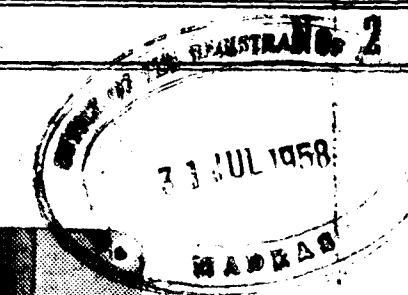


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THE MUNICIPAL GAZETTE

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JULY 1958

No 2.

The Whips-or Parliament's Usual Channels'

THERE are dozens of words and phrases in our everyday speech derived from sporting terms. Fox-hunting, for example, has even invaded our Parliamentary life—in the word 'whip. This is a shortened form of 'whipper-in' that is, the man in the hunting field who cracks his whip at at any hound he sees straying from the pack and makes it return to the business of chasing the fox.

Whip is not perhaps a very dignified name for important party officials in both House of Parliament, but it certainly indicates one of their functions; and when it was first used in the eighteenth century most Members of Parliament were country gentlemen to whom hunting was a familiar and beloved activity. Broadly speaking, the Whips are responsible for the smooth working of Parliamentary life. Indeed, without them British democracy would not work at all.

Sometimes you hear the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition say: 'Perhaps that could be discussed through the usual channels.' By 'the usual channels' they mean the Whips of the two sides. One of the main tasks of the Whips is to provide a sort of telephone line between the Government and the Opposition so that official but private conversations can be held between them. The kind of thing they discuss and settle is the length of time to be allotted to various items of Parliamentary business, and the days on which they are to be debated. Government Chief Whip finds out how much opposition the proposed business is likely to meet, and he assesses how long will be needed to complete it. These private talks often involve a little bargaining, with some give and take on both sides.

But the Whips are not only the official representatives of their parties; they are also the organisers of their parties, and the personal lieutenants of the party leaders. And very busy men they are, particularly at times like the present, when the Government has only a small majority. They are responsible for making sure that the maximum number of their own side turn up vote whenever a division

takes place. They keep detailed lists of where everybody is—those who are sick, those who are away or abroad, and they keep a close check on how each Member votes. If a Member fails to appear in the division lobby on several occasions he will receive a note from expressing their displeasure.

Another duty of the Whips is to make sure there are always enough of their own Members sitting in the Chamber. If there are under forty Members altogether the House can be 'counted out,' and the sitting is suspended until the next day, which means time is wasted. They certainly set a very good example themselves. There is always at least one Whip sitting on each front bench, to advise the party leaders and to keep an eye on the way the debate is going.

The two main parties have about a dozen Whips each. The Chief Whip on each side is a man of great experience and influence; and the party leader relies on him for advice and information of all kinds. The Whip tells him what the party is thinking about this or that political issue and also about what individual Members are thinking.

On the Government side the Whips are paid salaries and hold Crown appointments. Thus the Chief Whip is called the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, although the office has no duties. Under him there are eight other salaried Whips, who are far more important than the others. He knows all the Members of his party much better than the Prime Minister. He spends all his days and most of his nights mixing with them in the smoking room. It is his business to know their opinions on all political matters. This means that he is in a good position to advise the Prime Minister about suitable candidates for promotion to ministerial rank, and even to tell the Prime Minister that so-and-so would not be popular with the party if he were made a Cabinet Minister. So the Whips are not only links between the party leaders and the rival parties but links between the party leaders and the rank and file.

CHEAP & COMFORTABLE HOUSES (CONTRIBUTED)

WITH an object to give the maximum comfort at the minimum price the Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee, the first major national one in the tropics, was established in 1950 in the chain of national laboratories for the benefit of the citizens. —

It is of common knowledge that the most essential need of man, after food and clothing, is shelter a home to live in for rest and recreation. But his decision to prefer one house to another is influenced by two factors—its cheapness and its comfort.

Materials and methods of construction have been in use for thousands of years. But those traditional ways are found to be inadequate to-day to bring about the goal of good living within the reach of the masses. Thus it has become necessary to adapt them in the light of modern technological developments.

The aim of Institute is to develop new and cheap tools and techniques of construction, the better utilization of indigenous materials and industrial waste, the study of soil engineering and soil stabilization which will go to make houses cheap and at the same time to assess factors that govern comfort and make buildings efficient and strong under local conditions.

The drawing up of uniform building codes to guide construction agencies under public control such as Public Works Department, Municipalities Railways, Military Engineering Services have been felt necessary. Until quite recently, the British or American standards formed the basis of designs and material specifications, and the British codes of practice were used for construction purposes.

The major research work of the Institute for improvement in the physical properties of mud, the principal building material in the country was undertaken. Eighty per cent of the 37 crores of the country's population live in more than 5.5 lakhs' villages, where housing is a titanic problem. More so, in view of knowledge, as contained in the Planning Commission's report on the Second Five Year Plan, that a large proportion of 54 crore houses in these villages need to be rebuilt.

BETTER AND CHEAP BRICKS

The present average annual production of bricks has been estimated to be more than 500 crores. Nearly all of these bricks are hand moulded and are thus irregular

in size and shape and are of variable strength owing to high shrinkage and defective moulds. The rejection of the produce is as high as five to ten per cent.

The Institute has worked out some procedures in order to modernize this process. It is now possible to achieve adequate control in brick shrinkage, a major cause of defective bricks, and to increase their strength, by suitably modifying the proportions of the raw materials, sand, silt and clay.

Three new developments have been made at the Institute for improved process of brick making from sticky and plastic clays, such as available in the black cotton soil of Western and Central India. A new design of foundation on black cotton soil has been made in Madhya Pradesh and at Powerkheda in Itarsi, where a block of three one-roomed tenements were constructed with under-reamed pile foundation. These have shown no sign of cracking since the last two years, and the fabrication of a simple hand-operated brick and block-making machine at the modest price of Rs. 500 one tenth the cost of a similar imported one—to make a better yield of bricks of equal strength.

