privilege to witness, a spectacle which had not been witnessed for centuries, a spectacle which most probably will not be witnessed again. The race of Shastris, perfect in the schoolman's art of discussion, profound in religious learning and research, has nearly died out and will never revive. The race did not prosper under the later Mahomedan empire and had only begun to thrive under the revival of the Hindu rule. The Shastris who took part in the late controversy at Poona, were the products of the last days of Hindu ascendancy untouched by the influence of western education. Five such Shastris were elected umpires for the reform party and five others for the adverse party. Gopalacharya Karhadkar was the Sarpanch for both. The advocate of the reform party was of course the enthusiastic Vishnu Shastri Pandit, instructed and assisted by M. G. Ranade, while the adverse party replied through its champion Narayanacharya Gajendragadkar, assisted by the learned Vithoba Anna Daftardar. Thus marshalled, and ranged, the parties were well-marched and in the slippery fields of religious discussion had recourse to written questions administered by one party to the other and replied to also by written documents.

For nine days the resources of subtlety and research were exhausted by either party in support of their respective contentions and although the proceedings were conducted with decorum and patience, the public and the members of both parties were tired of what seemed to be an unending controversy, and clamoured for a vote. In response to the general feeling the Shankaracharya called upon the umpires to present their written opinions. When they had been submitted and the poll was taken it was found that one Panch of the reform party Vyankat Shastri Mate had gone over to

the opposite party and voted against his side thus making a majority of 6 to 4 against the validity of widow-remarriage. It was now an easy affair with the Sarpanch and the Shankracharya himself and the welcome verdict against widow-remarriage was pronounced by the highest religious authority recognised.

In the chagrin of defeat the discomfited party had recourse to the usual subterfuge of explanation and misrepresentation. It was put forth that the dissenting Panch of the reform party had been tampered with by the adverse party who had worked upon the religious fears and weakness of the old Shastri, had called upon him to imitate Dharmaraja who told a lie when the cause of righteousness required it and had at last induced him to swear by the holy feet of the Shankaracharya that he would vote against his party. It was published that the Shastri had admitted these facts when confronted with the question how he got over the text supplied by himself as unanswerable. Statements and counterstatements appeared in the news-papers and Mavlankar, the most forward member of the orthodox party, read out a written statement signed by Vyankat Shastri in which the allegations of the opposite party were denounced as false. The reform party in the exasperation of defeat and derision sought the aid of criminal courts. Some persons were prosecuted for defamation and punished by the Magistrates. A more serious charge was brought against Mavlankar of perjury in the above case and he was even totally sentenced to three months' imprisonment and had thus to atone for his zeal in the cause of orthodoxy. This event spread a gloom even over the adherents of the reform party who speedily withdrew in shame their other cases against the unfortunate gentleman; and the Shankaracharya fled back to his own territories apprehensive of insult and ill-treatment at the hands of officials who were suspected of a partiality for the cause of reform. At this distance of time we can at least say that the leaders of the opposite party lost their heads and the sense of their duty towards their country.

men in the heat of party-feeling even if the orthodox party were guilty of all that was laid at their door, and they thus not only brought down the hatred of the masses on themselves but also on the cause they advocated. After these scenes of sectarian animosity embittered by the success of the orthodox party one does not wonder to find that thenceforth for a long time to come the cause of social reform languished or was even despised in Western and also in other parts of India. Newspaper warfare continued to be fitfully conducted in a manner not much to the edification of either party. Widow-marriages continued to take place, but at rare intervals and among persons whose social position was hardly such as to lend importance to the reform. By a strange irony of fate every prominent member in the ranks of the advocates of widow marriage in the late controversy suffered from a calamity which he might have converted into an occasion of dignified blessing. But their conscience was too weak, it seems, to set at defiance the dictates of worldly prudence, and of family affections, the fear of social persecution and the importunities of old fathers and mothers. Social reform, therefore, began to suffer from the double disaster of discredit and desertion.

The embers of social reform were thus smothered by the ashes of its own disgrace and it seemed as if nothing would kindle again the enthusiasm of reformation, when in 1884 a whirlwind arose which swept away the ashes and fanned the dying fire into a blaze and a conflagration. An outsider of fervent feeling and strong sympathy, blew his famous notes on *Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood*, and attracted and rivetted the attention of all thinking men in India whether foreign or native. It must be said to the credit of the daring and undaunted reformer that he brought into deserved prominence a subject which had hitherto received but imperfect consideration at the hands of thinkers and reformers. Popular opinion was slowly undergoing a change against the practice of infant marriage; lectures and University essays were sometimes directed towards the

discussion of the subject and showed that the thought of the nation was awakening to the fact that there was something wrong about the custom "fit to be honoured more in the breach than in the observance." But it was not yet considered as the root of all social evil, at least as the cause of most of the miseries which the Hindu society suffers in the name and with the consolation of religions merit. It was Mr. Malabari who thundered out his denunciation against the custom and fixed the attention of all thoughtful men thereon. It was he who fought a tough battle in the cause of the child wife against conservative Hinduism offended in this case not only by heresy but also by what it considered to be intrusion by a foreigner. It was he who travelled throughout the length and breadth of India in the noble pursuit of a thankless task, and pleaded without fees and power of attorney the cause of dumb suffering women before adverse tribunals. It was he who, strengthening his hands with the favourable opinions of many philanthropic persons in place and power, convinced the leaders of Hindu society that the Government would be glad to meet them half ways if but the Hindu society would move up half the distance. But the apathy of Hindu society, the opposition of the very victims who are daily doomed to death, disgrace or decay, the lukewarmness of reformers' sympathy, his own injudicious utterances and proposals, his extraneous position and therefore impertinent intrusion in the eyes of the Hindu society, and the hostility and opposition of educated reactionists and uneducated bigots brought about at the time the failure of a grand mission advocated by a grand man. The Parsi reformer seems now to have retired from the thick and thin of the battle in despair and though he has not given up the contest, he seems desirous of transferring the command to a Hindu reformer who would be more acceptable to the Hindu people. *

* Recent events have shown that the zeal and energy of Mr. Malabari have not cooled down.

Such a successor he has found in the person of the redoubtable Diwan Bahadur R. Raghunathrao, who is a staunch and zealous Hindu. Gifted with energies which would do credit to a much younger man, and endowed with enthusiasm worthy of Luther or Keshab, a person of ordinary knowledge of the Vedas and the Shastras, and a polemic of great acuteness and obstinacy, he is eminently fitted to wage a war against the old Pandits and to show that early marriage and enforced widowhood have no sanction in the Vedas and the early Sutras. Whether burdened with the duties of governing a State or free from all trammels of service he has always devoted his valuable leisure to the work of publishing the results of his re-searches, to lecture to Hindu audiences, to carry on controversy with conservatives and reactionists, and to espouse the cause of every practical social reform against the orthodox custom and the still more orthodox people. But even he has failed to produce any impression on the public mind and the national institutions. A controversy with the orthodox Pandits is not the proper means of recommending social reform. The public can form only an imperfect opinion on the merits of the discussion, can derive no instruction and interest, and although often moved to reverent admiration, is usually attracted towards the Shastris and Pandits who support custom with authority. But undaunted by ill-success the venerable Dewan Bahadur R. Raghoonathrao pursues his course with greater vigour and greater eloquence, and deserves to be remembered by posterity as one entitled to the highest respect.

The Madras Presidency has shown and continues to show laudable activity in social reform, but the North-West and the Punjab have not had their due share in the history of its progress and failure. I have already said that the seeds of social reform lie in the spread of English education, and it is not surprising to find that these provinces are backward in producing their own advocates and martyrs of social reform, when we remember that

they have had their Universities established quite recently. But even there scepticism and distrust, inquiry and research have begun to work and bear fruit and before long we shall find representatives of both the provinces taking their proper place in the ranks of the social reformers of India.

We seem to have fallen upon the days of Congresses and Conferences ; it seems as if corporate energy has supplanted and extinguished individual energy ; the age of great conquerors and generals, of great prophets and apostles, of great philosophers and scientists, has gone, that of the East African Company, of the Salvation Army, of the Chloroform Commission, has succeeded. Nay, it is confidently asserted by men like R. B. Shankarrao Pandit and others that society has grown so wise and well-informed as to be incapable of being influenced by abnormal intellects ; that abnormal intellects and energies are an impossible phenomena, that in short the growth of civilization, if it has not equalized property, has at least almost levelled the intelligence of man-kind. If Shivaji could conquer and found a realm, could punish the Mahomedan for his oppression and give independence to a subdued people, only a National Congress could achieve, if not political independence what is much the same, substantial political equality. If Alexander conquered the whole world, if Augustus founded an empire, if Napoleon out-shone immeasurably every great man of his or other times and raised on the ruins of the republic a splendid empire, and bathed it in the gore of hostile nations, the Brazilian revolution, to take a recent instance, has shown us that a nation can achieve a change in which individuals sink into insignificance in the accumulated will of the people. While Newton and Kepler, Galileo and Copernicus discovered the laws of nature by the marvellous workings of their individual genius, now conclaves of scientists sit together and work out the problems of nature. In the same strain it is argued and believed that social reform

associations will accomplish reforms which are too strong for individual attacks. Where every individual fears to make a sacrifice and to bear the evils of social ostracism, a number of men might collect together and adopt certain fashions and customs and mitigate or distribute the miseries of social persecution. Thus the latest phase of social reform movement is the establishment of associations in which men might consent to pledge themselves to observe certain rules of social conduct and in case of breach to pay fixed fines to the association. Another development of the same character is the birth of the younger sister of the National Congress, styled Social Congress or Conference, to which delegates are sent by the various associations in existence interested in social reform or individuals who form a constituency by themselves. The very great divergence of opinions which exists in the Hindu community and especially the conservative character of the majority of Hindus have spoiled the work of this Social Congress and made it hitherto a ludicrous assembly affording more merriment than instruction to on-lookers. There is undoubtedly a certain tendency in the civilization of the 19th century which has developed the force of combination of men and ignored or extinguished or neutralized the power of individuals. We see the tendency in joint-stock companies, in Parliaments, in strikes and trade-unions, in congresses and in scientific commissions. But as yet this influence of modern civilization is not quite full upon us; we are not accustomed to union, and even where we find this influence working we still meet with individuals who leave their impress on society and who form the centre of all unions and of all corporate activity.

We are now in a position to consider the causes of the failure of social reform movements as hitherto carried out and advocated, the mistakes committed by social reformers and the insuperable circumstances which have opposed their progress. It must be premised that social reform in India is essentially a question of religious reform. Like many religions of this world the Hindu

religion has intertwined itself with the customs of the people in almost every phase of life's activity from the cradle to the grave. Every action is prescribed or proscribed with the sanction of religious merit or demerit, it is no wonder that such important questions as the marriageable age of girls or the remarriage of widows are not left to be decided by the force of popular opinion or the ideas of convenience and propriety. No doubt originally all sorts of opinions and customs prevailed, and the Vedas were equally favourable to all of them or did not condescend to express definite disapproval of any of them. But as from various causes certain practices fell into disuse or came under popular disfavour, an orthodox school was gradually formed and grew powerful and a majority of Sutras, Smritis and Shastras, at least 2,000 years ago, declared which of the various practices formerly in vogue were conformable to the tenets of the Brahminical religion and coupled their non-observance not only with the terrors of perdition, but also with the loss of social and civic privileges. It is, therefore, at least for the Brahmins of the whole of India and the superior castes who claim and affect an austerity of conduct on a par with them, not now a matter of choice and convenience whether they should marry their daughters early or late, or whether they should re-marry their widows, but a question of paradise or perdition, religious merit or sin, social praise or opprobrium; and it is natural that the people of India guided by the leading castes should offer a resistance to social reforms, resistance which has the obstinacy of religious orthodoxy. History shows us two or three grand examples of the subversion of orthodox faiths by the silent force of conversion following conviction; and as the circumstances which impede the progress of social reform in India are identical with those which are antagonistic to the success of religious movements, in discussing where the opposition of social conservatives is exerted and how it can be most easily assailed, we may

well draw for illustration and guidance, upon the history of Christianity, Protestantism and Buddhism.

