

Stri Dharma

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The United Provinces Remove Sex Disqualification.

It is very significant of the mood of India towards free and full opportunities for women that the Members of the Legislative Council of the United Provinces have removed the sex disqualification which prevented women from entering the Council. The motion to allow them to be nominated or elected to the Council was moved by the Deputy-President. It received hearty support from all sections of the house and was adopted *unanimously*.

Well done, U.P.!

Government, Do the Same for Child Marriage!

On the above occasion the Government announced its policy in terms which we demand should also be their policy for Child Marriage, the Age of Consent, the Devadasi and similar questions when they come before the Legislatures. We quote the words of Sir Sam O' Donnell, Finance Minister.

"The question of the extension of the franchise to women was left by the Joint Parliamentary Committee to be decided by the Provincial Councils. As it was essentially a question for the non-officials to decide even to-day, the official block would take no part either in discussion or in voting."

Women's contention is that if the matter of their voting is for their own non-officials to decide, the question of their marrying and their age for bearing children ought to be still more a matter for non-official decision, and entire freedom of voting should be left to all members on social reform matters. There is no logic and no consistency in the way the Government as such is interfering in the Child Marriage and the Age of Consent Bills.

Devadasi Legislation.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal, M. L. C.'s enthusiastic campaign for ending the Devadasi system met with splendid success, the Legislative Council accepting unanimously her Amendment to the Religious Endowments Act for ending the evil. Some of the Devadasis cling to the idea of dedication to the temple, and argue that the temples will not receive their full

service of song and dance to the God. They forget that while people look on these women as public property for purposes of "sanctified vice", the original intention cannot be performed purely by them as a caste. It is a case where

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

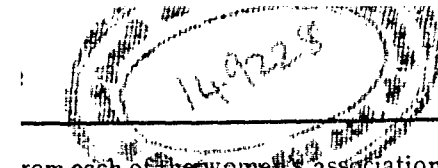
More harm is now done to people and to God by the persistence of the old order than by the transitional stage in which the office of the dancing girl is abolished. Heartiest congratulations to our Deputy-President of the Legislative Council on the passing of her Resolution!

Education Conferences of Women.

Arrangements are going ahead enthusiastically in many towns for holding the Constituent Conferences at which Delegates will be elected for the All-India Women's Conference on Educational Reform in Delhi. We are happy to announce that Her Excellency Lady Irwin, wife of the Viceroy, has promised to open this Conference, on the 7th of February.

Over 500 women met in Rajamundry for the Conference of the Godavari District, which is part of the Andhradesha Constituent area, and their Conference was an entire success. It was presided over by Begum Sultan Amiruddin, who has taken her Degree in Law and who is the wife of the District Judge. She emphasised the need for extending the schemes of Compulsory Primary Education to Muhammadan girls. "No joy and happiness can equal that derived from the full development of the mind." Yet she uttered a wise warning—"The crowding of Colleges by girls with inadequate health and intellect, should not be encouraged as it involves a waste of time and profitless exhaustion. Diplomas and degrees should not be the goal of a woman's ambition."

In Hyderabad (Deccan) a Muhammadan lady also was the President of a most successful meeting preliminary to holding a Constituent Conference there. Mrs. Faridoonji Rustomji was the Secretary-organiser and the meeting resolved to form an Association called "The Women's Association for Educational Advancement." Its Committee is formed of a representative



from each of the women's associations and large educational institutions in Hyderabad State.

We hope later to print the whole address of the President, Begum Saheba Hyder Nawaz Jung, for it is full of the wisdom of practical experience.

"We have met," she said, "to concert measures to make up the deficiency in the education of women, to ensure improved health to our sisters, to accelerate the spread of knowledge and culture amongst their rank and file, and to foster a spirit of mutual sympathy and unity. It has however to be kept scrupulously in mind that whatever proposals and measures of amelioration are planned, they are not cast loose from religious and national traditions. I for one am not a believer in servile imitation."

Women the Unifiers.

The strong feeling against communalism which exists in women in India to-day was clearly voiced by Begum Saheba Hyderi as she closed her speech with the following ideas:

"Love, sincerity and co-operation are the pre-requisites of national welfare. There is the need for sisters of all castes and creeds—Muslims, Hindus, Parsis and Christians—to work conjointly with a spirit of toleration. Let bigotry be replaced by broad-mindedness. If we women enter the field with this spirit of sympathy, harmony and breadth of vision you will find that this will be reflected on our men. And the pestilential miasma of communal strife that is choking us to destruction will, God willing, be laid low."

Women's Day in Congress Week.

The women of Madras have decided to hold a Women's Day, following the closing day of the Indian National Congress which is to be held in Madras this year. It is organised in order that the subjects on which women feel acutely shall be reviewed then by women, and that women's opinions shall be expressed on them in Resolutions. Many women are expected to visit Madras, both as delegates to the Congress and as visitors coming with their menfolk who are delegates. They will be invited to speak and co-operate in all the activities of the Day, as the aim is to make the functions all-Indian in scope and character, though the organisation must be undertaken by the local women. Great enthusiasm is being shown by the Madras women who have formed a large General Committee and elected Mrs. Malati Patwardhan, B.A., Adyar, Madras, as its Secretary. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has consented to act as President of the Day, and Dr. Annie Besant and Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal M.L.C. will be Chair-women of two out of the three sessions. The Secretary will be glad to receive the names of any ladies who will be in Madras for the various Conferences which take place at Christmas—the Theosophical Convention, The Social Reform Conference, the Music Conference and the Indian National Congress itself.

Women in Indian Public Life.

