

For the use of the members of the Franchise Committees only.



NOTE

Explaining the Origin & Nature

OF

Depressed & Backward Classes

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Depressed and backward classes.

THIS note is an attempt to explain the origin and nature of the classes usually called "depressed", and their relation to the Hindu social system. It is prepared for the use of the Franchise Committee, in the hope that it may help them to understand a very difficult problem. In writing it I have used the following material :—

(a) Crooke's "Tribes and castes of the North-Western Province and Oudh." This work, which is in the form of a dictionary, was written in 1895. To bring it up to date, certain additions and corrections are required, but Crooke is still the authority on the caste-system of these provinces, and is not likely to be ousted from the position.

(b) Sir Richard Burn's Census Report, United Provinces, for 1901, chapter VIII. This chapter contains a scheme of social precedence, which was based on local inquiries made by committees which were created *ad hoc* in every district, and is the *locus classicus* on this particular subject.

(c) Information collected by myself at various times on the subject of caste generally. This was done principally in connection with the census of 1911, when it was the result of local inquiries made by special officers in every district, usually from members of the caste themselves. Other information is the result of my own observations or of special inquiries which I have made. [It has been collected in a book of which I have just received advance copies.]

(d) The rough draft of a chapter on the backward and depressed classes which will ultimately appear in the Census Report of 1931, kindly placed at my disposal by Mr. A. C. Turner, Provincial Census Superintendent. His information was, as usual, collected for him by special officers in every district, who made inquiries from the local pandits and other influential Brahmans regarding such matters as "untouchability" and other disabilities of the "depressed." Mr. Turner has also allowed me to see the census figures for 1931, and I have used them in this note.

It should be understood, that all the statements made in this note refer directly only to the United Provinces; but with minor modifications they are probably also true of the whole of Northern India between sea and sea, and between Himalayas and Vindhya,—in other words, of the country formerly called Aryavarta or Aryan territory.

ORIGIN OF THE "DEPRESSED" CLASSES.

2. *The Arya social classes.*—When the Arya invaders first broke into India some 3,000 years B. C., they were already divided into three social classes, of which, two, namely, the ruling or military class, subsequently called the Rajan or Kshatriya, and the priestly class, subsequently called the Brahman, were already recognized as superior to the Vish, or Arya commonalty:

3. *Arya and Dasyu.*—On entering India, the Aryas found the country inhabited by a race, to which they gave the name Dasyu. The Aryas were a fair-skinned people, and, for the time, highly civilized. The Dasys were a mere collection of jungle tribes, darkskinned and little better than savages. The Arya hated and despised the Dasyu, whose physical peculiarities, manners and customs were all repugnant to him. But the Arya wanted the Dasyu's country; he wanted the Dasyu's women, for he had not brought enough of his own with him; and so the two races were forced into the closest contact.

4. *Intermarriage between dissimilar races.*—When two races of similar blood and civilization are brought into contact so close as this, there is usually fusion between them, producing a mixed race with characteristics derived from both sides of its descent. But when the two races are of different blood and at

different stages of civilization, then the fusion is never complete. Intermarriage between them occurs. But the process is not universal; the highest sections in the higher race disdain to take wives from the lower race, whilst the lower race cannot obtain them from the higher at all. And the process is not continuous; it is begun with reluctance, and it ceases as soon as the higher race has bred a sufficiency of women for its wants. The result is the formation of groups of all shades of colour, some of them of pure blood, both high and low, most of them of different degrees of mixed blood,—but all imbued with a spirit of exclusiveness, bred of mutual dislike and contempt.

5. *The varnas and the outcaste groups.*—So it was in India; and, thus there arose the four well-known *varnas*, a word which—significantly enough—means “colour”; the first three called Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya after the existing Arya social classes, the fourth class called Sudra, a term of uncertain meaning but possibly the name of some Dasyu tribe. There was, however, another class in this Arya-Dravidian society formed from the remnants of the Dasyu tribes, called Nishada or Chandala in Vedic times, and *hina-jatyo* (low tribes) in Buddhist times; with whom are coupled the *hina-sippani*, groups following low or primitive occupations, such as hunting, fowling, basket-making, the collection of jungle produce, as well as more degrading occupations, such as tanning, scavenging, and the trade of the executioner. These *hina-jatiyo* and *hina-sippani* were the “depressed classes” of that period. They were compelled to live in villages by themselves; and they were so “untouchable”, that, like the lepers of the middle ages, they had to give notice of their approach by striking two pieces of wood together.

6. *The later invasions.*—At a much later date came the foreign invasions, beginning with the expedition of Alexander the Great in the fourth century B. C. and ending with the irroad of the Huns in the fifth century A. D. Greek, Parthian, Scythian, Kushan and Hun, one after another, broke through the northern passes and carved out kingdoms for themselves in India. The invaders, sooner or later, were absorbed in the Hindu social system; their kings and nobles, in virtue of their position, usurped the style and rank of Kshatriyas, whilst their tribes were added to the ranks of Vaishya or Sudra; some also to the *hina-jatiyo*, since some of these newcomers were barbarians, as alien from the Hindu as the Dasyu had been from the Arya.

7. *The social pale.*—When a higher race like the Aryan intermarries with a lower race like the Dasyu, it is usually compelled, sooner or later, to admit the halfbred groups into its social system; but it generally endeavours to keep out the lower race. The result is the formation of a sort of social pale, within which are the groups that possess any share of the higher blood, outside of which are groups of the lower blood. So it was in India. The Brahmans, anxious to preserve the Arya people and especially the Arya religion from contamination, at first tried to exclude not only the *hina-jatyo* and *hina-sippani*, but also the Sudra. In respect of the latter they failed; for though a distinction is still drawn between the once-born Sudra and the twice-born higher classes, yet the former is recognized as a full member of the Hindu society. And even amongst the *hina-jatyo* and *hina-sippani* there were many that from time to time succeeded in forcing their way within the pale.

8. *The parvenus.*—The process by which such an outcaste group enters Hindu society has always been the same. The aspirant begins by abandoning the degrading occupation which is traditional in his group, and takes to some less unsavoury means of livelihood. As he grows prosperous, he gives up all those primitive customs which are especially abhorrent to Hinduism, for instance, the practice of widow remarriage, the drinking of strong liquor and the eating of pork or beef. He also lowers the age of marriage and adopts the characteristic Hindu domestic rites. His next step is to induce some Brahman first to attend and then to serve his rites. He adopts in place of his group name some sectional name,

preferably one also to be found in groups of higher position. Lastly, with the assistance of his newly acquired family priest (*purohit*), he invents for himself a pedigree, and puts out a definite claim to be a member of one of the three higher castes. And such a claim has more than once been admitted.

9. *Exclusiveness of the low groups.*—It must not be supposed, however, that all tribes outside the pale were equally anxious to cross it. The spirit of exclusiveness, which was and still is the principal characteristic of Hindu society, has worked both ways. If the Arya hated and despised the Dasyu, the Dasyu hated and feared the Arya. He was quite as unwilling to give the Arya his daughter in marriage as the Arya was to take her. At no time would he have felt any desire to exchange his own priests and his own rites for the priests and rites of others. His objection to eating food cooked, or drinking water given, by an Arya, was even stronger than that of an Arya to eating food cooked, or drinking water given, by him: for his objection was the result of certain primitive superstitions to which he attached great importance, whilst the Arya's objection was mainly the result of racial fastidiousness.

"DEPRESSED" CLASSES OF THE PRESENT DAY.

10. *The present state of affairs.*—The *kina-jatyo* and *kina-sippani* of Buddhist times have their descendants or counterparts at the present day. There are still in existence such degraded tribes as the Habura, the Sansiya, the Nat, and other vagrants, or the Dòm, which are wholly outside the pale of Hinduism, and have so far shown no great desire to be received within it. There are, in South Mirzapur and elsewhere, tribes that have only partly emerged from jungle life, and still preserve their primitive customs, beliefs and rites. There are castes following unsavoury professions, from which the better castes to a greater or less extent hold themselves aloof. And it is to these castes and tribes that, *prima facie*, the term "depressed class" should be restricted.

11. *Terminology.*—The phrase "depressed class" is of comparatively recent coinage. It is not to be found in Crooke's great work. It was not used by Sir Richard Burn in the Census Report of 1901; nor was it used in the Census Report of 1911. It seems to have found its way, probably from Madras, into the United Provinces about 1920. The use of the word "depressed" in this connection is unfortunate. Firstly, it does not translate any vernacular term; indeed the Hindustani adjectives used in this connection, such as *adi* (aboriginal), *adna* (inferior), *dalit* (downtrodden), or *achut* (untouchable), have been subsequently selected to translate the English adjective. Secondly, the word "depressed" is question-begging, for it connotes the presence of a depressor; and though there may be castes that can with justice complain that obstacles have been deliberately placed in the way of their social or economic or political advancement, there are also many castes which, though they may be of low social status, are certainly not "depressed" in the literal sense of the word, and would be extremely annoyed if they were told that they were. This is indeed the principal reason why it is so difficult to define the term, and why its meaning differs so greatly with different authorities.

