

APPENDIX 'A'.

[*The Bombay Chronicle*, February 28, 1944.]

"CASTE MUST GO."

The leading article in your issue of the 4th instant under the uncompromising caption, "Caste Must Go," deals in the right spirit with a major problem of Indian politics. But it suffers from some inaccuracies and does not go to the very root of the problem. It says that 2,500 years ago Buddha denounced caste, and that "for centuries thereafter caste was practically abolished in India." This is a popular delusion. Caste never was abolished in India; and Buddhism—and even Buddha himself—never denounced the caste system. Buddha only asserted the right of the lowest caste to share in the spiritual culture reserved for the three highest castes and monopolised by the Brahmins. In fact any number of stories in Buddhist literature show that caste and untouchability were not at all affected by Buddha's teaching. To take only two typical ones: A princess washes her eyes because they are polluted by seeing a Chandala; and when two untouchables, who enter the Taxila University pretending to be 'caste' men, are found out, they are manhandled and ignominiously cast out. In fact, a cardinal doctrine in respect of Buddhahood requires that whenever a Buddha is born, he *must* be born in a Kshatriya family. And this is exactly what is believed in Jainism also; every Jina *must* be born of Kshatriya parents. This insistence on caste distinctions in Buddhism and Jainism was quite natural and inevitable, and that for the reason I have repeatedly pointed out, namely, that caste is an inseparable concomitant and result of the belief in 'Karma' and reincarnation. Neither Buddhism nor Jainism discarded this fundamental Hindu doctrine of Karma and rebirth, whatever else both may have discarded when rejecting the authority of Hindu scriptures. Hence, "Caste must go" can only mean "Hinduism must go." This interdependence of the two dogmas, — Karmic reincarnation and its inevitable consequence, caste inequality by birth,—has nullified all the 'denunciations' of caste by the 'numerous saints and religious reformers,' ancient and modern, mentioned by you. As a matter of fact, not one of them, down to the present day, has really 'denounced' caste; they all have concentrated on surface treatment

I shall ignore the amusing personal compliments paid to me by Mr. Gandhi, though he seems to have forgotten, or ignored, two highly revealing special interviews I had with him in 1920 and 1921. But I cannot congratulate him—or those who have put him in this unenviable position by getting such questions posed—upon this farcical end of the brave show of 'answering' me that I have been hearing of any time these four months. I should like to know if even 'Dear M. ' to whom Mr. Gandhi's 'reply' was addressed in the first instance, or Professor Wadia who also was anxiously waiting for this 'reply' like myself, is satisfied with this sadly humiliating exhibition of inept shiftiness and disingenuous evasion."

CONCLUSION

Commenting on Mr. Gandhi's curtailed and publicised 'reply,' the *Times of India* (18-4-1945) wrote: "Mr. Gandhi's latest pronouncement on the caste system appears to mark an advance on his earlier views, he has in the past defended the caste system. . . . Mr. Gandhi's unequivocal denunciation of this institution should encourage Hindu social reformers throughout the country." But the leading Congress paper of Bombay naturally knows the Mahatma better; and so, putting its finger unerringly on the catch in Mr. Gandhi's words "caste. . . . as we know it," pointed out by me also, wrote: "The words 'as we know it' may be interpreted by different persons in different ways and that may hinder reform. We understand Gandhiji to mean that the present-day caste restrictions should all go, namely, the obligation to follow the caste profession and restrictions against interdining or intermarrying with persons of any other caste. If we have misinterpreted Gandhiji, we may be corrected." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 23-4-1945]. Thus to the wary Congress paper Mr. Gandhi's so-called 'denunciation' of caste is not so 'unequivocal' as it is to the unwary *Times of India*. In fact, as I have shown above, it is quite equivocal. I do not think it necessary to add anything except that the more I study Mr. Gandhi's writings and pronouncements, the more I am constrained to agree with what Mr. Jinnah said about him a few months ago in the Punjab. Presiding at the Jullunder session of the All India Muslim Students' Conference, Mr. Jinnah referred to Mr. Gandhi's summersaults in political and other fields and concluded: "He does not mean what he says and does not say what he means." [*Eastern Times*, 17-11-1944].

of the disease, such as 'temple entry' (real or pretended—in practice it has proved a ghastly farce), or a new label like 'Harijan' (which only confirms the stigma under a flattering name). These being the bedrock facts, the conclusion arrived at by Dr. Ambedkar and other leaders of the Untouchable castes is inevitable, namely, that, there is no salvation for them in the Hindu fold so long as the basic doctrines of the Hindu socio-religious polity remain what they are. It is no use deceiving ourselves any longer; the caste Hindus cannot, and will not absorb the Untouchables. It is best to face facts squarely, and give up such camouflage as 'temple entry', 'uplift of our Harijan brothers,' and so forth, and let these sixty millions of Indians go out of the Hindu communion so that they may be able to live with self-respect as human beings, and not as patronised and barely tolerated inferior creatures called by courtesy 'people of God.'

So we come to the question: Which religion should they adopt? After a long and careful consideration of the problem I have come to the conclusion that for their own good, and also for the ultimate good of the country, they should in a body adopt Christianity. I am not a Christian, nor am I attracted by the Christian creed as so many educated Hindus are; I am influenced by none but purely practical considerations in making this suggestion. Were I a Brahmin myself, I would strongly urge the same course. If they adopt the other alternative and turn Muslims, the baffling Hindu-Muslim problem will become hopelessly insoluble; it is not at all necessary to explain in detail why it should be so. Secondly, the Hindu community will be actually strengthened by shedding these irksome 'irritants' it cannot assimilate; and if they turn Christians they will lose their present growing bitterness and animosity against the Hindus and will be equally friendly with both Hindus and Muslims. Thirdly, as they are, almost by nature, worshippers of a Mother-Goddess, 'Mata,' they will have the benign and beautiful Mother Mary to worship instead of the gruesome and malignant goddesses of smallpox, cholera, etc., etc. Fourthly, they will belong to a religion to which belong the most progressive nations of the world, and will thus escape the baneful influence of the present day false nationalism that blindly regards everything 'western' as intrinsically evil. Finally, when thus emancipated from their age-long disabilities and superstitions they will become a power in the land that may hold the balance between the two contending major com-

munities, and thus make something like real and stable self-government really possible.

J. E. SANJANA.

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 6, 1944.]

“CASTE MUST GO.”

The letter appearing under the above caption in your issue of the 28th Feb. written by Mr. J. E. Sanjana, makes extremely interesting reading. It reminds one of the most interesting series of articles written some years ago by “Historicus” in the “Times of India,” when that paper was making a laudable attempt, through these learned articles, containing quotations of communal leaders, to create feelings of goodwill and amity between the Hindus and Muslims in India and thus helping His Majesty's Brittanic Government to fulfil their promise of conferring the boon of Swaraj on India the moment communal unity and goodwill made their appearance in this country! It was unfortunate, however, that some ‘short-sighted’ M.L.C. was responsible for the disappearance of these highly spiced articles from that daily.

Mr. Sanjana's advice given to the Depressed Classes to become Christians is no doubt a sane one. But Mr. Sanjana has made a few mistakes in his interesting letter which should be brought to his notice.

Mr. Sanjana says, “Buddhism and even Buddha himself never denounced the caste system. In fact any number of stories in Buddhist literature show that caste and untouchability were not at all affected by Buddha's teachings.” If Mr. Sanjana cares to go through the three Pali books in Buddhist literature, viz:—Assalayan Sutta (Majjhima Pannasak 2, Vagga, 5), Vasetta Sutta (Majjhima Panna Saka 2. Vagga. 5.) Sutta Nipata. Vagga. 3), and Vasula Sutta (Sutta Nipata, Vagga. 1) he will find that Lord Buddha has denounced the caste system and untouchability in definite terms. I shall give here a few quotations of Lord Buddha from these to prove that the great teacher did denounce caste system and untouchability. When the Brahmin Ashwalayana argues about the superiority of the Brahmins, Lord Buddha quotes to him the admonitions that Asita Devala Rishi administered to the seven Brahmin recluses, viz:—“You assert that the Brahmins are superior to

all the other castes and that they are the direct descendants of God Brahma. But are you sure that your original ancestors married only Brahmin women, and that your grandmothers and great grandmothers married only Brahmin men?" They admitted that they could not say anything definite about it. So Lord Buddha advised Ashwalayana not to persist in saying that Brahmins were superior to others. In Vasetta Sutta Lord Buddha says, "A man does not become a Brahmin by birth, but only by deeds does one become a Brahmin." In Vasula Sutta Lord Buddha says: "No human being is born a Chandala (untouchable). Only by his deeds does a person become a Chandala or a Brahmin. A man who is frequently overcome by anger, who is revengeful, sinful, atheistic, or robs others is a Chandala." In fact Lord Buddha revived the high philosophy and tenets preached by the Vedas and Upanishads, as the pure old Aryan culture had undergone degeneration and the people had started observing rigid rules of caste and were performing bloody sacrifices wrongly saying that they had been sanctioned by the Vedas. Nowhere in the Vedas or Upanishads could be found any passages which justify the caste system as it exists to-day. No doubt, some centuries after the death of Lord Buddha the Mahayana school came into existence and later on transformed itself into canonical Buddhism, with its mythology, and a sort of caste system did make its appearance and the whole system gradually transformed itself into the present day Pauranik Hinduism. In short Lord Buddha did emphatically denounce the caste system, and it is a travesty of facts to say that caste and untouchability were not at all affected by Buddhist teaching.

Mr. Sanjana is perfectly right when he says: "There is no salvation for the untouchables in the Hindu fold so long as the basic doctrines of the Hindu socio-religious polity remain what they are." To this I will add something more and say that the Hindu religion itself as it exists at present is doomed unless it changes its present ideas about caste system and untouchability. However Mr. Sanjana quotes Dr. Ambedkar about the change of religion of the untouchables. Perhaps Mr. Sanjana is not aware that the learned Dr. Ambedkar is one of the most profound scholars of Buddhism (a fact known to very few), and is at heart a staunch Buddhist. Many a time this great student of Buddhism has expressed that the salvation of India and the whole world lies in following the noble tenets and philosophy preached by Lord Buddha. It need not be

emphatically maintained that Dr. Ambedkar would never have entertained any love for a religion which supported caste in any form.

Lastly Mr. Sanjana is advising the untouchables to embrace the Christianity followed by the most progressive nations of the world. I am sure if Lord Jesus Christ had come down to this sinful world to-day, and seen with His own eyes what the so called progressive Christian nations are doing, He would have said with a shudder "Is this the Christianity that I preached to the ancestors of these nations, and for which I sacrificed myself on the cross? God have mercy on them." In short if Mr. Sanjana wants the untouchables to become Christians let them follow the Christianity preached by Lord Jesus, and practised by Father Damian who worked among the lepers in the Pacific islands, and by Rev. C. F. Andrews who worked for the down-trodden coolies in India, Africa and Fiji islands and not the Christianity practised by the "most progressive nations of today."

"K."

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 6, 1944.]

HUNTING THE HINDUS.

The activities of the British Government when they flung themselves upon Nationalist India in August 1942 had curious by-products. It produced the war-mentality against the Hindus. The Government singled them out for special treatment in the matter of collective fines. There was a balleyhoo to all those who wanted to hunt the Hindus.

The Muslim League desires to split their homeland into two; Prof. Coupland into six. Recently one Mr. J. E. Sanjana, an ex-Oriental Translator to the Government of Bombay who while in service wrote anti-national articles in the "Times of India" some years ago, always a bitter enemy of Hindus, Hinduism and Hindu aspirations, has been falling foul with the Rr. Hon Dr. M. R. Jayakar on account of the latter's remark about the historicity of Vikramaditya. Though a Parsi himself he has in another article appealed to the Harijans to embrace Christianity on the plea that the Hindus are too bad a company.

That the Hindus like any other community in the world have defects, no one will deny. That they are to blame for the political

serfdom of India as much as the Mussalmans, no one can deny. That untouchability is a sin and must be wiped out, almost all thinking Hindus concede. That caste has outlived its usefulness has been claimed by Hindu leaders more than non-Hindu leaders. No Hindu claims perfection. No Hindu with his catholic traditions would resent a sympathetic criticism.