The Editor is compiling a list of the names and addresses of women in India who are, or have been, serving as Magistrates, Lawyers, Municipal Councillors, District or Taluk Board Members, District Educational Council Members, University Senators, non-official Jail Visitors. She invites readers to send her the names of women serving in any of these capacities in their locality or of whom they know, especially of those in

Central or Northern India. Already a list of 70 such women has been collected but there are a number more, still untabulated. These women are an ornament to public life, and generally take their responsibilities very conscientiously and seriously. There is a rapidly growing desire amongst women for these opportunities of social and public service. The names will be published in an early issue of *Stri Dharma*.

Bombay Early Marriage Bill.

The Hon. Mr. Jadhav intends to move three Bills in the next session of the Legislative Council: one to prevent early marriages of girls below 14, boys 18; for compulsory registration of marriages; and one to restrict the right of adoption by widows. Much interest is being roused by these Bills.

Hope for Kharag Bahadur.

Our readers will remember the case of Kharag Bahadur, the Calcutta University student, who drew attention to the traffic in girls between Benares and Bengal by shooting a wealthy merchant of Calcutta who had bought and ruined a Nepali girl of good family, named Rajkumari. He was sentenced to eight years' rigorous imprisonment, but many petitions for mercy were sent on his behalf to the Governor of Bengal. We are glad to report that the Government has decided to review the sentence when he has undergone two years' imprisonment. There is every prospect that he may then be released. The poor girl has not been able to get any compensation from the Courts for all the agony she went through, because evidence was given that she was over 18 years old and because there was some discrepancy in the evidence of some of the witnesses in her case. Hers is only one of the thousands of lives that are blighted by the physical and mercenary lust of men.

Mysore Women's Activities.

A splendid Report of the past year's work has been issued by the Mahila Seva Samaj of Bangalore City. There are 203 members of the Samaj. The work carried on is educational in every sense of the term, and increases knowledge for both child and adult. It is also philanthropic and social. It has well been called "a model institution", worthy of Mysore which has earned for itself the title of the "Model State". The Reading Room for ladies, to give one instance of its efficiency, is supplied with 25 periodicals including daily papers, weeklies and monthly magazines. The attendance at the weekly course of instruction in Domestic Economy and Home Management ranged between 162 and 296. New buildings have been completed and a garden and playing grounds laid out. Every side of the work, except the industrial or vocational, seems to be flourishing. The womanhood of Mysore rejoiced exceedingly when the President, Mrs. Chandrasekhra Aiyar, who is the life and soul of the Samaj, received a First Class Kaisari-Hind Medal in the New Year Honours. She has since been nominated as the first woman member of the District Board of Bangalore. The work done by her is an inspiration to all who visit the Samaj's premises.

WOMAN'S VIEW OF LIFE'S PROBLEMS

BY SRIMATI PADMABAI SANJIVA RAO, B.A.

[The following is the text of the address delivered by Mrs. Padmabai Rao, President of the United Provinces Social Conference, recently held at Agra:—]

It is with a feeling of considerable hesitation, after careful and anxious thought, that I have persuaded myself to accept the great honour you have conferred upon me by asking me to preside over the deliberations of this Conference. To one like myself, who is engaged in the strenuous work of the education and training of girls, there is neither the opportunity nor the leisure to come into contact, except indirectly, with the many social problems that are affecting us so vitally to-day. Conscious as I am of my own unfitness to undertake such a responsible task, there is but one reason which seems to me imperative and which justifies my accepting this onerous duty which I am called upon to discharge to-day. It is the general awakening of the consciousness that human life cannot reach its highest fruition until man and woman together solve the problems that confront them. I deem it a great privilege, therefore, that you have given me this opportunity of placing before you for your consideration, what I may be permitted to call the woman's point of view. I pray that I may not be unworthy of this task.

Year after year Conferences are held to discuss the many evils from which Indian society is suffering, and to find solutions for the removal of those difficulties. Every honest Indian must admit that we have many urgent problems which require our serious consideration. I do not wish to minimise the need for reform in various departments of our social life. We are, and should be, emphatic in our condemnation of the many injurious customs and practices which have crept into our national life. In this connection, I cannot help referring to a book recently published which has created such a great sensation in the public mind. It is our duty to enter a most emphatic protest against the malicious and unscrupulous attacks made against the honour of a whole Nation by Miss Mayo in her book *Mother India*, a title, by the way, singularly inappropriate when used by a writer who has anything but a daughter's attitude towards a country which she has vilified and done her worst to injure.

The book, which so few of us have been able to procure, has been widely reviewed and has rightly raised a storm of indignation and protest in the country. It appears to be full of half-truths, even more dangerous than the many untruths in which the writer so freely indulges, and which are being daily exposed in the columns of the newspapers. It would be difficult for anyone to understand the mentality of a writer who evidently enjoyed the fullest opportunity of travelling in this country and yet had been so singularly unfortunate as to miss all the finer and more beautiful side of our national life. She seems to have been able to see nothing but moral depravity of the grossest kind wherever she went. The statements which she makes

are so grossly unfair, and so obviously untrue, that it seems almost unworthy of any notice on our part. But I feel that, in view of the wide publicity given to the book, I should place on record my own experience on some of the questions dealt with by her. It is amazing to find Miss Mayo so completely obsessed by the sex complex as to enable her to find nothing except sexual perversity in India.

