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THE Bharata Dharma

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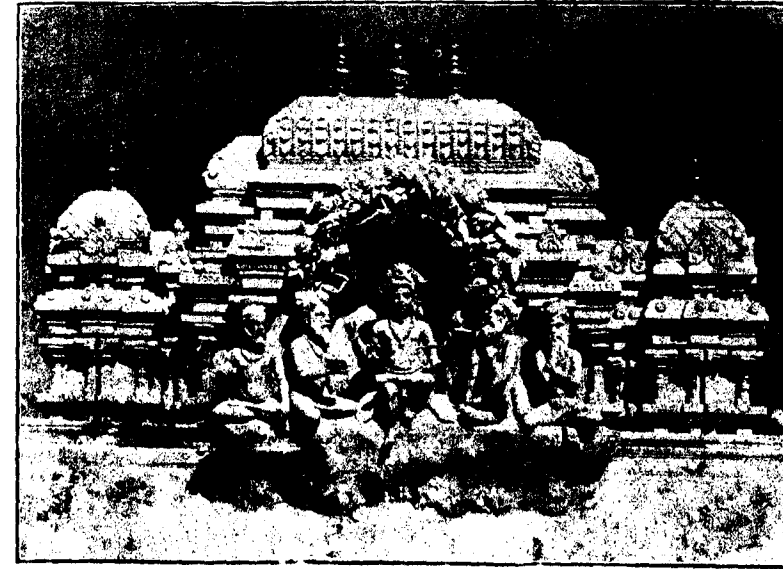
Editor: Mr. S. Raja Ram

Joint Editor: Mr. K. V. Sesha Ayyangar

VOL. VIII.

APRIL, 1930

No. 1



On the front parapet of THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT, Adyar:

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धा शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

Ah! The wonder under the Banyan tree! There sits the Teacher, a youth; the disciples, elders. The teaching is silence, and the disciples' doubts are dispelled.

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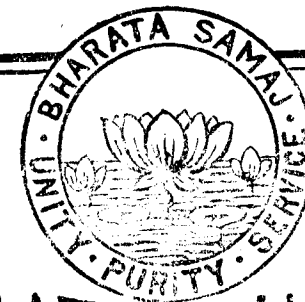
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BHARATA DHARMA

(The Official Organ of the Bharata Samaja)

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VOL. VIII.

APRIL, 1930

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Is Religion Played Out?

THE CONFLICT IN HISTORY

Address by Sadu T. L. Vaswani

Presiding at the Centenary celebration meeting of the Brahmo Samaj in Hyderabad (Sind), Vaswaniji in the course of his address said:—

"I cannot claim for me the label of any particular *samaj*. Like some of the *bhikkus* of old I may say that I have "gone from home to homelessness." I wish to belong to all. In my heart is a vision of the Free Church of the Spirit. Its flag is the *mantra* of Unity; and its colour is the synthetic colour of love. In love I come to you. In love and reverence I pay homage to the departed Leaders of the Brahmo Samaj. To Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Maharishi Debendranath Tagore, to Sri Keshub Chandra Sen, P. C. Mozumdar and other apostles of the *Nava Vidhan*, to the Acharyas and organisers of the Adi and the Sadharan Samajas, to Ranade and Chandravarkar of the

Prarthana Samaj, to Sadhu Navalrai and Sadhu Hiranand and their devoted disciples in Sind,—I offer the salutations of my spirit. I am not mentioning all: but to all collectively I mentally bow in love and reverence.

"A century ago the Brahmo Samaj started on its mission and during the century the man of India has changed more than most may know. Through all the changes and chances of the time which has elapsed, the Brahmo Samaj has borne witness to one great truth,—the necessity of spiritual regeneration. I hold that the problem of freedom is, at heart, a spiritual problem. Freedom is a category of the spiritual order. The Spirit of Freedom is God Himself. And freedom may not really be won without an inner transformation.