12. *Criteria of depression.*—Various criteria have been suggested by which to determine whether a particular tribe or caste should or should not be classed as "depressed." The principal of these are as follows:—

- (1) Untouchability, or pollution by physical contact; which involves—
 - (a) exclusion from the use of a village well;
 - (b) exclusion from the temples of orthodox Hinduism.
- (2) Food and water taboos.
- (3) Exclusion from orthodox domestic rites.

13. (1) *Untouchability.*—The criterion of untouchability is of special importance, because many people (including the Simon Commission) appear to regard "untouchable" and "depressed" as synonyms. The principle is of

far less importance in this province than in other parts of India. We have, for instance, no caste so low that its members can cause pollution from a distance, or by the fall of a shadow; our untouchables convey pollution only by contact. Moreover, the superstition is moribund. Few castes are now untouchable to Rajputs and Sudras; and though Vaishyas and Brahmans may be more particular, yet they too are apt to ignore untouchability, whenever observance of it would be inconvenient. If a Brahman is working in the field during the morning with an untouchable labourer, he can scarcely avoid contact with him; but the fact will not trouble him, for he will in any case wash himself and his clothes when he goes home at midday, and thereby can remove the stain of contact. Modern conditions have also served to weaken this taboo. Touchables and untouchables jostle each other freely in a crowded street, or a political meeting, or a railway carriage; but trouble is avoided because the touchable is careful not to display any curiosity regarding his neighbour's caste.

14. *Exclusion from wells and temples*—(a) *Wells*.—With the disappearance of the taboo of untouchability, itself the two principal disabilities which result from it are also disappearing. Not so long ago, the untouchables of a village, if they had no well of their own, were compelled to wait at the village well until some member of a clean caste condescended to draw water and fill their vessels for them; they were not allowed to draw water themselves. The reports received at the census of 1931, however, show that this restriction is disappearing rapidly, and that for the most part untouchables are as free to use the common well as anybody else. Nowadays, an untouchable would only be debarred from using the well, if a touchable wanted to use it at the same time; in which case the untouchable must stand aside till the touchable has finished.

(b) *Temples*.—Some social reformers seem to regard exclusion from the major Hindu temples as the principal disability of an untouchable caste, and the removal of it as the only step necessary to raise him into the ranks of Hindu society. It seems doubtful, however, whether so much weight should ever have been given to this particular restriction. Castes likely to be excluded from such temples would rarely have either an opportunity or a desire to enter them. Many such castes have their own deities and their own worships, often of a very primitive kind, and would ordinarily be content with those. If an untouchable conceived the idea of visiting the Golden temple at Benares, his motive will probably be either mere curiosity, or a vague idea, common enough amongst the followers of all primitive religions, that it is desirable to placate strange gods in their own domain. The prohibition, moreover, has never been confined merely to untouchables, but is extended to the followers of other religions, for instance Islam and Christianity. At the present time, the latest reports show that in many districts the prohibition has been relaxed. For instance, at a certain famous temple in the Bara Banki district where a large fair is held on the Shivratri festival, Chamars and sweepers are allowed to offer their Ganges water without any restrictions whatever; whilst from another district comes the report that Chamars are allowed to enter temples up to a certain fixed distance, provided they are wearing wet loincloths (*dhotis*).

15. *Temporary and permanent untouchability*.—Untouchability serves as a criterion of social status only when it is permanent. It is the result of uncleanness. Anybody may be temporarily unclean and therefore temporarily untouchable; for instance a woman in her courses or in childbed is always untouchable for a fixed period. If a man, though touchable himself, has come into contact with an untouchable, he himself becomes untouchable until he has removed the stain. Again, anybody, even though touchable himself, can pollute by touch the chief mourner after a death, who, for the benefit of the departed soul, must keep himself in a state of ceremonial purity. On the other hand, the son of a twice-born cannot be polluted by touch until he has undergone the *upanayana* ceremony which makes him twice-born, and has put on the *janeu* (sacred thread), a rite which should take place in the eighth year, but is usually postponed till the tenth or

eleventh; and it is this fact that makes it possible for the sons of Brahmins and Chamars to play together in the streets, or sit next to each other on the same school bench.

16. *The causes of permanent untouchability.*—In theory, the following practices would make a tribe or caste permanently untouchable, at all events to a Brahman :—

- (1) the following of some unclean profession, such as scavenging ;
- (2) the keeping of pigs, or the eating of unclean food, such as pork or beef ;
- (3) vagrancy, unless there is a settled home to which the tribe or caste occasionally returns.

Reports received in connection with the census of 1931 from the districts, show that the *average* Brahman still regards these practices as carrying with them a theoretical stigma of untouchability, even though that stigma, as already explained, may now be lightly regarded. There is, moreover, a marked and growing tendency to make untouchability a personal and not a caste attribute. Formerly, every person born into a caste, the members of which followed some degrading practice, was treated as permanently untouchable. At the present day, any caste, or any section of a caste, or any individual who has abandoned the practice which made him untouchable, becomes touchable. The village Chamar, for instance, will remain untouchable so long as he handles dead animals, but the Chamar who has become a saddler (*zingar*), or a cobbler (*mochi*), or a groom (*syce*), is not. This has happened even amongst Bhangis, for there is a case recorded of a municipal latrine-cleaner, who having first risen to the rank of jamadar of scavengers, subsequently abandoned that occupation altogether, and is now no longer regarded as untouchable by his fellow-citizens. And all recent evidence suggests that, at the present day the castes that would, *as a whole*, be treated as untouchable are very few,—the Bhangi; the Dom; and the wandering tribes; and these would be untouchable not only to the Brahman but to all orthodox Hindus. The whole idea of untouchability, in fact, is now fast disappearing.

17. *Untouchability amongst the untouchables.*—Curiously enough, however, many castes, which for this reason or that are in theory untouchable, are particular in keeping certain other untouchables at a distance. For instance, the Basor, a section of the Dom tribe, which has settled down to the comparatively respectable occupations of basket-making and music, will not touch either a Bhangi, a Chamar, a Dhobi, or even a Dom or a Dharkar, both of whom are his close relatives. Among the five castes mentioned, the Bhangi and the Chamar will not touch the Dhobi or the Dom. The Dharkar also extends his objections to the Chamar; whilst even a Dom will not touch a Dhobi.

18. *Untouchability summarized.*—The principal facts connected with untouchability can now be summarized—

- (a) The number of castes that would be regarded or treated as untouchable by all the twice-born is small.
- (b) The number of castes that would be regarded as untouchable by the Brahman is considerable, but—
 - (i) the stigma of untouchability will disappear if the practice which produced it is abandoned;
 - (ii) even though a Brahman may *regard* any particular caste as untouchable, he will not necessarily *treat* a member of it as such, if to do so would cause himself inconvenience.
- (c) Castes, themselves untouchable, are often more intolerant in their treatment of other untouchables than the twice-born themselves.

19. *Untouchability the minimum criterion.*—It follows, therefore, from what has been said, that untouchability cannot be regarded as a good, and still less a decisive, criterion of social status; for in certain circumstances anybody

may become untouchable, whilst with relatively little trouble, anybody who is untouchable can relieve himself of the taint. The number of those who attach any importance to the principle is constantly growing smaller, and the principle itself is constantly growing weaker. If we confine ourselves strictly to the few castes which are untouchable to everybody, then untouchability may serve as a criterion of the *minimum* population that can be regarded as "depressed;" beyond that, however, its use would be dangerous. On the other hand, the degrading practices mentioned in para. 16, whether they do or do not connote untouchability, do connote a social status, which may, or may not, be sufficiently low to be consonant with "depression."