It has also a novel feature of having an automatic locking device. The need for mechanization of brick manufacture has long been felt. The machine allows bricks to be manufactured on a cottage industry basis and is likely to find considerable use in community project areas. Four persons are required to operate it and the output is about 2,000 bricks per 8 hour-day.

To promote a wider use of prestressed concrete in order to conserve critical materials—cement and steel, which are in short supply—the Institute has fabricated a simple pretensioning bed and prestressing screw-jack made in local workshop for casting pre-stressed building components.

HOUSING COMFORT

A building should be so orientated as to let in minimum solar load during summer and maximum in winter. To help in these studies two set-ups have been installed in this Institute, viz: Sunshine and Shade model and Heliodon.

It has also been ascertained that in hot dry areas, the direction of Sun's rays should be the guiding factor for positioning a house whereas in hot humid areas, the

seasonal wind directions should also be taken into consideration.

To study the behaviour of concrete structures by non-destructive method, the Institute has fabricated two apparatus, Sonic Tester and Ultra-sonic Pulse Tester. Work is in progress on correlating the conventional strength of properties with sonic modulus.

As part of the comfort survey projects, studies on the determination of minimum heights of ceilings consistent with thermal efficiency and comfort of the building interiors were taken up in Roorkee and in Delhi.

A thermal comfort atlas is under preparation. It will give maps of effective temperature for different months of the year, indicating degree-days above or below the comfort range of temperature in summer and winter.



Prefab Buildings For All Purposes

By
David Jarrow

A new era of British trade is in the offing. Without fuss, but with a quickening pulse, one of the true industries is leaping towards the front row of Britain's export money-makers.

Prefabricated buildings not just houses, but schools, post offices, factories, hospitals, clinics, canteens, telephone exchanges, holiday camps, airports. That is the industry.

Eight million pounds' worth of prefab exports by Christmas, ... 1952 four times greater than a mere three years ago that is one year's measure of its productive pace.

Transporting houses by mule through mountain passes, That's the gauge of its flexibility.

Coronation year is likely to bring even bigger improvements, and by 1958 we may be well on the way to the export target of £50,000,000 a year envisaged by works Minister.

NEW MEANING

Prefab is a word that still has to win a psychological battle. In the mind's eye, the average man still represents an unhandy, awkward-looking figure.

Buildings From Sand

A quick and economical method of building houses and other structures has been developed by a well known British company, using a technique called Sifoam. Sifoam is a lightweight aerated concrete made with cement and sand, which is literally poured into its place on the actual building site.

Sifoam concrete is obtained by foaming a sand and cement mixture. The foam is produced by equipment using compressed air and liquid foam compound, which is injected during the mixing process. This causes minute air bubbles to remain suspended in the concrete until the material is set. The result is a light concrete, with an insulation value superior to ordinary dense concrete or brick-work, and it is so fluid that it can be conveyed and placed in position by means of a pipe line.

The concrete is poured into specially designed formwork or moulds, giving the complete shape of the building required.

dwelling on a bombed site, a makeshift home for a blitzed family.

But the arts of prefabrication have moved fast since the war-time rehousing flurry. Today, with aluminium and timber, with steel frames, "cellular" concrete and other stress tested materials, the prefab can be as permanent as orthodox bricks and mortar; cheaper, speedier to erect, and with a minimum of skilled labour; adaptable to jungle and desert and suburb alike.

In the language of prefabrication, the Bristol, the Medway, the Newsum, the Kawkesley, the Unitroy, the Trusteel and a few others become increasingly familiar in Canada, Australia, Africa and the Middle East and will soon be making a mark in new dollar markets.

Take schools and hospitals. Bristol Aeroplane Company, with a prefab plant at Weston-super-Mare, point with pride to order-books listing hundreds of aluminium schools built and building for Australia.

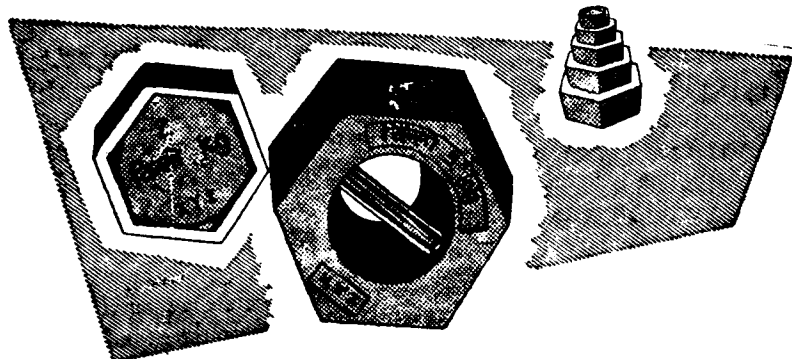
For the Commonwealth they are also making aluminium post offices and a TB sanatorium, nurses' homes, technical workshops and dozens of complete telephone exchanges.

(Continued on page 5)

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CHANGING OVER TO THE METRIC SYSTEM



India has at present no common system of weights and measures. There are not less than 143 systems in use. This multiplicity gives room for malpractices. The introduction of a uniform system throughout the country based on Metric Weights and Measures will be very convenient and make calculations extremely easy, especially because the country has already adopted the decimal coinage. The Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1956 has laid down the basic units under the metric system. The reform will be gradual so as to cause minimum inconvenience to the people.

Even after its introduction in an area or a trade, the traditional weights and measures will be permitted to be used for a period of three years.

THE CHANGE-OVER TO THE
METRIC SYSTEM OF WEIGHTS
AND MEASURES BEGINS
FROM OCTOBER, 1958

KNOW THE METRIC WEIGHTS



The unit of weight is the
KILOGRAM = 1 seer 6 tolas
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SUB-UNITS

10 milligrams = 1 centigram
10 centigrams = 1 decigram
10 decigrams = 1 gram
10 grams = 1 decagram
10 decagrams = 1 hectogram
10 hectograms = 1 kilogram

MULTIPLES

100 kilograms = 1 quintal
10 quintals or
1,000 kilograms = 1 metric tonne

ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

the air terminal at Evans Bay in New Zealand; the Kalamaki children's hospital near Athens in Greece.