But when a community of thirty-two crores, which has survived the shocks of time, which has traditions, social organisations and collective will be (sic) inspired by some of the noblest ideals known to mankind is sought to be hunted by men at the behest of the British policy, it is time that the Hindus dropped their apologetic outlook. Their strength and their weakness are theirs to scrutinise, to restore, to conquer. But they have as much right to exist as anyone else on this earth. They owe no apology to anyone for being what they are or have been.

If Hindus celebrate Vikramaditya festivals amateur historians like Mr. Sanjana with arrogant omniscience try to sneer at them for their lack of scientific knowledge. To the Hindus today, however, Vikramaditya is not a dead conqueror but a living hero. In him we live and he lives in us. A Vikramaditya celebration is not the announcement of a chemical analysis. It is not even a matter of glorying in the past; not merely a voice of the present. As I said at Cawnpore "it is the upsurge of a sub-conscious national motive. In the apotheosis of this hero we seek the unabashed expression of our supreme desire. In it we stand as what we are—the heir to immortal greatness. . . Vikramaditya is our Pillar of Fire leading us from bondage to the Land of Promise."

At Lahore while speaking at the inauguration of the University Sanskrit Association I dealt with the historic causes that gave birth to the caste system and made it rigid. Next day I received several angry letters attacking me for having tried to trace the 'raison d'être' of a social phenomenon unique in the world's history. No one can charge me for being fond of a rigid system in these days. There is scarcely a bond of it which I have not personally broken. But I protest against the tendency of many to condemn it without studying the forces and conditions which led to its growth, its dynamic and static aspects, its values. Where would India and its Culture have been when Central Asian hordes or the West descended upon her, without the caste system?

The much worshipped equality which Rousseau taught us and in the name of which the Hindus are condemned, is dead and buried as a living principle. Hitler preaches the superiority of the Germans. Mr. Churchill is the unabashed apostle of White domination of the world. In South Africa we are hunted, segregated and humiliated as pariahs. We know by experience that the White man who talks to us about equality lives segregated as a superman in this land. Favourite jobs are reserved for him. Wherever he lives there spring up a white suburb and a white man's club where Indians are unwelcome. Did we not hear in a big city in this country where, some years ago, the European Club maintained a Board "Indians and Dogs not allowed," till an Indian club put up a board "Europeans and Dogs not allowed!" Who can say that this colour caste system is an improvement upon the cultural hierarchy of the caste system? Who can say that the dissolution of the rigidity of the caste system under the quickening influence of modern democracy and nationalism may not create a better social system than the West possesses? With our limited knowledge and plentiful ignorance let us not be too dogmatic in our judgments.

When the British wanted India to be properly defamed Miss Mayo did the trick. Now that the rulers are angry with the Hindu community for their nationalist aspirations, Miss Mayo's foreign and inderogenous are bound to spring up almost anywhere. But like Shri Krishna the Hindu community can claim "I am Time." We have lived for centuries. The genius of our culture has more in it than what the rest of the world has produced. And nothing shall deter us from pursuing with steadfastness the destiny which our immortal heritage has carved out for us.

K. M. MUNSHI.

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 20, 1944.]

"CASTE MUST GO"

I am highly gratified to see that my letter under your brave caption "Caste Must Go" has not been ignored, but has elicited two long and sharp criticisms, which seem to me fatal to each other as they are written from two diametrically opposed points of view. Of these critics, I take K. more seriously as there is some attempt at argument in him, and shall answer him, argument for argument.

But I must for the present ignore his first paragraph, full of round-about ponderous sarcasms about my antecedents, which is utterly impertinent to the question at issue; for, my interesting antecedents are even more irrelevant to the problem of untouchability than perhaps K.'s own as he is evidently a Hindu professing to be a Buddhist, and certainly than the quite intriguing antecedents of Mr. K. M. Munshi who is a rank communalist. These person a lities, and Mr. Munshi's letter, I will deal with when I have done with K. and his letter.

K. tells me that I have mistaken the teaching of Buddha and that Buddha "did denounce caste and untouchability." And he goes on to quote excerpts from Buddhist texts which appear to him to support his view,—which is, it seems, the modern and modernising Buddhist's view, not that of the dispassionate outsider seeking for truth. If K. will glance through the works of life-long scholars of Buddhism, and if he will try to see Buddha and Buddhism in their historical setting, and also try to set aside the partisan exaggerations of later and especially present-day followers and admirers who see their hero through a highly refracting rosy haze,—he will realise that Buddhism was not that terrific world conquering revolution he and they believe it was, but only a ripple on the vast ocean of 'sanatan'—traditional—Hinduism, which had, before this heresy, swallowed Vedic Aryanism—(or rather pre-Vedic Aryanism, as the Vedas themselves are, at least in phonetics as well as vocabulary, and perhaps in ideology too, considerably Dravidianised)—and which has since swallowed all the other isms and ologies that must have come in with at least twenty-five foreign invaders and conquerors who have been absorbed by it in the last 25 centuries more or less. For it is perfectly true that Hindu culture (it is a gross misnomer to call it 'Aryan' culture) has remained almost stable throughout these centuries just because it has cared more for itself than for more mundane things. Again K. has entirely missed the fact that the words of Buddha he quotes are intended, not for laymen, but for those who have renounced the world to join his order of monks or Bhikkhus. I would ask him to read carefully the interesting dispute in 'Chullavagga' among these monks as to who among them should have precedence in the matter of "the best seat, the best water and the best food,"—that Bhikkhu who belonged to a Kshatriya family "before he entered the Order," or one who belonged to a Brahmin family "before he entered the Order."

This clearly means that before entering the Order, that is, renouncing the world, the monks did belong to different castes with conventional and traditional ideas of seniority and superiority. The Buddha tells them a parable of birds and beasts and exhorts the monks to give up such ideas; be it noted that he addresses them as "you who have left the world to follow so well taught a doctrine and discipline." Evidently he would not have objected to these distinctions if these disputants had remained mere laymen; but since they had renounced the world they must renounce name and caste,—exactly as the Vaidika Hindu had to do when renouncing the world and taking Sannyāsa. [S.B.E. XX, p. 192]. Again, the same idea is inculcated by means of the parable of the rivers losing their identity in the ocean: "Just so, O Bhikkhus, do these four castes—the Khattiyas, the Brahmanas, the Vessas and the Suddas—when they have gone forth from the world under the doctrine and the discipline proclaimed by the Tathagata renounce their name and lineage. . . ." [*Ibid.* p. 304]. He does not deny or denounce caste as such; he simply says that having renounced the world they must forget their name and caste,—just as even today the Hindu sannyasi is expected to do. In fact, he could not so denounce it as he was as much a child of his milieu as Christ was of his with his inherited narrow Jewish ideas. He accepted the social polity as he found it, and only tried to soften it as compared with the rigour and exclusiveness of the Brahmanic interpretation of it: otherwise, as the great scholar Hermann Jacobi has rightly observed, the Buddha's Bhikkhu "was but a copy of the Hindu sannyasin." But what Jacobi says later is still more germane to the question at issue: "It may be remarked that the monastical Orders of the Jainas or Buddhists though copied from the Brahmans were chiefly and originally intended for Kshatriyas. Buddha addressed himself in the first line to noble and rich men, as has been pointed out by Professor Oldenberg. . . ." It should also be borne in mind that the direct teaching of Buddha was only for the elect few, the monks belonging to such noble and rich families, who had seen the vanity and futility of the world and renounced it. That is why, as Jacobi says, "the Buddhists were confined at least in the first two centuries of their church to a small part of the country." What ground is there then for averring that Buddha and his teaching revolutionised the whole Hindu world and destroyed all caste distinctions for some centuries? Strict Hinduism reserved the final stage

of Sannyasa for the three higher castes, and later only for the Brahmans. But Buddha welcomed not only Shudras but even Chandalas into his Order of monks. As Jacobi again observes with perfect justice : " Thus we see that germs of dissenting sects like those of the Buddhists and the Jainas were contained in the institute of the fourth Ashrama (sannyasa), and that the latter was the model of the heretical sects ; therefore Buddhism and Jainism must be regarded as religions developed out of Brahminism not by a sudden reformation, but prepared by a religious movement going on for a long time." [S.B.E., XXII, pp. XXIX to XXXII]. And this has also been the opinion of all careful students of Buddhism, especially in the matter of castes ; all recognised authorities are agreed that Buddha and Buddhism accepted the caste system as they found it. Richard Fick in his ' The Social Organisation In North-East India In Buddha's Time ' (translated by Shishir Kumar Maitra), clinches the point thus : " The castes continued after the spread of the Buddhistic doctrine quite as well as before ; the social organisation in India was not in the least altered by Buddha's appearance." (P. 32). The same is the opinion of Dr. E. J. Thomas : " The fact of caste was not denied. The Buddhists even formed a rival theory of its origin, and placed the warrior caste, to which Buddha belonged, above the Brahmanical. It was only within the Order that the individual lost his ' name and clan.' " ['Early Buddhist Scriptures', p. 171]. Not only so, even the Hindu ritual continued unchanged among the Buddhist laymen : " But the layman could not, like the monk, discard his caste, and sacrificial ceremonies were needed at birth and other stages throughout his life as a householder." [*Ibid.* p. 185]. If K. wants Indian authorities, let him refer to ' Concepts of Buddhism ' by the indefatigable Bimal C. Law (pp. 15, 16 and 22), and Ratilal N. Mehta's exhaustive and scholarly thesis ' Pre-Buddhist India ' (P. 245). I particularly recommend this book to K. as a salutary corrective for his emotional and therefore erroneous estimate of ' the Lord ' Buddha's gospel and his influence in ancient India.

As for K.'s citation of Buddha's bowdlerised arguments based on the uncertainty of any man's actual descent,—“ are you sure that your grandmothers and great-grandmothers married only Brahman men ? ”—perhaps K. does not know that it was met by Jaimini in his *Mimamsa Aphorisms*, and by Shabarasvamin in his great scholium on these aphorisms and again by Kumarila Bhatta in his

huge commentary, with a frank cynicism that will take K.'s breath away. For these Mimamsakas were not mealy-mouthed apologists or believers in the 'hush hush' policy which is unfortunately so prevalent in presentday India; they were rigorous logicians and realists. They go further than Buddha and cheerfully admit 'the failings of women.' I would request K. to look up these illuminating pages in Sir Ganga Nath Jha's translation of the "Tantra-Vartika." If I reproduce them here Mr. Munshi may go into a hysterical fit and howl "Uncle Mayo!"

Now for K.'s startling beliefs (1) that the Vedas did not sanction bloody sacrifices, and (2) that 'rigid rules of castes' had no place in the 'high philosophy preached by the Upanishads.' Where did K. get these 'facts' from? What were 'Agnishtoma' and 'Jyotishtoma,' and 'Vajapeya,' and 'Ashvamedha' and fifty other Vedic sacrifices if not bloody sacrifices at which goats, cows, bulls, horses were sacrificed and eaten,—not in ones and twos only but in their hundreds and thousands in the more important 'Satras?' And as for 'shruti' on castes, why, the very root and rationale of the caste system and also untouchability lie in the famous and terrible Chhandogya text: "Atha ya iha kapuya charanah.....te kapuyam yonim apadyeran śvayonim va sukarayonim va Chandalayonim va"—"and those whose acts in this life are evil attain to an evil birth,—the birth of a dog, or of a hog, or that of a Chandala." (X. 2). K. is evidently a born Hindu and professing Buddhist, but decidedly he has yet to learn the very elements of Buddhism and Hinduism. He writes, again, as a wishful sentimentalist,—and writes irresponsibly,—when he says that "the Hindu religion is doomed unless it changes its present ideas about caste system and untouchability." K. does not know the wonderful vitality of this ancient socio-religious polity that has defied perhaps fifty such 'dooms' in the last fifty centuries. The profoundest impression made so far was made by the Aryan invaders; and what remains of real Aryanism to-day? Idol worship, temple worship, linga worship, caste and cow worship, Karma and re-birth,—the very bases of historical Hinduism,—are utterly non-Aryan; they are pre-Vedic, indigenous. Even descent from Vedic Rishis claimed by our Brahmans is almost exactly on a par with the Arab or Persian or Turkish or Afghan descent claimed by too many Indian Muslims. As my friend and senior, Balvantray K. Thakore, has rightly said with dry humour recently in Gujarati: "At present the words

'Bhargava Brahmana' in our language can only mean Brahmans living at Bhrigukshetra—that is, Broach,—where again 'Bhrigu' means 'crocodile'; this word Bhrigu has nothing to do with the Rishi Bhrigu." [Lectures on Modern Gujarati Poetry, p. 175]. As early as Baudhayana (cir. 500 B.C.), four-fifths of present-day 'Akhandā' India,—Avanti, Anga, Magadha, Śaurashtra, Dakshinapatha, Upavrit, Sindhu and Sauvira,—were bluntly declared to be inhabited by 'Sankirṇayonayah,'—'men of mixed blood.' As late as Kumarila again (cir. 600 A.D.), all outside the narrow limits of Aryavarta north of the Vindhya are called non-Aryans and even Mlechchhas. So when K. talks of 'pure Aryan' culture he talks of something that exists in the fevered imaginations of half-baked shallow sciolists whose nauseating frothy rant about imagined and imaginary Rishi ancestors, the Bhrigus, has been castigated by some writers in the *Jyotirdhara* and *Prajabandhu* of Ahmedabad only a few months ago.