20. (2) *The food and water taboos.*—These taboos form the most common criterion of the social rank of any particular caste. They form one of the bases on which Sir Richard Burn erected his scheme of precedence, and for all Hindus they are of great importance. A classification of castes according to these taboos represents, in Sir Edward Gait's words (Census Report of 1911), the "external view of the social organization." To the individual his caste matters much, but it matters very little to anybody else. A Brahman will not care whether his neighbour belongs to this caste or that, but he will care whether he can take food or water from his hands. At first sight it would seem that these taboos provide an adequate criterion of the social position of any particular caste,—at all events, in any given locality, for the intercourse which can take place in this matter varies from place to place. There are, however, many practical difficulties. The taboos themselves have always admitted of exceptions, for since the time of Manu it has always been recognized that the hungry traveller may obtain food as best he can, whether he thereby infringes caste regulations or not. The distinction drawn between *kachcha* food (food cooked with water) and *pakka* food (food cooked with butter, *ghee* or milk), forms another exception, and is an excellent example of practical casuistry. In modern times, again, the incidents of railway travelling have further relaxed these restrictions. It would be inconvenient to make inquiries regarding the caste of a platform food-vendor, especially if the wait is a short one. "Having drunk water from his hands it is foolish to ask about his caste," says the proverb; and a wise traveller avoids trouble by making no inquiries at all. Finally, the number of high caste Hindus, who will dine in company with Hindus of any caste, or with Muslims and Europeans, is constantly growing; and such guests do not as a rule inquire to what caste the cook of the host belongs. In short, these taboos also, though they can scarcely be described as moribund, are sensibly weaker than they used to be a generation ago.

21. *The food taboos of low castes.*—Again, many low castes are quite as particular as high castes regarding these food taboos. The Kumhar (potter), for instance, is in this respect on a par with the Kanaujia or Saraswat Brahman. The Majhwar and the Agaria, two primitive tribes in south Mirzapur, are on a par respectively with the Khattri and Kayastha. Out of 76 castes whose commensal taboos have been fully analysed, there are only four who will take food cooked or drink water given by almost anybody,—namely, the Bhangi, the Chamar, the Dom and the Kanjar (a vagrant tribe). In modern times as in ancient, the spirit of exclusiveness is as strong in some low castes as it is amongst the highest.

22. Lastly, in particular cases the taboos themselves are either irrational or merely sentimental. Why, for instance, should a twice-born caste be willing to take water from a man who transports goods by boat, and refuse to take it from a man who transports goods on the backs of bullocks or ponies? Why should he take water from a tailor and refuse to take it from a weaver? Why should he refuse to take water from a man whose oil he uses freely? The most striking instance of this, however, is that of the Kalwar. He has a longstanding claim to be regarded as a Vaishya. He is wealthy and his percentage of literacy is high. Yet no twice-born will take water from him, and the only reason appears to be that he sells liquor.

23. *Food taboos the maximum criterion.*—In short, though the food taboos are an important and well-nigh a decisive criterion of social status, the fact that a caste is debarred from offering either food or water to any twice-born caste cannot be regarded as decisive of its "depression." At the very most, it can be regarded as setting an upper limit, just as untouchability sets a lower limit, to the "depressed" classes.

24. (3) *Exclusion from orthodox domestic rites.*—At all times, throughout history, the Brahman priesthood have endeavoured to keep the *kina-jatyos* and the *kina-sippanis* segregated, not only from Hindu society, but from the Hindu religion and the Hindu ceremonial. They were not allowed to hear, much less study, the Vedas: they must carry out all ceremonies without using the *mantras* (sacred texts); and no Brahman would carry out any domestic ceremony (*sanskara*) for them. And that is still the position; there are many castes who are not served by Brahmans, yet have showed by their attempts to secure some trivial service from Brahmans, that they are desirous of receiving their recognition, and of being admitted as full members of the Hindu society. And if the term "depressed class" had only a historical or ethnographical significance, if it meant merely the lowest stratum in the Hindu caste system, then I should reserve it for those whom no Brahman will serve. They are in precisely the same position as the old *kina-jatyos* and *kina-sippanis*, who were the "depressed classes" of mediæval times. Their position is pathetic, because they want what the Brahman will not give them; they are "depressed" in the full sense of the word. At the same time there would be difficulties in using this as the sole criterion of "depression;" for there are many castes which possess their own deities, rites and priests (*baiga* and *ojha*), who are apparently content with them, and do not desire the ministrations of Brahmans except, sometimes, as astrologers. And some of these must certainly be classed as "depressed." Again, the disability itself is removable; the prosperous Chamar, Bhar, or Pasi, can always find for themselves family priests. And since an individual by his own action can free himself of this disability, it must be regarded as the attribute of a person rather than of a caste.

25. *The difficulty of defining a depressed class.*—With criteria so wholly vague and inconclusive, it is not perhaps surprising that different writers, each from his own point of view, have given such different meanings to the term "depressed." Some, for instance, would restrict it to the few groups, numbering perhaps a million in all, which are untouchable to everybody else without exception. Others would extend it so as to include all groups, in number some 13 millions, which are debarred from offering food or water to the twice-born. And there are some who would stretch the term so as to include not only those who can reasonably be called "depressed" but also those who can be labelled "backward":—whereby they stretch the figure to some 27 millions or so, and turn what is usually regarded as a minority into a large majority. Nor, in view of the magnitude of the political issues now involved, is there any likelihood that these differences can be composed; indeed they are more likely to be emphasized.

Personally, I regard it as wholly impossible to devise a general formula capable of covering all cases of "depression." "Depression" is a question of fact, not of formula. I consider that the only possible method of deciding whether it exists in the case of an individual caste is to examine the circumstances of that caste in detail.

26. *The backward classes.*—Of recent years a considerable number of lower Sudra groups have endeavoured to join forces with the "depressed classes." They describe themselves as "backward;" they claim that in respect both of social status and civil position, the difference between themselves and the "depressed" is only one of degree, and that they are as much in need as the latter of special concessions and special treatment. The result is that in the later discussions on this subject, "depressed" and "backward" classes are linked together as if they

were one. The term "backward" is as unfortunately chosen as the term "depressed." Firstly, what type of backwardness is meant? If it be backwardness in the matter of education, then, as one member of the Provincial Franchise Committee has pointed out, the term could justifiably be used to cover not only some, but all Sudras, and even a considerable number of the "twice-born." And if backwardness is interpreted as meaning the maintenance of primitive customs, beliefs and ideas, there are many continental nations which still cling to customs and superstitions quite as primitive as any to be found among our "backward" classes. Do not we ourselves dislike the number 13, the crossing of knives, the spilling of salt, and regard Friday as unlucky? Are not most of our Christmas customs survivals of pagan festivals? In short, the term "backward" is entirely relative: its content depends on the place where progress is supposed to end and backwardness to begin. Backwardness, like depression, must be regarded as a question of fact and not of formula; and here too, the only possible method of deciding whether it exists is to examine the circumstances of individual castes.

I commence, however, by certain general observations which may lighten the task of detailed examination.

NEED FOR SOCIAL UPLIFT AND POLITICAL CONCESSIONS.

27. *Social uplift.*—The Hindu social system is the most aristocratic in the world. A man is born a member of the caste to which his parents belong, and throughout his life remains a member of it. But ambition to rise in the social scale is as common in the East as in the West, and in favourable circumstances an individual, or a sub-caste, or even a whole caste, can rise to higher things. The progress of the parvenu has already been described (para. 8); and though that progress may be slow and even painful, yet it is sure, and long before it is complete, untouchability and other stigmata of "depression" will have passed away. Nor are such cases uncommon. Claims to higher social rank are usually ventilated at a census, for the claimants are anxious to be recorded by the new caste-name, which they have selected for themselves. In 1911 and 1921 no less than 26 low castes put forward such claims, of which seven claimed to be Brahmans, sixteen to be Kshattriya or Rajput, and three claimed to be Vaishya. There are many older claims. In short, the modern *hina-jaty* or *hina-sippani* can and do rise in the social scale by their own unaided efforts, and do not need the assistance of a social reformer to raise them. But if a low caste does not need patronage, it does need its adequate share of opportunity. It is useless for a Chamar or Pasi to give their sons a university education, if the sons can find no market for their degrees and no sphere of action for their energies. Nothing which any social reformer could do to raise the "depressed classes" will be half so effective as a government order making them eligible for appointment to services other than menial.

28. *Political concessions.*—The present composition of the Legislative Council is abnormal, for it includes twelve members belonging to low or depressed castes who owe their election to Congress support. Every other elected Hindu member in the present Council belongs to some twice-born caste; nor can I remember a single elected Sudra member in any previous Council. The reason is simple enough. In earlier days, the Brahman was not only the priest but the leader of society. The Rajput, whether king or petty baron, was the political ruler. To every Rajput clan were attached Sudra groups that lived under its protection and served it as cultivators, artisans, or menials; the relationship is proved by the fact that many Sudra sub-castes are still called by the names of Rajput clans. And the absence of Sudras from the Council today merely means that such folk still prefer to be represented by their natural protectors. It is impossible to say how long this preference will last. The historical bond between the twice-born leader and the Sudra follower has already been weakened, and the time is probably not far distant when the Sudras will cut themselves adrift, and seek to elect representatives from

amongst their own community ; which, in rural areas, is tantamount to saying that the tenantry will cut themselves adrift from the landlords. Personally, I believe that even under the present electoral system, the Sudra tenantry would in many districts be strong enough to defeat a landlord candidate ; which belief is supported by the success of the Congress in capturing twelve seats for low caste representatives at the recent election. But whether that be true or not for the present, it will certainly be true in the future, when the franchise qualification has been lowered. And that fact has an important bearing on the present discussion, for clearly any class which can secure adequate representation through the general electorate requires no special franchise concession.