The Trusteel Corporation are busy shipping £1,000,000 worth of building materials and parts for 13 country hospitals in the State of Victoria.

STEEL VILLAGE

For Abyssinia the Duke of Harar (Haile Selassie's son) has ordered a three-bedroom Unitroy house which, after showing off its qualities in the palace grounds at Addis Ababa, may clinch the deal for a whole village of these steel-framed bungalows whose walls, at 2½ inches thick give as much insulation as two-feet-six of solid stone. France and Cyprus, Portuguese East Africa, Israel and Arabia have also put these houses up.

Early this year a new type of "tropical" bungalow will go to the Belgian Congo from the Hawkesley plant at Gloucester.

With Bristol setting the pace in aluminium construction (and using fine bright colours to contrast with the metal silvery grey), other plants are forging ahead on new ways with timber prefabs.

OVER MOUNTAINS

One £250,000 Medway (Rochester) contract is to

ship out the housing for 2,000 men at a construction camp for the Aden oil refinery-along with hospital quarters and other buildings-the job to be done in three months; shipment No. 1 is already there, others are on their way.

Prefab houses have been air-lifted across mountain ranges in Africa. Prefab houses, specially "packaged," have gone by mule through rocky passes in Nyasaland for pioneer airfield workers.

At Lincoln, the Riley-Newsum house is being factory-made and "crateed" for Canada, for Australia, for the Middle East oilmen at Aden. The houses are shipped in sets of eight. More than 2,200 of them have gone to Australasia and Canada in the last two years.

When the 1953 British Industries Fair opens at Earls Court foreign buyers and home visitors will see a prefab "sectional city."

The new industry's pace is quickening. The backroom research is fast and furious. The foreign orders are there to be snapped up.

Today it looks as if Britain stands a fair chance of being first and quickest off the mark in the building race of tomorrow.

A Historical Survey of Begging

By SRI S. R. VENKATARAMAN, Secretary, Servants of India Society, Madras.

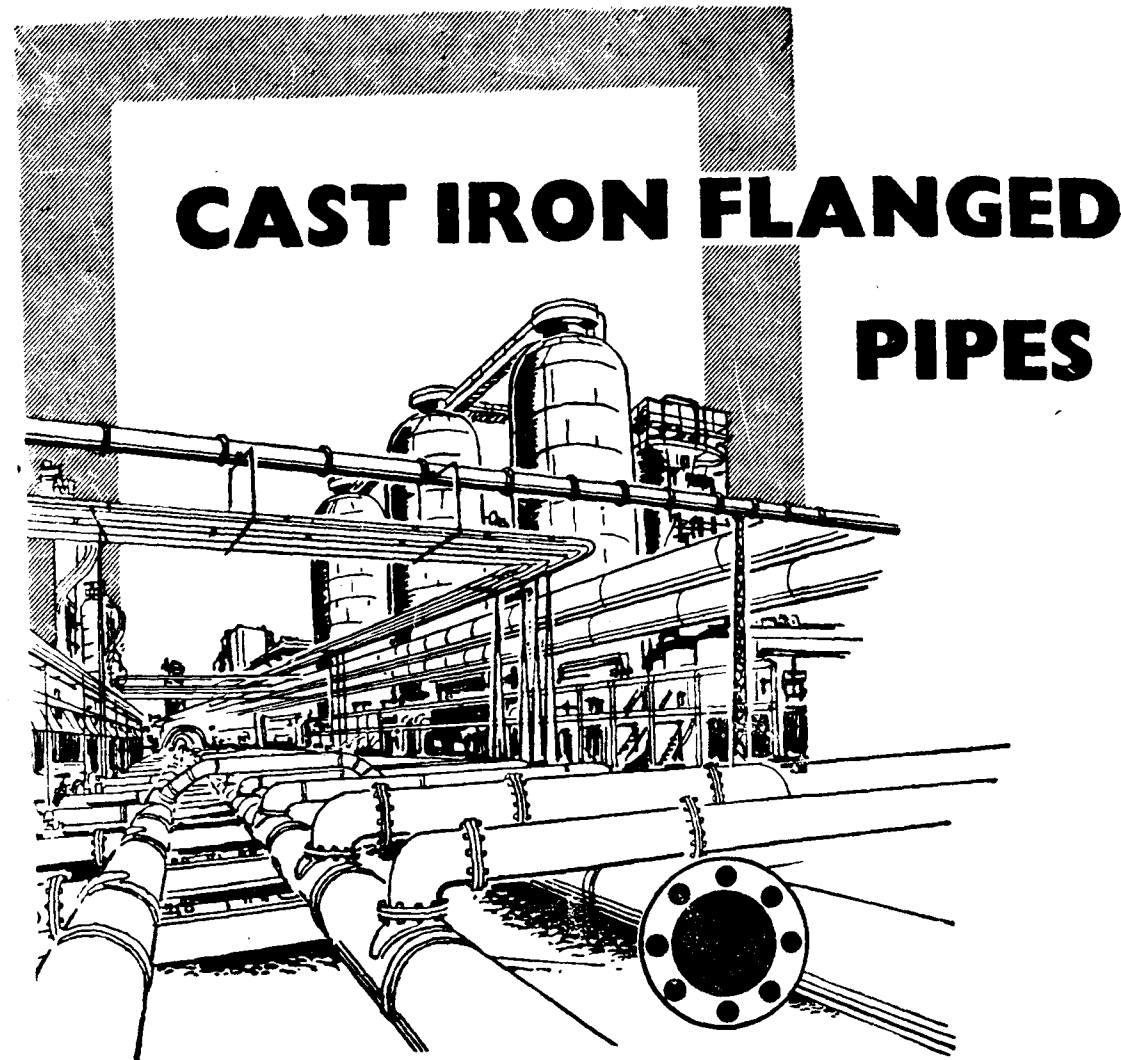
The aetiology of the problem of begging in retrospect will be a help to correctly assess and evaluate the current social problem of begging and to evolve suitable remedies for its eradication. There have been social evils as we have now, in all climes and all ages, embracing men, women and children. The denial of the basic needs for living a normal life gives rise to social problems whose ramifications are so far reaching as to impede the normal and healthy growth of the members constituting the society. In some cases even the character and emphasis of some very good customs have changed for the worse with the change in the social and political life of the people. The problem of begging is one such.