I. Woman is the stronghold of religious or social conservatism. It is not an idle excuse or shameful confession of weakness when social reformers who are reproached with inconsistency of conduct with their professed principles, declare themselves out-willed or over-awed by wives and sisters, respected mothers or domineering aunts. In all societies the prevailing customs and fashions derive their life from, and owe their continuance to, the support of women. An English lady who would move a tiny fan or hold a punny umbrella, is no more to blame than a believing Hindu woman who would make her rounds of Tulshi. Their reasoning capacity is less strong than their sensibility and the utility or humanity of new movements impresses their minds less than the imaginable dangers involved in the breach of immemorial custom or time-honoured fashion. Nay, the tenacity of women in cherishing social or religious prejudices, it is not only prudent and chivalrous to respect but it is generally dangerous and ungenerous to condemn or contravene. The apparently strange proposition, therefore, has to be laid down first that women, as has been experienced everywhere, are the first and the most inveterate enemies of reforms which are intended for their own good and to alleviate their own miseries.

But however we may deplore the superiority of women's sensibilities over their reasoning faculty, we cannot but adore that peculiar trait of their character, their uncomplaining endurance. It is this trait which is the cause of the safety of infancy and the stay of youth. It is this faculty which is the sustaining strength of the tender mother who watches the innocent infant throughout its trials of early existence, and who waits upon the often ungrateful youth in his illness. Whatever may be the deformity of the child or the depravity of the man, it is heavenly to behold the same unflinching devotion of mothers, forgetful of toils and insults, bestowing patient

attention upon the objects of their love. The same trait is again displayed by the wife who is man's faithful companion in pleasures, his loving guide and co-worker in the toils of life, his affectionate nurse in his illness.

And be it said in honour of the self-denying patience of Indian women, and I am not alone* in my belief, that Indian widows have preserved the inviolability of their husband's beds with more loyal fortitude than men could have respected the memory of their wives had it been ordained by custom that widows and widowers should be weighed in the same scale. Sbastric and popular opinion has treated women with less favour than men; the legends of mythology have enshrouded the constancy of wives with a halo of sanctity which has for ages flattered the pride of chastity of Hindu women; the immortal poets have sung the most delicious praises of the self-denying devotion of Savitri, of Tara, of Sita, and so captivated the feminine mind that these ideals for ever float before their eyes encouraging them to unselfish sacrifices. And Hindu women bear their lot not only without complaint but with a martyrdom of love and constancy.

It is they who are most opposed to their re-marriage, they who cannot conceive how they should be false to the memory of him who was worshipped as a God, loved as a husband, and served as a master. It is they who would, under the yoke of custom and religious sentiment, importune their husbands to get their daughters married to child husbands notwithstanding that they love them dearly and weep at the early separation brought about by themselves. Educated opinion is helpless before these fair obstacles whose self-abnegating endurance, hardened by custom and religious sentiment, loves the very sword

* दंपत्याभ्युत्क्रमे द्वांशः समः शास्त्रे प्रतिष्ठितः, नरा न तमवेच्छन्ते ते-
नात्र वरमंगनाः ॥...॥ न शतेनापि वर्षाणामप्येते मदनाशयाः, तत्राशक्त्या
निवर्तन्ते नरा, धैर्येण योविनः ॥ वराहमिहिर (बृ० सं०, अ० ७२,
श्लो० १२, १४.)

which smites them. Such is the impediment which social reformers have to meet at the very threshold and which baffles their attempts or disarms their courage by its gentle and lovable character. Time alone and the spread of female education will bring about the necessary change in the opinions and feelings of the gentler sex. Means, however, might have been adopted to aid the progress of female education and to accelerate the advance of feminine opinion ; for, as we shall presently see, the conquest of this stronghold is of the most vital importance to the reformer.

II. Inveterate and invincible as the women are as enemies, they are most enthusiastic and powerful as allies and proselytes of every social and religious movement. The same superabundance of sensibility over reason which keeps them addicted to the *statu quo* makes them staunch converts and believing followers. The same fascination, which very often, makes it impossible for men to go against their wishes is extremely useful in alluring and fixing the wavering sentiments of man in the interests of new faiths and propaganda. Philosophy tells us that reason is calculating and while it is not slow to discern the advantages of new movements it is often caustic in discovering similar advantages in institutions old and existing and may even see the evils of both. Except with certain individuals who are blessed with extraordinary enthusiasm, not dissociated with reason, the generality of men is always floating in a condition of semi-scepticism which makes them insincere as orthodox men and calculating as converts. As Gibbon has most beautifully observed, "while reason embraces a cold mediocrity, our passions hurry us with rapid violence over the space which lies between the opposite extremes". Woman is differently constituted from man and although she has seldom initiated new movements, she is more ready than man to adopt them and propagate them with blind zeal and fervent enthusiasm. In the common experience of Hinduism this trait of female character is observed and ridiculed. The prompt willingness and the

believing sympathy with which women join the standard of every new pretending or, unpretending preacher are the favourite subjects of popular reproach and novelist's humour. But the history of Christianity will afford us stronger proofs of the value and necessity of women as proselytes. Among the persons converted to the Christian faith in the first two or three centuries women form the most numerous as also the more orthodox portion. "It is often urged as a reproach that the new sect of Christians was almost composed of dregs of society, of peasants and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and slaves". "Nor did the early fathers of Christianity shun the society of women;" they were conscious of the value of feminine converts and were in their moral strength not afraid to avail themselves of it. "After the example of divine masters the missionaries of the Gospel did not disdain the society of men and especially of women oppressed by the consciousness and very often by the effects of their vices." Even the missionaries of the present day and the salvationists are discreet enough to employ fair appearance and gentle voice as coadjutors of persuasion and argument in the cause of Christian propagation. At last in Rome and in the provinces Christian principles permeated every household and although but partially listened to by the men they found more favour with the matrons and daughters of Roman families. Even the palace of the Emperor Diocletian was invaded by the new religion and Gibbon thus describes the state of the family showing the different attitudes of males and females towards new movements: "The prudence of Diocletian rendered him averse to any great innovation, and though his temper was not susceptible of zeal or enthusiasm he always maintained an habitual regard for the ancient deities of the empire. But the leisure of the two empresses, of his wife Prisca and of his daughter Valeria permitted them to listen with more attention and respect to the truths of Christianity which in every age has acknowledged its important obligations to female de-

votion." It is not at all impossible that the conversion of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, was influenced by the lesson which he received in his infancy from the devotion of his mother Helena, a Christian woman of York. When in the fourth century the Catholic religion was distracted with schisms and heresies the controversies about the nature of God and Christ, Arius the opponent of the trinitarian principle "reckoned among his first followers two bishops, seven proselytes, twelve deacons and what may appear most incredible seven hundred virgins." Athanasius, the supporter of the principle of three equal godheads, and the bishop of Alexandria, it is related, when persecuted by the arian emperor Constantius concealed himself for several days in the house of a beautiful virgin.

When Latin and Greek Christianity were consolidated at Rome and Constantinople under the care of Christian emperors the missionaries of both churches laboured to extend their religion to their neighbours, the Germans and Russians. Here again we come across the same prior conversion of females and their potent influence in securing the baptism of their husbands and relatives. Clovis, the first Christian king of the Franks, was won over by the persuasion of his wife Clotilda, a Burgundian princess professing the Christian religion. With the subversion of the Western Roman Empire by the invasion of the Goths, the Vandals and the Germans, the province of Britain was conquered by the Saxons who alone of the barbarians retained their paganism and England for two centuries reeked again with human sacrifices. The reconversion of England or rather the conversion of the Saxons will show us the same influence for good exerted by females. Ethelbert, the king of Kent and the first who adopted the cross and threw up the idols, had married Bertha a Frankish Christian princess. The ruthless king of Northumbria was tamed by Ethelburga, a woman respected for Christian piety, "of higher cultivation and commanding gentleness." Mercia remained heathen for a very long time, but at last "the influence

of the gentler sex brought it within the pale of Christianity. Alchfleda, the beautiful daughter of Oswin and a Christian princess, married Peeda, the son of Penda, and brought him over to the gentler faith.

The conversion of Russia under the influence of the Greek Church equally shows the priority and utility of female conversions. "Olga, the widow of Iogar, was the first who received baptism with pompous rites at Constantinople and was accorded the venerable name of the Empress Helena. Her conversion was followed by that of her uncle, two interpreters, sixteen damsels of a higher order and eighteen of a lower who composed the retinue of the great princess. After her return to Kiow and Novgorad she firmly persisted in her new religion but her labours in the propagation of the Gospel were not crowned with success and both her family and nation adhered with obstinacy and indifference to the Gods of their fathers. Her son Awatoslaus was apprehensive of the scorn and ridicule of his companions and her grandson Wolodomir devoted his youthful zeal to multiply and decorate the monuments of ancient worship. At length his conversion was determined or hastened by his desire of a Roman bride. The conversion of the Duke was followed by a general edict which proclaimed that "all who should refuse the rites of Baptism would be treated as the enemies of God and their prince." These examples will suffice to shew that in the early spread of Christianity and the subsequent conversion of the barbarians, women not only were among the first converts but were the most zealous and useful accessions to the new faith.

The indulgent reader will permit me to draw further illustrations from the History of the subsequent developments of Christianity ; illustrations which bring out this opposite force of feminine character. Monasticism early obtained a strong root in the tenets of Catholic Christianity, and "some self-abnegating spirits seriously renounced the business and pleasures of the world, abjured the use of wine, flesh and marriage, chastised their body, mortified their affection and embraced a life of misery as the

price of eternal happiness." "The example of Egyptian monks excited at first horror and contempt and at length applause and zealous imitation. The senators more especially the matrons transformed their palaces and villas into religious houses." "Reason might subdue or passion might suspend the operations of religious motives, but they acted most forcibly on the minds of infants and females." The names of Paula and her two beautiful daughters one of whom died from the effects of the pious lacerations inflicted on her tender frame are well known in the history of monasticism, for the fervour with which they subjected their persons to its discipline and the prodigality with which they devoted their riches to its maintenance.

In the 8th century the whole of Christendom was agitated by a controversy which is known in history by the name of iconoclasm. For us Hindus the nice distinction between images not fashioned by the hand and human-made idols, adopted and maintained by Catholic Christianity brought down to the level of idolatry seems incomprehensible and possibly absurd. We may however agree with the philosophic historian that "in the long night of superstition Christianity had wandered far away from the path of the simplicity of the Gospel, the worship of images was insensibly blended at least to a pious fancy with the cross, the virgin, the saints, the relics; the holy ground was involved in a cloud of miracles and visions, and the nerves of the mind, curiosity and scepticism, were benumbed by the habits of obedience and belief." At such a time a Christian Emperor Leo deriving inspiration from Armenian prejudices and Mahomedan ridicule declared an implacable war against images; and the same unsuccessful combat was carried on by five Emperors against the conscience of the Empire. The monks, the faithful slaves of the superstition to which they owed their riches and influence fought desperately in the cause of images and relics but the obsequious bishops proved loyal or traitorous according as it suited their interests or the whims of

the Emperor. We have the fact that a Council of bishops declared the worship of images as opposed to the spirit of the Christian faith. Women however were too strong for Bishops and Emperors, and even in the imperial family displayed the force of their unconquerable bigotry especially in the cause of a worship with which their sensibilities are most impressed. When the first order was given for the destruction of a statue of the Saviour at Constantinople which was renowned for its miracles, the multitude chiefly consisting of women saw with horror the imperial officer mount a ladder to execute his impious commission. Heaven interfered not as they expected; but the women seized the ladder, threw down the officer, and battered him with clubs to death.

“A female had been the principal mover in the great change of Christianity from a purely spiritual worship to that paganising form of religion which grew up with such rapidity in the succeeding centuries. A female was the restorer of images in the east which have since with but slight interruption maintained their sanctity”. Irene the wife of the son and heir of Constantine Copronymous during the minority of her son assumed the reins of Government and convened the third Council of Nice which abrogated the decisions of a former Council and restored images and relics to the devout adoration of superstitious Christianity. After her death the images again came under disfavour and Theophilus the last of the image-breaking emperors though a man of higher education was determined to extirpate monks and image-worship. In every Church the pictures on the walls were effaced, the sacred vessels were sold, or melted down, the monks were driven from their convents and perished of cold and hunger (though others seized the opportunity of returning to the pleasures as to the dress of the world).”

“The history of iconoclasm has a remarkable uniformity. Another, female in power, another restoration of images.” Theodora the widow of Theophilus had always worshipped images in private. “Twice the dangerous

secret had been betrayed to the Emperor that the female of his own family practised the forbidden idolatry. On one occasion, the children prattled about the pretty toys which their mother kept in a chest and took out, kissing them herself and offering them to the children's respectful kisses. Another time a dwarf kept as a buffoon surprised the empress while taking the images from her pillow and paying them every kind of homage. The empress received a severe rebuke, the dwarf was well flogged for his impertinent curiosity. Theodora learnt caution and brooded over Tutelar deities in secret." After the death of the emperor the monks flew into Constantinople; and the willing devotion of the empress gave triumph to the worshippers of images. Theodora furnishes us with the interesting and lovable instance of a woman divided between the tenderness of love for her husband and her bigoted reverence for images. In the conflict of these feelings she invented the pious lie, that her husband in the agony of death had expressed his repentance and actually entreated her to bring the images and had passionately kissed them. The reconciled clergy who could not save the iconoclast from perdition then pronounced his pardon before God and gave a written sentence of his absolution to the empress.