"This is often ignored: we attach too much value to mere organisation: we neglect the unit. In history we see a conflict between organisation and unit. We build organisations, often, at the expense of the deeper interests of units. And when organisations become big, complex, and strong they aim at perpetuating and strengthening their power rather than becoming channels of service to humanity. So nations fight with one another and nation-cults become aggressive, egoistic. War and violence are children of aggressive nation-cults. Big organisations are like the disease of dropsy: swollen limbs, but the life within is stifled: So religions with their emphasis on outer forms and creeds have become organisations of power rather than instruments of service and thus have stifled the spirit of life. Religions have quarrelled with one another: and quarrels spring often from ignorance and arrogance. The very character of Truth demands that it cannot be the monopoly of any one religion. For Truth is not a "possession" but life; and the law of life is expansion, development; religion should be a call to a life of ever-growing realisation and ever-advancing service. Possession is stagnation. Life's aspiration is:—Forward forever: The Rshis and saints, the seers and mystics had this vision of religion as life, light, and love.

"But when this vision is sought to be imprisoned in an organisation which by its very complexity and hardness sits heavy upon the free life of the individual, then religion becomes a ceremonial, a quotation from the scriptures, an echo from the past, a form, a creed; and creeds are broken reeds! And since creeds arise out of a consciousness of separation, they inevitably tend to antagonise one the other and harden into sectarianism.

"Religions were meant to be brothers. Today they quarrel as rivals. Communal, tribal and national 'gods' have held sway when

what the sad world needs is Communion with the Spirit Universal,—the Spirit of Truth, Beauty and Love. All over the world a new movement in Religion is needed,—one which would emphasise the value of the unit, the value of individual development, personal experience, and inner renewal. Numbers have their importance in the politics of democracy, *not* in the life of the spirit. For, this life, the truly religious life, is a life of growth in Truth, Beauty and Love. And these eternal values do not depend for their validity upon votes of the majority. God is in a minority, and His prophets and saints have, oftener than not, been persecuted and rejected.

"The call of religion is to a life of love; and love is the eternal need of humanity; hence the eternal value of religion. Truly great was India in the long ago; and she was great in the power of this vision of religion as reverence for the one Life in all, as worship of Love and Sacrifice; and modern India will not be great again without a new appreciation and assimilation of this supreme vision of Her sages and poets and prophets of the inner life. Modern India's urgent need is an inner movement of the Spirit with its message of harmony of religions and brotherhood of humanity and love and reverence for the poor and the sub-human God. Religion is Yoga or Unity—Yoga of science with faith, of aspiration with action, of work with worship, of knowledge with character, of nationality with humanity. Religion is the Yoga of life with Love.

Are you Afraid of Death?

IT IS MERELY RE-BIRTH

I wonder how many of us can admit that we are afraid of death? I admit it frankly, yet why should I be afraid of what, when you contemplate it, you see no reason to believe it to be harsh or difficult?

It is our very vitality of the moment that makes us quail as I believe all sincere people who dare acknowledge the truth must be apprehensive. I am sure that we go on (declares Ursula Bloom, in the Sunday Express).

Oblivion could not be frightening. I believe that the dead are very near to us, and that, should they wish to do so, they can visit us or see us at any time they so desire.

I do not think that they are worried by our difficulties, or distressed by our doubts, because seeing it from the side of Infinity they realise how transitory those problems must be.

To see the Divine in the drudgery of daily life is the discipline we need to purify our inner bodies.

The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to sinners twice-born. And I know of no better way to re-birth than daily prayer and *sat-sang*.

Darkness is far apart from blindness. I see pictures in the dark. And in the dark cometh the Blessed One.

Out of meekness cometh might. In tenderness is a spring of strength.

I see the silver hair on my head and I say :—Here is a messenger from the 'next' world!

None may find God unless first God finds him.

To meditate is to escape the tyranny of the world of sense and be linked up with another world—the world of Unseen Helpers.

Tapas has its value, partly, in burning the effects of some past *bad Karma*.

In 'ecstasy' itself is there not an element of anguish? The vision of the Blessed One is Joy. Is it not also, anguish? Is not His Flute, also, the Cross?

In your letter is an authentic note of the Voice of Love. You have suffered; therefore be of good cheer; you have loved and lost; therefore be strong! You have in you, Radha like, the yearning of a young heart; therefore are you blessed. You have followed the Flute: therefore are you of the chosen few. I send you my greetings of love.

Will "politics" solve the Indian problem? A living fellowship with Krishna and Buddha and Christ—with the Rshis and the Saints—is India's urgent need.