29. *Coercive processes available to low castes.*—Even if the electoral system were so constructed that only the twice-born could hope to secure election to the Council, yet their Sudra or low caste constituents have means at their disposal by which to compel their representatives to respect their wishes. Such castes are almost invariably ruled by councils (*panchayat*), of which there is one to each local section or brotherhood (*biradari*). These councils are generally composed either of all adult males in the brotherhood, or of representatives selected on one basis or another, and is ruled by a small committee, of which the headman of the brotherhood (*chaudhri*) is president. This headman is usually a permanent officer, either hereditary, or elected or nominated for life. These councils have authority to investigate and punish all offences against caste custom, and also to licence acts and omissions which by custom require their sanction. They are extremely powerful. Their decrees are binding on every member of the brotherhood, and anybody who disobeyed or ignored such a decree would render himself liable to be outcasted ; whilst the decrees of one brotherhood are almost invariably observed and put into effect by other brotherhoods. Moreover these councils can and frequently do take action against other castes should a cause of quarrel arise. Their weapons of offence are the strike and the boycott ; the offended council will forbid its subjects to work for, or serve, or have any intercourse whatever with, the offender until he has placated it. If, for instance, a Nai (barber) quarrels with one of his clients, the Nai *panchayat* will take the case up, and the client will go unshaven until he makes terms. Municipal scavengers have more than once organized effective strikes against an obnoxious board, whilst in one famous case there was a caste strike against Government itself. The Koiri poppy-growers, being dissatisfied with the rates paid by Government for opium, assembled in joint *panchayat*, and decided to stop growing poppy till the rates were enhanced ; and Government had to give way. In short the use of boycott and strike is well understood in India ; and I have little doubt that, if necessary, caste *panchayats* would not hesitate to use these weapons in the political arena,—for instance, against representatives who consistently ignored their wishes. Indeed, unless I am mistaken, they have already been so used in the sphere of local self-government ; whilst the Congress are constantly advocating the social boycott of their political opponents. This too is clearly a factor of which some account must be taken, when deciding whether a particular caste does or does not require any special franchise concession.

30. *Connection between social status and civil position.*—At the present moment all the Hindu majority, consisting of the “twice-born” and all the better Sudras, are anxious to avoid the possibility of being swamped in politics by the “depressed” and “backward” classes. They realize that if they expect these groups to be swallowed up in a general electorate, they cannot reasonably exclude them from the Hindu social system. They realize, moreover, that if they persist in such social exclusion, these groups will cut themselves off from Hinduism altogether, either by way of conversion to some proselytizing religion such as Islam, Christianity or the Arya Samaj or by forming themselves into a new and individual society, such as is implied in the term “Adi Hindu.” It is for this reason that

the social uplift of the depressed classes figures so prominently in the programme, not only of Hindu social reformers, but of Hindu political leaders. In short, the depressed classes are likely to obtain social salvation through the political door. There are, however, indications to suggest that the twice-born castes have allowed the propitious moment to slip by unheeded. The present reforms have awakened a rudimentary sense of political values in the lower classes, which, especially in rural areas, are also beginning to understand the advantages of economic independence. And it may prove that the social benefit which Hinduism has to offer will not prove enough to draw the depressed back to their old relations with the "twice-born." The break between the two is not yet complete, but it has begun and is continuing.

31. *Ad hoc definitions of depressed and backward classes.*—In paragraphs 25 and 26, it has been suggested that the only possible method of deciding whether a caste should be classed as "depressed" or "backward," as the case may be, is to examine the circumstances of that caste in detail. I now offer the following *ad hoc* definitions as a standard of decision:—

- (1) A "depressed class" is one whose social, economic and other circumstances are such that it will be unable to secure adequate presentation of its political views or adequate protection of its interests, without some form of special franchise concession.
- (2) A "backward class" is one whose circumstances are such that it could secure adequate representation of its political views or protection of its political interests through the general electorate, yet is unlikely to make use of its powers.

By these definitions I hope to emphasize the political object of this inquiry, whilst using the various social criteria not as decisive but as mere clues pointing to a decision.

DETAILED EXAMINATION OF CASTES.

32. The highest caste which I have ever heard described as backward is the Ahir, and I have examined the circumstances of this caste and of all others that are placed below it in Sir Richard Burn's scheme of social precedence, 157 in all. I have arranged these castes in convenient classes and groups, and in Appendix I, I have given for each caste or group sufficient information to serve as a basis for decision regarding its social and civil position. Appendix II is a table which shows for each group and class the population which is respectively "touchable," "untouchable," "not served by Brahman," "depressed," and "backward." I should explain that the figures of population wherever possible are those of the 1931 census; where these are not available, I have used the figures of the 1901 census. As there were decreases of population in each of the two decades between 1901 and 1921, and a large increase in the decade 1921—1931, the probability is that the 1901 figures are not far from correct now.

CONCLUSIONS.

33. I now summarize the conclusions of this detailed examination:—

Class A—Peasantry.—This is a class of about 9½ million population. It consists of nine groups consisting of 24 castes. The principal occupation of one of these groups is cattle-owning. A second is composed of shepherds and goat-herds, whilst a third specializes in intensive cultivation of all kinds such as the growing of poppy, flowers and fruit, and market-gardening. All these three, however, have ordinary cultivation as their subsidiary occupation, whilst it is the principal occupation of the other six groups. The vast majority are tenant-farmers and a large proportion are reasonably well-to-do, notably the cattle-owners and market-gardeners. Of the total population of 9½ million all except 480,000 are touchable and neither depressed nor backward. I have classed some 484,000 as backward.

Class B—Village menials, labourers and watchmen.—This class consists of ten castes with a population of 820,000. It is divided into five groups. Three

of these groups and a small part of a fourth, totalling some 354,000, are depressed, of which 244,000 are also untouchable.

Class C—Riverine class and group.—This consists of seven castes with a total population of 965,000. The members of this caste are all by tradition fishermen and boatmen, and many still follow that occupation, though a considerable number have taken to cultivation. This is a difficult group to place. Their social and economic condition is certainly better than that of any other group which has been classed as backward; and they should be able to make their wishes felt through the general electorate if they combine with other similar castes. Unfortunately, the nature of their occupation sends them far afield; and combination, even amongst themselves, might be difficult. They insist that they are "backward," and though I am inclined to doubt it, I have shown them as such.

Class D—Artisans.—This class consists of twelve castes arranged in six groups, with a population of over 8½ million, of which over six million belong to one caste, the Chamar. Of these only 5 million have been classified both as untouchable and depressed and 2½ millions as backward; just over a million consisting of the Barhai group and some weavers, are neither. In this group I have included two puzzling castes; the Kumhar, which though exhibiting every outward sign of depression, is touchable, eats clean food, and is admitted by nobody to be depressed; and a weaver group, of which five-sixths are by unanimous consent classed as both untouchable and depressed with little or no obvious reason. I have classed the Kumhar as backward.

Class E—Carriers.—This consists of only one group of three castes. The total population is only 49,000, none of whom are depressed or backward.

Class F—Domestic servants.—This class consists of eighteen castes arranged in five groups. The population is over 3 million. Of these one million are untouchable and depressed, and about 1½ million are backward. The rest, consisting of two groups, are neither.

Class G—Tradesmen and manufacturers.—This class consists of twenty castes arranged in seven groups. The total population is just under 2 million, of which a small group of 4,000 has been classed as backward. The rest are neither backward nor depressed.

Class H—Dancers, singers, jesters and musicians.—This is a small class of ten castes arranged in three groups, the total population of which is under 19,000. Of these 7,000 are classed as depressed. The rest are neither depressed nor backward.

Class J—Sectarian castes.—This is a small group consisting of two castes with a population of under 38,000, which are neither depressed nor backward.

Class K—Primitive tribes.—This class consists of 32 tribes in five groups numbering in all 2½ million. The whole of this group is both untouchable and depressed.

Class L—Vagrant tribes.—These consist of 19 castes arranged in four groups of which the total population is just under 112,000. The whole of these are depressed and save one small caste, 800 strong, the whole are also untouchable.

Total figures.—The population dealt with is just under 27,470,000. Of those 9,182,000 are untouchable, whilst 8,077,000 are not served by Brahmans. The number of depressed works out at 8,812,000 and of backward classes at 6,046,000.

