

*Shows and prizes.* Kannapuram is situated in the heart of Kangayam tract surrounded by fertile breeding centres. The Chitra Pournami cattle fair at Kannapuram being the first annual fair, the pick of Kangayam cattle are brought in large numbers for sale. Only the animals remaining unsold are taken to the Tirupur Show which generally takes place a month after. Cattle Shows to be of any value to the country should be in the centre of cattle breeding areas like Kannapuram and the ryots and breeders that attend the show should be stimulated to choose better stud bulls and workers and to know what sort of animal is the best.

In conclusion I urge that the pressing need of the country towards the improvement of cattle is increased facilities for proper rearing and housing of cattle and supplying of pedigree bulls and extension of private grazing grounds.

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**\*“The Indian Village—How to improve it.”**

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The problem of a country is the problem of its villages. Tell me how your villages are, and I will tell you how your country is. The prosperity of the village is the prosperity of the country. John Bright says, the nation lives in the cottage.

The few educated people with their borrowed but ill-suited fashions and noise on the platform and in the press, are not the whole nation. They are not solely the leaders that, they think, they are. It is the villager that mostly shapes the destinies of the nation. It is he that represents the true civilisation, the true character of the nation and not the English educated man who neither retains all that is best in the civilisation of his own country nor has assimilated what is best in the civilisation of the west. The latter has been talking much of late years about the need

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\* Paper read by Mr. Balakrishna Murthi, (Diplomaed in Agriculture) on 11th July 1915, before the College Day and Conference.

of raising the village, but what has been done? Very little indeed. He cannot, therefore, be relied upon for that steady co-operation which is necessary for the great work of improving the village. Far from being the man to educate the villager he has himself to develop many of those virtues which have all along characterised the village society, its communal life, its resolute purpose of mind, its naturalness of life. The village has all the elements of progress and, if only they are rightly understood and built upon, immense progress is possible there. Let us first understand the characteristics of village society.

The Indian village, as any other village, is conservative. Even the English villager, who is far better informed than the Indian villager, still retains much of the past. The Indian village of to-day is not very different from the village of the far-off to-day. The new forces at work in the towns, the new ideas which are finding their way into the village, have not been able to change the fabric of its society. The place is very small. The doings of every individual are in the notice of all. Nothing that is exciting, breaks the monotony of its life. Their occupations are peaceful and simple. There are no rewards of life which competition bestows. There is thus no clash of interests. They are cut off from the rest of the world. The level of their general knowledge outside their bounds is perhaps low. There are in their life none of the artificialities and uncomfortable, unclimatic, unnecessary conventionalities which degenerate and devitalize what are called the polite circles in towns and cities. "God has made the village, and man the town" applies with as much truth to society as it does to natural aspect. There is a dearth of those adjuncts to comfort and culture, as medical aid and higher education which can be had only in towns. The great inventions of applied science which are the handmaids of human progress and comfort, are clean outside the range of villagers' knowledge. The units of village society are sympathetic, they cannot help

being so. Theirs are the blessings of communal life. Their concentrated action is an example to those who would educate them. Even in the town the masses have that great virtue. That is illustrated in the way in which they collect money for the celebration of the great festivals in honour of their gods and goddesses. They raise the money, every pie of it, from among themselves. One man to command, and the rest to obey; the cricket field has not a better discipline to show than the harmonious united action of the villagers on festive and solemn occasions. The villager who has knowledge in any degree higher than the average villager is looked upon with respect. The shastry vadhyar who has read more than the rest is the leader of the village. He is their judge, philosopher, guide and all. These are among the more conspicuous features of village life in India.

It is these that have maintained so long the vitality of the village commonwealth. If the village is self-centred, complete in itself, it is due to those characteristics. It is a unit of administration and that is due again to the same. The villager who has not come under urban influences, takes his disputes to his head,—his uncrowned prince, his jurist, his legislator and all.

These must be borne in mind in planning any scheme for the improvement of a village. No reform can be a success there which is not based on what is peculiarly its own. No attempt should be made to supplant anything already existing. All that is to be done there, is to make a new thing understandable to the leader. Co-operation is manifest in their agricultural operations—ploughing, sowing, after cultivation, irrigation and threshing. It is there in a more genuine and perfect form than in towns.