There is one master-key which opens the door to all the hidden treasures of life, viz., LOVE

Let your life be a candle burning, burning with light. This be your service. Life teaches better than lips.

After winter cometh spring. And after death is—life! Even as water ascending as vapour to the skies returns to the earth as rain, even so death returns as life.

Look! how patient is the sun with the growing grass! Patient are the servants of God with the ways of men—patient with injury and ingratitude, with hate and scorn.

Silence is not emptiness. Go into silence! You will find it filled with music and with pictures of a new world—the world of Unseen Helpers.

You wish to know! Are you prepared to kill the lower mind?

Study the law of the little. Goodness grows on us little by little. Evil overcomes us little by little. Beware of the little.

Does the Goal seem still far-off? Don't be depressed. One step,—one step forward,—is enough!

As a dove flies home, so do my thoughts fly to Thee, O Lord! in the midst of my daily work.

The lotus flower exhales perfume: so does the truly spiritual man send out purity and love from every pore in his body.

You will see the truth in the measure in which truth is within you.

The Guru is a path-pointer. It is for you to choose.

A Great Astika

Sir T. Sadasiva Aiyar

A SKETCH

By K. V. Sesha Aiyangar

The two years that have intervened since the passing over of Sir T. Sadasiva Aiyar have borne eloquent testimony to the unique position in public life which he occupied, and to the soundness of the practical idealism that inspired his life. These years have also revealed to us

the rich legacy he has bequeathed to his country, a legacy not of silver and gold but of the shining example of life worthily lived and ideals pursued with steadfastness and courage. For two generations, Sir T. Sadasiva Aiyar strove to give disciplined and constructive expression to the new forces that are causing ferment throughout the country. For two generations he sought to effectuate that synthesis which is baffling our best efforts, the synthesis between the old and the new, between the aspirations generated by contact with the culture of the West, and the spirit of the precepts of the hoary Scriptures of India. His whole life was the expression of a continuous experiment in making a successful graft between those two cultures which though in many respects antagonistic, are yet complementary.

The fruits of that experiment, we have known. He wielded the great Sadhanas of Hinduism for self preparation. He dedicated that preparation to the service of his fellowmen. He combined the scholarship and the industry of a pandit with the infecting optimism and the aggressive zeal of a college undergraduate. In a country and among a people functioning largely under the blinkers of tradition he set up the standard of the right of private judgment in matters spiritual no less than secular. At the risk of unpopularity he championed the cause of the weak against the strong, of the oppressed against the oppressor, and of the despoiled against the spoliator. Was it a deserving cause needing support, or a useful movement struggling for recognition, there Sadasiva Aiyar was with the enthusiasm of youth and the wisdom of age, with far-seeing vision and firm resolve, giving freely of his time and purse, giving above all, the backing of his sterling reputation and character.

He had the complex personality of an advanced soul which sometimes presented a puzzle to friends and strangers. All however had to agree that the roots of his personality were deeply embedded in an unshakable allegiance to God. The foremost fact and factor in his life was the intensity of his devotion. Second to that and only to that, was his eagerness and determination, to transmute that devotion in service. In the profundity of emotional experience, in the rapidity with which devotional exaltations are attained, he stood alone. I believe it was during these moments that he saw those visions and framed those propositions of faith, that startled the public and rivetted its attention on the problems to which his whole life furnished an answer. In those moments he saw the vision of the long march of imperfect humanity advancing to perfection. From that height and with that insight he made those resolutions, to which he afterwards adhered through hours of trial and difficulty, resolutions which in their

full implication spelt a fundamental re-orientation of social life and outlook, spelt the casting off of the worn out forms of religious life and vitality, but health and energy to the substance of the religious principle.