Conclusion.—It is no part of my object in this note to suggest what special franchise concessions should be granted to the "depressed" and "backward" classes. All I need say by way of conclusion is that in my opinion the "depressed" certainly requires such a concession. As regards the backward classes, I am doubtful. *Ex hypothesi*, they are capable of obtaining sufficient representation or protection for their interests through the general electorate, but for reasons which make up their "backwardness," are not likely to use that power. They will, however, quickly learn to do so; and I consider that if any concession is given to them, it should be for a strictly limited period, which I put at not more than ten years from the first election held under the new franchise.

March 3, 1932.

E. A. H. BLUNT.

APPENDIX I.

Notes.—1. Clean food consists of the following:—Grain pulse, vegetables, sugar, milk, *ghee*, butter; mutton, goat's flesh, venison and game birds. Some high castes also eat wild boar's flesh and scaled fish. Poultry are regarded as unclean, but not sufficiently so to make a caste untouchable. The flesh of the domestic pig, beef, and all animals not commonly used for food, such as field rats, tortoises, crocodiles, bear's flesh or monkey, are positively unclean, and the use of any of these meats would render a caste untouchable to a Brahman. The drinking of spirituous liquor is lowering, but by itself does not make the drinker untouchable.

2. *Service of Brahman priests* means the possession of a Brahman family priest (*purohit*), who will serve the domestic rites (*sanskara*), of which there are sixteen. The twice-born may, and should, carry out all of them: the Sudra should carry out all but the *upanayana* rite, which makes the initiate twice-born; but probably most people other than Brahmans, whether once-born or twice-born, carry out only the more important rites, connected with birth, marriage, and death.

3. *Untouchable*, save where the term is further defined, means following one of the practices described in para. 16, which formerly made a caste wholly untouchable to Brahmans.

4. *Food taboos.*—For these purposes food is divided into *kachcha*, which means food cooked with water, and *pakka*, which means food cooked with *ghee*, butter and milk. The restrictions regarding the latter are much less stringent than the restrictions regarding the former. It must be remembered that the restrictions apply, not to the donor of the food, but to the cook. The Brahman may accept uncooked food from an untouchable, and also cooked food, if the untouchable's cook is of a suitable caste.

5. *Social classes according to Sir Richard Burn's classification.*—Group VIII consists of castes from whom some of the twice-born will take *pakka* food, and all will take water.

Group IX consists of castes from whose hands some of the twice-born will take water, whilst others will not.

Group X consists of castes from whom the twice-born cannot take water, and is sub-divided into three sections:

- (a) with respectable occupations,
- (b) with occupations considered more or less degrading,
- (c) suspected of criminal practices.

Group XI consists of such castes as are untouchable, but do not eat beef.

Group XII consist of such castes as eat beef and vermin, and are considered filthy.

Rural groups.

A.—PEASANTRY.

(1) *Ahir group*—*Ahar, Ahir, Bhurtiya, Harjala.*—The first two castes are closely connected, the third and fourth are offshoots of the second, which is the parent tribe in this class, descended from the Abhiras, a non-Aryan (possibly Scythian) pastoral race, and traditionally connected with the cult of the god Krishna. They are cattle owners, though many have become cultivators. The Ahir claims connection with the Rajput; all are orthodox Hindus, eat clean food, and are served by Brahman priests. The first three are in group VIII, the fourth, which has lost status by taking to begging, is in group X (b). The Ahir possesses a strong *panchayat*. None of these castes can be classed as either "depressed" or "backward."

(2) *Kachhi group*—*Baghban, Mali, Saini, Kachhi, Murao, Kouri, Kunjra*.—All of these castes are closely connected to each other and probably to the important Kurmi tribe. They are all cultivators, specialising in market gardening, the growing of fruit, flowers, poppy, and similar forms of intensive cultivation. They are all orthodox Hindus, and eat clean food, are served by Brahman priests, and as a rule are much better off than most cultivating castes. Kunjra is an occupational name (greengrocer), usually reserved for Muslims. These Hindu Kunjras are probably members of one or other of the former castes, who have taken to selling instead of growing vegetables. They are all in group VIII, and possess *panchayats*. The Kachhi has recently set up a claim to Rajput (Kachh-waha) descent. None of these castes can be classed as "depressed" or "backward."

(3) *Lodha group*—*Soiri, Kisan, Khagi, Lodha, Gorchha*.—These are all cultivating castes. The Soiri is probably of non-Aryan origin, whilst the Gorchha is of unknown descent. The other three are probably offshoots of the Kurmi tribe. All of them, however, claim Rajput descent, which claim seems to be admitted in the first case. All of them are orthodox Hindus, eating clean food and served by Brahman priests, though some Gorchhas drink liquor. All of them are in group VIII; the last three possess *panchayats*. None of these caste are "depressed" or "backward."

(4) *Bhar*.—This tribe represents the remnants of a Dravidian and possibly autochthonous race, which once held Oudh and the eastern districts, and was dispossessed by immigrant Rajput clans which were set moving by the Muslim invasions of the mediaeval era. This race before its downfall was well advanced in civilization, but the modern Bhar is on a much lower level. One section, known as Rajbhar, is of higher social standing than the rest. He claims to be a Rajput, is served by Brahmans, and only eats clean food. The ordinary Bhar keeps pigs and eats pork, and accordingly is untouchable to Brahmans, with whom in matters of ritual he has little or nothing to do. All of them have many primitive beliefs and customs. But their social position is undoubtedly higher than that of other similar tribes. He is in group X (a), and has a *panchayat*. Being a cultivator of fair standing he cannot be regarded as depressed, but he must certainly be classed as backward.

(5) *Bhoksa group*—*Bhotiya, Bhoksa, Tharu*.—The Bhotiya caste is composed of immigrants, either from Tibet or Bhutwal in Nepal. The other two castes live in the Tarai and Bhabar which are submontane tracts below the Himalayas. The first of these is now wholly Hinduized; they eat clean food, are served by Brahman priests, and have adopted all important Hindu customs. The Bhoksa possesses legends of Rajput descent. He is an orthodox Hindu and served by Brahmans, though his food is not always clean. The Tharu varies. In some places he is as advanced as the Bhoksa; and in others he is decidedly backward, eating unclean food, possessing primitive customs and having little to do with Brahmans. Both Bhoksa and Tharu, however, live for the most part in certain Government estates, and are well looked after. All three castes are cultivators by occupation, they are placed in group X (a), and have *panchayats*. I do not think that any of these castes can be called depressed, but the more primitive Tharus must be classed as "backward." I have taken a high estimate of over 50 per cent. as such.

(6) *Phansiya*.—The Phansiya is an offshoot of the Pasi tribe, which first came to notice as a separate caste in 1911. They were formerly hunters and fowlers, but have now settled down to cultivation and fruit selling. They eat clean food, are served by Brahmans, and imitate all the restrictions of higher castes. The caste is a good example of a rise in the social scale as a result of adopting a respectable occupation. They were not included in Sir Richard Burn's classification, as they had not then a separate existence. I would put them not lower than group X (a). There is a strong *panchayat*. I regard them as "backward," and estimate their number at 700. No census figure is available.

(7) *Gidhiya*.—This caste came to notice for the first time in 1911. It claims to be descended from Gujarat Rajputs, but is more probably an offshoot of the criminal tribe called Bawariya. Traditionally, they are birdcatchers and used to be criminals, but have now settled down to cultivation. They are orthodox Hindus. Their food, though they eschew pork, fowls and beef, is unclean, because they eat carrion. This caste was not listed by Sir Richard Burn, having only been subsequently formed. I should put it in group XI (b). There is a *panchayat*. I class the *Gidhiya* as depressed.

(8) *Meo*.—The other names for this caste are Mewati, Mina and Mina-Meo. There are both Hindu and Muslim branches and it is very hard to distinguish them; for many Muslim Meos call themselves by Hindu names, and also preserve various Hindu customs and beliefs. Throughout their history they have been turbulent and troublesome—the most desperate rogues in India, as one writer calls them. They are certainly not untouchable, though they are best avoided. They are placed in group X (c), and have a *panchayat*. They are certainly “backward,” though they require rather the restraining influence of the police, than the uplift of a social reformer.

(9) *Gadariya*.—This is a caste of shepherds, goatherds and blanket weavers, the origin of which is uncertain. They are orthodox Hindus, served by Brahman priests, and are particularly careful about their food, drink and personal purity. They are in group IX, and possess a *panchayat*. The *Gadariya* claims to be a Pali Rajput. He is neither “depressed,” nor “backward.”

B.—VILLAGE MENIALS, WATCHMEN AND LABOURERS.

(1) *Luniya group*—*Luniya*, *Beldar*, *Kharot*.—The parent caste in this group is the *Luniya*. The common occupation is earthwork and the making of saltpetre. Most *Lunias* eat clean food; the other two castes eat pork, and are accordingly untouchable. None of them have Brahman priests. Some of them have taken to agriculture, and have accordingly risen in the social scale, but the status of most of them is decidedly low. They are in group X(b). The *Luniya* and *Beldar* have strong *panchayats*. The *Luniya* can scarcely be regarded as “depressed” though he is “backward.” The other two are depressed.