It would be uninteresting to take the reader through the barren history of Christianity hereafter plunged into the abyss of the Dark ages, with their superstitions and inquisitions. Nor do I wish to trouble him with the history of Protestantism and the various sects to which it again gave rise. In the religious and bloody polemics which established the sanctity of religious freedom in all the Teutonic countries women could but play a very insignificant part but whenever accident gave them the power and opportunity to sway the course of events their bigotry and their zeal were equally unflinching in the support of the orthodox or the protestant factions. In the history of England itself the reigns of Bloody Mary and Elizabeth will ever remain ineffaceable instances of woman's inflexible zeal whether arrayed on the side of old or new institutions.

Such is the character of women, most constant in conserving the orthodox, most powerful in promoting the protestant faith. Their opposition is untractable, and when converted they are the first to give enthusiastic support. Even Mahomed himself found the first and the most devout proselyte in his own wife the faithful Khadija who believed in the religious aberrations of her husband's mind. Other religions will also testify to the zeal and first conversion of females and Buddhism is not without its Vishakhas and other female Kshapanikas. "Buddha's first converts were common men and among the earliest were women." The opposition of females to the cause of their own salvation ought to be weaned away and the slow effects of female education should have been supplemented by vigorous efforts directed towards the single purpose of enlisting the female sympathy in support of urgent reforms. Difficult as the problem is it is, certainly not so difficult as belling the cat in the fable, and it was a mistake of the social reformers that serious attention was not given to its solution.

(3) But the greatest mistake of social reformers lies in their entire neglect of the middle and lower order of Hindu society whose feelings ought to be awakened and whose support ought to be secured. Notes and pamphlets written in eloquent English are addressed to a handful of readers who have received English education and to a number of foreign officials. Lectures are delivered in English to audiences mostly composed of persons, who do not lose or gain by their support or condemnation of the lecturer's views. Opinions are sought from a few of the so-called leaders of Hindu society and Parsi and English gentlemen who love to make a display of the breadth and liberality of their philosophic and philanthropic views. But the sturdy yeomanry of the Hindu society, the representatives of the middle classes are entirely ignored or sedulously offended. They remain uninformed and sullen or a series of mistakes courts their opposition. No systematic crusade

against the few above mentioned horrid customs has yet been preached in the vernacular. No serious attempt has yet been made to fill the public breast with compassion for the innocent girl who is a widow before she is a wife, with pity for the pale wife who is a mother before she is a woman. It is the masses who conserve the orthodox institutions, it is the masses who must adopt the advocated changes. Their prejudices are not shaken, their compassion is not aroused, their support is not solicited, their vanity is not flattered and the result is that every social reformer blusters for a time and then sinks into silence in the enormous apathy and contempt of the ignorant and traduced masses.

At the root of this grand mistake, this neglect and contempt of the middle orders of society lies the ignorance of the conditions of the success of religious or social movements. It is believed that the educated men of India by sacrifice and example ought to be able to effect a change by constituting a separate society or a legal corporation for reform and then gradually extending its sphere. It is further hoped that the lukewarmness of reformers' zeal can be compensated by the aid of legislation compulsory or permissive ; in fact we are here brought face to face with the not yet settled controversy between the necessity of popular acceptance and the efficacy of legislative compulsion.

(a) In the first place the common misconception of theorists must be corrected, viz. that the educated men form a separate class by themselves and that during each generation of this class it is possible to improve its social condition. Here we come across the first great difference which distinguishes social from religious movements and one which discloses the weakness of the former. A new religious sect like the Christians or Mahomedans or the Prarthana Samajists (not lukewarm) when it has obtained a sufficient number of adherents, multiplies its number by the very law of nature. The religion of the father by law and fact is the religion of the children. Again they are separated entirely from the orthodox

society and are obliged to form a compact body by the necessity of the situation, both for defensive and offensive purposes. But social opinions may and do differ in the same household without creating a split and unless there is a change in the national feeling, social heresy does not necessarily propagate from parents to progeny. The Prarthana Samajists may adopt for themselves the most desirable custom of marriage as an article of faith and it may succeed as far as they are concerned. But so long as Hindus are to remain Hindus social reformers can succeed not by secession but by persuasion. If such is the case with respect to social reformers, whose zeal again is intensified by a common estrangement from the orthodox masses, it is pre-eminently so with the number of people styled the educated class of India. They have nothing in common except a loose mass of ideas derived from Western civilization often characterised by the most opposite views entertained according to different frames of mind. Their feelings are not ardent, they are incapable of union on any common principle. Their numbers are constantly shifting, their continuity is almost evanescent. They rarely come from educated families, they often leave behind them uneducated children. They are swayed in different degrees by respect for aged parents, by partiality for old creeds. They inherit from their different districts, castes and customs, different prospects, principles and prejudices. In short every essential of strength and success is wanting among the educated men of India, viz. the sectarian unity and enthusiasm which have from time immemorial belonged to the Jews, which characterised the early Christians combining the intolerance of the Jews with the discipline of episcopal government and which is the pre-eminent feature of the Mahomedan bigotry even of the present day.

(B) But irrespective of this, the secret of the success of social or religious movements has always been the seizure of the popular conscience. In the immortal words of Milman "no religious resolution has ever

been successful which has commenced with government. Such revolutions have ever begun in the lower or middle orders of society, struck on some responsive chord of sympathy in the general feeling, supplied some religious want, stirred some religious energy and shaken the inert strength of the established faith by some stronger counter emotion.' With this remark he prefaces the history of iconoclasm, the struggle of image-breaking emperors against the prejudices of the masses. Nay the sturdy common sense and the strong feelings which characterise the masses ought to make them a factor deserving of respect and persuasion rather than compulsion or contempt. They are undoubtedly slow of change, but are open to argument and sympathy, they possess many of the characteristics which I have already described as belonging to women and are only more sensible and less enthusiastic (स्त्रीशूद्राणां समानधर्मः). Preach to them in their own language, forgive their short-comings, arouse their conscience, and enlist their sympathies and there is not the least doubt that they will come to the succour of their own innocent widowed girls, of their own oppressed wives and daughters. ♣

The history of the world's religions proclaims with a hundred voices the truth of the same lesson. The early spread of Christianity among the masses of the Roman empire, among the dregs of society, among artisans and mechanics, among the slaves and labourers has not merely met with a passing notice at the hands of the philosophic Gibbon but has been commented upon by him. It converted at first only a few of the sages of Grecian philosophy, only a few of the rich senators and members of the superior classes. It gained easy admittance in huts and cottages, it was shut out from the groves of the academy and the palaces and castles. Sophistry is hard to convince and richness is indolent. But straightforward simplicity is easy to move. "Such is the constitution" observes Gibbon "of civil society that whilst a few persons are distinguished by riches, by honours and by knowledge, the body of the people is condemned to obscu-

rity, ignorance and poverty. The Christian religion which addressed itself to the whole human race, must consequently collect a far greater number of proselytes from the lower than from the superior ranks of life. The exceptions of learned converts and rich proselytes are too few in number or too recent in time entirely to remove the imputation of ignorance and obscurity which has been so arrogantly cast on the first proselytes of Christianity. Instead of employing in our defence the fictions of later ages it will be more prudent to convert the occasion of scandal into a subject of edification." Gibbon betrays a sceptic cynicism when he goes on to explain "it is incumbent on us diligently to remember that the kingdom of heaven was promised to the poor in spirit and that minds afflicted by calamity and the contempt of mankind cheerfully listen to the divine promise of future happiness." He touches the right chord when he observes that the fortunate are satisfied with the possessions of this world and the wise abuse in doubt and dispute their vain superiority of reason and knowledge." But Gibbon in the exaggeration of artistic portraiture has entirely ignored the middle classes, *viz.* those who lie between the opposite extremes, those who are between indigence and profusion, above obscurity and below renown, superior to the wretchedness of ignorance and yet devoid of the vanity of learning. They are men of firm and sympathetic temper neither debased by fortune or erudition nor chilled by poverty or ignorance. "There is always a depth of latent religiousness in the heart of the common people" and the preachers of Christianity spoke with simplicity and earnestness the truths of the Gospel and enthralled the minds of the masses.

What are the causes that led to the Reformation? Was it not that the masses had begun to understand and read the Bible in their own Vernacular tongue? Was it not that the art of printing had placed the Bible on the table of the poorest household, had snatched away the monopoly of the Latin-knowing monks? Did not

"letters and theology cease to be cloistral and hierarchial?" "Erasmus was sure to come and with Erasmus a more simple, clear and popular interpretation of the divine word." The history of Protestantism is the clearest example of the power and necessity of popular awakening to bring about a reformation. Milman thus forcibly describes the influence of the art of printing and the manufacture of paper. "Books from slow, toilsome, costly productions became cheap, were multiplied with rapidity which seemed like magic and were accessible to thousands to whom manuscripts were utterly unapproachable. The power, the desire increased with the facility of reading. Theology from an obtruse science, the exclusive possession of an order, became popular. It was ere long the general study, the general passion. The preacher was not sought the less on account of the vast extension of his influence. His eloquent words were no longer limited by the walls of a Church or the power of a human voice. They were echoed, perpetuated, promulgated over a kingdom, over a continent. The fiery preacher became a pamphleteer. He addressed a whole realm, he addressed mankind. To many the book became the preacher, the instructor, even the confessor. The conscience began to claim the privilege, the right of granting absolution to itself." Why not take a hint, a lesson from the above? Why not throw broadcast on the Hindu world pamphlets and books condemning the horrid customs? Why not rouse the feelings of the poorest mechanic, of the most obscure householder? Why not reproach the national conscience with the inhumanity of girl widows, the degeneration of child wives?

(c.) The fate of every religion which has built up a fabric of sacred hierarchy is always the same. The aggression of the bishops and priests, the encouragement of idolatrous worship, the seclusion of letters and the ignorance of the masses are the evils which usually follow the constitution of a priestly order. In India these evils existed and will even now be found; nay, a curious reader may discover the counterpart of every abuse in

Hinduism, in the history and circumstances of the Catholic Church. But we read that reformation in Europe has shaken the privileges and ruined the indispensibility of Bishops, has placed the path of salvation in the hands of every man, has given him the book of books to be studied by himself, has destroyed the corruptible monopoly of Bishops and priests to propound the only orthodox Theology. Let us not allow the lesson of history to be taught in vain. Reformation in India under the auspices of English education has already begun, it remains and behoves Indian Luthers to appeal to the heart and sense of the people, to bring the texts of Shastras and Vedas to the understanding of the *popular jury* and to solicit, nay, to extract a favourable verdict. I do not argue that Shastric controversy should be avoided that learned orthodoxy should be ignored. Let the orthodox Shastris and the protestant Pandits plead before the people, whose acceptance must be overwhelming and whose interests are at stake. What I deprecate most strongly is the futility of a trial in the forum of learned priesthood. The judgment is foregone, the result is certain. They will burn you like Jerome of Prague, will treat you with contempt like Wycliffe, will incarcerate you like Galileo, will hoot you out like the reformers at the Poona controversy of 1870. The constituted priesthood have always opposed new movements in science or religion, they have always been conquered by popular acclamation, they have always accorded compulsory rectification, they have subsequently even adjusted their position and philosophy to the new innovations. True and terse is Milman's description of the position of the clergy before and after the Reformation. "The sacerdotal order must recede from authority to influence. Here they would mingle with the general mass of society, assimilate themselves to the bulk of mankind, become subjects, citizens, fathers of families, and fulfilling the common duties and relations of life, work more profoundly beneficial, moral and religious effects. There they would still stand a great degree apart as a separate,

unmingling order, yet submit to public opinion, if exercising control, themselves under control." In fact printing and classical education ought to do for India what they did for Reformation in Europe ; it should no longer be necessary to depend upon the memory of a single Shastri or Pandit in a whole town, or on the possession of a single valuable manuscript in order that religious questions may be solved and social conduct guided. A Rajaram Shastri or a Bhao Puranik cannot have all his own way, cannot rule like a despot. Public opinion ought to be and will, in due course of time, be formed on the basis of texts multiplied and diffused far and wide and interpretations more sensible and less severe. That public opinion will influence and subjugate the priestly order, and eventually shastras and Shastris will come round in support of the nationalised order of society.