Begging respected in early society.

Every religion of the world advocates simple living and high thinking, and the vow of poverty for its followers. This was one of the most prominent characteristics of Hinduism. It pervaded every strata of society and became

a part and parcel of the daily life of the individual, devoted to higher pursuits. The scriptures of the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain faiths, with one voice proclaim the ideal of poverty or renunciation as the goal of human life in this world, that the material world and all that we see around us, is not the real world and that the hankering after wealth and worldly goods, comforts and luxuries bring in only misery and suffering. When great religious teachers were asked, by earnest students engaged in higher pursuits, to tell them what the ideal of life should be, they said, referring to the entire range of man's earthly life, that "Nothing in this world is real." They negated every worldly object, by saying: "NETHI, NETHI—Not this, not this." There is a Sanskrit Sloka which puts in a nut-shell this ideal: "Beware and be warned, mother and father, kind and brother, wealth and home are of no avail." They felt that the real object in life must be to promote harmony and peace by non-attachment to mundane things and not to

(Continued on page 7)



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cause economic inequality in society, by a mad rush to become rich as quickly as possible. This was to enable people to realise the oneness with each other and with God, by serving their fellowmen; for they were convinced that the pursuit of the material wealth was a great obstacle for the attainment of this ideal. This is very well reflected in another Sanskrit saying: "I do not want kingdom, Heaven nor re-birth. My only desire is to console the suffering." The civilization and culture of our country was nursed by people who were votaries of this ideal of life.

This ideal is possible of realization only by an austere life, deep study and contemplation, preaching and service to fellowmen, untrammelled by worldly possessions and desires. This rule applied with great strictness to those classes who studied and taught scriptures, namely, the Brahmacharis and Brahmans.

Duty to give alms.

Our ancient law-givers, like Manu, Apastamba and others have laid down strict rules as to who should beg, from whom to beg, and to whom to give. Giving of alms and feeding the guest were enjoined on every (Grahastha) householder. The Tamil Poet, Thiruvalluvar says that the householder is just like a sheet anchor for a boat in a storm-tossed river. To the student, the traveller and the ascetic, the householder was a pillar of strength as he gave food and shelter to all the three. Our Sastras also state that the beggar who comes to the door of a householder, is God himself disguised, and to refuse alms to him is a sin. For instance, the Apastamba Dharma Sutra says that if a woman refuses to give alms to a (Brahmachari) student he snatches away or destroys her merits and those of her family arising from sacrifices, gifts and burnt offerings, progeny, cattle, spiritual glory of their families and food. Another passage says that one should not refuse to give food to a crowd of students begging for alms for fear that among them there may be someone who is a devoted student of the scriptures and who has carried out all the duties enjoined on students. To displease him was to court certain disaster. The person who refuses him alms will suffer innumerable hardships in this life or in the next or in both. This fear of incurring the displeasure of the Almighty and the dread of undergoing sufferings consequent on the refusal to give alms is so indelibly impressed in the minds of people that no woman would think of refusing alms to anyone however undeserving he may be. That was the old order. All these, however, were intended to promote social justice, harmony and peace in the community.

For what purpose can one beg.

Our old law books declare that begging is specially appropriate to Vedic students (Brahmacharis) and Ascetics (Yatis). And begging can be resorted to by the student for the benefit of his teacher, for one's own first marriage, for a sacrifice, to support one's parents and to discharge one's own duties towards worthy persons. A man oppressed by hunger may beg for a little cultivated land, a cow, a sheep, gold, corn, or cooked food. Manu says that a person who is without food for three days may take away even by theft, corn, or food, to satisfy his hunger even from a person lower than himself in status. He can steal grain and corn from the thrashing floor, from the field, and food and grain from the house or from any place from which he could get them to satisfy his hunger. We find here the English saying, "Beg, borrow or steal," anticipated but with this difference that the person who steals must announce his intention when the owner confronts him. Similarly, the diseased, the indigent, and one who is torn away from his family and who is on a journey is permitted to beg.

Rules for begging.

Elaborate rules have been laid down for begging by students (Brahmacharis). The Brahmachari must beg daily for his food from householders and offer them, in return, firewood brought from the forest after cutting and hewing. A Brahmachari in good health, failing to offer firewood in return for the food offered by the housewife for seven days continuously, would be guilty of having violated the vow of Brahmacharya and he would have to undergo the prescribed penance for it. A Vedic student should beg daily. He should not beg one day and live by it the next day. What he begs on a day must be consumed the same day. This was probably with a view not to develop in him the possessive instinct.

This practice of begging for food by students studying in schools is still in vogue in some remote villages. They beg their daily food and lead a hard disciplined life. Many such students have risen to high positions in public life by their diligent application to studies and integrity of character. But begging in its pristine purity has disappeared, has the traditional idea of charity is losing its hold on the Hindu mind, yielding place to indiscriminate begging by the destitute and the diseased.

A student should not beg food all for himself. He should announce to the teacher all that he had gathered by begging and place them before his preceptor. The student can only take whatever his teacher directs him to take. When the teacher is away on a journey, the student after

begging alms, must announce his collection of food to the teacher's wife or son, or failing both of them, to the other learned Brahmins and take for himself what is permitted by them.