I have watched the growth of a whole generation of girls who have grown from childhood into girlhood and womanhood under our care and guardianship. And if one may judge from the knowledge gained from books and also from statements made by European friends with regard to conditions in Europe, I am able to say without the slightest hesitation that sex looms less largely in the consciousness of an Indian girl than in the case of a European. The conditions of marriage, our social conditions and etiquettes, and, above all, our attitude towards the marriage relationships, are such as to discourage all unhealthy emotional excitements. Marriage is a far more impersonal thing with us than with the people in the West. It is a religious duty, a state entered into not primarily for the gain of personal happiness but for the performance of a great social duty, the paying off a debt to the ancestors who have given the bodies in which we live, and through which we live, and through which we gain knowledge and experience. This idea is so deeply impressed upon the Indian consciousness that even the ignorant man and woman mould their lives in accordance with it. This has to a remarkable extent made sexuality a less important factor in our lives. The charges brought against us by Miss Mayo of excessive sexuality are to my mind unimaginable. It is inconceivable to me that some of the things which Miss Mayo mentions in her book could have taken place in our midst, and that those of us who know the lives of the people in different parts of India should not have known or even heard of a single instance of the kind which she suggests is so common in this country. The extraordinary conclusion that has been drawn for us is that India is unfit for self-government. If the chastity and purity of its womanhood be the test of a nation's fitness to govern itself, I have no hesitation in declaring that India can stand comparison with any country in the world. In fact history has proved the vitality and vigour of our national life and culture. India has a past of immortal antiquity which stretches backwards for thousands of years. She yet lives, and is great in the world of thought and culture, while her contemporaries, the mighty civilisations of Egypt and Babylon, have perished. Miss Mayo's book is obviously inspired by a political motive and is evidently part of a campaign which the enemies of Indian freedom are carrying on. She feels it necessary to inform us that she is not a commissioned agent of the India Office, and in that very statement reveals herself. Miss Mayo, however, has overreached herself, and by her vulgarity and coarseness has lost all chance of gaining a hearing even from those who are most anxious to purify and reform our social abuses. Therefore the wild and exaggerated statements made by her need not be seriously considered by a Conference like this.

Let me at the outset state that it is my firm conviction that there can be no solution to our social problems unless men and women work together. Let us therefore now pass on to the consideration of the work that lies before us. It seems to me that in order to give effect to the many resolutions that are passed at a Conference like this, it is absolutely necessary that an attempt should be made to carry on an extensive and educative propaganda, in order to win the intelligent and indispensable co-operation of those who form the real executive of human society—I mean the women of the race.

WOMAN THE BUILDER.

Women and their position has often been termed the key-stone of society. Her progress is the real progress of the nation. Let me remark, therefore, that it is heartening to watch the signs of the growing interest in the public mind in the emancipation and advancement of women. During the past few years rapid progress has been made in various fields of social reform. Although a great deal still remains to be achieved, the exceedingly swift manner in which franchise has been granted to women in many provinces in India—without that struggle and opposition which was so special a feature of this progress in other countries—is a proof of the honour in which women are held and an index of the pace at which our country is moving. To my mind this achievement is due to the innate respect which Indian men bear towards women as the representatives of the feminine aspect of the Divine Life. This spiritual conception of womanhood has been beautifully expressed by the Lady Emily Lutyens. She says: "Every woman by reason of her sex is a high priest of God, priest of that oldest of religions, the greatest mystery religion of creation. It is the function of the priest to transmute the lower into the higher, to consecrate the outward visible signs that they may better show forth the inward spiritual grace."

"Woman is the great transmuter of the Universe, and in that she is for ever fulfilling her priestly office. She is the guardian of the life-forces of the world, building them into forms of beauty. Her contribution to the world should be that of ever changing, ever transmuting, ever working towards perfection of the forms through which the life-forces-work. She should look at every question from the standpoint of life and expression."

All social well-being and happiness depends on the maintenance of this ideal, and I would therefore urge you to examine some of our social problems in the light of this ideal, that of the woman as the transmuter and the builder.

Let us first examine the home which is pre-eminently the sphere of influence of woman. She is the custodian and guardian of the future generations of the race. She is the nourisher who helps to build the bodies of the children, as also she is the preserver of the spirit of beauty and refinement in the home. It is the

woman who by her wisdom and sacrifice keeps alive that spiritual and religious tradition, that reverence for the culture and heritage of our ancient Rishis. But while her power of maintaining the health and strength, both spiritual and physical, are so great, we must equally readily acknowledge that through her ignorance she may be able to destroy and degrade as surely as she can build and transmute.

INFANT MORTALITY.

If to-day, therefore, I lay stress on the vital necessity of education and culture for the girl and the woman, it is because facts of a most appalling kind are staring us in the face, and which no one, who has the intelligence to grasp the principle upon which human society rests, can afford to ignore. The wastage of infant life in our country, and notably in our province, can only be described as terrible. Statistics will show you that in the U.P. out of every thousand babies born as many as 352 die within the year of birth. The following figures from the different countries speak for themselves.