Finally, K. after frankly agreeing with me that the depressed classes must go out of the Hindu fold, insinuates in a roundabout way that perhaps I don't know that Dr. Ambedkar is 'at heart a staunch Buddhist'; and so, inasmuch as the progressive Christian nations are furiously warring amongst themselves, the depressed classes should become Buddhists, or in the alternative, Christians only of the type of Father Damien or Rev. C. F. Andrews. I may state here that Dr. Ambedkar knows me, and also my views on the subject; I have marginally annotated for him a copy of his pamphlet on the subject; and I think he now knows that Buddhism was almost as caste-ridden as Hinduism. As for wars,—taking a panoramic view of Indian history 'from the first syllable of recorded time'—I mean real ascertained history and also our epic and Pauranic legends,—can K. show me a single lustrum, nay, a single year, before the Satanic British Government got firmly in the saddle, when wars—a hundred wars in a hundred corners of this vast land—were not on as soon as the glorious 'Vikrama Kāla,' that is the season of adventures, of invasion and raid and rapine, arrived, regularly after the Dasserā? Was it not the almost sacred duty of every king, according to our greatest writer on polity, the 'Lord' Kautilya, to aggrandise himself at the cost of weaker neighbours by means fair or foul, and even fiendish? Did not this teaching of this venerable authority find its glorious last fulfilment in the annual raids—proudly called 'Mulukhgiri' and regretfully recalled to this

day—of the Marathas, right down to the end of the glorious eighteenth century,—in Karnatak, in Andhra and Tamil lands, in Gujarat, in Kathiawad, in Malwa, in Rajputana, in the Doab, in the Punjab, in Bihar, in Orissa and last though not the least, in the happy Bengal of the mid-eighteenth century? When are we going to give up this ecstatic but static, and therefore idiotic, idealisation of an imaginary golden age in the dead past, and learn instead to fix our gaze on the fateful future? When are we going to learn to be realists like the erring, fighting, Satanic but dynamic, and therefore progressive, nations of the West? What has Turkey done? What have Egypt and Iraq and Syria and Iran done? As I said twenty years ago, if we want Western forms of Government and polity, if we want to be one of the respected nations of the world, we must Westernise—Hellenise—our minds. For, as the humble adage which I quoted then rightly has it, “we cannot eat our cake and have it too”; we cannot stick or go back to our old world ideas and ideals of seventh century Arabia, or Yajnavalkya's or Vikrama's India, and live as a world-respected and self-respecting modern democratic nation too. Hence the absurdity of asking the untouchables to adopt the literalist and quietist Christianity of “turn your left cheek if the right be smitten,” or the true Buddhism of renouncing and running away from the world. If they did they would continue to be downtrodden as much as they are today—if not more.

J. E. SANJANA.

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 22, 1944]

“CASTE MUST GO”

Anyone who reads my original letter on this subject and observes its detached temper and cold colourless phrasing, must feel puzzled about the frenzied and illogical fury of Mr. K. M. Munshi's onslaught (in very deplorable English) on “one Mr. J. E. Sanjana,”—whom, by the way, one Mr. K. M. Munshi had to court assiduously twenty years ago for a paper to be read at the Gujarati Literary Conference held at Bombay, and whom the same Mr. Munshi had to court as assiduously again about half a dozen years ago in behalf of a friend and protege of his own. “Should auld acquaintance be forgot?” And that in so unseemly a manner? Well, well! Such is the corroding influence of active politics, and

such the intoxication of a little power—'amalno amal' as they say in Kathiawad,—especially when politics and power are tasted by little minds. "You cannot touch pitch and remain undefiled," as I told Mahadev Desai long ago when he asked my advice as to which of two offers then before him he should accept. I told him to reject the safer one from the worldly point of view—it was from his old friend V. L. Mehta—and unhesitatingly to follow his conscience and his idealism which prompted him to prefer Mr. Gandhi's invitation to join him; but I warned him never to forget that the cleanest politics, even 'spiritualised' politics, must clash with his idealism. But Mr. Munshi never has believed in idealism; the 'main chance' has been his one ideal in life. No wonder then that he can indulge in such bad manners, bad logic and bad English in his idiotic outburst. But I shall not imitate him; though I can assure him that if it comes to a slanging match, I am not a novice at the game,—as a Parsi poet and several others know to their cost; "ham bhi munh men zaban rakhte hain,"—I, too, have a fair command of Billingsgate, which, moreover, I can certainly use more artistically than crude botchers like Mr. Munshi can.

The poet above referred to brought forward in a purely literary controversy those same writings of mine in the *Times of India* which both K. and Mr. Munshi now bring forward as an argument against me when the subject of the discussion is 'caste and untouchability'! So I must once for all dispose of these writings which seem to serve as the final unfailing—'Rāma-bāṇ'—argument of my opponents, in any controversy, on any topic. Thus do little minds—like great—think alike!

What K. says in his paragraph of personal amenities is, like his knowledge of Buddhism and Hinduism, very mixed up and based on wrong information. I never wrote in the *Times of India* as 'Historicus'; that writer, so far as I know, was a professor of history who wrote very serious articles; I wrote several articles as 'Hystericus,' poking fun at the 'history' of 'Historicus', of the then Vice-Chancellor, Sir C. Setalvad, of Mr. Jayakar and others. Those articles were not, as K. avers, 'quotations of communal leaders'; they dealt with history, caste, untouchability, etc. The 'quotations of communal leaders,'—and also from numerous other nationalist leaders and papers,—appeared in the 'Through Indian Eyes' column. That column again did not disappear, as K. imagines, because 'some shortsighted M.L.C.' brought about its ces-

sation ;—just as I had received no ' behest ' (as Mr. Munshi avers) from Government to write that column, I never received any—not even a direct or indirect hint—that I should stop writing it. I stopped writing it because I and my editor decided to stop it, especially as under the management of its ' Damaging Editor ' our main assailant had disappeared. It will be strange news to K. and Mr. Munshi that the first man to congratulate me upon the result of the debate on this column in the local Council was the late Lakshmidas Tairsee who especially had himself introduced to me for the purpose. It will be surprising news to K. and Mr. Munshi that Dr. Ambedkar has twice borrowed the file of all my writings in the *Times of India* and carefully gone through them and quoted the ' Through Indian Eyes ' column as an authority several times in his book on ' Pakistan. ' He has also urged me more than once to republish all those articles in book form. Finally, K. and Mr. Munshi will be stunned to learn that after a very long and close study of that same file, obtained through my friend Captain Rustam Dadachanji, Mr. Devadas Gandhi offered me a few years ago the editorship of the *Hindustan Times*. He was at me for nearly two hours (in 1920 his father had sized me up in two minutes when Mahadev was keen on my taking up *Young India* and *Navajivan*) and I had to argue a lot before I could convince him that I could not change caps so easily as can some political mountebanks and cheap-jacks who today follow a Mahatma and tomorrow fawn like poodles upon a Sir Maurice. I was not, and I am not, ashamed of anything I have written, ever since the writing itch seized me just over forty years ago. I am rather proud of everything I have written—not only because of its definite superiority in the matter of clear thinking and clear writing to anything which masters of muddled thinking and shoddy or slushy writing like Messrs. K., Munshi and Co. have written or are ever likely to write,—but also because of its absolute sincerity and conscientious regard for objective truth,—virtues which slim and slimy politicians are constitutionally incapable of appreciating or even understanding. And I have not written one single sentence at the dictate of anyone save my own sweet will ; or to please anyone save my own self. So much for my antecedents. But may I ask Mr. Munshi what they have to do with the problem of untouchability, or the one he has mixed up with it, the historicity of Vikrama ? Would it be fair, and (what is more to the point) would it be relevant to the problem at issue, if I were to bring into

this discussion his scarcely decent political summersaults, his positively indecent literary exhibitionism, his relations with his literary devils whose brains and even theses he has openly been accused of picking and lifting from, or his interesting adventures in film-land? I hope he will not indulge again in such despicable pettifogging tactics and street arab manners.

Having been inured for full forty years to this last argument of uncultured minds, indulgence in vulgar and (what is worse) irrelevant personalities, I am indifferent to the abuse of such vulgarians. But I am really distressed to see the unfortunate English language so cruelly manhandled: "na bādhatē tathā danḍo yathā bādhati bādhatē;" the 'danḍa' of Munshi's bad language does not hurt so much as his criminal misuse of the poor English language. There are at least twenty outrages on the language in his letter. Why does he use words and idioms he does not know well? Not only must he misspell the ugly Americanism 'ballyhoo', he must also make it do duty for 'tally ho!' In his great Cawnpore harangue, he similarly 'overreaches' himself in using the word 'overreaching': "It is a faith of political power strong and overreaching"! Mr. Munshi accuses me of 'arrogant omni-science.' As I have often said before, I know my limitations very well: and I have never claimed to know more than I do. Hence I admit I have not made such brilliant discoveries as Mr. Munshi has. To mention only a few, he has discovered that 'L'Esprit des Lois' was written, not as is generally supposed by Montesquieu, but by Montaigne; that the correct name of the history of Mahmood of Ghazni's reign was not Tārikh-i-Yamīnī but 'Tārikhī (with long I, meaning 'historical') 'Jāmīnā' (both A's long); that the great Ghaznavide's name was not Mahmood, it was Mahmād; and so forth, and so on, almost 'ad infinitum.' For one could easily fill pages with such choice gems of scholarship from Mr. Munshi's masterpieces of bad information, bad grammar, bad spelling and bad taste. And surely it does not require 'omni-science' to detect or enjoy such delicious howlers?

Even taking Mr. Munshi's cheap political claptrap at its face value, does he really believe that the behaviour of the Whites in South Africa or in India, or Hitler's Aryanism, can justify his own ridiculous 'Aryanism,' or the caste system and its inevitable fruit the untouchable 'outcaste'? And do all these Satanic whites treat large sections of *their own nationals* as being definitely and doctrinally viler than dogs and swine as our holy Rishis have decreed?

Mr. Munshi again asks the rhetorical question : " Where would India and its Culture have been when Central Asian hordes or the West descended upon her, without the caste system ? " Has he ever asked himself the other, more pertinent question : " Why did India (with her Culture with a big C) invariably go under whenever such Central Asian hordes descended upon her ? " Was it not because of the same caste system which has prevented India from becoming a nation ? For here again that homely dictum applies with deadly effect : " We cannot eat our cake and keep it too."

But what is really pertinent to the problem of caste is the patent fact that can be easily gathered from Mr. Munshi's howl about my imaginary ' hunt '—and that is his shameless communalism and caste consciousness. His brain is so obsessed with this vicious kink that he is shocked to see me, a Parsi, suggesting that the untouchables should embrace Christianity ; he could have understood it if I had suggested that they should turn Zoroastrians ! Then he goes on to rant about Vikrama—as he was ranting more than ten years ago about Samudragupta with his ' frockcoat ', his ' kushan topi ' and his trousers. That was before he discovered the virtues—and perquisites—of the Khadi cap, dhoti and sandals. Then again he rants about the beauties of caste. The only thing I can gather from this rambling and confused effusion is that caste must remain what it is and that Vikrama, whether he really existed or not, is a ' national ' hero who is going to help us to ' overreach ' ourselves. I am glad he has given up Yājñavalkya along with Samudragupta ; because ten years ago he had hysterically howled for reviving the Smṛiti punishment of death for those who abduct ' Aryan ' women,—'prātilomye vadhah smritah ' was his favourite text then. This ' nationalist ' ex-Congressman did not specify then who these persons worthy of death were, but he left no room for doubt as to their identity when he raved about ' Aryan ' women being abducted from railway stations, and so forth and so on ; and it is not necessary to cross the t's and dot the i's in his highly ' nationalistic ' suggestion in order to identify the victims of his ' Aryan ' and Hitlerian wrath. And such are the men who in this unfortunate land can pose, and are accepted, as ' leaders ! ' " Hue tum dost jiske dushman uskā āsmān kyun ho ? " No wonder the presence of a ' third party ' becomes absolutely necessary for the peace of the country. I have after much thought suggested that this ' third party ' should be of the soil, rooted in the soil, and friendly to both

the warring majorities,—I mean the 'third party' consisting of six crores of untouchables and three crores of aborigines. The only other alternative is a foreign 'third party' whom base communalists like Mr. K. M. Munshi are evidently determined to keep in the saddle for at least one hundred and fifty years more.