(2) *Arakh group*—*Arakh*, *Khangar*, *Kotwar*.—The *Arakh* and *Khangar* are closely connected; indeed, in some tracts they describe themselves in terms which can only mean that they are two branches of the same caste. The *Kotwar* is merely one section of the *Khangar*. As a whole, these castes appear to be offshoots of the *Pasi* tribe. They are employed as village menials, watchmen, and labourers. Some *Khangars* claim Rajput descent; and though they are certainly of non-Aryan origin, a very large body of tradition makes it plain that they did actually rule in the past. These *Khangars*, of course, follow all the twice-born customs of the Rajput. The rest are of lower status, but they eat only clean food, and employ Brahmans, though of somewhat inferior grade, to serve their rites. They are decidedly less backward than most of the *Pasi* tribes, but must be placed among the “depressed.” The *Arakh* and *Kotwar* are placed in group X(b), the *Khangar* in group X(c), because he is suspected of criminal practices, notably, theft and burglary. None the less, he is very often appointed the village *chaukidar*. The *Arakh* and *Khangar* have *panchayats*.

(3) *Sejwari group*—*Sunkar*, *Sejwari*.—Both these castes belong to Bundelkhand. The former are labourers, the latter serve the Bundela Rajputs as menial servants or watchmen. Though the social status of both is low, they appear to be orthodox Hindus and are served by Brahmans. Little is known of them and their customs, but the worst alleged against them is that they drink liquor. The *Sejwari* is placed in group IX, the *Sunkar* in group XI. They can be classed as “backward.”

(4) *Dusadh*.—The Dusadh is a menial tribe found in the east of the provinces; whose origin is very uncertain. Some of their legends would suggest a mixed descent, but more probably they are of non-Aryan stock. At one time they seem to have been soldiers, and it is said that most of Lord Clive's army at Plassey was composed of Dusadhs. They appear to be regarded as untouchable, but it is difficult to imagine why, for they eat only clean food and follow clean occupations, being mostly ploughmen or watchmen. On the other hand, they have no Brahman priests, and though they assert that they are orthodox Hindus, many of their deities and beliefs are decidedly primitive. An attempt has been made to connect the name with Dhusiya, which is a sub-caste of the Chamar, but the derivation is impossible, and their affinities seem to be rather with the Goud and Fasi tribes than with any occupational group. They are placed in group XI, and have a strong *panchayat*. They are "depressed."

(5) *Dhanuk*.—The origin of this tribe is unknown. One Bhangi group is called Dhanuk, but is most probably an offshoot from the parent tribe which has taken to scavenging. In some places too one of the Dhanuk sub-castes is Dusadh. Apart from this, however, it appears to have no affinities with any other castes of the same status. One early ethnologist appears to regard them as of Parthian (Pahlava) descent, on the ground that the name can be derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "archer," but the theory is scarcely convincing. By occupation, Dhanuks are village menials, day labourers and watchmen, whilst their women are midwives. They eat unclean food and drink freely of liquor, and though they call themselves orthodox Hindus, they have many primitive beliefs and are not served by Brahmans except as astrologers. They are placed in group XI, and have a strong *panchayat*. They are "depressed."

C.—RIVERINE.

Kewat group.—*Mallah, Kewat, Bind, Sorahiya, Tyar, Chai and Kadhara*.—It is difficult to decide which caste should be regarded as "parent" in this group. The title is possibly best assigned to the Kewat, who is usually regarded as the modern representative of the ancient Kaivarta. The pedigree of this caste is uncertain. According to Manu, the Kaivarta is descended from a Nishada father and an Ayogavi mother, a class itself descended from a Sudra father and a Vaishya mother,—a very low descent, since in both generations the father was the lower of the two parents in rank. Some Puranas on the other hand, give the Kaivarta a Kshatriya father and a Vaishya mother, a far more distinguished parentage. Both Kewat and Mallah claim to be descendants of the ancient Nishadas, and it is mainly on this ground that they now insist on being reckoned amongst the "backward" classes. The argument, of course, is by no means conclusive, for groups of quite as undistinguished descent have risen in the social scale. So much, however, is certain that these groups are all inextricably linked together, for each appears as a sub-caste in one or more other groups. They also appear to be connected with the Kahar and Luniya groups. By occupation, they are traditionally fishermen and boatmen, but at the present day many are cultivators. They are all of them apparently orthodox Hindus and served by Brahman priests. For the most part also they eat only clean food, and fish, though some eat such food as tortoises and crocodiles. They are all placed in group IX. Kewat, Bind, and Chai have *panchayats*: in all probability the rest have them too, but I cannot find the fact recorded. I think they have quite enough independence to make their voice heard in a general electorate if they choose: but their occupation will make difficult any combination with other group for political purposes, and, though with some hesitation, I class them as "backward."

Rural and urban groups.

D.—ARTISANS.

(1) *Barhai group*.—*Barhai, Kunera, Lohar*.—These are respectively the carpenter, the turner and the blacksmith. The Kunera is merely an offshoot of the Barhai. Both Barhai and Lohar claim to be Vishvakarmabansi Brahmans—

a more suitable pedigree for the Lohar than the Barhai, since Vishvakarma is the Hindu Vulcan. They are also orthodox Hindus, eating clean food and served by Brahmans. All of them are placed in group VIII and have *panchayats*. They are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(2) *Kumhar*.—The Kumhar is the village potter. He is a quiet, respectable and industrious artisan, specially fastidious in matters of food and of food taboos. His ceremonies are orthodox, but he has little to do with Brahmans in his domestic rites, which are carried out not by a *purohit*, but by the Nai. Brahmans, on the other hand, will fix auspicious days for his ceremonies. The Kumhar's status is everywhere low, though he is trying to rise in the social scale. He is despised because he has to handle rubbish and sweepings as fuel for his kilns, and he is associated with that impure beast, the donkey. Others despise him as a kind of butcher, because he cuts the throats of his pots when he takes them from the wheel. He does not appear to be untouchable to anybody and indeed he can offer water to the twice-born, being placed in group IX. He has a strong *panchayat*. I cannot class him as "depressed," though he is backward.

(3) *Kori group*—*Orh, Balai, Kori*.—By tradition the members of all these castes are weavers and most of them are so still; but many Koris have taken to agriculture or domestic service, whilst some Orhs have prospered and are now moneylenders and landholders. The parent caste in this group is the Kori, of which both the others were originally sub-castes. The Kori, as his sectional nomenclature proves, is of very mixed origin. His social status also varies according to his occupation; those who have taken to domestic service or agriculture are regarded as considerably higher than the weavers, and are certainly touchable. The others are generally regarded as untouchable, eating unclean food, whilst Brahmans apparently have little to do with them. The Orh is of considerably higher status. He eats clean food together with fish and fowl, is served by Brahmans of a good class. He is often an orthodox Vaishnava. The Balai eats unclean food and drinks liquor but he is served by Brahmans and is often an orthodox Vaishnava. He can scarcely therefore be regarded as untouchable.

The Orh is in group X (a), the Kori and Balai in group XI. The Koris that have taken to domestic service should be placed as high at least as group IX. The Kori possesses a strong *panchayat*. I class Orh, Balai and the Koris of the three western divisions as neither "depressed" nor "backward." The rest of the Koris I class as "depressed."

(4) *Chamar group*—*Chamar, Dabgar, Gharami*.—In villages the Chamar is the currier, tanner and leather worker, and also the village drudge. He is unclean because he handles the bodies of dead animals, especially cattle. His women are the village midwives, another unclean occupation. He eats unclean food not excepting beef, whilst as a rule no Brahman priest will serve him. In some parts of the province he is compelled to live in a hamlet of his own (*chamrotia*); even the lowest castes regard him as untouchable. On the other hand, many Chamars have taken to cleaner occupations such as those of saddler (*zingar*), cobbler (*moahi*), groom (*syce*), whilst the extension of the leather trade at Cawnpore and elsewhere has enabled many Chamars to become wealthy, when they aim at a social status much higher than that of their village brethren. Such Chamars are generally regarded as touchable, and many change the caste name for something less ill-sounding, for instance, Kuril, Aharwar, Jatia, Dhusia and, especially, Jaiswar. The Dabgar and Gharami are small offshoots which have taken respectively to the making of leather vessels and thatching. All of these are placed in group XII, but I am inclined to think that only the village Chamars are properly placed there, whilst the rest should be placed probably as high as group X (b). The Chamar has a very strong *panchayat*. I class the great majority of Chamars as "depressed." Those who have risen in the social scale to some extent I class as "backward." I estimate the number of the latter at 2,000,000.