He was a great pioneer. With rigorous logic he deduced direct corollaries from the propositions of his faith, and with rare courage gave effect to them in conduct, with a suddenness and simplicity that struck consternation among friends and aggravated the hostilities of his critics. To him the compromise of a principle was unthinkable. It was tantamount to cowardice and surrender both of which were incompatible with a temperament of which courage was a normal part. Like all pioneers he was imperfectly understood and needlessly criticised. These criticisms were encouraged, by the frank and unconventional tone which he adopted in his utterances. He had the true controversialist's joy in battle, and raised and enjoyed controversies. Criticism he always took in good part without any trace of sourness. He had a public sense as fine as that of any public man. Steadfast in his own loyalties, he freely tolerated wide divergences in views and practices. Indeed he felt these differences not merely as inevitable incidents in changing times but as hopeful signs of a rapid social evolution. His most bitter opponents could not deny him the transparent sincerity of his character, the utter honesty of purpose, and the high idealism that pervaded his life.

This probably is one explanation of the apparent riddle presented by the great popularity he enjoyed in spite of the unpopularity of his views and social practices. He had a mystic charm that attracted people to him and retained their affection and regard in spite of their antipathy to his opinions and conduct. Not much of a speaker, he drew more audiences than many others gifted with the faculty of speech. Of him it may truly be said that people who came to scoff remained to listen with curiosity rapidly changing to interest and respect by the time he finished. To-day, two years after his death the Madras public is still searching for the person who will fill his place and give that inspiration and momentum to public work which he gave. The presence of his energetic and vivacious personality at a meeting was as the presence of ten. By his side young men felt inspired and old men felt young. Where shall we find another like him to whom advancing years brought growing freshness and increasing hope and who gave freely of his life with a lavishness and sense of duty all his own.

We have known him as a student of the Bhagavad Gita striving to relate its priceless truths, to the immediate needs of the time and the conditions of contemporary life. We have known him as the

enthusiastic and inspiring expounder of Srimad Bhagavatha engaged in the discovery of the Dharma of the present age. We cannot help thinking of him as a great *Bhakta* of Sri Krishna, as he himself loved to be known, to whom the very mention of the name of Sri Krishna would bring transports of joy. We love to cherish his name as the untiring social worker toiling for the emancipation of the country from remediable wrongs, and as a patriot who kept to the post of duty in public life with courage and faith when communal passions raged and lesser persons were swept off their feet and landed into hostile camps. Of him it may be more truly said than of many others that tasks in hours of insight willed were through hours of gloom fulfilled.

This is not the place to refer to his work as a judicial officer. The chorus of praise which greeted him when he lay down the reins of his office is proof of its high character. It was the least part of his personality outside the court house. Nevertheless it is impossible not to allude to the outstanding eminence which he earned for himself as a judge who was a humanist as well as a lawyer endeavouring within limitations and boundaries of his office to bring rules of law into conformity with the evolving social consciousness of the people. He combined unfailing courtsey with strict impartiality. A fearless independence and a passionate love of justice were the outstanding features of his judicial administration which was capable both of intricate subtilities and of ruthless directness, as exigencies called them forth for the rendering of justice for which alone courts exist.

In reminding ourselves of the life that shed its lustre and fragrance over this Presidency for two generations we are not merely paying homage to a great soul whose personality was a veritable peak of idealism, but invoking the power that sustained that life, a power which the spirit of the times is making increasingly manifest in the years that have followed and which bids fair to secure ere long those secular and spiritual mutations that were the steady objective of the life of Sir. T. Sadasiva Aiyar.

Amendment to Sarda Act

[We gladly give insertion to the following from "Swarajya" Editor].

WOMEN'S PROTEST

Mrs. M. E. Cousins writes:—

In view of the reports appearing in the Indian Press regarding proposals to make radical changes in the Child Marriage Restraint Act of Harbilas Sarda, the Women's Indian Association has sent the following telegram to the Viceroy:

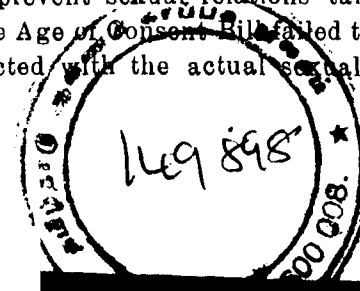
"The Women's Indian Association appeals to your Excellency to uphold the Sarda Act intact, and to disallow any amendment or change on any grounds. The proposed amendments will nullify all expectations of social reformers, especially of women, who are the chief sufferers under the present customs."