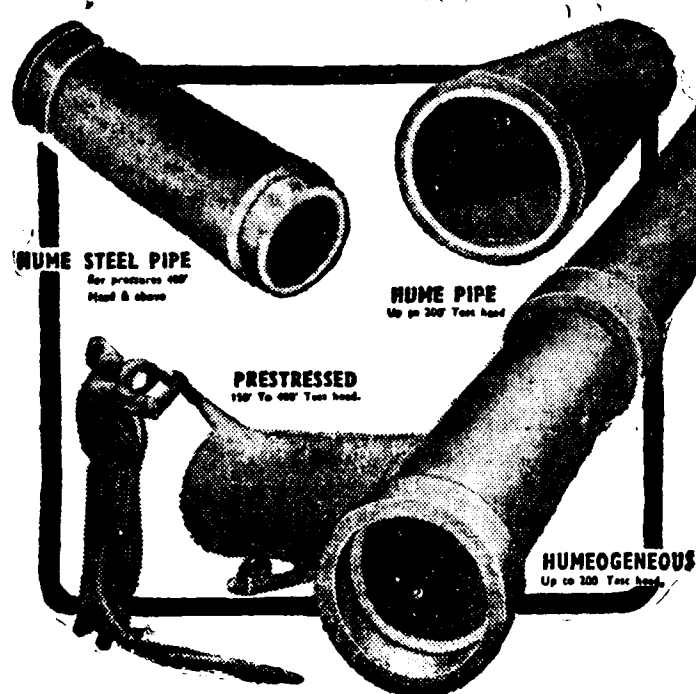
Students must first beg of a person who would not refuse, and in begging the student should say "Sir or Madam, give food." When the student is sent out by the teacher for collecting alms he gives him a staff and bowl. He must first beg of his mother, then of other families which are generally well disposed towards him. When the alms are brought to the Guru he should accept them with words "These are good alms," "The Boudhyana Grihya Sutra adds that a Brahmana student should beg with the words "Bhavati biksham dehi" (lady give me food). Parasara says that the student should first beg of three women who would not refuse or of six or twelve or of an unlimited number. Manu says that the student should first beg of his mother, sister or mother's sister. This gives the impression that women then as now, were more charitable than men.

With the growth of rigid caste rules about food during the course of centuries, the choice of persons from whom the Brahmachari could beg was restricted. But he could still beg from anybody except 'Apapattas', i.e., those who have deviated from their duties and those guilty of grave sins. Manu lays down that a Brahmachari should beg alms from houses of those who study the Vedas and perform sacrifices, who are zealous in the discharge of their duties and virtuous in their conduct. Yajnavalkya says that a Brahmachari should beg food from Brahmanas who are blameless. But Visvarupa, a commentator, says that in times of distress or difficulty the student can beg from the Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra as well. Angirasa holds that in times of distress a Brahmachari should not beg cooked food from the Sudras, so as not to deprive them of their meagre rations.

Giving alms was one of the five duties (Pancha Maha Yagnyas) which every Brahman is bound to perform. Gifts of food called Vaisvadeva is one such. So and one who failed to give alms to the student the traveller and the ascetic

(Continued on page 9)

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and those in need was considered to have failed in the discharge of his duties to himself, his family and to God.

WHO SHOULD NOT BEG,

There were also rules intended to punish illegal begging. Parasara, another law-giver, stated that the king should fine that village where persons of the higher classes wander about begging though they are not like Brahmacharis (students) devoted to the study of the Vedas. Brahmins who neither study nor teach the Vedas, nor keep the sacred fire become equal to Sudras. The king shall punish that village where Brahmins are unobservant of their sacred duties and ignorant of the Vedas, and subsist by begging. For it feeds robbers.—Manu.

Those kingdoms where ignorant men eat the food of the learned will be visited by draught or some other great evil befall them.—Vashista. These rules bear ample testimony to the fact that indiscriminate begging even by Brahmins was punished. There were also other restrictions. During the Mahabharata times no one who was not a student can beg in the Kingdom of Kekaya. So also a student who had finished his studies should not beg. If he begged it was considered a transgression of his (dharma) duty and he had to make amends for it by penance.

Begging was not considered a humiliation. Manu, Bhudhyana and Yajnavalkya state that food obtained by begging was supposed to be pure.

A Brahmachari who subsisted on food obtained by begging was supposed to be observing a fast.

Thus begging in ancient days was not resorted to indiscriminately by the destitute and those unable to earn a living. In fact, the destitute and those unable to earn a living did not exist in those spacious days. Begging by students devoted to Vedic studies was considered respectable. In fact, begging was considered to be discipline and legitimate duties enjoined on a student by our Sastras. There was absolutely no stigma attached to begging. But the state of affairs did not continue long, as the social and political changes disturbed the old order of things.

In the medieval times the prosperous and pious merchants took delight in the distribution of food to the needy, the orphan, and the beggar. In the Buddhist times, however, mendicancy, beggary and undue asceticism were regarded as social evils. This appears from the trends of the conversation between Buddha and Ajathasathru. The monastic order under Buddhism was perhaps the first attempt at organizing begging on a rational basis. Under the Mauryan polity

something corresponding to the modern welfare state was attempted. Kautilya, the great political philosopher and statesman, laid down in his Arthashastra that the king should make arrangements for the care and maintenance of the aged, infirm, the afflicted, and the destitute women, both pregnant and nursing, and the destitute children.

The Mauryan state therefore spent a large amount of its revenue on its social obligations to the under-privileged in the state. In fact we find all kinds of relief work subsidised by Government as in a modern state. King Harsha on the celebration of the Buddha Jayanthi day at Prayag spent in charity large sums of money in giving alms to hundreds and thousands of people who had gathered there. In addition to feeding them he gave costly presents and clothes. This continued, it is said, for several months, if the chroniclers are to be believed. The famous Chinese Traveller, Hiuen Tsang, was present in the arena on a plain of five miles radius, where over half a million people had assembled to receive the charitable offerings of King Harsha. Every one in need of help received food of the richest kind, clothes, money and treasures in an abundant measure. Thousands of Buddhists in particular were given costly clothes, hundred pieces of gold each, besides pearls, cotton garments, flowers, perfumes, drink, meat, etc. Others such as the Brahmins were given gifts of all kinds for twenty days. During the next ten days seekers of alms from distant countries were sumptuously fed and lastly the poor, the orphans and the destitutes were fed for full one month. There is nothing strange therefore as the chroniclers say that this distribution of charity by King Harsha resulted in the depletion of the five years accumulated revenue of the state as a whole. When the treasury became empty, King Harsha gave away the jewels which were his personal property as well as his royal robes. When these were exhausted and there was nothing more to be given, he begged his sister, Rajyashri, a second-hand garment for worshipping Buddha. This open handed liberality and charity of King Harsha was equally shared and emulated by the well-to-do subjects in his state.