(5) *Khairwa*.—This is a small caste of catechu makers found in Jhansi. They are on much the same level as the Dusadh, whom in some respects they resemble. They eat only clean food, have primitive beliefs of their own, and do not employ Brahmans as priests. They are placed in group X (b). I class these as "backward."

(6) *Dalera*.—This is a small tribe which may be akin to Khagis. They are basket makers, labourers and thieves. They are orthodox Hindus in all respects. They are placed in group X (c). I class these as "backward."

E.—CARRIERS.

Banjara group—Banjara, Belwar, Naik (plains).—The parent caste is the Banjara. Naik is the name of one of the sections (five Hindus and two Muslims), into which the caste is divided, whilst Belwar appears to be merely another name for Naik in some districts. They share a common occupation, the carrying trade; but many are now tradesmen or cultivators. A caste of this kind is naturally of mixed composition, but its Hindu branches taken as a whole may be regarded as entirely orthodox. All of them eat clean food, though some drink spirits, and all of them are served by Brahman priests. Indeed, the Naik and Belwar claim, apparently with good reason, to be of Brahmanical origin; in the case of the Belwar, the claim was admitted in 1911. The Banjara has a *panchayat*. They belong to group X (a). I class these as neither "depressed" nor "backward."

F.—DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

(1) *Nai*.—The Nai is a village barber and performer of minor operations such as setting bones, drawing teeth and lancing boils. He is an orthodox Hindu, served by Brahman priests and eating clean food, though some drink spirits. He is an important member of the village community; his trade gives him the right of entry into all households, with the result that he has become the village news-monger, whilst many caste councils use him as their messenger to summon the brotherhood together. As a village tradesman goes, he is prosperous, receiving not only annual dues from his clients, but special fees for marriages, confinements and other important occurrences. His caste has a powerful *panchayat*. He is placed in group VIII. I class him as neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(2) *Bari group—Bari, Bargahi*.—The traditional occupation of both Bari and Bargahi is the making of leaf platters, such as are used at Hindu feasts. They are, however, also household and personal servants. Little is known of their origin, and their sectional nomenclature does not help, as this consists mostly of local names. They are both orthodox Hindus, eating clean food, and served by Brahmans. At the present day, many have taken to cultivation. They are placed in group VIII; the Bari has a *panchayat*. As servants, it would be difficult for them to make their wishes heard in spite of their masters; and I class them as "backward."

(3) *Kakar group—Dhimar, Gharuk, Gond, Goriya, Kahar, Kamkar, Singhariya*.—This group requires description rather more detailed than usual, for their position is a subject of controversy. The parent caste in this group is the Kahar which has a variety of occupations, being fishermen, palanquin bearers, domestic servants, and growers of certain special crops, notably, the *singhara* nut or water caltrop. The Dhimar and Goriya are groups which specialize in fishing; and the Singhariyas, as their name implies, specialize in growing *singhara*. The rest are for the most part domestic servants, though some Gonds are stone cutters and grain parohers. The Gharuk is the Hindu "bearer," who serves Europeans. Traditionally, the Kahar is descended from a Brahman father and a Nishada or Chandala mother; which may be interpreted as connoting a mixture of Arya and non-Arya blood. The Rawani sub-caste of Kabars claims to be Chandrabansi Kshatriyas, a very high class. Kabars are orthodox Hindus, and with few exceptions eat only clean food. They are also apparently served by Brahmans, though for legendary reasons they refuse to accept Brahmans as their spiritual guides (*gurus*). Those

who are engaged in domestic service regard themselves as superior to the groups which follow other occupations, but all of them are placed in group VIII, and consequently rank relatively high in the social scale. They are particular regarding their own food taboos, which is natural enough, since by carelessness they might become unfit for their principal occupation of domestic servant. I think they must be classed as "backward." They would scarcely venture to oppose their masters in politics.

(Note.—This Kahar Gond should be carefully distinguished from the Gond tribe of Central India, which has a few representatives in Bundelkhard.)

(4) *Dhobi*.—The social position of the washerman caste is very low. One authority writes of him "no Hindu of any caste, even the lowest, will wash his own clothes, and so the Dhobi has been formed into a caste which will bear the impurities of all." His unpleasant occupation, especially the fact that he washes the clothing of women when they are themselves unclean, stamps him as specially impure; even the lowest castes despise him, will have nothing to do with him, and, though untouchable themselves, will not touch him. This is true even of the Dom. Apart from that he eats unclean food, and except in some of his marriage ceremonies does not appear to be served by Brahmans. The fact that he occasionally, though not invariably, uses asses to take soiled clothes to the washing place and back again is also against him. Yet the highest caste regularly employ him, and cannot regard him as untouchable in the fullest sense, since they allow him to wash their clothes. Nobody of course will take either food or water from him. He is placed in group XI and has a very strong *panchayat*. I class him as "depressed."

(5) *Bhangi group*.—Strictly speaking there is no longer a Bhangi caste, if indeed there ever was one. It is a group composed of a number of castes, all of which follow the profession of scavenging; Hela, Balmiki, Rawat, Dhanuk, Turaiha, Lalbegi, are the principal groups, together with Shaikhmehtar, who call themselves Muhammadans. They are of course hopelessly unclean and untouchable to all. They are not served by Brahmans, and their beliefs are wholly their own. They are classed in group XII and most, if not all of the Bhangi castes, have strong *panchayats*. I class them as "depressed."

Urban groups.

G.—TRADESMEN AND MANUFACTURERS.

(1) *Sonar group*—*Sonar, Niyaria, Kasera, Thathera*.—These are all metal workers. The first is a goldsmith, the second a metal refiner, the other two work in brass. They are orthodox Hindus, eat clean food and are served by Brahman priests. All of them are of respectable status. Some Sonars, indeed claim Kshattriya origin. They are all in group VIII, and all of them except the Kasera have *panchayats*. These are neither "backward" nor "depressed."

(2) *Barai group*—*Barai, Tamboli*.—These two castes specialize in the growing and selling of betel (*pan*) and are closely connected. Like most castes which are connected with the production of articles of food, they are careful to preserve their personal purity, eat only clean food and are served by Brahmans. They belong to group VIII, and have *panchayats*. These are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(3) *Darzi group*—*Bharbhunja, Chhipi, Dhunia, Patwa, Tarkihar, Darzi*.—These are all occupational castes, respectively grain parcher, calico printer, cotton carder, braid maker, makers of palm-leaf ornaments and spangles, and tailor. All of them are orthodox Hindus, eating clean food and served by Brahmans. Many Darzis claim to be Kayasthas. They are all in group IX, except the Dhunia who is in group X (b). The Chhipi, Dhunia and Darzi all have *panchayats*. These are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(4) *Churihar group*—*Churihar, Lakhera, Manihar*.—This is a group of cognate castes; all of them manufacture glass bangles, whilst the Lakhera also makes bangles of lac, and the Manihar makes tinfoil. Nearly all Lakheras are Hindus, but most of the other two castes are Muslims. They are orthodox Hindus, eating clean food and served by Brahmans. They belong to group X (a); the Churihar and Manihar have *panchayats*. These are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(5) *Rumaiya group*—*Saiqalgar, Ramaiya*.—The traditional occupation of the Saiqalgar is that of armourer. At the present day, however, they are mostly wandering knife-grinders. Most of them are Muslims. The Ramaiya's occupation is peddling and trading. He is sometimes a Sikh, sometimes a Hindu. Little is known of either of these castes, but both appear to be of respectable standing. The Ramaiya is in group X (a), and the Saiqalgar in group XI; both, however, are probably placed rather too low. These may be regarded as "backward."

(6) *Kalwar group*—*Kalwar, Teli*.—These two are occupational castes. The Kalwar is traditionally connected with the sale of liquor, though now a days he is a general trader and moneylender. The Teli is the oil-presser. Both are orthodox Hindus, served by Brahmans and eating clean food. The Kalwar has a long-standing claim to Vaishya descent. Both have been placed in group X (a), but at the present day that is probably too low. Both have *panchayats*. These are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(7) *Mochi*.—The Mochi has a complicated history. Thirty-five years ago there were two kinds of Mochi; the shoemaker and cobbler who was a Chamar, and the saddler and harness maker who claimed to be a Srivastava Kayastha, and apparently was so, since he intermarried with them. The former has prospered considerably, and for the last 20 years he has called himself Kayastha-Mochi, thus claiming to be a Kayastha, though no Kayastha will admit the claim. At the present day they are probably all orthodox Hindus and served by Brahman priests. They are placed in group X (b) and have a *panchayat*. These are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

H.—DANCERS, SINGERS, JESTERS AND MUSICIANS.