It has also sent the following to the Home Member in time to reach him before yesterday's Executive Council Meeting:—

"The Women's Indian Association, eighty Branches throughout India, most emphatically protests against the proposed amendments of the Sarda Act. When the Age of Consent Law could not make the enforcement of consummation after thirteen certain, the undertaking of parents to prevent consummation before fourteen is only the camouflage of reactionaries and will be impossible to carry out. The Government must uphold a Law passed by eighty-seven Legislative Assembly Members against fourteen, upheld by the preponderance of public opinion and especially by women's organisations everywhere."

Association's Memorandum

The Association sent forward to the Government in July last a Memorandum from the representative women and Women's Associations of the Madras Presidency, a reasoned and detailed document which carried great weight at the Assembly discussion, as did also the telegram from Madras urging the passing of the Sarda Act. No evidence has come forward since then to controvert the arguments then brought forward. The attempt to allow parents to marry their girls at twelve at their own undertaking to prevent consummation before fourteen cuts back on one of the chief reasons for the passing of the Bill, viz., to save thousands of girls from the widowhood which statistics have shown, becomes their lot between the ages of twelve and fourteen, and also to prevent sexual relations taking place before fourteen which even the Age of Consent Bill failed to enforce through want of evidence connected with the actual sexual intercourse. By



means of a marriage certificate of age connected with also the legal age of birth these two intense evils will be averted by the enforcement of the Sarda Act as it stands.

The instances given in the daily papers of children of three and four years old being married in this panic of a minority of orthodoxists shows how absolutely necessary it is to save people from the extremes of orthodoxy which becomes inhuman, cruel, and subversive of science, true religion and national welfare. There is a great deal of exaggeration of numbers current regarding the rush to marry girls and boys before the first of April. It is deplorable that the Indian people make an inflated morbid publicity of the proportionately small number which even in itself is a disgrace to their civilisation in the eyes of all the world. When one compares calmly the actual number of marriages celebrated in even the most orthodoxist Centres with the number which would be celebrated over a series of the coming years in the ordinary course of events before the Act was thought of, it will be seen that the number of boys and girls who will be saved from a cruel fate by the Sarda Act, will be millions compared with the few thousands actually rushed through this week.

Appeal to Public

Any weakness, any vacillation on the part of the Government, any whittling down now of the Act's Conditions will be not only unstatesmanlike but ridiculous, in view of the fact that those who are sincerely orthodox have already had time to make the Sarda Act inoperative by marrying their children during the last six months, and therefore to lower in any way the ages and the conditions of the Sarda Act will be "shutting the door of the stable after the steed has gone."

The Association appeals to every reformer and every organisation to send forward telegrams and Resolutions to Delhi so as to uphold those who on the spot are fighting the forces of reaction.

The "Saptapadi" in Hindu Marriage

SHOULD IT GO?

The Indian Social Reformer of the 15th March writes:—

The *Saptapadi* or "seven steps" is the central rite the performance of which is indispensable in a valid Hindu marriage. In the orthodox ceremony, the bridegroom takes the bride seven steps by the

sacred fire, touching her feet and planting it at each step. When the seven steps are taken, the marriage is complete and binding for all time. The late Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, one of the founders and leaders of the Bombay Prarthana Samaj, and a great Sanskrit scholar, revised the orthodox rite leaving out the *homa* or sacred fire and other incidents savouring of idol-worship, but keeping the *Saptapadi*, for use by members of the Samaj. He had the collaboration of eminent Hindu lawyers, and it was thought that the revised rite will be valid in law, and that a marriage celebrated according to it, will be a valid marriage. The Bombay Prarthana Samaj, unlike the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj, was particular about maintaining continuity with the parent faith, and Sir Ramakrishna was especially strong on this point. He and other leaders, therefore, had conscientious objections to make the declaration repudiating belief in the older religions, which the Special Marriage Act of 1872, requires of parties to marriages under its provisions and many marriages have been performed according to the Bhandarkar rite, and all marriages in Dr. Bhandarkar's family have been celebrated according to it, without registration. We believe that in one case the Bombay High Court held that a marriage under that rite was a valid marriage. The position has since been changed by the passing of Gour's Act which has done away with the repudiation clause in the case of civil marriages among Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and other Hindu sects including the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. We are, therefore surprised to see an editorial in the *Subodh Patrika* advocating the omission of *Saptapadi* from the Bhandarkar rite, on the ground, not of its being idolatrous, but of its being derogatory to the latest ideas about the equality of women. To Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar and his friends and colleagues, the dignity of womanhood was not a strange idea, and the *Subodh Patrika's* reasoning is a reflection on the pioneers of the Theistic reform movement. The proposal seems to us to be inspired merely by a sense of ennui which, for want of a better object, tries to find satisfaction in moving things about just as an outlet to its pent-up energies.