J. E. SANJANA.

APPENDIX B.

THE UNTOUCHABLES.

In the heyday of Non-co-operation one of the miracles performed by Mahatma Gandhi was the apparent removal of untouchability, at least in some parts of the country. Just like Hindu-Muslim unity, or like the universal adoption of khaddar all over the land, the removal of the sin of untouchability was also declared to be an accomplished fact; and if there was any opposition to this plank in the Gandhian platform, it was, we were assured, from a discredited and hopeless minority which could be contemptuously left to stew in its own medieval juice. Those who were not carried off their feet by the tremendous wave of Gandhian sentimentality, those who knew something of the immense inertia and conservatism of the Hindu masses, and who therefore doubted these "accomplished facts," were told that they were lifeless old fossils hopelessly out of tune with the new life pulsating from end to end of India. Village schools were said to be equally open to the Brahmin and the Bhangi, village wells could be used by the Bania and the Dhed alike, and all Hindus, caste and outcaste, had met in a loving embrace after centuries of estrangement, like long-separated brothers. No doubt there was some grumbling and growling; but that was attributed to the proverbial exception that proves the triumphant rule.

But this Utopian heaven did not last long. The forces of conservatism began to assert themselves even before Mr. Gandhi was sent to jail; and many of the merchants of the Bombay cloth market made it pretty clear that their contributions to the Crore Fund would not be paid if Mr. Gandhi was going to spend any part of it on the Antyaja fad. Numerous villages refused to support national schools which forced caste children to sit with Antyaja children; and they also refused to allow the Antyajias to draw water from the caste wells. Since his return from jail, Mr. Gandhi himself has had to bow before this rising storm of orthodoxy against his heresy and to swallow the bitter compromise of separate schools for untouchable children. And yet, with all this, the fiction of the removal of untouchability being an accomplished fact was sedulously kept up.

Now orthodoxy is in full cry, and even this pretence has been openly thrown aside. In the last few months meetings have been held in Gujarat, and at the very headquarters of N.-C.-O., Ahmedabad, denouncing the "damnable heresy" of Mr. Gandhi and challenging him to prove from the Hindu Sastras that the four castes can remain unpolluted by the touch of the Antyaja. And the culminating point of the reaction has been reached at the Bombay meeting where, according to the *Bombay Chronicle's* horrified wail, it was declared that "in any other country Gandhiji would have been lynched for the declaration of his heresies." The castes are in full revolt and the Mahatma has been practically asked to repent in sackcloth and ashes for daring to criticise the Hindu Sastras and Acharyas in his Belgaum address. And the latest news is that the Kathiawad Political Conference at which Mr. Gandhi is to preside is likely to split on the self-same rock of untouchability.

In spite of the noble defence of the Mahatma's heresy by that staunch champion of Muslim orthodoxy, the *Bombay Chronicle*, dispassionate on-lookers cannot but feel that Mr. Gandhi's position, whatever else it may be, is illogical and untenable. He said in his Belgaum address: "The priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I claim to know something of Hinduism. I am certain that the priests are wrong. It is a blasphemy to say that God sets apart any portion of humanity as untouchable." We daresay it is a blasphemy to say so; but its being a blasphemy has nothing to do with the point at issue, *viz.*, whether the "priests" know more of Hinduism or Mr. Gandhi does, and whether the Hindu Sastras and historical Hinduism enjoin untouchability or not. It is a mere *argumentum ad hominem* to bring in the red herring of blasphemy. But this is the usual weakness of Mr. Gandhi's dialectic; he mixes up what ought to be—at least according to his own ideas—with what actually is, and then goes on to draw conclusions perfectly agreeable to his own views.

Mr. Gandhi has been repeatedly challenged to a Sastraic debate on this vexed question, but he has always shirked the challenge. It would be stupid to deny that the Hindu law books do enjoin purificatory ritual for those who touch the Antyajās. The testimony is overwhelmingly in favour of the "priests" although Mr. Gandhi claims by implication to know more of Hinduism than they. So in order to prove his thesis to his own satisfaction, Mr. Gandhi has resorted to one more illogical device; he has separated the

Smritis of Hinduism from the purely religio-philosophic books and tried to get support for his heresy from the latter. But even this attempt to wrench a few texts in his support from the whole canon of Hindu Sastras is not so successful as he thinks. After all even the law books stand rooted in the older and more inchoate Srutis (revelations) and the origin of the theory of untouchability can be traced to the sacred Upanishads.

But Mr. Gandhi can also cite scripture when it suits him, and he has always relied for his heresy on a verse of the Gita which says: "The wise (Pandits) view equally a learned and continent Brahmin, a bull, an elephant, a dog or a dog-eater (*i.e.* untouchable)"—and this the Mahatma interprets to mean that all these categories are of equal value in the eyes of the wise, and therefore the last, the dog-eating untouchable, should be treated with the same respect as the first, the learned and continent Brahmin. But a present day Pandit has met the Mahatma on his own ground and refuted this interpretation. "True it is," he says, "that the wise man does look upon all these as manifestations of the same Supreme Spirit in the ultimate analysis; but this is from the viewpoint of the initiate; for the ordinary work-a-day world the viewpoint must be different. And again, consider the significant order in which these categories are placed in the scale of being; at the top stands the learned and continent Brahmin and at the very bottom of the diminishing scale, lower even than the dog, stands its eater, the Untouchable; is this not proof positive that the Antyaja is the lowest creation of God and therefore rightly declared untouchable by our Rishis?" So far Mr. Gandhi has not given any sufficient reply to this irrefutable refutation; perhaps, it is not possible for him to give any. [*Times of India*. 9-1-1925].

ON GITA, V. 18.

..... Pandit Ramanath Sastri, who has translated and annotated the Gita from the Pushtimargi Vaishnava point of view, says in a note on this verse (V. 18): "Many people very often cite this verse as an authority and say 'what does it matter if we dine with Dheds, or if we touch Dheds? For the Gita enjoins equal vision in looking on all things.' Now we ask these people: 'If you do not see any difference between a Brahmin and a cow. . . . and an elephant and a dog, then why don't you hail a Brahmin as Dog-ji? . . . Why

don't you hail your wife as daughter? For you are possessed of equal-seeing eyes. And just as you are prepared to allow Dheds to dine with you, have you ever shown the liberality to allow a dog to dine with you? '...Therefore, good people should understand that persons who put such a meaning on the verse are deceiving the world, and they should not mind the acts and words of these persons'.

[*Times of India*, 30-1-1925].

THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

When the problem of untouchability and the treatment of Depressed Classes was discussed, rather casually, before the Simon Commission during Mr. Turner's oral evidence, the witness is reported to have said: "The social system in the villages has remained untouched but the position is better in cities." Agreeing with this opinion, Sir John Simon said: "Frankly, that was the impression I got during our last tour. There is a considerable distinction between cities and country districts." This interesting exchange of *obiter dicta* appeared in this paper, as by a grim irony of fate, on the day that the Share Bazaar went on strike and a huge Hindu meeting was held in this city in order to protest against the Bombay Corporation's sacrilegious resolution decreeing that there shall be no distinction of caste in the matter of providing drinking water for the children attending Municipal schools—that all, Brahmin or Bania or Untouchable, shall take water from the same supply and drink it from the same cup or "loti." Those who are opposed to this attempted breach in the hoary battlements of caste have cleverly introduced the red herring of sanitation and hygiene—they profess that it is highly insanitary to allow all and sundry to drink from the same "loti." Of course, this sanitary objection disappears as soon as every caste has a separate cup allowed to it—one for Brahmirs, another for Banias, a third for lower castes, and specially a separate one for Untouchables. In fact this sanitation stunt is an afterthought—it is the cup used by the Untouchables that is at the bottom of the agitation. And—if oriental metaphor may be permitted—the cat of untouchability was let out of the bag of indignant rhetoric by the distinguished president of the Hindu meeting, Sir Manmohandas Ramji. He protested against the Bombay Corporation's reforming zeal in forcing school children to drink from the same cup "without distinction of caste or creed,"

and, referring to one or two other reforming resolutions of the Corporation, he said : " Not content with these things, the Corporation has passed a resolution that children (in municipal schools) should sit together, without any distinction of caste, whether they be children of (high caste) Hindus or Parsis or Musalmans, or whether they be children of Mahars, Chamars or Bhangis, and that they must drink water from the same cup." From this point of view it is also particularly instructive to note the emphasis laid in the first resolution adopted by the meeting on the current usage of the " Varnashrama dharma " (*i.e.*, Hinduism as based on the caste system) which keeps the Untouchable at his proper distance.

To those who look carefully beneath the surface this mass meeting in Bombay seems only typical of the general Hindu outlook on the problem of untouchability ; it only shows that there is no " considerable distinction " between cities and villages in the matter of treatment given to the Depressed Classes. If there is any distinction, it is only apparent and often inevitable in the circumstances of the case. In a great cosmopolitan city like Bombay, it is not easy to distinguish an Untouchable coolie or servant or chauffeur or clerk from his " touchable " *confre* ; and, even if he can be distinguished, he cannot be kept at his proper distance in the trams and trains of a crowded city. That is why the position in cities appears better than in the villages. A few concrete instances will show that the touch-me-not spirit is no less rampant in the cities than in the districts. No Hindu restaurant in Bombay will knowingly admit an Untouchable ; anyone entering and found to be an Antyaja will be ignominiously ejected, however clean and well-dressed he may be. In the temples the distinction is, of course, still more jealously kept up. A Mahar leader, who is a Barrister-at-Law and Member of the Legislative Council, was very nearly assaulted the other day and ejected with contumely from a great Vaishnav temple in Bombay. The Brahmin Sabha of Bombay which has on its roll the elite of the local Maharashtra Brahmins (who are said to be less caste-ridden than other Brahmins) has very nearly split on the question of allowing Mahar boys to get " darshan " of the temporarily set up idol of the elephant-headed god during the last Ganpati festival. Almost every " National " school, whether in village or town or city, has ultimately foundered on this rock of untouchability, as has been plainly and repeatedly admitted by Mr. Gandhi himself. To say nothing of cold weather tourists, it is doubtful if even those

Englishmen who spend the best years of their lives in this country fully realise the tremendous power and all-pervading influence of the well-nigh impregnable caste-system of which the unfortunate outcaste—the “Anāmika,” the “unmentionable” fifth caste Untouchable—is the legitimate and inevitable result. No solution of the general Indian political problem can pretend to be even tolerably and temporarily complete if it ignores this basic fact in the socio-political texture of presentday Indian society. [*Times of India*, 20-10-1928].

A TALE OF WOE

In the Baroda State the untouchables are supposed to be better treated than in the adjoining British territory, because the State has made laws recognising the equality of the Antyaja with caste people. And yet in Padra Taluka the other day the standing crop of a poor Antyaja woman was fired, and she herself brutally assaulted, because she dared to send her little son to the local primary school. Now comes a tale of woe from Chanasma in Kadi Prant where an artesian well has been sunk and built with the labour of the Antyajas who were promised the use of the well. But when the well was ready for use they were first flatly told it was not for them, and when they complained to the Punch the latter generously allowed them to lay a pipe 500 feet long at the end of which they could have a tap all for themselves. Now an unexpected owner of the land at the tap end cropped up, so the pipe line was taken somewhere near to the local tank. But this meant pollution of the tank and therefore of the dirty linen washed there. So the tap was accommodated elsewhere. But did this mean the end of the trouble? No; the enraged caste people have cut the pipe line several times and the Antyajas are without water to drink. How very “adequate,” to use Mr. Gandhi’s term, must the untouchables feel the treatment given to them by their co-religionists! [*Times of India*, 9-5-1931].