Sweden	84	Madras	199
Scotland	116	Bengal	207
England and Wales	127	Bihar & Orissa	304
France	132	Punjab	306
Germany	186	Bombay	320
Hungary	207	U. Provinces	352

You will notice that the death-rate is abnormally high in India compared with the countries of Europe; and unfortunately our province enjoy the unenviable notoriety of having the highest death-rate in India. It is well known that the causes of high death-rate are early marriage, poverty, a low standard of living, bad nourishment, low vitality of mothers and over-work in the case of expectant mothers. Prof. J. A. Thomson has stated that where people lose heart, reckless birth-rate may follow just as from opposite causes; and the tendency to multiply is greatest where the conditions of life have reached the lowest level of efficiency. In India, therefore, we have a very high birth-rate—by no means a sure indication of prosperity—but rather pointing to a desperate recklessness born of despair, accompanied by an appalling death-rate. It is this awful drainage of life that we have to combat. What are we doing in the matter? The ignorance that prevails even amongst the educated section of the people on the most elementary principles of hygiene and sanitation is amazing. Thanks to Lady Chelmsford and to Lady Reading, an All-India Maternity and Infant Welfare League has been started. There are many centres now being worked by philanthropic associations like the Seva Sadan, the Servants of India Society and the Women's Indian Association. But the scheme can only be made a success when the public mind is fully awakened to the awful destruction which is going on amongst us. Custom and a certain sense of the inevitability of fate have made us content to live under intolerable conditions. The social conscience has to be awakened. We require an army of workers of

men and women who will teach the sacredness of human life and the responsibility of those who are its custodians. And may I here say that it is not the parents only who are responsible for the welfare of the children, but society? The landlord who rack-rents, the municipality which is indifferent to the drainage and sanitation and the society which imposes unreasonable restrictions, all have their share in the responsibility for the lives of the children. These facts have to be brought home to the people. It is the supreme ignorance of the most vital facts of life in which the masses are steeped that is one of the main causes of this disastrous state of things. The first step that must be taken is the rapid spread of knowledge of an elementary kind on all these subjects.

I believe a great deal of educative work could be done by means of the cinema. Municipalities and other bodies must combine together and finance the production of films of an educative character for work amongst the masses, not occasionally as is done during the National Baby Week, but throughout the year. I do not wish to minimise the good work that is already being done, but only wish to point out the necessity of a greater concentration of public effort along these lines of work.

But the diffusion of this knowledge and the supplying of medical aid to the women of India requires a large number of trained doctors, nurses, and midwives. It seems to me that a good deal of sentimental objection exists in the mind of the public about the respectability of these professions, and there are many parents who would be most unwilling to allow their daughters to render social service along these lines. This sentiment however is the result of a deep-rooted instinct which considers it degrading to a woman to take up any work only for the sake of pecuniary gain. The only way to overcome these objections is to create a different attitude towards all social work. Personally I feel that all social work can become effective only when inspired by a spiritual ideal. Work which is done only for money is degrading both for man and woman alike. It becomes merely mechanical and therefore dead, without the vitalising power of a great spiritual ideal. It is only when the relief of the suffering and the needy and the teaching of the ignorant are seen to be the truest service of God that we shall be able to eliminate all the degrading associations that have gathered round some of these professions. We must elevate them into true and holy vocations those duties which the human soul feels called to perform by an impelling and divine inspiration from within.

(To be concluded)

Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave—and give,
Who knows the gifts which you shall give,
Daughter of the newer Eve?

WOMEN THE WORLD OVER.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Women's Indian Association is affiliated with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, so the following letter will particularly interest its members. It is specially necessary that the women of Asia should understand and sympathise with the problems of the various Asian countries as the sisterhood of the East should for Indian women be an easy and primary part of international sisterhood.

GREETINGS OF CHINESE WOMEN TO FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. CANTON, CHINA.

May 24th, 1927.

The Women's Movement General Alliance of China cordially sends Greetings to the Federation of Feminist Organizations of Other Lands.

We acknowledge with thanks the letter (dated April 25) and the far-sighted resolutions of the British Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation for your friendly greetings, sympathy, and goodwill in China's Nationalist Cause. The dawn of a new China is approaching, and our hope for Peace and Freedom is just as earnest as yours!

The Chinese women as a whole have joined the ranks of the world feminists in the Fight for Freedom and Equality. Thus we wish to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves to the Feminist Organizations of Other Lands.

We pledge to do our utmost for the salvation of China and the Kuomintang. We concern ourselves with better International Understanding between China and the Powers, so that genuine goodwill shall be achieved. We assist in the women's emancipation movement; we help in the education of the masses; and we participate in the National Revolution, which aims to elevate China to a state of Freedom and Independence, and to promote the general welfare of the Chinese people.

To-day China is in the midst of a titanic struggle to take her entitled place among the Family of Nations. The World will be better for a modern, progressive, and independent China, hence the following points in regard to the relations between China and the Powers merit your serious consideration:—

- Observance of strict neutrality in the internal affairs of China.
- Avoidance of any threats or provocative displays of force and war measures.
- Abrogation of the unequal and humiliating treaties.
- Saving the world from "Gigantic Blunder" in China.

In conclusion, we cordially invite your co-operation with us in the endeavour to solve China's greatest problem by practical wisdom and peaceful negotiations with the Chinese Nationalist Government at Nanking. Surely an intelligent and reasonable solution will contribute a great deal towards World Peace and Freedom!—Sincerely yours,

(Signed) (MRS.) LEUNG YIH SU-CHI, M.A.

On behalf of the Executive Committee.

WOMAN, THE HEART OF NATIONS

BY GEORGE S. ARUNDALE.

Obviously, the great need for India at the present moment is Home Rule, and therefore unity to the end of Home Rule. If only our leaders could subordinate themselves to their country, we should soon achieve Home Rule, for three hundred odd million people are not to be resisted with impunity.

Let us now, however, look at other needs only less vital than Home Rule. What comes first? I should like my readers to send their own views of the needs next in importance after Home Rule. For my own part, although there are one or two other needs of urgent importance, I unhesitatingly put what I shall call the renaissance of Indian womanhood. To my mind the woman is ever the heart of the Nation, for fundamentally she embodies the Nation's power and sacrifice. And wherever I have travelled, I have found less the woman superior to the man—with more grace, *gaucherie*; with more quietude, less blatancy; with more purpose, less noise; with more understanding, less narrowness; with more life, less form. In India the Indian woman stands as the unique link between the Past and the Future. Apart from the peasant, the "educated" Indian man of to-day is half western, and with but few exceptions, among whom one must gratefully mention Bose, Tagore and Gandhi, is entirely adrift from that Past upon which must rest India's Future.