I have heretofore touched as succinctly as possible on the incapacity of the educated class to effect any far-reaching or durable change, the imperative necessity of moving and taking along with us the masses—the middle and lower orders of Hindu society, and the danger of risking these reforms on the doubtful acceptance of orthodox Pandits. I proceed to discuss as a part and parcel of this subject the limits and the importance of Government interference and countenance.

(d.) And here at the outset I am reminded of the famous saying of Aristotle that true virtue lies between the opposite extremes. Questions which have agitated the minds of men and sages from times immemorial and which seem to be as far from settlement as ever, questions of the nature of free will and predestination, whether times make men or men make times, or as expressed in the Sanskrit line काळस्य कारणं राजा काळो वा राजकारणम्, questions such as these can be best solved by the method indicated in the above saying of Aristotle. The real truth lies between both these extremes. To a certain extent man is undoubtedly an architect of his own fortune but some of his circumstances are still guided

by destiny that times have strong influence upon the rise of men, and strong men also influence times, that kings and legislators are potent in influencing society, which again acts upon kings and legislators.

Look at the constitution of man and his surroundings ; his actions and condition, his success and failure depend upon both what he wishes to do what other people do towards him, upon what nature in its various workings acts upon his conduct. He has control over the first but he can by the greatest amount of knowledge acquire very little over the other two. The floods of the Hoangho and the destruction of the Chinese opium, the insult of an American envoy and the declaration of an American War are things which are beyond one's control ; things which can not but affect a trader's prospects. It must not be supposed that I maintain that the one or the other of these events happened for the purpose of affecting one's prospects, nay their occurrence was the result of laws as immutable as any other nature's laws, but had no consciousness of benefiting this trader or ruining that other. But still events such as these can not but influence the condition of men and being beyond their control may be said to be in one sense predestined. And yet they do not constitute the all in all of the circumstances determining man's condition. He must supplant them by his work ; he must sow his opium or cotton at the proper time and endeavour to rear up the greatest produce before he can hope to profit by these events. Again the accidents of birth are beyond a man's control. You can neither blame or praise him for his being born high or low, but industry and good conduct may as much ennoble the one as carelessness and depravity debase the other. The fall of lightning or the flood of a river can neither be foreseen nor prevented but the setting up of an iron conductor or the building of a dam may partially neutralise their evils. In fact I am inclined to look upon life as a constant battle between free will and predestination, between what man can do and what his surroundings

do over which he has no control, now favourable, now opposed. In the case of each individual it is difficult to estimate the power of both these factors. The extraordinary success of talent and industry, energy and stratagem may here be thrown in shade by the immense fortune showered thereupon idleness and want of merit by the accident of birth or the turn of a lottery. But still both factors are always working and generally the sum total is I think equal and opposed. As in nature, there is extreme diversity underlying a pervading uniformity.

We often speak of times being favourable or otherwise. But what is 'times'? Is it the revolutions of the hands of the chronometer? Is it not only another expression for the aggregate of human and natural influences exercised on one's conduct? Is it not a part of the above mentioned question stated in different terms? In the language of Newton we might say that a man attracts and influences other men and the surroundings and is attracted and influenced by them with a force varying directly as their masses and inversely as their distances. Two definitions may here be given. A man's or a society's mass is the measure of his and its total mental and physical powers. While distance is not distance in space measured in feet or inches but is the mental apathy of each. Powerful minds and bodies like those of Shankaracharya, Christ, Mahomet, Napoleon, Adam Smith, Watt, cannot but set a certain portion of the society revolving about them, themselves being little attracted by it. On the other hand the intense religious dissatisfaction of the 16th century could not but influence the minds of men and direct their energies towards reformation. If the distance is great the ultimate momentum is however very small. Apathetic people like the Hindoo masses give rise to few powerful and enthusiastic minds. Similarly great energies and gigantic capacities which are estranged from the world pass away without having to be classed as the benefactors or the malefactors of the world.

Legislation is the will of one individual, or a certain number of men, or of a majority invested with certain authority seeking to bind the will of a people. Against the world's enormous mass of prejudice, the will of any individual, like a stone flying up from and seeking to raise the earth, is sure to be dragged down and shattered to pieces. But legislation which carries with it the will of the majority cannot but conquer the will of the minority. In fact to deny this would be to deny the power of the greater mass to attract the smaller at a small distance, to deny what is very obvious without the aid of any mathematical illustration.

To leave metaphor aside, those who maintain that legislation representing the will of a single individual or that of a few persons can affect and influence the conduct of the masses are equally wrong with those who hold that such will representing the feeling of the majority cannot influence the conduct of the minority. In short legislation to be successful must be preceded by popular conviction in favour of it ; and then it is very powerful, it confirms the wavering, converts the unthinking and subjugates the rebellious few. And what is true of legislation is also true of government contenance or support not formally embodied in an enactment. This position is not only true *a priori*, but has been established and confirmed by innumerable instances in the history of mankind. I have already discussed the operation of the widow-marriage Act, a piece of legislation which proceeded from good intentions on the part of the British Government but was based upon an imperfect apprehension of the limits and opportuneness of legislation. Of all the ancient nations the Romans alone developed a sound system of law and jurisprudence, were known for their love of law and order and we have a perfectly clear history of the growth of their legislation. If one were to go through all the edicts and laws repealed or obsolete and to investigate the causes of their being so, one would find opposition or non-approbation of the people as one of the most important. I might cite one instance.

Under the laws of Justinian the liberty of divorce was restricted by the necessity of alleging some one of the causes enumerated therein and very strict penalties were enacted against capricious divorces. But it must be remembered that the state of Roman morals in the latter days of the empire was very low and divorces were common. And the successor of Justinian beset by complaints and remonstrances, was compelled to sweep away all these provisions and to restore the liberty of divorce by mutual consent. "The manners of Constantinople" observes the historian "perhaps of the Roman world triumphed over the severe authority of the church." The history of Iconoclasm which I have already touched is another illustration of the futility of such legislation and the memorable words with which Milman begins the relation of that history are fit to be repeated, "No religious (or social) movement has been successful which has commenced with Government."

A successful religious or social movement might not commence with government ; but might end, nay, generally does end with it. A social movement which has struck strong root in popular sympathy and which then acquires the support and aid of expressed legislation progresses by leaps and bounds and spreads over the whole nation within a very short time. The reason is not far to seek. In every society there is always a section of people whose sole guide to conduct in life is convenience or fashion ; men who are the slaves of ambition or the sport of imitation. With these legislation or royal countenance supplies the necessary spring to action and they go with the stream wherever it may carry them.

The lessons of history on this point are not less numerous and convincing than on others. The immense impetus given to the spread of Christianity by the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine has not only been acknowledged by Christian writers but has also been made the subject of superstitious praise. The auspicious event is said to have been predestined and notified

by the appearance of a radiant cross in the sky, by an evangelical dream of Constantine. Divine honours are heaped upon the first Christian emperor and he is looked upon as an equal of the apostles. "Such a comparison" remarks the historian "if it alludes to the character of those divine missionaries, must be imputed to the extravagance of impious flattery. But if the parallel is confined to the extent and number of their evangelic victories, the success of Constantine might perhaps equal that of the apostles themselves. By the edicts of toleration he removed the temporal disadvantages which had hitherto retarded the progress of Christianity; its active and numerous ministers received a free permission, a liberal encouragement to recommend the salutary truths of revelation by every argument which could affect the reason or piety of mankind. The exact balance of the old and new religions continued but a moment; and the piercing eye of ambition and avarice soon discovered that the profession of Christianity might contribute to the interest of the present as well as of a future life. The hopes of wealth and honours, the example of an emperor, his exhortations, his irresistible smiles diffused conviction among the venal and the obsequious crowds which usually fill the apartments of a palace. The cities which signalised a forward zeal by the voluntary destruction of their temples were distinguished by municipal privileges and rewarded with popular donations. The salvation of the common people was purchased at an easy rate, if it be true that in one year 12000 men were baptized at Rome besides a proportionate number of women and children and that a white garment with 20 pieces of gold had been promised by the emperor to every convert." The same immortal historian thus graphically describes the final distinction of paganism at Rome 60 years after the conversion of Constantine. "But the same arguments fell with much more energy from the mouth of an emperor and the gods of antiquity were dragged in triumph as the chariot-wheels of Theodosius. In a full meeting of the senate

the emperor proposed, according to the forms of the republic, the important question whether the worship of Jupiter or that of Christ should be the religion of the Romans. The liberty of suffrages which he affected to allow was destroyed by the hopes and the fears which his presence inspired ; and the arbitrary exile of Symmachus was a recent admonition that it might be dangerous to oppose the wishes of the monarch. On a regular division Jupiter was condemned and degraded by the sense of a very large majority. The hasty conversion of the senate must be attributed to supernatural or sordid motives. They were gradually fixed in the new religion as the cause of the ancient became more hopeless. They yielded to the authority of the emperor, to the fashion of the times and to the entreaties of wives and children," (Memorable words these ! They express most vigorously the causes of the success of religious and social movements, viz., female conversion, conversion of the masses or fashion and lastly political compulsion). The vain pretences of the Pagans were swept away by the last edict of Theodosius which inflicted a deadly wound on the superstition of the Pagans. "It is our will and pleasure" says the emperor "that none of our subjects whether magistrates or private persons, however exalted or however humble may be their rank and condition, shall presume in any city or any place to worship an inanimate idol by the sacrifice of a guiltless victim." The act of sacrificing was declared a crime of high treason against the State, which could be expiated only by the death of the guilty. The use of any profane ceremonies subjected the offender to the forfeiture of the house or estate where they were performed. These imperial laws were rigidly executed and every hour contributed to destroy the influence of a religion which was supported by custom rather than by argument. "The ignorant vulgar whose minds were still agitated by the blind hopes and terrors of superstition were soon persuaded by their superiors to direct their vows to the

reigning deities of the age. The generation that arose after the promulgation of the imperial laws was attracted within the pale of the Catholic Church and twenty-eight years after the death of Theodosius the faint and minute vestiges of Paganism were no longer visible to the eye of the legislators."

Such is the history of the triumph of Christianity, the final conversion of Rome and the provinces, the ultimate extinction of Paganism. The way was paved by the religious preachings of the Apostles (St. Paul and St. Peter), the example of martyrs and the gradual *conversion of women and the masses* ; but the final success was achieved or at least accelerated by the rigour of the imperial laws and the preaching of the imperial smiles. Not that there was no last struggle, no re-action, no exemplification again of the principle that legislation without popular approbation, or against the stream is of no avail. The law of nature, of action and re-action, gave birth to a Julian who combined ability with Paganism, learning with superstition and political success with religious failure. The emperor strove by every means to restore the numerous deities of the ancient world and the bloody sacrifices which he himself most ostentatiously practised every morning and evening. The imperial missionary was heard to say that "if he could render each individual richer than Midas, every city greater than Babylon, he should not still esteem himself the benefactor of mankind, unless at the same time he could reclaim his subjects from their impious revolt against the immortal gods." That multitude which is swayed like a weather-cock by every breath of imperial pleasure no doubt betrayed themselves. "The restoration and encouragement of Paganism revealed a multitude of pretended Christians who from motives of temporal gains had acquiesced in the religion of the former reigns and who afterwards returned with the same flexibility of conscience, to the faith professed by the successors of Julian. But Christianity was spread far and wide, the roots of the religion of the apostles had gone

down deep in the heart of the people and the arts and rigour of Julian failed to support the tottering edifice of Paganism. With his death the retrograde movement was arrested, the edifice gave way, the immortal gods succumbed and the civilised world easily and swiftly settled down to Christianity under the encouraging care of Christian emperors."

I believe the history of every religion will reveal these successive steps of progress and development so much so that it is impossible to say whether a propagation can really be successful eventually without the aid of legislation or what is equivalent, government countenance. The preachers and martyrs saw the seed of the new movement in the breast of the sturdy and simple common people, the new class is at first persecuted, but it gradually increases in power and number, the wave reaches the thrones and palaces from which it again redounds on the people with greater energy and increased volume and engulfs the whole nation. There is again a retrograde motion, a persecution by the now heterodox kings of the now orthodox people as a whole, but the obstruction only creates a deluge which overwhelms king and subjects and leaves nothing behind of the old system save perhaps its name. Thus it was that Christianity spread, was persecuted, was taken up by emperors, was triumphant, was oppressed by a backward movement and was at last the general and the only religion of the Western World. Thus spread Mahomet's religion, which after it had gained a sufficient number of proselytes, was persecuted out of Mecca, but stood firm at Medina and gradually gained strength. It turned back upon Mecca again and converted it easily. Henceforward the conquests of the Arabs were the conquests of their religion; an uninterrupted career of success carried it over Seria and Persia, Egypt and Africa, Spain and India. If any body used the force of legislations or political compulsion in spreading religion it was Mahomet whose matter-of-fact doctrines invested himself and his successors with the temporal as well as the spiritual

leadership of the world. Mahomet by the tenets of his religion was not only the king and protector of the faithful but the oppressor of the kaffirs, and the wild spirits and fanatic fury of the Arabs realised the dreams of the preacher and the ambitious man.