From the above mentioned facts, it is clear that there was great deal of distress and poverty in the country. Among those who received charity at the hands of King Harsha, a large number were probably Buddhist monks, and an equal number belonged to other communities. The political, social and economic changes might have been responsible for the presence of large number of destitute people in the country.

We shall now see what the Great Tamil poet, Thiruvalluvar, has to say on begging. His work, the famous Thirukkural, which enshrines the most cherished ideals of

the Tamils, contains the observation of the poet based on the prevailing conditions of the times and the general attitude of the people on beggary. It is obvious that in those spacious days begging in conformity with the traditional rules was not considered a social evil but as very respectable. The Hindu ideal of life pertaining to its four stages in the life of the individual, such as the student, the householder, the wanderer and the ascetic, enjoined on every Hindu the sacred duty of giving alms not only to the abovementioned four categories of people but also to the forsaken, the poor and the dead. It was enjoined on every individual to be hospitable to every guest, as charity will never run to waste, but would yield a very rich dividend. Society in those days looked upon a man rolling in wealth but was inhospitable and of an uncharitable disposition as anti-social. Speaking about begging Thiruvalluvar exalts the giving of alms rather than of receiving of alms. He says even a man in a low position should not say "I have nothing to give" but give whatever he can out of his little possessions. The remedy for putting an end to the disagreeable sight of beggars is to give them alms, and see their pleasing and satisfied looks, on receipt of charity. He admonishes the rich who enjoy the good things of life without sharing them

with others. "The action of such rich people is no better than that of joyless begging."

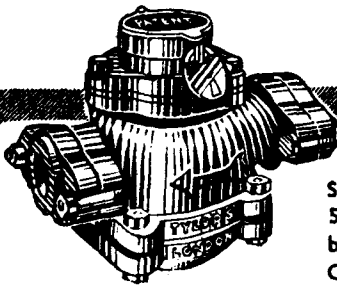
THE EVILS OF POVERTY

The poet Thiruvalluvar describes the evils of poverty very graphically. Poverty deprives one of both the present and the future happiness. It destroys one's ancient decent character and social standing. It brings in its train untold miseries. Though one may be full of wisdom, learning and culture his advice and words will go unheeded because of his poverty. This is borne out by the Tamil couplet which says that a wife will have no use for her husband without wealth, and even his mother who gave him birth will not want him. The acute pain and suffering that a poverty stricken person undergoes is described by Thiruvalluvar as follows: "One may sleep in the midst of fire, but never in the midst of poverty. However, he lays down certain rules which may be noticed. One must beg only of people who are likely to give and if they refuse, the blame would not be that of the beggar but of the person who refuses. Begging may be pleasant when a man gets what he wants

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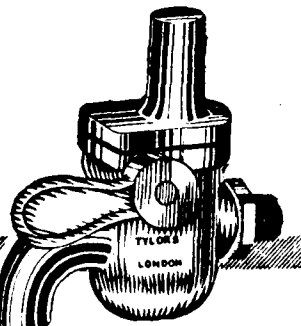


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without disappointment or grief. For to receive alms, from liberal minded persons who understand their duty to society, is pleasant. Here is another revealing statement of the poet.

"Evils of begging will disappear when people do not refuse to give but give with kindness and courtesy. Thiruvalluvar feels that the absence of beggars and the discontinuance of the habit of giving alms to the poor will make this world insipid a very disturbing statement indeed. He compares such beggarless society to a wooden doll which is lifeless and emotionless. In fact he, believes that it is necessary to have beggars so that the givers may be glorified. He advises the beggar not to get angry when alms are refused. At the same time, he expatiates on the evils of begging. He advises people not to beg even from those excellent persons who give alms readily and cheerfully without refusing. He even goes to the length of cursing the Creator,

"If he has decreed that men should resort to begging for their livelihood let Him also go a begging and perish." The poet feels that the evils of poverty can be remedied not by begging, but by doing honest labour and earning enough to maintain oneself. The poor gruel which a man takes after working hard for it, will be sweet as the Divine nectar. "It is putting the tongue to wrong use to beg water even for a cow." Ultimately he advises those who must beg, to beg from those who would not refuse.

Thiruvalluvar's ideas on begging though seemingly

contradictory, are not really so. He sees no evil or degradation if a student, or an ascetic begs. For both of them were useful members of the society. He condemns begging by able-bodied idlers and hard-hearted householders who refuse alms. The former has degraded begging and the latter failed in the discharge of his duties. He is very bitter about these two classes of people.

Besides the community as a whole was never different to the needs of the student, the religious preacher, the ascetic, the wandering pilgrim, the diseased beggar. Rulers and merchants, Zamindars and landlords established rest-houses, feeding houses, endowed temples with lands, the revenue from which was utilized for feeding the abovementioned categories of beggars. These benefactions of the enlightened rich are scattered over the length and breadth of the country even in the remotest villages. But to-day the rest-houses and other buildings have become the private property of the anti-social individuals, and the endowments have been eaten up by those who were entrusted with their administration. Our countrymen who have had the benefits of English education have been responsible for diverting the income from charitable endowments for other secular purposes. These are several other causes such as the growth of population, industrialization, failure of monsoon, unemployment and underemployment have swelled the ranks of beggars as never before in the history of this country.

Britain's Road Safety Drive

An Englishman having experience of road safety methods in the Old Country, who is now attached of road safety Safety Division of the Commonwealth Department of Transport in Australia, here gives some general impressions regarding the British scene.