I therefore look to the Indian woman to give the true impetus and direction to modern Indian life, and I am more than happy to notice how she is gradually asserting herself in all departments of civic life. It must at least be said to the credit of the Indian man that he gave the vote to women as soon as he received the vote himself, which is more than the Western man has had the sense to do. And I am thankful that Indian women have risen to the opportunity thus afforded them. The more the women can dominate India's political life the sooner will India settle down to prosperity, and the Women's Conference at Poona in the earlier part of this year was of the happiest augury.

As a matter of fact, I am in favor, as part of the renaissance of women, of the economic freedom of women, at all events in the West. Women are slaves while the purse is in the husband's hands, and there can be no true freedom for women until their financial equality with men is assured. They may not actually earn money, though, of course, large numbers of them do; but they alone can generally spend it wisely, and they have far greater need of money than men. It is immaterial who earns it. The right to money is partly with the individual who earns it, no doubt, but equally with the individual who is mainly concerned with the expenditure of the money to the end of the happiness and prosperity of the family; and in most cases this individual is the woman. So she should have her share as of right and not as of grace. There must be a legal endowment of worldly goods, not a mere empty phrase during the marriage ceremony.

—NEW INDIA.

THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ON ADMINISTRATIVE EDUCATIONAL BODIES

BY RENUKA ROY B. SC. (ECON.). LONDON

The question of the status and position of women is one of the foremost problems of the modern age. Europe and America have been the pioneers in the question of women's emancipation, and we are fortunate in that we can learn from their experience and avoid their mistakes. Women's emancipation came in the west before education had been widespread enough, and what is more important, far-reaching and complete enough for it to act as a stabilising force, when the flood-gates of freedom and independence were flung open. Coupled with this factor, women were treading an unknown path; and can we blame them, if ill-equipped as many of them were, they were not able to keep a proper balance and the inevitable chaos, which accompanies all transition periods, resulted?

It is being realised more and more keenly, that it is only through education—and by that is meant education in the sense of true cultural development, and not mere literacy—that the evils can be averted. It behoves those Indian women who have been given the means of self-expression and self-development, to help their less fortunate sisters. But it is imperative, that those who arouse the majority of Indian women from their torpor best expressed by that now famous phrase "pathetic contentment," and who teach them of rights which appertain to human beings as such, should also take on themselves the responsibility of guiding the newly-awakened minds along the right lines, and of helping them to mould their ideas, so that they realise that "rights" which have no "duties" as their counterpart have no meaning at all, and that independence is given for fuller self-expression and not for purposes of a life without responsibilities.

It is a very hopeful sign of the age that greater interest is being shown by educated women in the reformation of the educational system—at least so far as it relates to women and to mould it along lines best suited to produce a beneficial result. Although conferences and women's journals can do much to influence public opinion and to lead education into channels which educated women desire, yet they have no power behind them to give effect to their resolutions. These can only influence, but the actual power is in other hands, and the work too is done by other brains. It is absolutely necessary that women should have administrative control over educational affairs. Only in this way can they really make their opinions felt.

Let us pause to consider how it is, and why it is, that women have to-day so very little administrative control, and what the reasons are which account for such a lack of women's representatives on educational bodies.

In the first place, women's education has hitherto been thoroughly neglected; and it is only now that we are beginning to appreciate the great value of education. So long women were debarred from being represented on different public bodies, educational or otherwise. Both lack of opportunity and of education, except amongst

a mere handful, have contributed towards this. Now these barriers are breaking down, and although much remains to be done, there are quite a number of educational bodies on which women's right of representation have come to be recognised. It is due to social prejudice, lack of civic feeling and an utter want of enthusiasm that educated women to-day are prevented from taking advantage of their opportunities, in helping the administration of education, and the formulation of educational policies. Education in this country is largely in the hands of Government, as most educational institutions are either wholly or partly aided by public funds. There is a sad lack of private enterprise in this direction. After the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the education of each Province has been wholly given over to provincial administration and control. Education is now a "transferred" subject; and the Legislative Council has a certain amount of control over educational policy through the Minister-in-charge. However imperfect the power of control be, it is a power full of potentially; and as far Bengal is concerned no woman has yet been vested with the authority of wielding this power. In Madras and elsewhere, the Councils have recently recognised the right of women to be elected members of the Provincial Legislatures.

The actual administration of education is carried out in the Provinces by an authority of dual nature. There is the Government department under the Director of Public Instruction who is helped by the members of the Educational Services.

In respect of primary education, the recognised policy is to leave the actual administration, as far as possible, in the hands of local bodies such as municipalities and rural councils and even smaller local boards. These bodies do a good deal of useful work, but their tendency is to neglect primary schools, and divert their attention to secondary schools, with which they are more remotely connected. These bodies can hardly be said to be very sympathetic to the education of girls. Even zenana education in districts, which is carried out by employing a woman teacher who visits the different centres, where ladies from the neighbourhood congregate to be taught, is in the hands of committees consisting almost wholly of men. These committees have women on them, only when the wives of officials, Christian missionary ladies, and others who come out of the *purdha* happen to be there. Very often the Secretaries of these committees are men, with the result that there is no supervision at all. Where secondary schools for girls exist outside cities, efforts have been made again and again to form women's committees, but such efforts have not been crowned with success. At present, it is next to impossible for women to be represented on administrative educational bodies in the districts. Even if the *purdha* system was not there to make matters worse, it would yet be impossible for women who need education themselves, to administer the education of girls and of other women.