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Quite naturally—and legitimately, too, so far as the game of politics goes—much capital is being made out of the indictment of the Government by the Punjab Depressed Classes Mission in their memorandum to the Simon Commission. What is at the bottom of

this unusual outburst which avers that high caste Hindus have done more for the Untouchables in the last fifty years than has the British Government in the last one hundred and fifty? We do not know, but it will come out in proper time. We are not acquainted with the actual condition of the Depressed classes in the Punjab but it is interesting to contrast with the above indictment by the Mission—(has it anything to do we wonder with Lala Lajpat Rai's Servants of the People Society?)—what an organ of the Punjab Adi Hindus (*i.e.*, Depressed classes) has said about Lala Lajpat Rai's indictment of the hard-hearted Punjab bureaucracy for keeping these classes depressed and not allocating a crore of rupees that he wanted for their education and uplift. Said the Gurmukhi paper, *Adi Danka*, in effect: "When the Hindus had Swaraj, were not they masters of crores of rupees? But then, let alone uplifting us, cruel laws were made to prevent us from getting any education. Smritis were in force then which ordained that molten lead should be poured into our ears if we heard the Vedas recited and that our tongues should be cut out if we recited them. The Hindu leaders of to-day are the descendants of those same Hindus. That uplift of us which they could not accomplish when they had the power and the means, they are going to accomplish now by begging alms of a crore from the Sarkar! These are hollow pretexts. These are opportunist tricks....."

Perhaps they are; but as we have said we don't know the actual state of affairs in the Punjab. So let us leave this theoretical wrangling aside and simply record a few facts, on this side of the country, that we do know and that have come to light recently, some only during the last few weeks. We have already seen how the Untouchables of Dehu, the birth-place of the famous saint-poet Tukaram, were punished by Touchables for presuming to send their children to the local school according to a new-fangled resolution of the District School Board. Now we learn that the School Board of the Ratnagiri District has taken it into its head to enforce in all Local Board Schools the Bombay Government's five year old resolution that Untouchable children shall be admitted to such schools and allowed to sit with the Touchable children without any distinction. Mr. Pandu Vithu Mahar, member of Kharepatan School Committee, writes in a Ratnagiri paper: "A few days ago I went to the village of Korle and next day I took with me nine children of our (Depressed) class to the school. The teacher said he would consult

the local elders and then let me know. I said : " If necessary you may make them sit apart for the present, but do please enrol their names.' As he refused to do that also, I came back and informed the Chairman (of the School Board) ; but I have received no reply so far."

Thirty-three Mahars of Kandalgaon (Dist. Ratnagiri) write in a long letter to another Ratnagiri paper : " In order to gain popularity the local Headmaster has won over the (higher caste) people of Kandalgaon"—be it noted in passing that the " Lok " (" people") of the village *never* include the sub-human Untouchables—" and is agitating to make the new circular nugatory, and consequently the people of our village have begun to harass us. The headmaster tried to induce us with threats to give in writing that *we* were unwilling to send our children to school or that *we* did not want to have our children sit side by side with Touchables' children. When we refused, the Touchables removed their children from the school after another consultation with the headmaster. Ultimately we were intimidated into giving in writing that we were not willing to have our children seated with Touchable children. On the strength of this document our children are being made to sit outside the school room as before."

It may be said, as it was said by Sir John Simon the other day at Poona, that matters are not so bad in the cities, that " the position is better in cities " than in villages. It is worth noting, therefore, that it is a Bombay paper that publishes a bitter attack on the Ratnagiri School Board for trying to enforce this " tyrannical " resolution in village schools and wars the Board that if it persists in forcing Touchable children to hobnob with Untouchable ones, " the believers in the Sanatan Dharma (orthodox religion) will prefer to see the schools shut up." It is equally noteworthy that it is in our highly Khadi-clad suburb of Matunga that the Gujarati girls' school is threatened with disruption because a few Untouchable girls want to attend it. The *Nava-Yuga* writes : " It is said that Nationalists who wear Khadi and pose as prime Chelas of Mahatma Gandhi, *viz.*, Messrs. Velji Lakhamsi Napoo and Kanji Master, are at the bottom of this agitation." Again, it is the Lokahitawadi Sangha of another suburb, Dadar, that complains in " Nationalist " papers that " in spite of the (Bombay) Corporation's resolution, as well as that of the (Bombay) Schools Committee, dep-

ressed class students are not given admission in some of the Municipal schools."

So much for the solicitude of high caste people, including Khaddar-clad Nationalists, for the education of their Untouchable brothers. Now for a few samples of other kinds of "uplift." The *Samatā* ("Equality") publishes the following complaints and grievances of Untouchables: (1) At Kathi (Dist. Poona) the "people" have begun to persecute the Untouchables because the latter have begun saying "Ram-Ram" and "Namaskar". Be it known to the uninitiated that these are salutations which only the higher castes have the right to employ; the Mahars etc. must say "Johar" or "Paya lagu" (I touch your feet) to the "people." (2) The Untouchables of Tanoo (Dist. Poona) tried to behave "like Touchable Hindu people"; the result of this impudent encroachment is that many of them have had to leave the village and some have migrated to Bavda. (3) At Velapur (Dist. Sholapur) the Mahars are persecuted because they have dared to refuse to address Touchables as "Saheb" and to say "Paya lagu" ("I touch your feet") in salutation. (4) At Jambad (Dist. Sholapur) the Untouchables refused to make "nautch" and "tamasha" for the diversion of their Touchable lords. Therefore these Untouchables were thrashed, their huts were burnt down or pulled down, and they were driven out of the village limits. (5) At Bavda (Dist. Poona) some Untouchables exhorted their fellow-outcastes to give up eating the leavings of higher caste people, dead animals, etc., and to refuse to do the dirty work of the "people." The elders of the village have told these Mahars with new-fangled notions that it is their "dharma" to eat what they have always been eating and do what they have been doing. Those Mahars who do not follow their ancient and eternal "dharma" have been thrashed by the "people" and threatened with expulsion from the village.

Now for an attempt at "temple entry" and its consequences. A daring reformer of a place near Nasik took along with him some Untouchables right into the local temple of Rama during the Ganapati festival celebrated a few weeks ago according to the "Tilak" calendar. This sacrilege split the "people" into two factions and, according to a correspondent of the strictly orthodox *Bhala*, the emissary of the Hindu Sabha of Poona had to go there and bring about a "compromise" on the following terms: (1) henceforth none should insist on taking Untouchables inside any temple; (2)

none should admit Untouchables into any room in a private house where "people" sit.

And here is a little tale from a village called Kalambi (Dist. Satara) that has a pathetic moral of its own. The Inamdar of the village is a Mahar, and he lives in a house of his own in a fruit garden. There are two wells in his grounds from which water is taken by the "people" of the village, but the Inamdar dare not use his own wells! He has therefore to beg the "people" to pour a little water now and then into his utensils, and in the rainy season he has actually, to pay to get water from his own wells. Though repeatedly urged by men with reforming zeal to exercise his right of ownership over the wells, or at least one of them, he has steadily refused to do so, pleading custom and usage. Perhaps he is wise in his generation; for if he were to presume to assert his ownership of the wells, the "people" might teach him a sharp lesson and put him in his place as a member of a sub-human species.

This reminds us of what Mr. A. V. Thakkar wrote last year in the *Navajivan* describing the awful plight of Untouchables, and particularly the lowest among them, *viz.*, the Bhangis, as regards the use of wells in Borsad Taluka. Mr. Thakkar saw a Bhangi woman waiting near a well for some merciful "people" to give her some water: she had waited from morning till noon, and none had given her any. But the most exquisite touch of spirituality is revealed in the manner of giving water to the Bhangis; it can not be poured direct into their pots,—any "people" doing so would get polluted. Says Mr. Thakkar. "Once our teacher Chunibhai had shown the temerity of pouring water direct from his bucket into a Bhangi's pot, and he had received a stern warning in consequence: 'Master, this sort of thing won't do here.' A small cistern is built below the slope of the well. Any one who is moved by pity may pour some water in the cistern. A bamboo pipe juts out of the cistern, and the Bhangi woman must put her pot under the pipe, and it may get filled in an hour or so." For, adds Mr. Thakkar, it is only the unwanted water remaining over in the bucket of the woman drawing it that is as a rule thrown into the cistern, and that too if she takes pity on the waiting Bhangi woman.

Yet Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Solanki presumed to ask the Simon Commission to treat Untouchables as separate from caste Hindus and not to lump them with the Hindus,—a demand that has been rightly attacked by the "Nationalist" press as "disgraceful" and

" dreadfully wicked ". For the misguided Untouchables ought to have said, like the patriotic Depressed Classes Mission of the Punjab, that it was their Hindu brothers who were doing so much more for them than the Satanic Sarkar, and that " more than the caste Hindus the Government are responsible for the Untouchables' poverty, illiteracy and backwardness ".

What does it matter if a monster meeting in Bombay objects to their children being admitted to municipal schools on equal terms with Touchables' children ? What does it matter if the All-India Marwari Agarwal Conference solemnly resolves on October 29th at its Calcutta session that " it was against their religion and a great sin to touch food cooked by Untouchables," and that they were not yet prepared "to remove the social barrier existing between Untouchables and other communities ? " And what does it matter if that other Depressed Classes Mission, the Dalit Uddhar Sabha of Delhi, says frankly in its latest report that its workers have to face much opposition from the higher castes, and that the Zemindars in North Indian Villages declare that rather than touch the Untouchables " they would prefer them to become Christians ? " Any way, it is highly unpatriotic to say such things as Dr. Ambedkar said, even if they be true. What has truth to do with the game of politics ?

[*Times of India*, 7-11-1928].

HINDU LAW REFORM.

The All-India Hindu Law Research and Reform Association has just held a conference at Poona under the presidentship of Mr. Justice Madgavkar of the Bombay High Court. The chief aim and object of this Association, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, was careful to emphasise, is " to promote and stimulate the study of and research into the very original authorities " on the Hindu law. Mr. Kelkar thinks it advisable to make it quite clear that the Association as such is not responsible for any concrete bill, embodying reform in the existing law, sponsored by any member of the Association. The same note of extreme and apologetic caution runs through the carefully worded Presidential address. " We must be careful," says the President, " to avoid offending Hindu susceptibilities." How prone to take offence these susceptibilities are is well illustrated by the significant fact that

objection has been taken, at least in one province, to the very word "Reform" occurring in the name and title of the Association. As Mr. Justice Madgavkar observes in his address: "The masses and the women and to a large extent even the commercial classes dread reforms." A large number of politicians and the politically minded intelligentsia are also known to dread the idea of reform by legislation. As the President says, "it is not merely from the Shastris and Pandits but too often those least versed in our ancient laws that the outcry proceeds of sacrilege and of religion in danger whenever any proposal of reform is mooted"; and he rightly adds, "the Government is not directly concerned in encouraging them; its declared policy is one of neutrality."

It is no use denying the fact that Hindu opinion on the whole is averse to legislative interference with the Hindu legal institutes whose authors, according to the prevailing belief held even by many highly educated minds, were *trikāla jñāni* (endowed with full knowledge of the past, present and future times) and therefore infallibly authoritative for all time. "Whatever Manu has said is wholesome" is another common saying often quoted with approval. And a dictum of the great law-giver quoted with equal approval even by educated men is "woman is not fit for freedom"; as pointed out by Mr. Justice Madgavkar in his picture of the joint family system, woman is expected to accept "throughout her life a subordinate position." It is against this tremendous mass of conservatism and legislative inertia that the Association has to battle. As the President has mildly put it, "that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the administration of Hindu law and its results is hardly open to doubt." He has also gently pointed out that some of the fundamental ideas and social institutions on which the structure of the Hindu law institutes was raised are rapidly disintegrating; the joint family system tends more and more to be out of tune with modern conditions as "the circumstances, economic and psychological, which made for the stability of the joint family tend to disappear"; the caste system is in "the process of dissolution"; and, consequently, "the social structure has so altered that the existing law results in consistent hardship not contemplated by ancient principles and legislators."