Road traffic accidents are, of course, not peculiar to Australia. Every country in the world has this problem to face. So let us review what is being done to combat this drain on England's already insufficient man-power.

The loss to England's heroic export drive caused by death and injury on her roads, has been so severe that the Government has set aside the vast sum annually of a half a million pounds, to be spent in an endeavour to educate the British public in good road conduct.

How is this money spent? In the main, it is devoted

to general road safety propaganda (films, exhibitions, posters and other media of a nature likely to capture public interest), with the underlying idea of encouraging local authorities throughout the United Kingdom to take an active interest in road education. The Government foots the bill for any such activities to the extent of 50 per cent. The propaganda outlined above is important, but, since it has been decided that road conduct of the right kind is fundamentally a matter of youthful education, by far the greater amount of activity is directed towards children of school age. Children of all school ages are therefore catered for, from kindergarten to public school. The manner in which the subject is treated along this human scale has, obviously to be varied in accordance with age groups and circumstances. For the infants, there are posters portraying Teddyp Bears, and other popular animal figures, crossing the road correctly or otherwise; there are picture books with

(Continued on page 12)

little stories and rhymes of an appealing nature; and there are films. For the children in Primary Schools, the instruction becomes more advanced. In addition to films and posters, there are poster competitions and games, together with play-round instruction. The last is always popular and is very helpful. Lines are chalked to represent street kerbs, and children on tricycles and kiddiecars ride around on the road (the space between the chalked lines), while teachers act as traffic policemen. The riders are taught to give proper hand signals and to obey police signals, and the pedestrian children (each child is by turns driver and pedestrian) are taught the proper "kerb drill."

All this is treated as great fun by the youngsters: but the good seed is nevertheless, being quietly and efficaciously sown. What a child learns while at play will stick, and if the instruction is continued by progressive stages, the child will become road-minded as by a natural development of character.

Scholars from Post-Primary and Secondary schools must be approached in yet a different manner, again. In many such schools there are Pupils' Courts; and here any scholar who has been reported by police, teachers or schoolmates, for bad road conduct, is tried by his or her peers. Sentence can be as severe as, for example, prohibiting the culprit from riding a cycle to school; or it may be, the parents are written to and asked to make a point of escorting their child to and from school as his road conduct is a source of danger not merely to himself, but to others. In short, the offender is pilloried by his own shame—one of the most effective punishments for youthful misdoers. Then, there are films, posters, and essay competitions, periodic checks on bicycles and cycling proficiency tests. Some education authorities indeed will not permit children to ride bicycles to school unless they have passed a proficiency test.

When we come to the young man of Public Schools, the approach makes its appeal to the budding sense of adult responsibility. A talk or a short lecture is followed by a visit to a Road Safety Exhibition. These exhibitions are interesting and efficient. The fact that almost every exhibit is animated greatly assists in holding the interest of pupils. Apart from "cut-away" models of motor cars and motor cycles—the purpose of which is to instil into youthful minds an appreciation of the thought and skill which is embodied in the modern vehicle; and always with the safety angle to the fore—there are Miles Motor Trainers and other training models for giving the students a rudimentary grasp of the art of driving and testing reaction. In addition there are complementary films.