The history of the success of Protestantism will afford us equally strong arguments proving the potency of political compulsion in establishing a new religious movement. The Paulites, the original fathers of Protestantism, fought against the religion of St. Peter, were persecuted and almost nipped in the bud. Wycliffe followed in the same track and with the same result. John Huss and Jerome of Prague taught Wycliffe's doctrines and impressed the peasants of Germany and Austria and were eventually murdered by a breach of faith and cruelty of torture. But the soil was now prepared, scepticism had matured and spread far and wide pervading the people as well as the Princes; and when Luther appeared on the scene and proclaimed his thundering denunciation against the indulgences of Popes and Prelates, his cause was lastly taken up by the peasants and the smaller Barons. But peasants and Barons had been many a time vanquished and terribly punished and Luther would have shared the mournful fate of his predecessors at the edict of Worms presided over by the interested orthodoxy of Charles V, had not the good Frederick of Saxony thrown the weight of his political importance in the scale to support the cause of the determined heretic. Luther sought the support of the people and preached his doctrines in peace unmolested by the efforts of the Pope to silence his tongue by the threatened burning of his body. Fortunately for the cause of the new heresy, a breach now occurred between orthodoxy and political power, between the Pope and the emperor. The emperor not only became lukewarm in his desire for the suppression of heresy but the edict of Spires gave finally a political sanction to the creed of Luther. The famous clause was signed by the emperor's brother that each State should, as regards the edict of

Worms, so live and bear itself as accorded with its view of its duty to God and the emperor. The princes who favoured Luther immediately adopted his religion as that of their States and half Germany became dissevered from the dominion of the Popes. Nay the catactrophe did not end here. The Barbarian heretics obtained their hereditary triumph, (the last may it be hoped), and shook the beard of the Pope in his not overpious den. Rome was sacked by an imperial army, its riches were plundered, its licentiousness exposed and insulted. Even the church of the Prince of Apostles was not spared. The German soldiers respected neither priest nor cardinal, neither Church nor Monastery. Germans clothed like cardinals went riding about Rome with a bottle of wine on the pommel of the saddle or a courtesan behind. Not a priest or friar dared walk in the streets except in the garments of a soldier, else the Germans would cry out "a Pope! a Pope! kill! kill!". Such was the insulting triumph of Protestantism taking root first in the minds of the people, severally persecuted as Paulites, Wycliffites and Hussites, but gaining strength at last from the support of Princes. It spread over England and Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden influenced by causes religious as well as political, supported as well by the inclinations of the people as the power of the Princes. Bloody battles were fought as have never been fought in the cause of religion before the final close of the struggle and it may well be said no religion owes more to the sword its triumph than the religion preached on the field of battle or the wave of the sea, by Gustavus Adolphus and Elizabeth of England.

The truth of the maxim "history repeats itself" is nowhere better illustrated than in the complete accord which exists in the history of Christianity and Buddhism. 600 years before Christ his exact prototype preached the same doctrines, viz., the uselessness of sacrifice and the duty of universal love and charity, with almost similar progress and success. Brahmanical philosophy, Yoga, Sankhya and Vedanta had created distrust in the efficacy

of the existing methods of praising and propitiating the deity, in the same manner as Platonic philosophy had diffused scepticism in the Grecian world. Buddha took up the transmigrations of the soul and the endless miseries of existence from Sankhya philosophy, and inculcated virtue as the sole means of attaining happiness in this life and in the next. Christ's religion based itself upon the immortality of the soul and the trinity of the Godhead imbedded in the philosophy of Plato and preached as a practical religion for the masses the love of our neighbours and the duty of forbearance. Both found the first the readiest and the most enthusiastic followers among women, both addressed their sweet words to the common people and convinced and converted the humblest mechanic, the poorest beggar. Christians and Buddhists were persecuted for a long time till at last they grew stronger and stronger and reached the thrones and the palaces. It took 300 years for the full development of the progress of both and at the end of that period of trial and struggle Christianity and Buddhism were embraced by the great emperors Constantine and Ashoka whose political careers also closely resemble in as much as both marched from the West and after a series of splendid achievements became the paramount Lords of the Roman and Indian empires. The emperors gave immense impetus to the progress of their favourite religions by personal influence and imperial legislation. How Christianity received support from Constantine to such an extent that he is often styled the 13th apostle and how imperial legislation first tolerant and then persecuting ensured its establishment have already been described above. A similar series of events aided the progress and achieved the success of Buddhism. The edicts of Ashoka alias Raja Priyadarshi engraven on marvelously durable pillars show the successive steps by which the Raja attempted to force his religion upon the people, at least to compel his subjects of whatever religion they might be, to observe the four great cardinal duties, respect for parents, charity to

Brahmans and Shramans, love of their neighbour, tender regard towards all sentient beings. The emperor rises from exhortation to command, from encouraging to threatening expressions, from supervision to inquisition. We may place side by side the celebrated edicts of Theodosius and Ashoka both imperiously prohibiting the sacrifice of animals in their different ways, the one showing legal punishments upon the delinquents, the other simple and plain and fitted to the land where to hear was to obey.

Theodosius A. D. 385.

It is our will and pleasure that none of our subjects shall presume in any place or city to worship an inanimate idol by the sacrifice of a guiltless animal. He who does it shall be guilty of high treason, the house or the property shall be forfeited where the sacrifice may have been offered.

Ashoka B. C. 200.

Thus sayeth the Raja Priyadarshi—Animals are not to be sacrificed, living creatures are not to be put to death &c. By these righteous observances the religion of the heaven-beloved Raja will flourish throughout the world. It is the ordinance of duty and should be as stable as mountain. Let every virtuous man obey it. Let no man think of opposing it.

The subject of the advisability of legislative interference is a burning question of the day and one on which the educated men of this country have most materially differed but on whose speedy and simple solution depends in a great measure the future success of social reform. I maintain as will have been gathered from what I have said heretofore that social legislation is useful and needful only after the minds of the people are prepared to accept the change by the preaching and the example of great and respectable men. To force the people against their will and accept certain customs and fashions is not only mischievous but has been found to be impracticable. But to forego legislation in favour of reforms which are al-

ready considered desirable by a majority of the people and which are adopted by a sufficient number of men, is to deny the assistance of a powerful ally, is to leave social reform to the tender mercies of apathetic ignorance, of obstinate sophistry, of interested blindness. I have quoted historical examples to substantiate both these positions ; but a further illustration from the history of our religion itself will be of greater value. Every one who has the slightest acquaintance with the Vedas and the early Sutras will have felt himself confronted by the strange discovery that our remote ancestors, that the very Rishis and sages who are the fathers of our Hindu religion daily sacrificed cows and other quadrupeds and indulged in beef and mutton. Nay, the most auspicious occasions such as the arrival of a great guest or a son-in-law, the performance of a shraddha were necessarily marked and celebrated by the slaughter of cows and by meat preparations. For every blessing in life craved at the hands of the gods there was a sacrifice of cows, bullocks and goats and horses. What earthquake has wrought this magic change that the Hindus for centuries have abhorred flesh-eating, have looked upon the slaughter of a cow or bull as the deadliest of all sins ? What has caused the great revulsion of feeling by which now the Hindus are excited to a disturbance, a rebellion, a mutiny by the name of cow's fat or the sale of a cow to a butcher ? What religious revolution has brought our orthodox shastris to declare that in the Kaliyuga the slaughter of animals and cows especially is an inexpiable sin ? Even our Agnihotris and Pandits look upon animal sacrifice as forbidden and unmeritorious. This change cannot be referred simply to the influence of Buddhism for it was never the predominant religion of India and never subjugated Hinduism. It can only be referred and has been referred to the great imperial edict of Ashoka, that trenchant legislation against sacrifice and slaughter of sentient animals. The Historian shall relate his own tale.

" Perhaps no despotic order has been issued

since the first establishment of civil Government which is so calculated to create a profound impression. The Brahmins, however abstemious in their own food, had sacrificed animals from immemorial antiquity ; the Kshatriyas were equally celebrated as warriors and hunters who had lived on meat and wine from their earliest history. The edict was thus directed against the daily worship of the Brahmins and the daily pursuits and the daily food of the Kshatriyas, whilst the edict was based upon the broad principle of benevolence which neither priest nor soldier could understand. The Brahmin would never regard his sacrificial knife as an instrument of cruelty nor was the Kshatriya likely to desist from the sports of the field or abstain from his ancient flesh feasts because of the pain they might inflict on the antelope or the boar."

"The emperor failed in the promulgation of the first edict. But the Raja was not to be thwarted in his benevolent intentions by the opposition or disaffection of nonbelievers. He promulgated the edict with all the pomp and ceremony of an imperial demonstration. It was surrounded by all the emblems of power and authority that would excite universal reverence and ensure universal obedience. At every important station throughout the empire there were grand processions of elephants and chariots accompanied by imposing displays of rich and costly articles and winding up with fire works and illumination. Vast assemblages of people were thus gathered together in orderly but overwhelming multitudes. The drums were beaten and the proclamation was made by a special messenger from the sovereign. Thus sayeth the Raja Priyadarsi :—"Animals are not to be sacrificed, living creatures are not to be put to death &c., it is the ordinance of duty and should be stable as a mountain. Let every virtuous man obey it. Let no man think of opposing it. The law which directs ceremonial rites must conform to the ordinance of duty.' "

"Raja Priyadarsi is perhaps the first sovereign on

record who authoritatively declared that the national religion must conform to justice and humanity. He aimed a mortal blow at the old Brahmanic ritual by asserting that the sacrifice of animals was contrary to humanity. He did not appeal to any religious sentiment such as precludes the Brahmins now from eating beef or the Mussulman from eating pork. But the force of the appeal to humanity against the bloody ritual was irresistible. A powerful antagonism was excited which lasted for ages ; but in the end humanity triumphed over the Brahmin and the Kshatriya. In the present day animal sacrifices have almost passed away from India ; the royal and imperial sacrifices of the Rajasuya and Ashwamedha have disappeared from the land ; and although the love of the chase is still strong in the Kshatriya yet the national sentiment of the Hindu is opposed to the slaughter of any living thing."

Humanity may have triumphed over the Brahmin and the Kshatriya as it rarely does and has not certainly done yet in the interest of the child widow and the child wife of India. But there were other causes which contributed to the success of the imperial command against the sacrifice of living animals. It is not true that from the date of the Edict a powerful antagonism was created between humanity and the Brahmin and the Kshatriya. The antagonism had already been in existence and raged even before the birth of Buddhism. The popular mind had already been poisoned against animal sacrifices. The philosophy of Vedanta and Sankhya had already revealed to the Hindus the true and the one God and the sole method of his attainment, contemplation and knowledge. The controversy between *Karma* and *Dnyana* ever grateful to the Hindu ear had already been raised, discussed and settled unfavourably to the former. Justification by works had given place to justification by faith. The age of the Grihyasutras had gone, the science of sacrifice had developed into the most troublesome details and the popular mind had already been tired of the endless troubles of

sacrifice. In short Buddhism was only possible because Sankhya and Vedanta had prepared the soil and changed the national sentiment. But sacrifices were still performed by believing fools and conservative sceptics and it required the powerful hand of the Emperor Ashoka to suppress the customary offerings, and almost to expel sacrifice from the land hitherto known as Karmabhumi. From that time Hinduism has accepted *ahimsa* as one of its great doctrines, the Shastras and the Smritis have modelled their teachings so as to reconcile sacrificial slaughter in past ages with its prohibition in the present and we now cherish nothing so dear to us as the sacred inviolability of our cows although our ancestors cherished exactly the reverse.

Such is the history of one of the most wonderful revolutions in the national sentiment. Popular prejudice, the humanity of the change and the imperial denunciation brought about a state of things which without the one or the other would not have been possible. I wonder why an equally desirable conversion or subversion of feeling should not become possible under the operation of the same causes. I know not why the Hindus should not be induced to abhor marriages before conventional puberty as inhuman and injurious, just as they now abhor marriages after it. I do not know why the Queen Empress in response to a change in national sentiment and in fulfilment of a divine mission, may not imitate the noble example set ages ago and authoritatively declare that the national religion, whatever it may be, must conform to justice and humanity. But the usual reply is that civilised example is very powerful and British statesmen who are pledged to a policy of non-interference may leave the influence of their example to work by slow degrees the desirable change. It will therefore be necessary to discuss the effects of civilised example of fashion and of contact and to consider the circumstances of the British Government with reference to it.