Asian Women's Conference

DR. TAGORE'S SUPPORT

The following letter sent by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore before he left India to the organisers of the proposed All Asian Conference of women will be read with interest:

"I have read the letter proposing an Asian Women's Conference

with deep interest, and I hasten to tell you that I am entirely in sympathy with the movement which you propose to inaugurate. The consolidation of the cultural consciousness of the Orient is the preliminary step for the enrichment of world culture, and as women are the fundamental custodians of the cultural life, it will be most valuable for them to meet and strengthen their understanding of the gifts that Asia has to offer to the world.

Wishing your movement the success it richly deserves."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Vigilance Work In The Madras Presidency

By K. V. Sesha Aiyangar: M.A., B.L., Advocate and Secretary, Madras Vigilance Association

The Madras Vigilance Association after five years of hard work amidst difficulties and depression has secured the passing of the Brothels Bill into Law. In any well ordered society functioning in conformity with the Dharma Shastras there ought to be no need for an Association to counteract Traffic in Vice. If however even a fraction of what has been revealed in the evidence before the Select Committee on the Brothels Bill is true, we are having a state of things in our urban centres, where tender girls of school going age are sold into sexual slavery for fifty or sixty rupees. They are drudged for a few years and after having been used up, are flung into the scrap heap of diseased and discarded humanity. No responsible citizen can contemplate such a state of things with equanimity. The Madras Vigilance Association is the challenge of modern social conscience to this new evil.

If the experience of other countries especially in the West, where the vice has probably prevailed longer and taken deeper root is of any value to us in India it is to demonstrate that belated action in this matter may be practically futile. As the Honourable, the Advocate General, pointed out in the course of his address in seconding the adoption of the report the causes that make traffic in vice possible and profitable are such as are likely to persist and grow under the present conditions, and the nature of the evil such as to call forth all our resources for combating it with success.

The scheme of the Madras Bill for the suppression of Immoral Traffic is two-fold. One portion of the Bill is directed to the prevention of the continuance of the Traffic, by the enactment of suitable penalties for those that participate in it. Another portion of the Bill is devoted to the rescue and care of minor girls entrapped by the Traffickers. As the Honourable Mr. Justice Venkatasubba Rao observed an essential feature of the campaign against commercialised vice is the existence of properly equipped places where the children rescued from Brothels can find homely care, and get the training for a life of usefulness. It was truly generous of Mr. Justice Venkatasubba Rao to have stated that the services of the Madras Seva Sadan to the extent to which it can be of use will be available for this purpose.

The Bill itself is only a weapon in the public campaign against organised vice. The possession of the weapon cannot by itself ensure success in the struggle. In this as in other fields of voluntary work the result achieved will depend entirely upon the extent of public support moral and material that is given to the cause. That support will be required both in getting the sanctions of the bill effectively got into operation, and in giving human chances of normal life to those who have already been victimised in the past.

It has also to be pointed out that unless along with the efforts specially directed towards the eradication of commercialised vice timely steps are taken to remedy the distressing economic conditions of woman that prepare the ground for Immoral Traffic, we shall not have solved the problem. After all who are the women that get drawn into these social eddies. What is the history of Fantine? "It is society buying a slave." From whom? From misery, from hunger, from loneliness, from abandonment. A soul for a bit of bread. Misery makes the offer. Society accepts it. It is said that slavery had disappeared from our civilisation. This is a mistake. It still exists.....it weighs now upon woman, that is to say, upon grace, upon feebleness, upon beauty and upon maternity. This is not one of the least of man's shames"—*Les Misérables*.