If such is the case, if the legal rules at present administered must be purged, as desired by the President, of their bewildering variety, complexity and minuteness, if they are to be separated

from " their admixture with ritual and theology ", if they are to be adapted to " existing social facts," if they are to prove of influence in " raising the social standard," if in fact—to speak frankly—they must be thoroughly overhauled, then we venture to think the Association must take up a bolder stand than it has done at present. It should not show so much anxiety to proclaim to the world its attitude of cautious and non-committal neutrality. The President carefully points out, as a sop to irreconcilable, inveterate orthodoxy: " I hope, gentlemen, I have not committed you or the Association to any particular line of action on any particular point." Mr. Justice Madgavkar is surely aware that while there is on the one hand " extreme conservatism," " worship of ancient legislators," and " reluctance to face facts," on the other there is in the Hindu society a small but growing section which is impatient of all such caution and timidity and which wants to sweep out of its way the pious fiction (enunciated by a Shankaracharya while blessing the Association) of bringing about " necessary changes in their law and customs while retaining the principles intact." One of the resolutions shortly to be considered by the All-India Congress Committee wants " to make revolutionary changes in the present social and economic structure of society and remove its gross inequalities." We do not know if the sponsor of this delightfully sweeping resolution has fully realised its effects on Hindu social and religious institutions and practices. But if the Association does not mean courageously to take the lead of this clamant minority and to guide these young hotheads on to paths of wise practical reform, it would better respect the susceptibilities of the dissenting province and drop the dread word " Reform " from its name and title.

[*Times of India*, 24-5-1929].

HINDU LAW REFORM.

Our comments on the presidential address delivered by Mr. Justice Madgavkar at the conference convened by the All-India Hindu Law Research and Reform Association have proved unpalatable in certain quarters and attempts are being made to show that the Association, as well as Hindu society, is not only eager for Hindu law reform, but is actually proceeding at a fine pace in that direction. As an apt and justifying instance in point is quoted the blessing of a religious head, a Shankaracharya, in which the reverend

gentleman enunciated what we called the pious fiction of "bringing about necessary changes in their laws and customs while retaining the principles intact." To those who are content with such pious fictions and with platform speeches and resolutions, who pretend to see something very bold and daring in the proceedings of the conference and who profess to be content with what appears to dispassionate outsiders very much like half-hearted timidity, we have nothing to say. But we would draw the attention of those who keenly feel the need of Hindu law reform, and who really and earnestly desire to go beyond the stage of mere research and resolutions and speeches, to a book entitled "Legal Aspects of Social Reform" by Mr Paul Appasamy, M.A., LL.B., (Christian Literature Society for India, Madras.) The views expressed by the author of this very practical book of modest suggestions may not prove very palatable to some, but they are none the less worthy of consideration by earnest reformers. "India," says Mr. Appasamy, "is anxious to provide herself with the latest in the way of constitutions, and is professing herself disenchanted with the one which is now in working order. But no constitution, however ingenious or cleverly contrived, could work smoothly or make for progress, if there are permanent features in Indian social arrangements which make for tyranny or oppression or injustice."

And the three "social arrangements" of this kind with which the book deals in detail are just those on which Mr. Justice Madgavkar has unerringly put his finger: status of woman, caste and joint family. Mr. Appasamy observes: "If we look deeply enough into the question, the root of most of the trouble is the antiquated law with which we are satisfied for the ordering of our private lives, while we crave for the most modern of constitutions where public or political life is concerned." That is the tragedy of it. People want democracy, Socialism, even Communism; but they want at the same time to retain distinctions and privileges of caste and sex. The first thing the Turks did when they set out to modernise their State was to adopt the Swiss Code. They did not pretend to bring about changes in their existing laws and customs while retaining the principles of the "Sheri" Law. This reminds us of what Mr. Appasamy says rather despondently of India, that "the country can scarcely be said to be ripe for any radical reform of Hindu Law."

[*Times of India*, 29-5-1929].

UNTOUCHABLES AND THE CENSUS.

Coming events cast their shadows before, and the census of 1931 has been casting its shadow for some time now. A peculiar interest attaches to this census inasmuch as the new constitution of self-governing India will also be hammered out in 1931 and the respective representative strength of several communal interests in the new legislatures will depend on the figures of population supplied by the 1931 census. It is not surprising therefore that various interests have begun pulling in various directions, and in this tug of war the position of the Government is not unlike that of the unfortunate husband of a number of wives with conflicting interests. Thus the Musalmans have raised an indignant complaint that even the census of 1921 was not fair to the Muslim community, but as the Shuddhi *cum* Sangathan movement has come in between, the 1931 census is likely to be still more unfair and to include in the Hindu population a number of backward tribes and sub-communities that are Islamic by religion though they have retained Hindu names and Hindu social customs. The common insinuation is that the vast army of enumerators will consist mostly of Hindus, and these persons will not be strictly scientific in their enumeration and classification but will be swayed by such unscientific considerations and quasi-political influences as the Shuddhi movement. On the other hand, there are high caste Hindus who fear that the Census may further reduce their steadily dwindling majority over all "the rest," and they protest that every one calling himself or herself a Hindu should be returned as a Hindu, irrespective of such considerations as religious or social beliefs and customs. Particularly they want all aborigines returned as "Animists" in past censuses to be classified as "Hindus" with the recognised Hindus, touchable or untouchable. From another point of view, the "Jāt-Pāt Torak Mandal" (Caste Breaking Society) of the Punjab also is anxious that the Census should not insist on recording the caste, sub-caste and sub-sub-caste of the Hindu population but should enumerate them as just "Hindus" and nothing more. The contention of the Mandal is that the usual enumeration of the myriad castes and sub-castes is a sort of State encouragement to the fissiparous tendency inherent in the Hindu social polity which has kept the Hindus from becoming one nation and which is an anomaly in these days of democracy, equality, fraternity.

In striking contrast to these altruistic attempts of caste Hindus to embrace their humble brothers, whether animist or depressed, in a wide communion freed at least on paper from galling caste distinctions, stands the brief memorial of the Audi Hindu Depressed Class Sangha of the Punjab to H. E. the Viceroy on the subject of "Depressed Classes and Census Returns." It is a profoundly interesting document that deserves to be widely known and carefully considered by all who desire to face the actual facts of the complex Indian problem as they are. This short and "humble" petition of the Audi Hindu Depressed Class Sabha prays that His Excellency "will be pleased to instruct the Census Department to make the necessary entries as usual, in the column of caste," as, in the Sabha's opinion, "the absence of so important an entry . . . will mean serious harm to the low castes." The reasons given for this outwardly surprising demand are worth careful consideration. The memorial speaks out a bare truth when it trenchantly observes: "The real purpose of the Census is to find out all actual facts so that the Government and the country may be in a position to wisely undertake the solution of problems arising in the India of to-day. For, until a disease is carefully and adequately diagnosed, its treatment is difficult if not impossible."

The petition—it is a little masterpiece of cold logical reasoning that mercilessly exposes the humbug underlying many present day shibboleths—bluntly says that "some of the high caste Hindus are making an effort to see all the untouchables and other low castes enrolled not under their distinct castes . . . , but under the *indefinite* name Hindu;" and, after enumerating the various interesting attempts recently made by caste Hindus for the "uplift" of the untouchables, the petitioners add: "their aim seems not to be the education or betterment of the poor, but rather to add to their numerical strength." Going to the root of the matter the memorial says that "caste is a religious institution," and that "so long as Manu-Smriti and other Hindu Shastras which are the roots of the caste system are sanctioned as among Hindu scriptures by the Hindu world in general, so long will caste system remain. Any superficial means to remove caste rigours merely by refusing to tell one's caste . . . will be meaningless."

Anyone who knows the facts, and has the courage to face them, must admit that the Sabha has spoken out the whole truth and that the glib declarations of "removal of untouchability" of which we

have heard so much in recent years are mere eye-wash, as witness the shameful use made by the Congress, of all bodies, of such election slogans humiliating to the Untouchables as we have quite recently heard in Bombay City itself. We strongly endorse the demand of the Audi-Hindu Sabha that the Census should give particular care to the enumeration and classification of the castes called "untouchable." Another reason why this should be done is that there is a dispute about the actual number of real untouchables in India ; some put it as high as sixty millions, others would estimate it at about forty millions. A careful Census enumeration would put this dispute at rest.
 [Times of India, 14-10-1930].

THE CENSUS AND UNTOUCHABLES.

The Census has created a remarkable revulsion of feeling in favour of the classes known as " Depressed " or " Untouchables." At least that seems to be the case in the Punjab. The Musalmans, the Sikhs, and even the orthodox Hindus of the Mahasabha are opening their arms wide to welcome the Depressed Classes as long lost brothers, and intense propaganda is being carried on to induce them to enter themselves in the Census forms as co-religionists of the various propagandists. To add to the confusion, the stern Arya Samajists go about advising the Hindus to discard the name "Hindu" as a degrading term applied to them by the Musalmans. If we are to believe the reports in the Punjab press, this fervent propaganda is causing even intercommunal bitterness. The simple and humble " Untouchables" feel naturally bewildered and overwhelmed by this excess of loving kindness and literally do not know which way to turn. In this perplexity they have received advice from their own leaders that is likely to add to their bewilderment.

For instance, Mr. Bansi Lal, M.L.C., the sweeper member of the Punjab Legislative Council, frankly told a meeting of the Depressed Classes that they should not trust any of the benevolent persons who were persuading them to call themselves Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs. With a still more disarming candour Mr. Bansi Lal confessed that he had so far called himself a Hindu because he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity offered by Congress Hindus and get himself elected to the Council. But, he continued, he knew that he was a sweeper and would ever remain a sweeper whether he called himself a Hindu or a Musalman or a Sikh ; and

he advised his brother Untouchables strongly to call themselves by their real caste names, such as Bhangis or Chuhras, instead of going into any of the three folds and adding to their numbers without doing any real good to themselves.

This confession and advice have created much consternation and bitterness in the Hindu press, and Mr. Bansi is now denounced as a mere "Bhangi of Lahore" by the very papers that once welcomed his candidature and election as a great triumph of the Congress party, and they blame the Hindus now for their short-sightedness in helping him to rise to such dizzy heights. All this may seem amusing, but as a fact it is such incidents that give us revealing glimpses of the real India—the India that is far away from the idealised India of some constitution makers who move about with their heads in the clouds. Ten years ago Mr. Gandhi made removal of untouchability, along with Hindu-Muslim unity, one of the main proofs of fitness for Swaraj. In his present campaign he has discreetly given the go-by to this baffling question of untouchability. But the question is there all the same and is bound sooner or later to make itself felt.

[*Times of India*, 25-2-1931].

UNTOUCHABILITY.

There is a vague but comforting belief abroad that the problem of removing the untouchability of the Depressed Classes has made great headway during the last ten years. When Mr. Gandhi started his non-co-operation campaign ten years ago, he put the removal of untouchability in the forefront of his programme along with khaddar and Hindu-Muslim unity. This time both the Untouchables and the Muslims were put aside, and it was generally believed that at any rate the question of untouchability was no longer a key question and that the problem was far on the way to solution, if it was not actually solved. The recent manifestation of non-co-operation and civil disobedience is supposed to have silently achieved a social revolution and to have practically done away with ideas of high and low caste, and the more orthodox Hindus do believe and fear that the Congress has insidiously undermined the ideas of caste distinctions and taboos. It is no doubt true that in cities the political ferment has reacted on the social conscience of the younger generation, and at least during the excitement and fever of the last twelve

months the age-long disabilities of the depressed classes appeared to have vanished where people gathered in large numbers. And yet during the space of this same year occurred some events that discount much of the optimism felt in nationalist circles on the question of untouchability. The recent revival of the Nasik temple entry Satysgraha and the determined stoning of the Untouchables by caste Hindus must make these optimists pause and take stock of the situation, especially as among the leaders of the orthodox section at Nasik are to be found staunch Congressmen who have taken a prominent part in the civil disobedience movement.