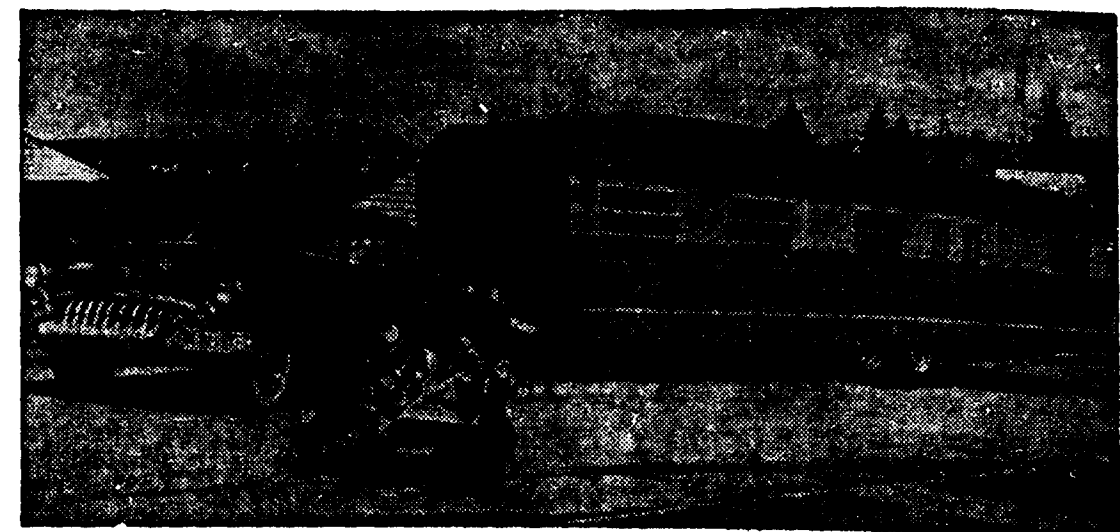
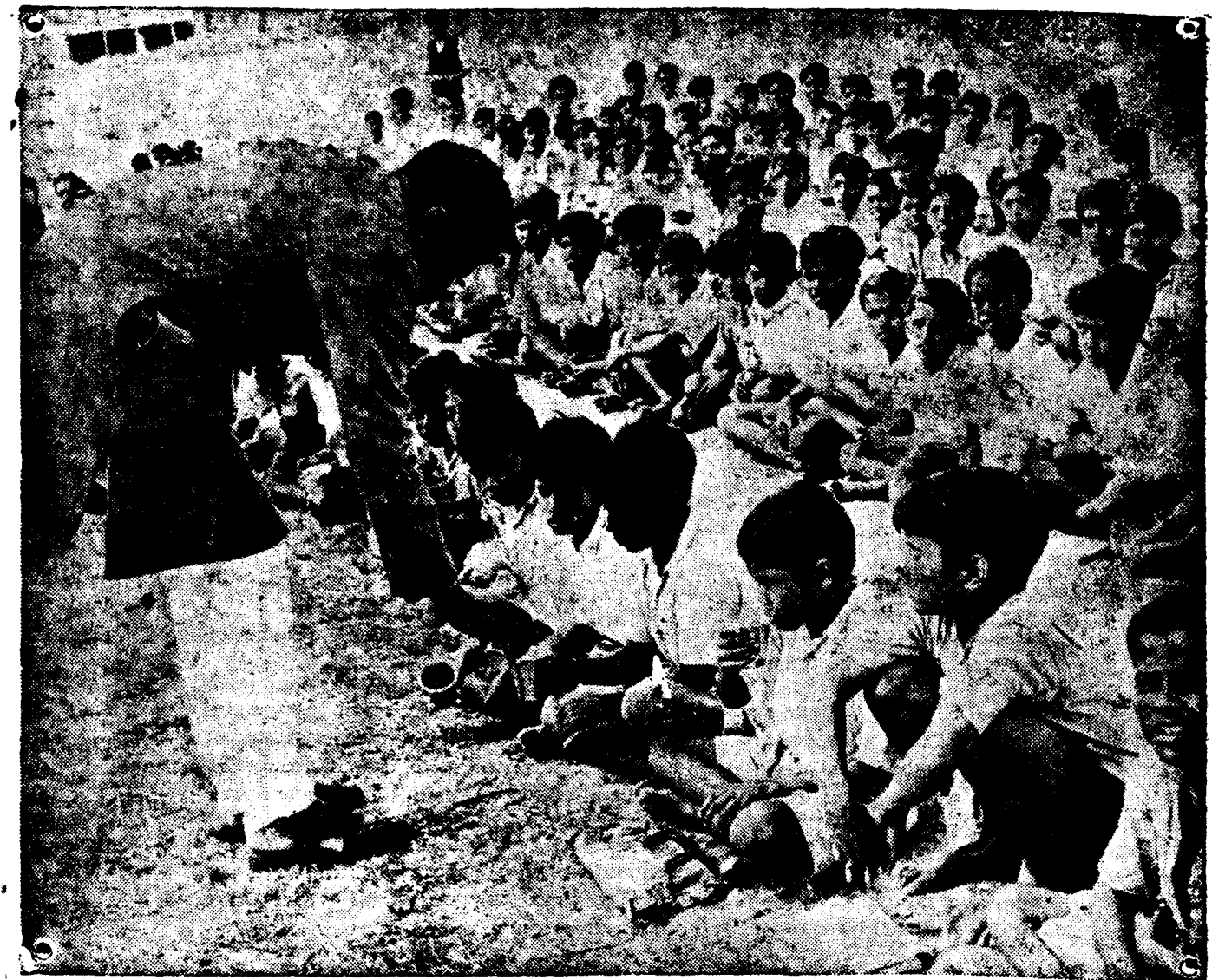
Some schools—notably Harrow—have gone to the extent of forming clubs, the object being to give the boys an elementary instruction into the working of a motor vehicle.

so that, when they become drivers they will know what happens when they operate the clutch, shift gears, or manipulate any other of the controls on their car. This knowledge gives them also some idea of what a vehicle is capable of doing.

This concentration of road safety propaganda—direct and indirect—upon children, is part of a long term policy. The difficult of changing the confirmed bad habits is apparent, if, however, the instruction of the child begins early enough and is continued throughout the school career the average child will all most inevitably respond on right lines.

Almost every municipality in the United Kingdom has a Road Safety Committee, and many prominent citizens have shown their interest in this important subject by personal appearances, speeches and the like. The big cinema organisations make their particular contribution by including Road Safety films in their programmes, from time to time. The Police stage demonstrations, and give lectures and talks. Road Safety Weeks are being held, somewhere or other, without intermission. For rural areas, mobile exhibition vans are provided. These tour the countryside and park at a convenient spot at a village, such as school-yards, outside public houses, and so on: thus taking the message of road safety to the people, instead of asking them to come and get it. Exhibitions of one kind and another are set up in suitable halls in towns and cities, and the public is admitted without charge. Film vans with daylight projection are parked at various vantage points. And there are innumerable other activities. In London itself, a permanent exhibition and cinema for road safety is housed in the West End.

To sum up: local government, police, and authority generally, all agree with the Government that the business of making our roads safe is a national one, and only be handled on a completely national basis.



11-7-23
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Nine Rules

Nine rules for a long life have been drawn up by doctors from seven nations who attended a "Longevity Congress" sometime ago at Vittel in France. Here they are:—

- 1— Everyone reaching the age of 50, even if they feel well should have their hearts examined by a specialist.
- 2— Everyone should be examined by a doctor six months after recovering from any serious illness, even if they feel perfectly well make sure the illness, has not left them with possible concealed ill-effects, such as cancer.
- 3— Have a good family doctor and have entire confidence in him, particularly if he has known you since your birth. His word should be accepted first and the "influence of state medicine should merely be a complement to the family doctor."
- 4— Mental happiness is one of the biggest factors in longevity. It has been found that generously inclined people live longer than other persons and that people with children and grand-children who are always trying to help their descendants tend to live longer than other persons.
- 5— If you have been used to working hard all your life up to the age of 50, try to continue to work in your later years. But make sure before hand that your occupation is suited to your capacity.
- 6— Don't rely on last-minute efforts to prolong your life. It is necessary to build the foundations of longevity when you are young.
- 7— Don't attach importance to stories claiming that you can live longer than other people if you have a "change of air."
- 8— Don't believe the old saying that because many members of your family have lived to a great age you also are certain to live to a great age.
- 9— It is worth while to pay attention to the way of living and thinking of certain Oriental peoples. The oriental ideas of seeking and longevity and happiness by contemplating of nature in solitude and by achieving serenity of outlook warrant close investigation by Western peoples.

FOR A LONG LIFE