(c.) When a civilised society has adopted a certain religion or custom the societies less civi-

lized or more barbarous which come in contact with it cannot escape the influence of better example, the ambition of flattering imitation. The splendour and pomp of a religion which is supported by the embellishments of civilization and the extravagance of orthodox kings cannot fail to impress the sense and flatter the vanity of the surrounding people. They gaze with admiration on the magnificent churches, mosques and temples, the rich decorations and the lively portraits, the imposing and orderly ceremonies, the number and investments of priests. Thus when Roman, Indian and Arabic empires had adopted Christianity, Buddhism and Mahomadanism, the union of civilization with the increased splendour of religious worship contributed to the easy conversion of the labouring barbarians. The history of the conversion of the French, the Germans, the Saxons of England, the Russians, the Turks will not disclose the dignified spectacle of persistent preaching and patient propagation. The change of religion was by masses and races and mostly began with the kings. The conquest of the Roman Empire or the Khaliphate by the barbarians resulted in the conquests of the barbarians by the religions of Rome and Bagdad. "The followers of Clovis declared themselves equally ready to follow their heroic leader to the field of battle or the baptismal font. The new Constantine was immediately baptised with 3000 of his warlike subjects and their example was imitated by the remainder of the gentle barbarians, who in obedience to the victorious preachers, adored the cross which they had burnt and burnt the idols which they had adored." In England the conversion of the king was followed by that of the nobility and his subjects as it was manifest "that the royal favour inclined to those who received the royal faith. In Russia the edict of Wolodomir proclaimed that all who should refuse the rites of Baptism would be treated as the enemies of God and their prince and the rivers were instantly filled with many thousands of obedient Russians who acquiesced in the truth and excel-

lence of a doctrine which has been embraced by the great Duke and boyars. The influence of civilized example or of fashion is nowhere better illustrated than in the different manners in which the different sections of Turks which invaded the German, Russian and Persian Empires were affected by their respective religions. The terrible Hungarians who overspread Germany and France and devastated the country finally settled in what is now called Hungary, and were absorbed in the Catholic Church. The Turks of Russia however quietly settled down to Greek Christianity which from Constantinople influenced the surrounding countries. While the Turks who precipitated ' themselves upon Persia and conquered Bagdad, Syria and Turkey and Egypt became the most devout Mahomedans unerring in their five prayers and though politically the oppressors of the khalifs, religiously their abject slaves.

Even the present agitation for widow marriage and against infant marriages is one which has its rise mainly in the comparison of our society with the more developed and finished societies of Europe with whom we have come in contact. The influence of civilized example is slowly but surely upheaving the national feeling and before long will lead to some desirable or undesirable result. Where some superior example does not exist and where such customs have not been impeached so persistently as to lose hold of the national mind any individual and fitful effort in the direction of reform must fail. It is related that Parsharam Pant Bhao Patwardhan who had the misfortune to have his own daughter widowed at a very tender age, mooted the question of remarriage ; but it is needless to state the result of the agitation when civilized and superior example was unknown and even derided, when western education was unknown and when the revival of the Hindu Shastras and learning tended rather to confirm than confront orthodoxy, and even the countenance of the Peishwa was impotent to lend support to the agitation begun in such high quarters.

But at the present moment the States of Rajastan are making progress under very favourable circumstances. The double influence of western example and paramount pressure has spurred the desire of the various Rajas to effect salutary reforms in their marriage customs and the already prepared minds of the people have easily given way before the double force added to which work the countenance and support of their own princes. Considerable reform has taken place in the scale of marriage expenses and before long progress in advancing the age of marriage will be achieved and be a matter for example and imitation for the rest of India.

Unfortunately however the circumstances of British India materially differ from those of the State of Rajputana. These States are governed by native princes who can directly and more minutely influence native society, who themselves suffer in common with the people from these horrid customs and whose conduct can never be misinterpreted into the oppression usually imputed to the most harmless foreign government. In India as a whole legislation will have to come slowly and tardily, not as the emanation of a philanthropic government but as the result of the express consent of a majority of Hindus. British officers can at best preach from a distance, but in pursuance of the wise and safe policy which has guided the Government of this country, must wait until the people themselves move for legislation through the influence of education and example. Further still the various ways in which royal favour comes to the aid of social progress are also barred to a Government which cannot sympathise with the people except from a distance, whose unconcern removes the only basis on which such action is tolerated and not misconstrued. As in this world the fear of evil works more than the prospect of reward, the sovereign promotes social reform more by the persecution of the dissentient than by favouring the proselytes. Under the British rule such petty persecutions more poignant because coming from a foreign Govern-

ment, will cause heart-burnings which it is politically advisable to prevent. In a word the salvation of British India—the largest portion of Hindustan lies in legislation pure and simple, cautiously resorted to in response to the desire of an unmistakeably ascertained majority, legislation of the sample of the Parsi matrimonial act.

Am I in conflict with the immortal philosopher ? Is the conflict reconcileable ? Will not such a piece of legislation be one of those sins of legislators of which Spencer complains so bitterly—sins which have deranged society and produced evils tenfold more than those sought to be corrected ? Are the bounds of legislation transgressed which it is competent for Government to enact in fulfilment of ends for which it exists ? Such are some of the questions which would seem to smother a proposal like the above and which derive support from the highest living authority. But it must be remembered that economical phenomena which are the result of immutable laws are different from purely social ones, those which are grounded in custom, in feeling, in education, in the history of the development and arrest of society. To seek to remodel or correct the one even with the voice of a sufficient majority, assembled in solemnity but which cannot change human nature, is futile ; but the endeavour to change custom, to alter feeling and education and thus to turn the course of social development is not so difficult. It is difficult to believe, unless the reign of altruistic principles becomes supreme, that property can be done away with by the machine of legislation, that prices of commodities can be fixed in the interest of the poor, that ventilated lodging can be procured for the masses at fixed or low rents irrespective of other conditions. But social conduct is guided by opinion ; opinion though inherited, is easily liable to change under the influence of powerful causes and appliances ; and legislative appliances embodying the opinion of the majority may produce speedy and permanent results unalloyed by other evils. It is an admitted fact that every state of society has its blessings

and evils and a change while it removes the existing evils may give rise to others which may or may not be foreseen. If for this reason every change is to be deprecated, if Spencer's argument is to be conceded and applied in an unqualified manner, then no change is a blessing, no society is better than another, no civilized Government better than a barbarian one. Spencer neither means this nor is this true ; evils shall and must exist at all times but the objects of civilization, of legislation will be considered satisfied if they tend to minimise them. The questions of social reform, whether late marriages will cause more good than evil, whether legislation seeking to enforce late marriages will be more beneficial than baneful, whether the evils of social legislation can be foreseen by the limit of human understanding and corrected, all will have to be carefully discussed and threshed only and society may satisfy itself on each and every point before the final step is taken. Nothing is further from my contention than that society should appeal to legislation without being practically unanimous on the desirability of change. But I maintain that legislation easily and speedily secures the result sought ; whether desirable or no society shall have to determine beforehand. It may be argued that if society is to be practically unanimous where is the necessity of invoking legislation ; the wisdom of using an iron hammer to break an egg which will burst of itself ? I have already gone over the ground. I have already shown that feeling and opinion are slow to produce practice, that some are unthinking, others indolent, others obstinate. When preachers' and apostles' example and sacrifice have changed the conduct of the many, have affected the conscience of all, emperors and legislators come in and finish the work by converting the unthinking, by fixing the indolent and by compelling the obstinate. Ashoka and Kanishka did this for Buddhism, emperor Constantine and Theodosius did this for Christianity, Mahomed and Abubakar did this for Mahomedanism,

Frederick (of Saxony) and Elizabeth did the same for Protestantism. Why should not legislation be leagued with the cause of social reform, in furtherance of measures which everybody feels are salutary, which have been recommended by example.

Again religion is a great factor in the circumstances of a body politic which has to defend itself against aggressors and may well engage the care of Government and legislators. The limits of the field of Governmental interference are yet a matter of divided opinion, and practice shows that Governments are habituated to be all-interfering. Not only is the Church indivisible from the State, but as a matter of fact education, trade, health, and morals do enter into the list of subjects with which Governments have thought it proper to deal. The social customs, in their various ways, are calculated to influence the capacity of a nation to prosper and pull on in the struggle for existence among nations and peoples; and thus they may fitly form the care of legislators and Governments. But customs such as infant marriage and widow remarrige stand upon even a higher level than this and may perfectly satisfy the test of Spencer. Where national degeneration is fast coming upon the people, where under altered circumstances the results are becoming day by day more serious, where unnatural practices are producing their evils beyond description, where the very existence of a people is threatened, if there the Government which exists for the preservation of the society and people cannot and may not interfere I fail to see where it can with more propriety.

I have hitherto discussed the principal causes of the failure of social reformers. I have shown that women are the first great opponents of social reform and no attempt has yet been made to win them over to its side. I have shown that the common people, the great masses, who should be the chief objects of address in all religious or social propagation, have been entirely ignored by reformers. I have discussed at length the subject of po-

pular acceptance and legislative interference. I have shown that both are equally necessary for the speedy and stable success of social reform, but that the masses ought to be first convinced before legislation is sought. The British Government should and will proceed cautiously and gauge the popular feeling accurately, before any piece of legislation is launched into existence. What social reformers have hitherto done and still recommend in future is to force reform on the people by legislation. Their great mistake lies in supposing that the legislative pill is the panacea for all diseases and whether acceptable or not should be forced down the throat of the suffering patient. I have also incidentally dwelt upon the fact that the educated people, pledged societies, and registered associations can achieve very little, in consequence of want of union, and want of continuity of enthusiasm. I have again noticed that Shastric controversy is fatal and futile and that popular judgment should be sought, because the Shastris are always arrayed on the side of orthodoxy and because the popular sanction is sure to be followed by the conversion of Shastras and Shastris. I proceed to deal with a few other defects in the mode and manner of the preaching and practice of social reformers which have been detrimental to their success.

(1). The subject of infant marriages and enforced widowhood has not yet been treated with lucidity of treatment and irresistibility of argument. Systematically it has not been discussed even by Mr. Malabari who wrote unconnected articles in denunciation of the custom in his paper. His larger productions are nothing more than a compendium of opinions of a number of native and European thinkers which, however interesting reading they may be, do not make up a connected and exhaustive treatment of the subject. Even Mr. Gidumal's production has not aspired to anything beyond what Mr. Malabari has attempted. The *pros* and *cons* of the subject have not been fully discussed and the exact account of good and evil which can be attributed to the two customs has not yet been ascertained. We are told

and vaguely believe that something is rotten somewhere and that infant marriages and enforced widowhood are responsible for it. But the national mind has not yet been clearly convinced of the exact nature and effects of the disease so that it may cheerfully accept the changes or may itself crave and incline towards a change. What are the evils attributed to the two monsters? Are they really due to them? Are there any benefits? Would you give up the benefits to eradicate the evils? On each of these points every thinking man has his opinions not yet subjected to a searching criticism and hence so varied as to make the generality fearful of change. Wisely has it been said वादे वादे जायते तत्त्वबोधः. Truth is brought out by repeated discussions. Let those who think for themselves discuss the subject with a spirit of moderation and let those who do not think for themselves look on and be the arbiters. I know controversy is unending, that the thinking disputants will hardly be induced to give up their positions or to acknowledge their errors. But I do not mean that it should be our aim to convince these men at first. It will suffice if the masses, who are more practical, are led to come to a conclusion of their own. When once they are agreed that there is a crying evil which must be corrected, when *a priori*, independently of the Shastras, they are convinced that the two customs have much to answer for very serious evils, the further question and it will be tolerably an easy one—is how to gradually introduce the changes, how to fit them in with the Shastras, innumerable and varied as they are, or rather how to fit in the Shastras with the desired changes. This is what has not yet been done. This is what remains to be done—disquisition and discussion. The inquiry which Mr. Talwalkar of Bombay suggested shows that the national mind yearns for instruction and solid information, and not mere dramatic bombast. It does not wish to give way to shrieking fears or to sheepish imitation. To quote the golden words of Milman again “such religious revolutions have ever begun in the middle or lower orders of society, struck on some responsive chord of

sympathy in the general feeling, supplied some religious want, stirred some religious energy and shaken the inert strength of the established faith by some stronger counter-emotion." The general people and not the disputants must be made aware of the fact, must feel intensely that gross injustice is being done to their wives and children.