Another silent but eloquent commentary on the question is supplied by the reply to an interpellation in the Bombay Legislative Council. In 1923 the Council adopted a resolution recommending that "the untouchable classes be allowed to use all public watering places, wells and *dharamshalas* which are built and maintained out of public funds or are administered by bodies appointed by Government or created by statutes, as well as public schools, courts, offices and dispensaries." And here is the resolution adopted by the Kolaba District Local Board on the same subject so recently as December 13th, 1930, that is, when Mr. Gandhi's civil disobedience movement was in full swing: "The principle that the tanks, wells and *dharamshalas* of the Board should be made accessible to Untouchables is accepted by the Board. *But* in bringing this principle into practice the Board should fix up boards that the wells, tanks and *dharamshalas* are open to the Untouchables at *only* those villages in the district where the public opinion is favourable for such action." It should not be difficult to surmise how many villages there must be in the District "where the public opinion is favourable for such action," especially as even the municipality of such an advanced city as Poona quite recently shied at the suggestion to throw public tanks and wells open to all irrespective of caste. It is in the fitness of things, therefore, that now comes the news of the purification of the tank at Mahad (District Kolaba) that had been once again "defiled" by the Untouchables in accordance with the subordinate Court's decision that the tank is a public piece of water. Pending the decision of the appeal to the District Court, the orthodox caste people have found it impossible to do without the water from this tank which is now being used by the Untouchables also. So the Sanatanists purified the tank by first taking one thousand pots full of "defiled" water out of it and then putting cowdung and

other purifying substances (all products of the cow) into it. And it is particularly worth noticing that the lead in this act of "purification" was taken by a Congress patriot recently released from jail. When we take all these things into consideration we begin to understand why Mr. Gandhi is not particularly eager to tackle the problem of untouchability just at present.

[*Times of India*, 23-3-1931].

THE MAHATMA ON MISSIONS.

Mr. Gandhi's ultimatum to Christian Missionaries working in India, as reported by a foreign journalist, created something like consternation, especially among Nationalist Indian Christians. "Even George Joseph," writes the Mahatma pathetically in the inevitable *dementi*, "my erstwhile co-worker and gracious host in Madura, has gone into hysterics without condescending to verify the report." And Mr. Gandhi hastens to add that the report of the interview as originally published "is a travesty of what I have always said and held." So he "re-touches" the statement and gives his own version of the statement "as I should make it." But even this revised and authorised version, with deftly inserted qualifying words here and there, repeats in effect what the original version said, namely, that if the missionaries continue to proselytise he would "like" (not "ask") them to withdraw, and that "the great faiths held by the people of India" (not "India's religions" as in the first report) "are adequate for her people." Therefore, says Mr. Gandhi in conclusion, "India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another."

Several questions of great interest, speculative as well as practical, arise out of these oracular dicta of the Congress Dictator. Evidently Christianity is not, in Mr. Gandhi's opinion, one of the "great faiths held by the people of India" among which he mentions even Zoroastrianism, a faith professed by less than a hundred thousand souls. And yet Christianity actually claims more followers in India than any other "great faith" except Hinduism and Islam. What right has Mr. Gandhi to say that the third biggest communion in India is not one of the great faiths of India? Again, it is as much the duty of a Christian to proselytise as it is of a Musalman to Islamise his neighbour. If, as Maulana Muhammad Ali used to say, "every Musalman is a born proselytiser," so is every

Christian, at least in strict religious theory. Is Mr. Gandhi going to deprive the Indian Christian, along with the Bideshi missionary, of one of his sacred birth-rights? And that brings us to the more serious problem: is he going to deprive Musalmans also by statute of their right to convert non-Muslims to Islam? Is any such article in the Declaration of Rights of the future Purna Swaraj—because “India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another”—going to make the working of that Swaraj smoother? Is it going to strengthen the bonds of Hindu-Muslim unity?

And does Mr. Gandhi sincerely believe that “India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another?” “India” is a vague term to use in such a context; but every year thousands upon thousands of Indians do as a fact get converted, either to Islam or Christianity, and some even to the Arya Samaj fold. Is Mr. Gandhi going to make such conversion penal? It may well be said that these conversions, of which only a small proportion are really due to the wiles of foreign missionaries, are a necessary evil in the present condition of Hindu society. To put these conversions on the lowest and purely worldly plane, that of betterment in the social scale, is it a small thing that a down-trodden Untouchable who dare not, as in Mr. Gandhi's own Gujarat, drink water even from a cattle trough, should feel that he is as good as any other man, that he is as much a man as even the President of the Congress? Can Mr. Gandhi deny that the Untouchable rises immensely in the scale of humanity as soon as he turns Musalman or Christian? If Mr. Gandhi's words mean anything they mean that Hinduism is at this moment “adequate” for the Dhed and the Bhangi as it is for the Brahmin and the Bania. If it is, what is the meaning of the Parvati Satyagraha at Poona, of the Kala-Ram temple Satyagraha at Nasik, of the recent Government orders that the orders about admitting Untouchable children to school must not be evaded as they are, of that awful cry of agony from the Punjab Adi Hindus at Mooltan, “We are treated worse than dogs?”

[*Times of India*, 28-4-1931].

CONGRESS AND UNTOUCHABLES.

On the auspicious Coconut Day a few Untouchables were invested in Bombay with the sacred thread which, as some of our readers may not know, even the perfectly touchable Sudras have no right to wear. It was in the fitness of things that this dazzling

act of sacrilegious but quick social uplift should have been presided over by that versatile patriot, Mr. K. M. Munshi, whose burning zeal in a dozen fields (including the High Court) is well known and highly appreciated in Congress circles. We do not know if this investiture with the sacred thread, which is the privilege of the three highest castes, will bestow any practical privileges on the Untouchables who have been thus heroically uplifted. For instance, will they be admitted into the Kala Ram temple at Nasik during the coming "Simhastha" pilgrimage to that holy place? In the authentic Rama-Raj, Rama himself, as a strictly constitutional Aryan monarch, had to chop off the head of a Sudra because he had the impudence to practise religious austerities, a privilege reserved to the first three castes. Let us see if in this Satanic Raj the sacred-threaded Untouchables will be admitted into the temple of that same Rama, and whether Mr. Munshi himself will lead them in their revolutionary resolve to do so. If they are so admitted, and if Mr. Munshi's generalship succeeds in getting them so admitted, those refractory followers of Dr. Ambedkar, who wanted on Coconut Day to take part in the investiture ceremony but were not allowed by Congressmen to do so, will have to change their present views and admit that the Congress is really doing something for the Depressed Classes.

There is no denying that at present a vast majority of Untouchables look upon Dr. Ambedkar as their leader and do not regard the Congress as in any way more representative of the Depressed Classes than it is of the Musalmans, or even as a sincere champion of their elementary rights as human beings. A historical interview which Dr. Ambedkar had with Mr. Gandhi on August 14, and which by a remarkable chance has not appeared in any of the Congress or Nationalist papers which report even the activities of the Mahatma's she-goat, is of the utmost interest and importance in this connection. The Mahatma pathetically complained that Dr. Ambedkar had declared that the Congress was not representative of the Depressed Classes although he, Mr. Gandhi, had the Untouchability question nearer his heart than even the Hindu-Muslim puzzle, and although the Congress had spent twenty lakhs of rupees on the removal of the curse of untouchability. In reply Dr. Ambedkar expressed amused surprise that such a large sum as twenty lakhs should have been spent on the removal of untouchability without his knowing it and without any tangible results. The untouchability policy of

the Congress, said Dr. Ambedkar, was like holiday clothes, to be paraded on ceremonial occasions ; and he pointed out the interesting but rather disconcerting fact that the Chairman of the Nasik District Congress Committee was also the leader of the orthodox movement at Nasik to oppose the sacrilegious " Satyagraha " of the Untouchables for entering Kala Ram's temple, and that the Mahatma himself had denounced the " Satyagraha " as " illegitimate." As for the charge brought against himself, that he was anti-national and a traitor to the Congress, Dr. Ambedkar flatly told Mr. Gandhi who tried to soothe the embittered Mahar leader by praising his work for the country at the Round Table Conference : " I have no country. You say I have, but I say again I have no country. No Untouchable with any humanity in him, with the least self-respect in him, will say 'this is my country' about a land in which we cannot live even a dog's life, in which we are not shown consideration that is shown even to cats and dogs." He said further in unforgettable words : " How, and to whom, shall I and my people say what we feel on seeing our ceaseless persecution by those same peasants of Bardoli about whose harassment by Government officials you make such a tremendous fuss ? You have shut your ears to our outcry. And as for your Nationalist press, why, it seems they have not even the type to print things about us ! "

That is perhaps the reason why Congress organs have no room for reports of mass meetings of thousands of Untouchables convened by Dr. Ambedkar's party, although ample room is found for reports of nook and corner gatherings presided over by amiable but untouchable " Nationalist " cricketers ; and that is also the reason why this historical interview has not so far been published by Congress organs that are anxious to publish bulletins about the health of the Mahatma's she-goat. But now that Mr. Munshi has taken the burden of the untouchability problem on his Atlantean shoulders there will surely be a change in the present policy of the Congress towards this problem, and we have no doubt that when the " Simhastha " begins at Nasik Mr. Munshi himself will lead a contingent of be-threaded Untouchables right into Kala Ram's temple, or perish heroically in the gallant attempt.

[*Times of India*, 29-8-1931].

REPRESENTATION AND MISREPRESENTATION.

Who is the real representative of the classes variously known as "Depressed," "Untouchable" or "Antyaja"? Mr. Gandhi or Dr. Ambedkar? The latter's uncompromising opposition to the claim of the Congress to speak for these down-trodden classes has raised this question, and Congress circles and organs are making strenuous efforts to get Dr. Ambedkar discredited in the eyes of the western world because his rebellious attitude is likely to make the Congress's claim to represent the whole of India appear hollow and unsubstantial. Hence the cables sent to Mr. Gandhi, expressing confidence in him and repudiating Dr. Ambedkar, by certain bodies that claim to speak for the Untouchables. The very fact that not only the Muslims but even the Hindus and Sikhs have flatly refused to accept Mr. Gandhi as their representative and to leave the solution of the communal question in his hands is a curious commentary on the claim that the Congress represents the whole of India. But, leaving aside this wider question, let us consider the narrower one whether the Congress really represents the Depressed Classes. The very first phenomenon that puzzles any dispassionate observer of this fascinating though painful problem is the startling fact that wherever, in the last few years, the Depressed Classes have tried to assert their elementary religious, and even civic, rights, khaddar-clad Congressmen have opposed and assaulted them with the war-cry "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!" For instance, when the Mahars of Mukhed (near Nasik) only the other day wanted to carry a religious procession through the public thoroughfare, we learn that "crowds of caste Hindus from various villages made a general lathi charge, with shouts of 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki jai,' on the Untouchable Satyagrahis and scattered them in all directions." On the other hand, at the Poona and Nasik temple entry Satyagrahas, and on other occasions, the Untouchables are known to have shouted the war-cry "Ambedkar-ki jai."

Another phenomenon that is likely to puzzle the observer who has no inside knowledge is the attitude of certain bodies representing, or claiming to represent, the Depressed Classes in repudiating Dr. Ambedkar and plumping for the Congress and its sole representative, the Mahatma. It is not commonly known that there are varying degrees of untouchability and that among those who are generally lumped together as "depressed" or "untouchable"

there are exquisite gradations and caste taboos. Thus the Cham-bhar regards the Mahar as his inferior, and the latter regards the Mang as still lower in the scale of humanity. In a society so constituted, and in the bargain so woefully backward, it is not difficult to imagine how easy it would be to have—or, if necessary, to create—feuds and factions. Even in a homogeneous sub-community like the Mahars, it would not be impossible to find men of very limited attainments but overweening ambition for leadership who would willingly lend their help to pull down a man whose very success in life is almost a crime against the laws of nature which have condemned the community itself to eternal servitude. These are a few of the wheels within wheels which work, or are worked, unseen and which give rise to such phenomena as we have noted. A man like Dr. Ambedkar has to work not only against the conservatism of caste Hindus; he has also to fight against the caste idea that holds his own Depressed Classes in its iron grip, even more than it holds the educated high caste man. And quite naturally; the very essence of Hindu reformism itself is to pretend to raise the lower to the next higher caste level, (e.g., by giving sacred threads), leaving those higher still immune from the hated contact. The classical instance of this self-deception—if it is nothing worse—is Mr. Gandhi's solution of the problem, namely that the Antyajias should be raised to the level of Sudras, who should intermarry with them, thus leaving the sacrosact "traivarnikas" (the three upper castes) safe from the dreaded intermixture.

[*Times of India*, 20-10-1931].

PREPOSTEROUS CLAIMS.