It is only by means of Inspectresses of Schools and their staff, that any control by women is exercised at

all. Local bodies almost always employ the District Inspector of Schools to look after the administration of primary schools under them or aided by them. It would be a very good plan if the number of Assistant Inspectresses appointed to look after the primary girls' schools in the same way. Although the Inspectress of Schools in Bengal has been given great administrative powers, her staff is too limited for it—to supply a sufficient number of District Inspectresses, to look after the administration of both secondary and primary schools in the smaller areas, in anything but a superficial manner. It is the duty of Government to improve their prospects, instead of applying the retrenchment axe to the women's branch of the Provincial Educational Service.

Even if there was not an inherent prejudice on the part of the majority of our men, they would still be unable to look after women's education in districts, as they could never penetrate the *purdah* nor understand our true needs.

There has been a great increase in the number of Corporation primary schools for girls in Calcutta. In big cities, it is far more possible for women to play a greater part in the administration of schools. Secondary schools in towns have more women in their Managing Committees, but their number should be increased.

The University has control over secondary schools, because they give or withhold the power of affiliation to appear at University examinations. It has a very great deal of power in its own hands over higher education. In Calcutta, the Senate of the University is composed of ex-officio Fellows and of Fellows elected by registered graduates, and the faculties. The elective element has gone up. The Government retains the power of withholding consent to the affiliation of colleges, but it is much influenced by the University. Although the University wields all the administrative power by means of its Senate, yet there is hardly any women to represent the interests of women's education anywhere. In Calcutta we find that there is only one woman member on the body of the Senate, and she is a Government nominee. Not even one Indian woman is found anywhere, either on the Senate, the Syndicate or the faculties!

If we are anxious to administer and control the educational policy—even so far as women only are concerned—how can we possibly do so without representation on the body of the University itself? Yet, there is no disqualification to women becoming members of the Senate. Registered graduates who are women, not only have the right to vote, on the same conditions as the men, but also have the right to contest elections to fellowships. True that these rights exist, but as things are now, if women do avail themselves of these rights, their path might not be easy, and prejudices which have barred women from their just rights in Cambridge, would also operate in our country. But until our womenfolk rise above social prejudice, shake off their natural tendency to inactivity and contest University elections, nothing can be done.

Recently a proposal has been set afoot by some of our pioneer women educationists to move Government for the creation of a separate board for women's secondary and intermediate education, consisting mainly of women and a small number of able men in the nature of experts. This board is to set up a separate School Final in accordance with the proposals of the Sadler Commission Report. The Sadler Commission has shown us, that there is a great waste of time due to the low standard of the present School Leaving Examination of the Calcutta University. Time is, at this stage of education even more precious in the case of girls than boys, and the reason is that, only a few girls go in for higher education, the great majority getting married at the completion of their school-life. If their School Final is on a higher level, they would at least be ensured a better and more complete education before leaving school. The board would also be useful in introducing new subjects for girls, such as Domestic Science and Social Hygiene. Its advocates want the board to have the recognition of the University and its co-operation in its creation; but they maintain, that the board must be created even if University help is not forthcoming. The usefulness of such a board is unquestionable. It would give women a much greater power in the administration of girls' education. But it is essential that this board, though a separate entity, should have connection with the University. This could be secured by a few of the members of the board being members of the University Senate or *vice versa*. As a matter of fact, the University which contains so many of our most intellectual men should be brought to realise the necessity of co-operating with educated Indian women, and of rendering them every aid in the formation of this women's board.

In matters educational, centralisation is necessary in order to obtain co-ordination of policy, but there is need for a good deal of regional devolution for its actual administration.

This devolution could be effected by the formation of District Women's Councils which would be supervised by the Central Board of Women's Education. These district councils would be concerned with both primary and secondary as well as the zenana education of women in the districts. At present they will have to consist of quite a number of men and only a few women. The number of women would gradually increase as the social conditions in the districts improve. The wives of official and other educated women in the districts should be induced upon to manage the boards and to train up interested resident ladies to take up the work. This is most important to preserve continuity in action. Although men will have to form the majority on these district councils under the present circumstances, yet these councils would form a training-ground for women in the districts and would also be under the control and influence of a Central Board, where women would predominate. Herein lies their superiority over local bodies such as municipalities which would have to consist wholly of men for a much longer time to come, as a long period will elapse before women are either able or willing to join them.

The Inspectress of Schools would be an ex-officio member of the Central Board, and the District Inspectress, if appointed, would be ex-officio member of the district councils and could play a large part in making the councils a success. However, the whole power should not be vested in their hands. Ultimate control should be kept in the hands of independent men and women who have not to be accountable to Government for their action, as Inspectresses naturally would be. Initiative and new ideas can only be introduced by those who are free from the trammels of officialdom.

Of course, the time will come for these district councils to be established after the Central Board is brought nearer materialisation. Recently the Government have urged upon the University the necessity of forming a separate board for secondary and intermediate education for both boys and girls. If such a board is formed and women are given their due importance, then educated women would have no quarrel with the project. But it is most deplorable that the Government proposals to the University include only one woman on this board. All things considered it would be best for women to have a separate board, but it must work in co-operation with the University if it is to be a success. The formation of this board would by no means make it unnecessary for women to establish their claims to fellowship on the body of the University. Higher education will be controlled there and it is essential for us to have a hand in the guidance of the higher education of Indian women.