To revert to the history of the four great religions upon which I have drawn for reasons already adduced in this essay, the reader will have seen that every great religion which has conquered, had not only some striking superiority over its rival, had not only been preached by prophets and apostles, but at the same time supplied a want which was most keenly felt by the people who accepted the new religion. Among the causes, assigned by Gibbon for the spread and success of Christianity, he mentions the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the nature of man's existence after death. The former religions were incapable of giving any answer to the fervid question asked by men who could not explain the unjust distribution of life's pleasures and pains. Socrates and Plato had been led to believe that the souls were immortal but had not given an authoritative and divine solution. "It was necessary that the doctrine of life and immortality which was dictated by nature approved by reason and received by superstition should obtain the sanction of divine truth from the authority and example of Christ." When Buddhism was preached and succeeded, the Hindu religion was sorely suffering from caste and sacrifice. Caste had then assumed rigidity and the disabilities of certain castes, not yet hardened by ages of petrification, created a desire to throw off bonds recently imposed. The endless maze of sacrificial rites had smothered the yearnings of devotion had tired, out the patience of devotees, and the religion of charity, of goodness, of equal meritorious attainments for men of all classes was hailed as a deliverance from caste and ceremonial. The unity of God was the trenchant weapon of Mahomedanism in spite of its manifold defects. Neither the Arabs nor the Jews nor the Christians were

so rigidly monotheistic, the popular mind was dissatisfied with the plurality of gods, the religious allegiance was weakened "by being prostituted to several deities" and Mahomedanism was accepted by the Christians of Alexandria hopelessly at a loss to unravel the unity of three gods. Similarly the state of Christianity in the sixteenth century was scandalous. The unmarried priests were a scourge of society. The Teutonic population was unable to pour its devotion through the medium of the unintelligible Latin. The most atrocious sins were pardoned by payment to licentious prelates and the pomp of Popes was in sore contrast with the simplicity of the poor fishermen of Galilee. These and other causes had created a thirst which required to be quenched and Luther did not succeed only by his eloquence, judgment and daring, but the Teutonic people wanted a Luther to come to them and redress their grievance. In short a new religious movement succeeds not merely by its own energy and goodness, but also by the rottenness of the old state of things, by the consciousness of society that there is a pain in its leg, and lion-like as it is, it subjects itself, like a lamb, to the operations of an Androcles who must no doubt be accustomed to face lions again.

(2) "Wycliffe was not only a premature but incomplete and insufficient reformer. He was destructive of the existing system but not reconstructive of a new one." Indeed the experience of the world is quite full of this difficulty—the difficulty of reconstruction as compared with destruction. It is easy, it is comparatively easy, to denounce the present customs of marriage, to prove that they are the cause of unnameable evil. But the highest duty of the social reformer is to propose measures which are not only feasible but acceptable, which not only preserve the benefits of the old customs without deviating too far from them, but are also in consonance with advanced principles and secure the desired good. It is to be regretted that social reformers have not hitherto succeeded in placing before the public a

scheme of reform which would be recommendable in all respects. It is no doubt true that destructive energy must precede reconstructive ; unless you are first convinced that your house deserves to be pulled down it would be of no use to tell you how you should rebuild it. It is no wonder, therefore, if we find the reformers' energies principally directed hitherto towards the impeachment of these customs. But the time has now come to tell the people how the social fabric is to be reconstructed and in this attempt social reformers have not yet succeeded. On the questions of widow-marriage and infant-marriages the reformers have had the temerity to place before the public the most radical ideals and yet have had the timidity to propose the most awkward methods to attain them. You cannot break off with the past and teach society by a lift to the highest ideal of French Revolution, nor can you lead society like blind men by mazy paths unless it is satisfied that they are secure. We may grant it that the people are convinced of the evils of early marriage and enforced widowhood, but what are they to do in order that these evils may be corrected ? This is the most crucial question of the day.

They have proposed late marriages and marriages of widows at all ages as the ultimate goal to be reached and have suggested as tentative measures that girls on reaching majority might disavow their marriage and that the difficulties of widow remarriage should be removed by making it a crime to socially boycott a remarrying widow. I take these as the latest instances of the reconstructive activity, to show how dangerous, unpalatable, and most probably ineffectual measures are suggested by men of great intellect and good intentions. To make marriages a violable contract to be rescinded at the opinion of the major girls is to virtually destroy the parent's right to give a girl away in marriage, to introduce the principle of self-election, to reduce marriage from a sacrament to a pure contract, to make the most sacred and delicate bond in life the sport of capricious girls and their friends, to give an

opportunity to greedy parents and machinating suitors to get marriages disavowed with very questionable motives and to destroy the peace of families and sow the seed of discord and enmity. In short, I cannot conceive to what evils this unlimited right of girls to throw their husbands overboard, if they like, were granted. You can conceive the chagrin of a husband who may even have partially fulfilled his duties to find his wife removing him just at the most interesting and critical period of their life. It may be that even crime and bloodshed will be the result of such a state of marriage-laws. If it be intended that the threat of such incalculable evils should induce Hindu husbands to marry, and Hindu parents to give in marriage only major girls I think the remedy is circuitous and more dreadful than the cure. Why not make a direct law that only major girls should be married? Why allow unthinking parents and uncautious husbands to drift into these dangerous positions hoping for the best as man always does? Again, social boycotting short of assault or other more grievous crimes is practically out of the reach of law. And yet if it is made punishable, a system of inquisition and prying into the private concerns of families will have to be introduced and the evil of such a power vested in the police or the magistrates or envious persons can best be imagined and is such as an enlightened foreign Government ought to prevent. I am not going to discuss here the merits and demerits of these and other kinds of reform—a subject which I have reserved for a separate chapter. But I simply advert to the fact that social reformers have not yet succeeded in enunciating a practical and unobjectionable scheme of reform.

(3) The first and the most effective argument which is generally advanced in disparagement of social reformers in the personal character, is that of their apparent insincerity, their lacking the courage of their convictions, the absence of zeal and enthusiasm, and their unwillingness to set a respectable example. It is a trite observation that zeal and enthusiasm are the weapons of social or religious

reform, that a pound of practice is better than a ton of precept. Men usually wait to see whether those who recommend are themselves willing and ready to try ; men fear to tread upon unknown ground until those who show the path themselves demonstrate its security. Moreover nothing fixes the attention and excites the sympathy of men as the pathetic tales of the sufferings of preachers. Persecution, however condemnable, has always served to advance rather than check the progress of religion. And every great man had his share of suffering, of sacrifice for principle, of unflinching devotion to the cause advocated. Christianity would not have been so fascinating, its unbounded charity so enchanting, without the pathetic spectacle and remembrance of the crucifixion of Christ. St. Paul suffered every taunt and torture for the sake of his religion. St. Peter was chained and dragged through the streets of Rome. Early Christianity is full of the stories of the sufferings of martyrs till at last the rage of martyrdom grew so wild that people courted death by provoking the heathen magistrates. Mahomed, the most favoured of all religious reformers, had yet to suffer for his preachings, to be persecuted out of Mecca, to have his life constantly endangered by religious fanatics and assassins. How pathetic the scene of Buddha turning back from the closed chamber where his dear wife and beautiful child were asleep, how heart-rending the renunciation, how magnificent the restraint of impetuous passions when one last kiss of love on their sweet moist cheeks was denied, lest that kiss should shake his resolution to abandon the world to search after the unseen. That renunciation, like the Christian sacrifice, has become the renunciation of the Buddhistic faith. And how much did Wycliffe suffer ; what pangs did Jerome of Prague set at nought on the horrid pile of fire ; what fortitude did Cranmer exhibit when he thrust his finger into flame to show that he cared little for bodily pain but much for the truth of his opinion. Luther and Calvin, Cranmer and Morre and a hundred other notable souls have cheerfully sacrificed every thing,

affluence and pleasure, body and even life, in the cause of reforms they preached ; and their success was as much due to their readiness of sacrifice as to any other cause. In short, religious or social reform has never been successfully preached from judicial benches or professional chairs but from shaky pulpits and in the naked air, not by mere lectures and preachings but by example and sacrifice.

It is extremely easy to hurl the charge of insincerity at the head of social reformers, to elicit the answer that the time of action has not yet come and must be preceded by a period of speech. It is extremely easy to point at the lives and sufferings of great preachers and reformers, of Wycliffe and Jerome, of Luther and Cranmer, who spoke their mind and suited action to their speech inapprehensive of danger in and out of time. But it must be remembered that conservatism is hard to shake, old practices difficult to abandon, social persecution more dreadful than being torn to pieces at the feet of an elephant. And the courage to brave all evils, to dare every persecution is given only to a few. Prophets and martyrs are not a phenomenon of every day occurrence. Centuries elapse before men arise who by their intellect, by their exertions, by their courage chain the mind of mankind and for all times to come create a lasting impression on the sandy breach of the world's existence. Such men can be numbered on the fingers ; it is no reproach that they are not many ; it is the highest praise that they cannot but be so few. That social reformers are not able to show brilliant examples of sacrifice is therefore, in my opinion less a matter of surprise, and more a matter which should excite our sympathy instead of our contempt. I have already shown how the women of our family are conservative, how ungenerous and difficult it is to set at naught their feelings, and how social reformers are held in check by the influence of woman-kind, by respect for elders and society. Such feelings as these are not only natural, but deserve credit and sympathy. Conservatism properly looked at is not a

bane but a blessing. If men could abandon their practices and customs at the blast of every reformer's blowing, if the various ideas of convenience and propriety recurring to the mind of a thinking or unthinking man were to influence mankind easily, then society would be reduced to a state of chaos that reigned before the world was created, would bear the appearance of a country visited by a hurricane, trees uprooted, houses shaken to ruin, rivers and lakes leaving their beds and inundating the land and the whole atmosphere filled with dust and sand. Such things cannot and are not allowed to occur every day by the great goodness of providence. Society will always present an imperturbable appearance to the innumerable host of ordinary social reformers who are mostly persecuted into subjection.

Another important consideration which checks the zeal of reformers and deserves the attention of on-lookers is the injustice of inflicting social evil on guiltless progeny. Imprudent marriages in indigent circumstances generally followed by shoals of children are much to be avoided by men who are alive to the responsibilities of parents, as marriages opposed to the social and religious customs in vogue. The children of such connections, for no fault of theirs, and perhaps against their inclinations are ostracised from society, are denied the pleasures and privileges of social intercourse, are often obliged to accept the most undesirable partners in their own life. As I have said the dissentients in religious matters are vastly better than dissentients in mere social customs ; the former claim the sympathy and support of their children as a matter of fact and necessity, but the latter are not sure of their children accepting their social creed and throwing their lot with their parents.

I advert to these disabilities of the first race of social reformers not to justify but to excuse the dearth of example or the lukewarmness of conduct and to show that if they cannot be admired, they need not at least be blamed. Social persecution shall have to be braved some time or another; great pain, mental and bodily, must

be endured before salvation is achieved ; and those who will do this for the sake of suffering womankind, nay, for the whole degenerating mass of Indian population, will deserve the honors of martyrdom, will deserve to be immortalised in the history of India.