Despair at his failure to arrive at an agreement with the minorities seems to have turned Mr. Gandhi into a mere politician. Replying to a question at Birmingham, he is reported to have said that the Congress had produced a settlement "which had been accepted by the Hindu, the Musalman and the Sikh." We should like to know which settlement Mr. Gandhi referred to when he made this surprising statement. Did he mean the still-born Nehru Report which was the Congress reply to the late Lord Birkenhead's challenge to Nationalist India to put forward an agreed demand? If so, when did the Musalmans accept it? If they did accept it, why is there a painful breach between the Congress and such representative Muslim bodies as the Muslim Conference and the Khilafat

Committee? If there had been a settlement acceptable to all communities, would the numerous All-Parties Conferences have failed, and would Mr. Gandhi have been reduced to the desperate remedy of starving himself for twenty-two days? Mr. Gandhi made a still more remarkable statement in connexion with this "accepted" settlement when he said that it was for the British Government "to hand over the country to the Congress and leave the Congress to settle with the minorities." How does this modest demand square with the assertion that the minorities had already accepted the Congress settlement? Incidentally, we get a sidelight on the method by which the Congress is going to "settle" with the minorities from the refreshingly candid confession that "if he (Mr. Gandhi) had the opportunity he would dispossess the Indian Princes of their insolent palaces." We wonder if Mr. Gandhi expects the Princes to fold their hands in true Mahatmic humility and hand over their "insolent" palaces to the agents of the Congress, or, at best, to offer strictly non-violent Satyagraha fortified by a few world-advertised fasts. Evidently Mr. Gandhi's chagrin at his failure has put him off his guard and we thus have a glimpse of what is in his heart—ruthless Congress rule (under the velvet glove of professed non-violence) in spite of opposition from any minority or "insolent" princeling. What this would mean in actual practice, especially "if Britain declared that she would withdraw from India," and did actually withdraw at Mr. Gandhi's courteous request, it is not difficult to visualise. It is a grim prospect over which every separate interest in India ought to ponder.

It is mere camouflage, and not very ingenuous camouflage, to ask the world to believe that the interests which cannot now come to a settlement would immediately do so as soon as the British Government declared its willingness to "hand over the country to the Congress." According to Mr. Gandhi the Government of India is a wedge between the communities, and organic life in India is being poisoned by foreign matter, which has to be expelled as the first condition of a settlement. We differ from that. What nationalism, or patriotism, there is in India, whatever cohesion there is among the politically minded minority in this vast continent, is actually due to the existence of this "foreign matter" that has, unintentionally perhaps, acted as a healthy irritant to rouse the "nation," *i.e.*, the politically minded part of it, from age-long stupor and make it conscious of inequities and injustices, whether social

or religious or political. To be brutally frank, what has united Hindu and Musalman in the last few years is more the dislike of the "foreign matter" than love of country. What is the use of shutting our eyes to facts however unpalatable they might be? And what is the use of bitterly slanging Mr. MacDonald for telling us not to shut our eyes to such facts? What wisdom is there in asking the British Government to "hand over the country to the Congress" when, the very next day after this peremptory demand, the General Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee is howled down when defending the Congress at a public meeting at Parel in this City which has been proudly proclaimed to the world as the stronghold of the Congress during the Civil Disobedience agitation? What sense is there in persisting that the Congress is the sole representative of every interest in this vast country, including the Depressed Classes, when caste Hindus in Madras stone a procession of Adi-Dravidas who had the temerity to claim the right of using a certain road? Day after day cables are being sent to the Round Table Conference repudiating the Congress and denouncing Mr. Gandhi's claim to represent the millions of down-trodden human beings whom, but for the existence of the foreign irritant, no one would perhaps have thought of as having any claims in any "national" division of spoils. Yet we are told that all will be well if only India is handed over to the Congress. As we said yesterday, the fact is that the India which Mr. Gandhi imagines does not exist. [*Times of India*, 22-10-1931.]

UNTOUCHABLES AND MR. GANDHI.

At the end of last week Mr. Gandhi was lamenting that India was misrepresented by the London papers and offering to supply them with the truth from the pure and undefiled well of Congress propaganda. A day later Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, presiding at the All-India Depressed Classes Conference at Gurgaon in the Punjab, said that "we see a lot of misrepresentation being carried on in London," and he went on to show how Mr. Gandhi was misrepresenting the case of the untouchables. Mr. Gandhi, the Rao Bahadur added, was a good, kind-hearted man, a great man, one with few rivals, and so on—all very polite and eulogistic, leading up to the warning: "Beware of Mr. Gandhi, the politician." That was only another way of saying what Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Srinivasan, delegates representing the Depressed Classes at the Round

Table Conference, had stated in the letter we published last week. They exposed Mr. Gandhi's hostility to the claims of the Depressed Classes and said that "Mr. Gandhi is not only not playing the part of a friend of the Depressed Classes, but he is not even playing the part of an honest foe." When charges like that are being made by responsible men it ill becomes Mr. Gandhi to raise the old cry that English papers are unfair to India and misrepresent what is going on in this country. At the best of times it is not a very profitable cry, and in this case it only leads to the old question, "What is truth?" The difficulty of answering that can be known to few so well as to Mr. Gandhi who, as he has often said, has devoted much of his life to searching for the truth.

In this dispute between Mr. Gandhi and the Untouchables, statements are constantly being made which should be capable of proof or disproof. It is not a matter of searching for truth in the abstract, but an argument as to what has been done by the Congress and Mr. Gandhi. Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah flatly denies the claim made by Mr. Gandhi that the Congress had been taking care of the Untouchables from the beginning, that the Congress had always stood and still stood for the removal of untouchability, and that the Congress had always championed the cause of the Untouchables. "I say," is the emphatic reply of Rao Bahadur Rajah, "that these statements are all untrue." Is the implied challenge to be taken up, or is it merely to be added to the charges of a very similar nature already made by Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Srinivasan and to be left unanswered? The matter is not one that can well be left alone. When Mr. Gandhi is thus attacked he cannot evade the task of defending himself and the Congress and yet make vague and unsubstantiated charges of misrepresentation against the London press. The apostle of truth has been exposed before the meeting of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference as saying what is not true about those very classes. Are we to hear from Mr. Gandhi that this is only more misrepresentation? The problem becomes every day more interesting and more sharply defined; but there is no sign of that change of heart which Rao Bahadur Rajah seems to postulate as necessary for the solution of the problem.

The Untouchables have apparently to satisfy themselves, if they can, with Mr. Gandhi's recent assurance in *Young India* that if they can not succeed in making their voice felt he will be prepared

to lead a campaign of civil resistance on their behalf and to paralyse the Hindu orthodox opposition. That assurance is rather cold comfort in view of the fact that Mr. Gandhi has more than once refused an opportunity of leading such a campaign. In fact all these resolves and assertions mean very little. An ounce of practice is far better than a pound of principles. What is the use of talking of formulas when we see what is actually happening around us in all parts of the country? A party of Untouchables is assaulted, by khaddar clad people who shout "Mahatma Gandhiki Jai," for carrying their holy book in a palanquin through a public thoroughfare; another party is assaulted because it dares to carry a bridegroom in a palanquin, at Rajapura (practically a suburb of Mr. Gandhi's stronghold, Ahmedabad); high caste children are removed from a school because two untouchable children are allowed to sit with them; such is the endless stream of every day events (of which perhaps not one in a hundred is reported) which proves for practical men the truth or otherwise of the claims put forward by Mr. Gandhi and the Congress. And all this has happened in the last few weeks, full ten years after Mr. Gandhi made the removal of untouchability a condition precedent to, and a proof of fitness for Swaraj.

[*Times of India*, 3-11-1931].

TEMPLES AND UNTOUCHABLES.

On November 5 begins the Satyagraha of the Untouchables at Nasik to gain the "right" to enter the famous Kala-Ram Temple. It is a pity Mahatma Gandhi is not there to take the lead and, as he is reported in *Young India* to have declared to an admiring audience in London, "paralyse Hindu orthodoxy." He had two such occasions in the last two years, once when Untouchables attempted to storm the Parvati temple at Poona and again at Nasik when Untouchables made Satyagraha for establishing their "right" to enter the Kala Ram Temple. But he refused on both occasions to take the lead; in fact he expressed stern disapproval of these attempts to paralyse orthodoxy. Nor have his lieutenants in this Presidency shown any enthusiasm for the Nasik Satyagraha. The President of the Bombay Presidency Congress Committee is discreetly silent, and Mr. K. M. Munshi, who distributed sacred threads among Bombay Untouchables a few weeks ago and thus raised them at a stroke even above the "touchable" Sudras, has refused to

have anything to do with the Nasik Satyagraha. He has also said in so many words that the Congress cannot afford to lose the sympathy of the orthodox Hindus. "Temple entry Satyagraha," he said, "means arousing caste and community passions.....To dignify temple entry into a national issue would be suicidal."

It has been said many times by Congress organs and orators that it is a "primary" or "elementary" right of every Hindu to go into any public temple for worshipping the god in it. These enthusiastic organs and orators are wrong. Orthodox Hinduism does not believe that "God created all alike" or that all Hindus have equal rights and duties. The very structure of Hindu society, based as it is on "Chātur-varṇya," the Hindu Dharma itself which is based on "varṇāshrama," denies any such equality *ab initio*. It is no use denying or shutting one's eyes to facts. Touchable Hindu society is made up of four water-tight "varṇas," of which again the fourth, the Sudra, is in the communion on sufferance only as a necessary evil. The Mahatma himself for all his professions of liberalism and paralysing orthodoxy cannot get over this four caste idea; he is a firm believer in it, and in fact that has always been his strongest argument whenever he claims to be an orthodox Sanatanist Hindu. And where there are castes there are bound to be "outcastes." It is the caste system and the Karma theory which are the foundation of the untouchability idea. So long as this socio-religious structure of the Hindu communion remains intact it is illogical to talk of temple entry as an elementary right of the Untouchables, or to put it on the same level as their legal and civil right to walk on any public road.

[*Times of India*, 5-11-1931].

UNTOUCHABILITY AND THE CONGRESS.

After much flirtation with the dangerous problem set up by the Nasik temple entry Satyagraha started by the Untouchables, the Bombay Congress Committee has taken its courage in both hands and made some brave though vague resolves to give help to the satyagrahis. The Congress tacticians have apparently been driven to desperation by the slogans of the Nasik satyagrahis, "Ambedkarki Jai" and even "Shaukat Ali Zindabad!" This was too much, especially in view of Mr. Gandhi's claims at the Round Table Conference, and the conference of Hindu leaders called by the Congress junta on Sunday last was the result. The

most interesting speech made on this occasion was by Mr. G. B. Pradhan of the Social Equality League. It was a speech full of stinging truths which exposed the hypocrisy of the Congress in the matter of untouchability. "Dr. Ambedkar," said Mr. Pradhan, "is the true leader of the Untouchables, not Mr. Gandhi who claims to represent 95 per cent. of the population of India. I ask you all: Do you *yourselves* believe this claim?" What can be said to a man who asks such awkward questions? The Congress press report has rightly boycotted him. But we must say that the right note was struck by Mr. Natarajan who urged that removal of untouchability was a purely Hindu question and the Congress as a national institution had no business to meddle with such purely communal questions. He went to the root of the matter when he pointed out—as has been done times out of number in these columns—that untouchability is the logical and necessary outcome of the caste system itself, and that if untouchability is to go caste itself must go root and branch.

There is no doubt that the Congress has made a mistake in making removal of untouchability a main plank in its platform, just as it made a still greater blunder in tagging the Khilafat question on to Indian politics. What business, for example, has the Parsi president of the B.P.C.C. to meddle with a purely socio-religious question of the Hindus? Even Mr. Gandhi who in 1921 declared, for reasons best left unanalysed, that untouchability must be removed if Swaraj was to be won in one year, seems to have seen his mistake. He now coldly tells the Depressed Classes to wait till Swaraj is won for the redress of their manifold grievances. We do not know that even under Swaraj untouchability will cease to exist as if by magic because Mr. Gandhi or some other Congress dictator wishes it so to cease. Prejudices so deep-rooted as to last through hundreds of generations cannot be easily destroyed. Political opportunism like that shown by the B.P.C.C. will only complicate the difficult problem instead of making its solution easy. Any way, the Congress action is not going to add to the credit of a body whose insincerity in the matter has become a byword with the Indian public.

[*Times of India*, 15-11-1931]

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Errata.

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