Madras Vigilance Association

NEED FOR RESCUE HOMES

H. E. THE GOVERNOR'S APPEAL FOR FUNDS

The annual public meeting of the Madras Vigilance Association was held last evening at the Y. M. C. A. Auditorium, His Excellency Sir George Frederick Stanley, the Governor of Madras, presiding. The meeting was largely attended by ladies and gentlemen interested in the work of the Association.

Presentation of Report

In presenting the annual report of the association, the Lord Bishop of Madras said that there was an appalling amount of social evil in this presidency, as was evident from the figures which were elicited by the enquiries of the Select Committee. The association at first attempted in its own way to grapple with this evil, having very little knowledge of its extent. Soon it found that it was not competent to tackle the problem. After two or three more or less unsuccessful attempts, they, in conjunction with the Government, prepared a bill which would give them necessary powers to protect unfortunate girls and women who had become victims of prostitution. After a great deal of negotiation and trouble the Bill had now become law and they were now able to proceed with the second stage of their work, that of providing rescue homes. What they were aiming at was to establish a central home in Madras where those unfortunate women whom they had rescued could be taught a trade and made to live a decent life and become an asset to the community. Madras, he hoped, would give a lead to the rest of India in bringing about this reform.

Adoption of Report

Mr. Justice M. Venkatasubha Rao, in moving the adoption of the report, said that it was after a great deal of labour on the part of those connected with the association that the Prostitution Act was passed. A good deal of opposition to the Bill which existed in some quarters was due to the fact that its real purpose was not understood. The Bill had nothing to do with private morals of individuals. What it sought to attack was commercialised vice. They had now passed the first stage and were entering upon the second and the more important stage that of redeeming the fallen girls. This work of redemption would fall to the lot of the public. That was also the object of the Vigilance Association.

Speaking of rescue homes, he had a personal suggestion to make and that was from his knowledge of certain conditions in the city of Madras. There was the Children's Aid Society dealing with young criminal offenders. There was another society—the Madras Seva Sadan—which took under its shelter girls who were destitute and needy. But so far as the Vigilance Association was concerned they had to deal not with the destitute and the needy but the fallen women and girls. Government said that if the public took the initiative, and came forward to establish rescue homes, they would do all in their power to give their financial support to that work. Speaking as the President of Madras Seva Sadan he said he was authorised to say with the concurrence of those helping him in his work, that the Sadan would take in rescued girls and do the work of rescue homes for the present.

In conclusion the speaker paid a tribute to those members of the association and Mr. K. V. Sessa Iyengar, in particular, who took great trouble in getting a law passed for the suppression of brothels.

Social Legislation in Madras

In seconding the motion Mr. Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar said that a sensitive and quickened social conscience was the true index and measure of the civilisation of any country or any community. It was not enough for a person claiming to be a citizen or a member of a body politic to cultivate a self-sufficient morality. One must be able to impart to others a bit of the better life and light that had been vouchsafed to him by Providence. It was the recognition of this principle that marked the European civilisation of the latter part of the nineteenth century and the post-war philanthropic and social efforts in Europe, America, the Eastern countries and of the League of Nations. The Vigilance Association of Madras had been conceived and organised in a genuine spirit of social service for the purpose of reclaiming a number of their fellow beings who had been victimised by the vice of commercialised prostitution. If the evidence given before the Select Committee of the Legislative Council revealed the true state of affairs, no responsible citizen could afford to sit with his hands folded and look upon with equanimity the growing evil which might in course of time corrode and sap the very foundation of their religious and social life. The nature of the evil was such as to call forth all their efforts for combating it successfully. The public of this Presidency owned a great debt to the Vigilance Association for educating public opinion and for the new legislation against immoral traffic. The Bill gave a practical expression to the determination of the people to arrest and if possible to root out the growing evil and to do their duty by way of rescuing at

least a few of the helpless victims of this traffic from their life of shame, wretchedness and misery. The Bill in Madras went further in many respects than the legislation in England and in other parts of India. He believed that the successful working of the new measure to a very great extent would depend upon the right type of rescue homes being provided by the private, philanthropic and Governmental support. The legislative measure was but the first step in the campaign against the evil. The Vigilance Association had set to itself this task and the success attending its efforts entirely depended upon public support, moral and material, that was extended to it. The work of the Association was one in which every citizen could render some help and he had no doubt that the response would be great. In conclusion, the speaker paid a tribute to Mr. K. V. Sesha Iyengar for the untiring efforts he had taken to get the Bill passed. The speaker was glad that a member of his own profession was able to do much and hoped that more members of the profession would follow the example of Mr. K. V. Sesha Iyengar.