(4) It is a misfortune that with the single exception of R. Raghunathrao, social reform has not yet been preached and advocated by any person whose faith in Hinduism has been unquestionable. I have mentioned, in the very beginning, the cause of all reform activity in its threefold directions, have shown that English education has produced this all-pervading desire for a change. It is not surprising, therefore, that those, who are social reformers, are at the same time more or less religious and political reformers. Mr. Malabari the boldest and the most persevering of all, is unfortunately secure on his own Parsism but cannot escape the suspicion of a too English or Western leaning. This inauspicious connection between social and religious reforms has been the cause of serious mischief and furnished ground for damaging misrepresentation. In fact, society is unable to distinguish between those who merely advocate that child widows should be freed from their load of miseries, and those who in religion advocate changes in the most settled points of Hindu belief and practice. To the orthodox Hindu the remarried widow is the wife of, and may probably herself be a drunkard, an eater of flesh, possibly beef, a demolisher of idols, a Prarthana Samajist, an admirer of Christ, a traducer of the Vedas, and a host of other things which it is impossible for a Hindu to think of without horror. This fashion of mistaking the social reformer for a religious apostate can be seen vividly in newspaper writing ; it is a subject of ridicule in every social novel : the social reformer of the novelist is a drunkard ; the widow marrying gentleman of the farces is a dissolute man, and our private conversation with orthodox gentlemen will convince us of the contemptuous manner with which they dispose of all social reformers. And let it be admitted that the con-

duct of social reformers has given just cause for such fears. It would neither be proper nor charitable to quote extreme examples of persons who are known to dine in European hotels, and to lie in municipal gutters, who would pose before orthodox Hinduism as the preachers of social reform. But the notorious Prarthana Samajist professions of very honourable gentlemen who are held in the highest respect, of the Honourable Ranade, of Prof. Bhandarkar, of Principal Modak and others, who are both social and religious reformers, is a serious cause of weakness in the work of social reform. And who can estimate the loss sustained by the cause of female emancipation in consequence of the deplorable conversion of Pandita Ramabai, a lady of the highest intelligence, the boldest enterprise, the purest philanthropy. But to repeat one of my fixed ideas, trifling incidents will as much rule the destiny of mankind as the accumulated circumstances of life will produce and fashion incidents. The matter is past all remedy and we can at best deplore. Certain it is that social reform leagued with religious apostacy has derived all its odium and has failed to secure popular acceptance or even to evoke popular sympathy. It will, at first sight, lead us to suppose that the cause of this lies deeper than the more unobjectionable connection between social and religious reforms. The force of Hinduism as a religion must be considered before we can properly estimate the evil of linking together the two reforms. It is unquestionable that Hinduism has stood the test of conflicts with many a religion ; and will most likely essentially remain the same for a long time. Buddhism fought a civil war with it for ten centuries. Christianity and Magianism have hitherto failed in their fitful attempts to convert it. Mahomedanism could not succeed in destroying it inspite of iconoclastic emperors and the permanent settlement of Mahomedan population. The reason of this is not far to seek. The religions of the world have no revelation to show which can equal or at least is superior to the Vedas, in the intensity of religious fervour, in the consistency of

religious philosophy ; no religion can exhibit that depth of moral discipline which is preached and enjoined by Hinduism ; and if the world is developing altruistic tendencies in the march of civilization no religion has yet reached the stage of Hinduism, which only does not dream of slavery but has discountenanced the massacre of all sentient animals. Such is the strength of pure Hinduism divested of the mass of dross which has gathered round it ; various systems of philosophy have revered the same Vedas, various schools of Smritis have inculcated the same virtues, temperance and truthfulness, charity and compassion, conjugal chastity and universal love. Whoever preaches, therefore, in the same breath that child widows should be married and that the Vedas are a bosh or that wine may be drunk and supports preaching by practice shall find no bearing in the Hindu ear, no sympathy in the Hindu heart.

. Let me not be misunderstood ; however much I may condemn religious reform on particular points or the general question of the sanctity of the Vedas, I do not make a stand of it for argument. It may be true that the Vedas cannot be proved infallible nor may they suit that fitness of things which nature dictates. It may be true that caste sanctioned though it may be by the Vedas is a calamity. It may be true that temperance cannot be justified except on the ground of faith. What I contend is that reform on these points is for a long time to come impracticable, that Hinduism has not yet come to look upon them without horror. To mix therefore, the most commendable with the most odious, the most easy with the most difficult of reforms is to make the cause of social reform as hopeless as that of the religious, at least for a long time to come. The contempt of social reformers for the precepts of Hindu religion has thrown the whole cause into not unmerited disrepute. Various instances may be quoted in which unnecessary offence was given to the existing religious beliefs of the Hindus. One can imagine that the dearth

of enthusiasts necessitates the rejection of caste prejudices in the selection of a widow bride and her spouse. But it is difficult to explain why the marriage should take place in a Prarthana Samaj Mandir, on a Shrawan-day and by the hand of a professor who delivers a lecture on the Vedic mantras recited on the marriage occasion, unless the leaders mean to make social reform at the same time a religious rebellion. Nay, even the most harmless ceremonies which are observed and which must exist in all societies and religions, are abandoned as having a tinge of Hinduism, a smacking of idolatry. I believe social reformers could have made social reform as harmless as possible, but the impetuosity of the desire for change in all directions is difficult to restrain. I do not mean that Prarthana Samajists or Arya Samajists should belie their convictions and flatter Hinduism; if they have set up a new religion they are at liberty to take up the most desirable customs and ceremonies of marriage as an article of faith. But if reformers are Hindus yet in practice, if their professions have not yet found response in conduct, what should have prevented them observing the same conduct and practice in the marriages of widows and widowers? But over-zeal often induces a state of mind which leads men to think that if they have cast to the winds one bond of sympathy with society it is all the same if they cut off all others. Such is the mistake of social reformers for which they are responsible, the mistake of unnecessarily mixing the cause of social reform with the religious. The alliance has been most mischievous, has transferred the opprobrium and difficulty of the one to the other and made social reform hopeless and unpalatable.

(5) Yet another mistake which lies at the door of social reformers is their unnecessary haste, extreme views and very often offensive preaching; and here we come across one of those points of difference between the propagation of social and religious reforms. In religion slow and gradual change of beliefs, a transformation by

degrees is an impossibility, while social reforms in order to be successful must be gradual and imperceptible, must proceed by slow though steady steps. There is no intermediate step between the infallibility of the Vedas and their human origin, no reconciliation between the efficacy or the uselessness of sacrifices, and Buddhism could preach no gradual change from Hinduism, it was of necessity a bold renunciation, a wholesale condemnation. Between monotheism and polytheism an intermediate step consistent with reason is inconceivable, and Christianity could not reform the idolatry of Greek and Roman societies by gradually limiting the number of gods from a crore to one. By a strange fatality Christian monotheism developed into a triple Godhead, the consistency of whose plurality with the yet professed unity of God gave rise to furious battles both in councils and on bloody fields, and stern Mahomedanism ridiculed the Christians as idolators and preached and enforced a jealous monotheism as yet unsullied by the various intrigues of art and superstition. As has been observed by Bacon a true god is a jealous God and cannot brook the presence of others, true or false, one or many. It will be thus seen that religious preaching, as of necessity starts with extreme views and cannot be guarded or bounded in its condemnation. On the contrary, the greater the intensity with which antagonistic faiths are assailed the greater the force with which the new movement works on the minds of the people. It is notorious that the early Christians believed that the Gods of the Pagans were the demons who accompanied Satan in his fall and were allowed to roam over the earth deluding mankind as Satan did Adam, that the most virtuous of ancients could at the utmost hope to secure the least noisome part of hell. Mahomedanism less original than Christianity had yet to declare that Mahomet was the last of the prophets and that after his preachings even the Jews and the Christians have no salvation.

But the case of social reform is extremely different; where it is not accompanied by religious

heterodoxy, progress cannot but be gradual, the preaching should not but be inoffensive. It is possible and desirable that the marriageable age of girls should advance year by year; society cannot at once fly from cradle marriages to spinster wedlocks, from widow asceticism to the license of old widows often marrying young husbands, from rigid abstinence to unbounded liberty of food and drink. Change will and ought to come slowly, the people should be accustomed to every step in the progress and forget that they are changing their customs and habits. The history of social reform will convince us that the leaders of reform were never distinguished by moderation, by respect for the existing things and men, by felicity of speech which, while it condemned, at the same time did not insult. It is rumoured that the great Shastric controversy which raged in Poona might have ended in a compromise, a concession that child widows may be remarried. But the reforming party would not be satisfied without a change at once sweeping and unlimited. They thought themselves justified in their irrational obstinacy by the argument that it was an unnatural wrong that while widowers of sexagenarian or octagenarian age were allowed to marry only virgin widows be granted the precious privilege. Saturated as these reformers were with these and kindred radical feelings and arguments they failed to see that society was not constituted on the most equitable considerations nor could be reduced to a rule of three in a day, a year, a generation or even a century, that even the best types of society were not yet regulated in the just proportions of equality and liberty. They had read the history of the French Revolution, had admired and imbibed the philosophy of the revolutionists, but had failed to grasp the lessons of the catastrophe. Nay, they had never understood or found out the true secret of social success, viz. progress by compromise, a subject which has been quite recently explained with perspicuity by the Hon. Mr. Justice Telang in a Marathi lecture. It is unnecessary

for me to enter into the details ; what I have said above will suffice for the purposes of the chapter. Had a beginning then been made, the cause of reform would have begun to show fruit under the more favourable circumstances which every day brings to bear upon it. But the extreme views of reformers created an opposition which nipped the flower in the bud and has discouraged similar trials in future.

And if the reformers were uncompromising in their claims they were equally uncompromising in their condemnations. They were neither checked by respect for the feelings of aged men nor by respect for truth and patient investigation. Everything old seemed to be rotten and cruel, unthinking and unmerciful, and the spirit of exaggeration, the love of telling effect often seduced them from the sway of sobriety and sweetness. It is needless to quote instances, to gravely sit to substantiate the charge. True it is that you cannot call your ancestors fools and tyrants without exposing yourself to the same accusation. They were the products of circumstances equally with yourselves, and deserve to be respected. require to be convinced, not despised or condemned. Similarly exaggeration is often the bane of social preaching. I remember once the great commotion created by one of Mr. Malabari's allegations that the majority of Hindu widows were immoral, which however is to belie one of the most obvious truths discernible by any accurate observer. Nay, the Hindu society may well be proud of the class of self-sacrificing and devoted women for whose peers you may vainly look for over the surface of the earth. But irrespective of the truth of the allegation, a careful and cautious preacher would never exaggerate a point in a manner which is altogether irrelevant and which would only serve to inflame hatred and opposition in the ranks of his hearers. In short, to say that there is scarcely a village in India, scarcely a hamlet whose shrine is not desecrated by a child murder, is an unwise hyperbole induced by over-zeal in the condemnation of

Hindu widows, and is one against which every social reformer should carefully guard himself.

Conclusion.

I have taken the reader through a rather long discussion of the causes of the failure of social reform agitation as carried hitherto and the condition of the progress and success of religious or social movements. I doubt not that the subject is a vast one and each point may furnish a basis for an independent discourse. But as this is intended to be only a preface to what I have to say on the main question, I have not discussed the points at greater length. I have gone into the details in some places in order to elucidate the most important points, and have taken long extracts from Milman's *Latin Christianity* and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in order to set off my humble composition with diamonds of pure lustre. Above all I have attempted to deduce from the history of the magnificent faiths, preached during historical times,—Buddhism, Christianity, Islamism and Protestantism—certain rules for the preaching of social reform, which I mean to follow in the task I have undertaken. The rules are:—

I. The conversion of Hindu women and securing their aid in the progress of reform.

II. Enlisting the sympathy of the masses.

III. The seeking of legislation with the approval of the majority of the Hindus.

IV. A complete discussion of the evils attributable to the customs of Hindu marriage.

V. The proposal of a practical and effectual scheme of reform.

VI. Example and sacrifice.

VII. The desirability of reconciling the proposed

reforms with Hindu Shastras and of observing strictly the present condition of the Hindu religion in other respects.

VIII. Avoiding haste, ultraism and offensive preachings.

In order that the public may fully understand how I am going to apply and observe these principles I propose to state in the form of a prospectus the outlines of my work and the manner of its publication. I propose to issue a series of pamphlets on the following subjects.

I. The ends of marriage and their relative importance.

II. The history of early marriages and their physical and moral effects on Hindu society.

III. Enforced widowhood—its history and evils.

IV. Late marriages and their inevitable consequence, choice by girls—whether a good reform.

V. Widow remarriages at all ages.

VI. A modified reform proposed by me.

(a) Girls shall not be married before they have completed their 12th year. (b) Married girls shall not be sent to their husband's houses until matured. (c) Unmatured widows may be remarried.

VII. The opinions of the Shastras on the limits of the marriageable age of girls and on widow remarriage. Reform proposed not opposed to the Shastras.

VIII. The nature of the legislative enactments which would be useful and desirable.

As I have said in the beginning of this pamphlet I wish to subjoin my views on the limits of female education for ordinary walks in life and to propose a course of school and subjects the main features of which are as follows: (1)

Primary schools for unmarried girls only ; (2) secondary schools for married but un-matured girls and held only in the afternoon ; (3) higher education to be left to the convenience of women and institutions.

In order that these pamphlets should reach women and especially the masses it is proposed to publish them in Marathi and distribute them gratis and free of charge.* The expense will be borne by a number of patrons and with the aid of voluntary subscriptions. The pamphlets will also make room for interesting contributions chiefly intended for women. It is possible at some future date to gauge the strength of public opinion by means of a petition for legislation circulated for signatures of the people. How far this and the other conditions enunciated above are followed and what success attends the execution of this undertaking, I leave it to the people to judge for themselves.

* About 4,500 copies of the Marathi translation of this pamphlet have already been so distributed.