Surely, with the urgent need for the spread of women's education and an even greater need to improve the type of education given, we should count on the help of all fair-minded and liberal men. But we must not forget that it is on women that the ultimate responsibility lies. It is for them not only to insist on their rights, but make use of them. If we do not understand the very essence of citizenship, and are not prepared to do our utmost in furthering the cause of women's education, all the help and all the sympathy that we obtain from our menfolk would be of no avail whatsoever. It is a women's problem, and it is for women to solve it. We who owe our freedom and education to a handful of enthusiastic reformers, and are the inheritors of all the pioneers have done, owe it to them and to our less fortunate sisters to do all in our power to improve the condition of the vast majority of our country women.

(From *The Modern Review*).

BRANCH REPORTS

MADURA.

Mrs. Hess of the American College has become President and Mrs. Anna Thomas, Secretary of the new Branch organised during Mrs. Cousins' visit. Many members have joined and there are promises of many more. The Branch conducted a Cosmopolitan Dinner and has been very active in selling tickets for a Benefit Dramatic Performance of which the profits are to be used for the coming Education Conference for the Tamil Nadu as a Constituent for the Delhi Conference.

MADANAPALLE.

This Branch has arranged to hold an Education Reform meeting and all the educated women and girls of the town are ready to attend it. The members of the Branch were very glad to welcome their first organiser, Mrs. Cousins, in their midst after an absence of 6½ years. Mrs. Lakshmi Gurumurthy is the energetic President. She is also an Honorary Magistrate for the town.

BOMBAY.

The Bombay Branches held a meeting in conjunction with three other societies at which they passed Resolutions supporting Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal's Resolution to prohibit the dedication of girls to the temples. They also welcomed Rao Saheb H. B. Sarda's Bill attempting to make early marriages unlawful, but asked him to raise the ages to 16 for girls and 21 for boys. Mrs. Talyarkhan J. P. presided.

VIZAGAPATAM.

Music and a short drama attracted a good audience to a fine meeting of this Branch and Resolutions for support of Devadasi prohibition and legislation to make unlawful the marrying of girls before 16 and boys before 21 were successfully passed. Miss Asirvatham, Principal of Queen Mary's High School, presided. There is good life evident in this Branch.

MAINPURI.

The members are interested in the coming Women's Conference on Education in Delhi, and have already selected Mrs. Tangali and Mrs. Visser to be appointed to go to Delhi as Mainpuri delegates to the All-Indian Conference.

ANANTAPUR.

The Anniversary meeting was a great success. There was feeding of the poor. The Secretary writes: "The Branch fully supports Sarda's attempt to stop early marriages. It wishes the marriageable age to be fixed at 14 but the age of consummation should be fixed for 16. I may state that 14 is the age generally observed in practice even among high-caste Brahmins." The Branch also sent its support to Dr. Muthulakshmi and requested her to act as Chairwoman of their local women's Education Conference.

RAJAMUNDRY.

The members of this Branch threw themselves into the holding of a Women's Education Conference which everyone says was very successful. The Branch also conducts an Industrial and Vocational School for adult women. In every way Rajamundry is forging ahead, and the Women's Conference was a unique success.

TANJORE.

The members are collecting names for a petition to Govt. to end the Devadasi system and to prevent early marriages.

VEERARAGHAVAPURAM, TINNEVELLY.

A meeting of over 70 ladies inaugurated this new Branch. Mrs. Sadhuganapathi Pantulu was elected President and Mrs. Gomathinathan Secretary with Mrs. Nasamoni Paul, Mrs. Rajammal Kolappa Naidu and Mrs. Janaki Ammal as Committee members. The meeting passed two Resolutions, one supporting Dr. Muthulakshmi in her work to stop the Devadasi system and the other welcoming Rai Saheb Sarda's attempt to make early marriage unlawful but asking him to fix the age as 16 for girls and 21 for boys. Mrs. Paul and Miss Akilandathammal spoke on these Resolutions respectively. Mrs. Krishnaswamy Iyengar presided and congratulated all on the extremely successful meeting they had despite the heavy monsoon rain. The Branch promises to be very active.

HOME OF SERVICE, MADRAS.

Dr. Annie Besant was kind enough to stop at the Home of Service, Mylapore, Madras, as she drove from the station to Adyar on her return to India after nearly two years' absence. One of the widow students read a short address of loving welcome to her as the President of the Women's Indian Association which conducts the Home. The occasion was a joyous one, with song, arathi, and garlanding. The house was beautifully decorated. All were glad also to welcome Mrs. Jinarajadasa who now looks in splendid health, and Mr. J. Krishnamurthi, who accompanied Dr. Besant.

HEADQUARTERS, WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

The Association gave a reception in honour of Lady Jagadish Chunder Bose in the Home of Service, Madras, on the 7th inst. She expressed much appreciation of the work of the Association and of the Home and told of her own Widows' Home in Calcutta, and of the number of teachers it is training for the village schools carried on by the Nari Siksha Samiti. She made the Committee of the Madras Home envious by her information that the Industries Department of the Bengal Government gives Rs. 300 and the Education Department Rs. 500 per month to the Calcutta Home. She also told how she, her two sisters and two classmates had, when in their teens, vowed that whether they married or not they would throughout their whole life give one hour a day to teaching work and to fostering the education of Indian girls, and all had kept their vow. Her motherly, informal address was inspiring to the students and visitors present. Sister Subbalakshmi Ammal, M.A., Principal of the Government Widows' Home, which provides education for over 80 girls annually, thanked Lady Bose and expressed the pride all felt in her and in her husband, the great Indian scientist, who is the only Asian representative on the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation at the League of Nations.