The report was then adopted.

Work in Rescue Homes

Dr. Martha Voegeli Arya then spoke about rescue work in the city. She said that as one connected intimately with the Madras Children's Aid Society she knew the conditions of the helpless and unfortunate victims to this vice. The Act could not be passed into effect because sufficient provision had not been made for rescue homes wherein the rescued girls could be lodged, fed and educated. She believed that in the long run these rescue homes should come under the control of the State for it was the only authority which could cope with the demands. In the absence of Government rescue homes, it was necessary that the public should raise funds to have such homes. Speaking about the nature of such homes, the speaker said that it all depended upon the needs of the inmates. The home should not only be a home to the children but should also be a school giving them some training. In school home for these fallen women and for girls rescued from brothels, provision should be made for a thorough medical examination of a girl before she was admitted in the home. She was of opinion that a rescue home should be in charge of a woman with training in medicine. Proceeding, she said that the remand home in which young delinquents were now kept was not a suitable home for girls rescued from brothels. The remand home should be used only for children who showed criminal tendencies. She hoped that the Government would support the Vigilance Association which was doing very useful work.

Srimati N. Visalakshi Ammal next addressing in Tamil appealed to the educated women to become honorary workers in the field for it was only women who could do this work effectively and successfully.

His Excellency's Speech

His Excellency in winding up the proceedings said that it was a fact that every civilised country had realised nowadays that such an association as the Madras Vigilance Association was doing an immense amount of good to the fallen women in large cities. He was glad that the Lord Bishop of Madras had made it clear in his speech that it was not the function of the Association to usurp the duties of the police. Its main function was only to create public opinion in such a way as to remove the evils from their midst. He thought that the Brothels Act, which had been referred to by the speakers was a notable instance of that. It was the pressure of public opinion which made the Legislative Council pass this legislation. He quite realised that the Act did not go quite so far as some ladies and gentlemen would like it to go, and from the speeches made it had been made quite clear that the Act would have been more satisfactory if in it provision had been made for the establishment of rescue homes. But he would like to tell them on this occasion that they were not legislating for the Madras City alone but for the whole Presidency and it was quite possible that, if provision had been made in the Act, not only the City of Madras would demand a home, but all the large towns in the Presidency would demand such homes and as such the provision should have been a very large sum, which at this time the Government could not see its way to grant. Whether there was provision for such homes in the Act or not, they must now find other ways for the provision of these homes. In such matters he had always held the opinion that the homes like those contemplated in the Act would always be better worked if they were under the control of private administration than if they were under Government control. In these homes one of the first essentials was that there should be a great deal of human sympathy shown. The unfortunate women who were brought into it must feel that they would receive sympathy from the management. He had always felt that this human sympathy could be much better given in homes which were run in semi-private capacity rather than in homes which were entirely under Government control. This was his personal opinion in the matter.

Proceeding, His Excellency said that the work was such a good one that he did not think any one would shrink from the task that lay before them and was confident that if an appeal for funds were made,

they would get an adequate response. At any rate they could get that amount which would enable them to make a beginning in the city. He suggested to the members of the Association to appeal to generous-minded people to help the Association with funds to enable it to build rescue homes. He thanked the members of the executive committee for giving him the opportunity to preside over their annual public meeting and wished the efforts of the Association all success and long years of beneficial work for humanity.

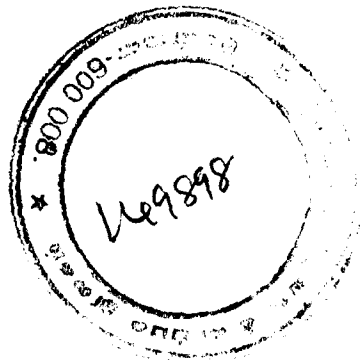
Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi proposed a vote of thanks to His Excellency for the great encouragement he had given to the Association and for the appeal made by him on behalf of the Association.

The meeting then terminated.

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