(1) *Gandharb group*—*Gandharb, Radha, Bhugat, Paturiya, Kunshan, Naik (hills)*.—The common occupations of all these castes are singing, dancing, and prostitution. Radha and Bhugat are merely two names for the same caste, whilst Naik is the name given to the dancing girls of Kumaun. All of them are orthodox Hindus, particular about their food and their personal purity, and served by Brahmans. The Gandharb, however, ranks rather higher than the rest. Amongst the Naiks, the men are cultivators and traders and actually wear the sacred thread (*juneo*). The Gandharb belongs to group IX, the rest are in group X (b). These are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(2) *Bhand*.—These are jesters and buffoons. All, but a very few, are Muslims, and it seems probable that in the case of the Hindu Bhands, the name is occupational rather than a caste name. They probably belong to the principal group in this class. They are placed in group X (b). These are neither "depressed" nor "backward."

(3) *Dharhi group*—*Dharhi, Kingaria, Pawariya*.—These are different names for the same caste, an offshoot from the Dusadh. Its occupation is dancing, singing and begging. They eat unclean food and are not served by Brahmans. Their reputation is unsavoury, because they go about with women of bad character, and their social status is very low. They are in group X (b). These are "depressed."

J.—SECTARIAN CLASSES.

(1) *Sectarian groups*—*Atit, Sadh*.—These are religious sects, which in process of time have become castes. Atits are orthodox Hindus in all respects. The Sadhs are a unitarian sect dating back to 1543, and originally recruited from a

number of castes. They are vegetarians, followers of the simple life, and specialize in cotton printing. They are of good social status, being placed in group VIII. These are not "depressed" nor "backward."

K.—PRIMITIVE TRIBES.

(1) *Kolarian group*—*Agariya, Bhuiya, Bhuiyar, Chero, Ghasiya, Khairaha, Kharwar, Kol, Korwa, Majhwar (Manjhi), Panka, Parahiya, Patari*.—These tribes are known as the Kolarian group, found mostly in South Mirzapur, though the Kol extends also into Bundelkhand. Though some of them have in minor matters been influenced by more advanced neighbours, their beliefs, customs and ceremonies are all primitive and essentially non-Aryan. Amongst many of them, for instance, there are distinct traces of totemism. They used to be jungle tribes, but many have now taken to cultivation. With the exception of the Majhwar and the Patari, all of them eat pork, and some eat beef. With few exceptions, all their rites and ceremonies are carried out by their own priests, known as *baigas*, who generally belong either to the Bhuiyar or Patari tribes. They also employ devil priests or exorcisors (*ojhas*). Occasionally, the less backward use Brahmans, but only as astrologers. The Benbansi section of the Kharwar tribe is much higher than the rest. Its head is the Raja of Singrauli; they now call themselves Benbansi Rajputs and not only are served by Brahman priests, but wear the *janco*, and have actually succeeded in intermarrying with Chandel Rajputs. The Agariya and ordinary Kharwar are in group XII, the rest are in group X (b). Many, if not all of them, have *panchayats*. They are all "depressed."

NOTES.—(1) The name Bhuiyar is also used in Mirzapur for the caste elsewhere called Orh; and in the same district there is yet another group called by this name, which seems to be an offshoot of the Chamar caste that has taken to weaving.

(2) The Majhwar Manjhi must be carefully distinguished from the Mallah Manjhi.

(2) *Bayar group*—*Banmanus, Bayar, Dhangar, Musahar*.—These tribes are of much the same status and racial affinities as the Kolarian group. They are possibly not quite so primitive, but it is a question only of degree. All of them eat unclean food. The Dhangar and most Musahars are served by *baigas* though some of the latter use Brahmans as astrologers; the Bayar, however, is sufficiently advanced to be served by Brahman priests. For the most part, they are ploughmen or village menials. The Banmanus, which is a sub-caste of the Musahars, still lives in the jungle and makes a living out of jungle produce. The Bayar is in group X (b), the rest in group XII. All have *panchayats*. They are all "depressed."

(3) *Dom group*—*Balahar, Bansphor, Basor, Dharkar, Dom (plains), Domar*.—Domar is merely another name for Dom, used in some districts. The other four are all sections of the main Dom tribe which have settled down to some comparatively respectable occupation. All of them eat unclean food and are thoroughly untouchable, whilst none of them employ Brahmans for any purpose. They rank very low in the social scale; indeed, the Dom is probably the lowest caste in the province. The Bansphor and Dharkar are placed in group XI, the rest in group XII. All of them have *panchayats*. They are all "depressed."

(4) *Pasi group*—*Aheriya, Baheliya, Kabariya, Khatik, Pasi, Tarmali*.—One of the most important of our low tribes is the Pasi, which is the parent tribe in this group. It is spread all over the eastern districts and Oudh, and is probably connected with the famous Bhil tribe of Central India. It has played an important part in history, and may once have been a ruling race. The traditional occupation of the Pasi is tapping palm trees, but they are now labourers, cultivators, distillers of illicit liquor, watchmen and thieves. Tarmali is merely another name for Pasi, alluding to their traditional occupation. Aheriyas and Baheliyas are hunters and fowlers in the western districts. They are offshoots of the Pasi tribe, which are closely connected and indeed claim to be identical. The Khatik

is an occupational offshoot of the Pasi tribe, whose principal business is that of a greengrocer; but some of them are also butchers. Another name for them is Chik. Kabariya is merely the name of a Khatik section. All of these groups eat pork and other unclean food, except the Babeliya. All of them, except the Khatik, employ Brahmans to serve their rites or as astrologers. All of them, of course, drink liquor. Their status is very low. The Babeliya is especially despised because his methods of snaring birds are regarded as unpleasantly cruel. Taken as a whole they are not so low, however, as any of the three former groups. All of them are placed in group XI, most of these groups have *panchayats*. They are all "depressed."

(5) *Hill-Dom group—Silpkar (hill-Dom), Saun.*—Silpkar is a name recently appropriated by the hill tribes, which were till recently called Dom. The social system in the hills is entirely different from that which we know in the plains. Apart from immigrants, there are only three main social groups, Brahmans, Rajputs and Doms or Silpkars. The two first are divided in Brahmans and Rajputs proper, and Khas Brahmans and Khas Rajputs. According to popular opinion, the Khas Brahmans and Khas Rajputs are descended from the Khasa race, which at a very early date settled in Kumaun. Dom is not the name of a tribe, as it is in the plains, but the name of an aboriginal race, popularly believed to be descended from the Dasyu, which was enslaved by the Khasas. It is now broken up into a variety of occupational groups; but neither the Brahman nor Rajput sections nor the Dom groups can be regarded as castes. They are merely social classes. For instance, a prosperous Dom can marry his daughter to a Khas Rajput. The Khas Rajput can sometimes get a real Rajput as a husband for his daughter. The rules governing intermarriage between the various Dom occupational groups are both lax and variable. On the other hand, a definite line is drawn between Brahman and Rajput on one side and Dom or Silpkar on the other. The former are within, the latter without, the social pale. Twenty-five years ago, all Doms were regarded as absolutely impure and untouchable; many, however, have risen, many more are struggling to rise, and in time will be successful. The adoption of a new name in place of Dom is proof of their desire for social uplift. They have not been separately shown in the scheme of social precedence; at the present time, however, I should be inclined to put them not lower than group X (b). The Saun is merely a small group of miners, belonging to the main Dom race. They are all "depressed."

L.—VAGRANT TRIBES.

(1) *Habura group—Bengali, Beriya, Bhantu, Habura, Kanjar, Karwal, Sansiya.*—All these tribes are closely connected. For the most part they are vagrant criminals, though some Kanjars are comparatively respectable shikaris. They all eat unclean food, are entirely untouchable, and employ Brahmans for no purpose whatever. The Bhantu and Sansiya are placed in group X (c), the Bengali, Beriya and Habura in group XI, the Kanjar in group XII. The Karwal was not separately listed. For practical purpose all of them can be regarded as in group XII. Most of these have *panchayats*. They are all "depressed."

(2) *Nat group—Budi, Bajaniya, Bajgi, Gual, Kulabaz, Nat.*—The parent stock in this class is the Nat; the other castes mentioned are all either sections of that caste or offshoots from it. The word "Nat" means dancer, but the tribe includes dancers, tumblers, acrobats of every variety; makers of combs, articles of grass and straw and metal; conjurers, jugglers, snake-charmers, tattooers, musicians, thimble-riggers, quack doctors—in a word, all those nondescript vagrants who wander about from fair to fair in search of a living that is always disreputable and often dishonest. All of them eat unclean food, are wholly untouchable, and none of them are served by Brahmans. The Nat is placed in group XI, and has a *panchayat*. None of the other groups were separately recorded in 1901. They are all "depressed."