హైదరాబాదులో సైతము

సోమవారం జరిగినది. శ్రీ లింగము సాహెబ్ హైదరాబాదు నవాబులకు గారు సభకర్తృత్వమును స్త్రీల కేటగిరీ రివ్యూను గలనైన హాకి లాభ ప్రదముగనుటనదియు, అన్యోన్య సహకారము, సానుభూతి ఎట్టి విజ్ఞాపించుచున్న వారిలో పెంపొందించగలదో చక్కగ నుడివియున్నది. ఈ విషయమున స్త్రీల యభ్యుదయనకట్టి ప్రణాళికలు మనము తయారుచేసినను, అది వలె సంప్రదానములకును, జాతీయ పద్ధతులకును అనుగుణించి యుండవలయునని విశ్వాసము. వీరి యుపన్యాసమున తర్జుమా మా పత్రికలో ప్రచురించగలము. శ్రీమతి రమ్యుని భవదండగారు ఈ సందర్భము కార్యదర్శులు. సభలో స్త్రీల యభ్యుదయమునకై కాళ్ళతల చుట్టము నొక చానిని వెలకొల్పుటకు తీర్మానించబడినది. ఈ సంగతి కార్యలాపన సభలో హైదరాబాదురాష్ట్రమునగల స్త్రీ సంఘాలకు జిక్కిన ప్రాతినిధ్య విధానమున.

స్త్రీలే సలభు నిర్మాతలు.

శ్రీ లింగము సాహెబ్ హైదరాబాదు-కులకత్తలపట్టు స్త్రీల కమిషన్ ర్యమును చక్కగా చూపుచు తమ అన్యోన్య న్యాయమున నుడివిన వాక్యములను అందరును గమనించి తీరవలయును. "జాతీయతాభ్యుదయమునకు స్త్రీలు, విశ్వాసము, సహకారమును అత్యంత లాభనములు. అన్ని కలములకును, అన్ని వలములకును, అన్ని తెగలకును జెందిన సాదరీయములు, సహనముతో కలిపిమెలసి పనిచేయుట ఎంతయు అగత్యము. పెరియార్ వారు, విశాలభావములకు తావోదంగ కలయును. మనకు, ఈ రీతిని సానుభూతితోడను, సహకారముతోడను, ఉన్నత దృక్పథముతోడను, సేవారంగమున ప్రవేశించిన యెవరి అభ్యుదయపు బృహత్తమమున సైతము మార్పుగలము. నేడు చేశమును నాశముచేయుచున్న కులకత్తలన్నియు సప్రజ్ఞ, వైక సహాయమున, నిర్మూలము కాగలవు" అని వారు నుడివిన వాక్యముల ననుసరించి మనము చేశకేవల ముందంజవేసిన, మనకు అన్ని తెగలలో

చేపడిన శిశువుల సంరక్షణమున వేరే అన్ని సాంఘిక విషయములలో బానుకొందురుగాక.

స్త్రీలవాదము సైతమిదియే

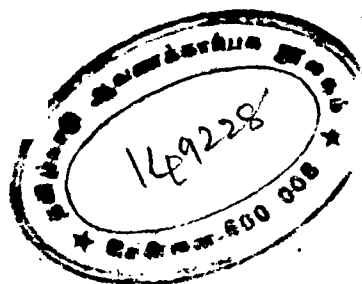
తమ వివాహముల విషయమునను, తాము బిడ్డలు కనుక నిర్ణయించు విషయమునను మరి యితర సాంఘిక విషయములను నిర్ణయించుటకును, తమ చేతులు తీర్మానముల ననుసరించియే యుండవలయునని స్త్రీలు కోరుచున్నారు. ఇట్టి విషయములలో క్రభివ్యయ వారుకోరించుటలో న్యాయ మేమియులేదు.

దేవదాసి చట్టము.

దేవదాసులలోని అనాచారమును నిర్మూలించు ప్రయత్నము ఇట్లు ముత్తులమ్మగారు అత్యంతోత్సాహముతో చేపడుతున్నది. ప్రచారమును సలభుచున్నారు. దేశీయులందరును, ఆ మెగారి యుద్ధమునకు అర్హులగు తోడ్పడుచుండ, దేవదాసిలముహూర్తం రిజిటరు, తమ పూర్వవారముల నే నిలుకబెట్టు యాందోళన సలుపుచుండుట ఎంతయు విచారకరము. మన యీ సోదరీయములు, దేశీయులు తమకు జూపుచున్న నిరాదరణమును, తమ సాంఘిక హింసకను గ్రహించక, తమ కుల మర్యాదలు పోయిన మలేమే పాడగునని భ్రమ పడుట పెరితనము. ప్రాచీన పద్ధతులెటులనున్నను, నేడవి ప్రాకారీకి భింపరాని హానిని కలుగజేయుచున్నవి. ఈ దురాచారము నిర్మూలమైనగాని మన సాంఘిక మర్యాదలు చక్కలుడబడవు. ఈ విషయమును మన సోదరీయములు మరుగుపరచుదురుగాక!

స్త్రీల సమావేశము.

నాలోపు కాంగ్రెసు సంవత్సరమున మదరాసు, స్త్రీల సమావేశము నొకదానిని జనప్రభుత్వ ఏర్పాటు జరుగుచున్నది. ఆ సంవత్సరమున స్త్రీల భాగ్యదయమునకు సంబంధించిన తీర్మానము ననేకములు చేయబడును.



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