One of the rules of their society is, that, if there is a death in a house, nobody in the street should eat till the corpse is disposed of. They co-operate in combating a common evil. If co-operative credit societies do not succeed there where else can

they? There is the greatest need for them and it will be seen that the only practical amelioration or salvation of the indebted peasant lies in his obtaining the necessary financial aid. There is no need to tell them of the disabilities they are labouring under in their agricultural operations for want of cheap credit. If the societies are not the success they ought to be, there must be something wrong with the workers and not with those who need the societies most. Writing on agricultural co-operative societies and banks Mr. D. E. Wacha, the great Indian Economist observed:

“It is superfluous to remind careful students of economic that what are generally known as credit co-operative societies are of a variety of character and for a variety of purposes. Among these are no doubt credit societies for the benefit of assisting the ordinary agriculturist in obtaining seeds and manure, ploughs and other agricultural implements for carrying on agricultural operations. But another and more important object is the relief of agricultural indebtedness which alone is at the root of a great deal of misery and distress from year to year among the peasantry. It should however be understood that, broadly speaking, the economic conditions prevailing in an European or American peasantry greatly differ from those current in India. Even in the country itself the normal conditions discernible in each province vary. In the circumstances, India for purposes of Agricultural Relief, is a continent distinct and apart by itself and needs an organisation, which can be practically conducted on lines in harmony with the economic condition as well as the feelings and sentiments of the people of each province. The mamul or usage should be freely borne in mind, for in engrafting on these provinces a foreign system of relief for indebtedness, it is highly essential to proceed on these lines of least resistance at any rate until the exotic comes to be familiarised and its benefits concretely felt and assured.”

It must be remembered, that the villager has little imagination to appeal to. There must be something concrete before his eyes. Some people must start a co-operative bank in a village and run it and the people must actually have the benefit of the bank. Local capital may then be made to flow into the enterprise they have seen the good of. If one village has done that, the neighbouring villages will follow suit. It is no good concealing the fact, that one village copies another village with greater readiness than it does the people from the towns whom they look upon as almost another species. A bank may be started with government money, the people made to handle it under official guidance and safeguards. Nothing will please the village leader better than that trust. He will be managing and disbursing government money, his Government trusts him, his neighbours thank him. He will be furnishing accounts as the Kurnam does for the revenue he collects. Official control should of course not mean official delays as are found in granting loans under Agriculturists' Loans Act etc. The officer is there only to see that the money is safe and to hear the complaints of the people. If the village head represents the House of Lords, the ryots are the Commons, each controlling the other, the power of the latter consisting in reporting all irregularities to the officer. When the people have seen that the bank is a blessing to the borrower and the lender alike, the Government may, if necessary, withdraw their money, and the local capital will certainly take its place. It is then that the other objects of co-operative credit societies can be thought of. The numerous mushroom Provident Funds and their disappearance, have made the villager less credulous and more wary. The lost ground can be recovered only by those methods which make them feel that they are the prime factor of their own advancement and that they have the protection, direct and immediate and easy, of the Government. The Government who have left many Local Boards under non-official control, may not find it difficult to show that much trust in the village leader

In effecting improvements in Agriculture, the same is the road to success. Demonstrate. That alone, would not, however, do. The improved implements of agriculture and water lifts may be demonstrated. But there seems to be an impression, that they quickly go out of order, and that, where they do, it is beyond the skill of the village mechanic to put them right. Where is the good of demonstrating unless they turn out better work than the old things? Add to this the vast difference in price between the primitive and the improved implements. To induce the ryot to give them a trial, it is necessary that the period of their serviceableness must be made clear to them. The manures stand in the same difficulty. They are too costly to induce the ryot who is content with the manures he gets cheap or for nothing at all. They measure the usefulness of a thing more by what it costs them than by the savings it may bring them in the long run. They may be shown the superior produce of scientific manure and superior seeds. But their illiteracy makes them difficult of understanding the arithmetic needed for comparing the commercial values of things. Matters are not, however, more encouraging with the educated classes. They invest their money in lands and banking. They think it the safest and the best investment, and do not trouble themselves about new things. Such of them as have large lands, are mostly content with the primitive plough and manures. Some are known to have induced their ryots to use them. However, even those who speak of the advantages of the scientific methods of agriculture, do not seek to profit by them themselves so long as things do not promise to change for the better and so long as the demonstrations are not likely to be productive of any or proportionate good. A Zamindar here, a proprietor there, may buy a plough of the improved type. There it ends. It never goes into the fields, and if turns the soil, it is only to make a show and no use of it. This clearly indicates what the agricultural associations have done till now.

If scientific agriculture is to make any progress in India, there is a demonstration of a different kind. An acre or two must be secured in the midst of the holdings of the ryots by those who have the real and sincere object of improving the condition of the Indian ryot, and the old and the new methods and things must be shown there, and their results proved, by juxta position. The ryot is always stuck in his business and cannot find it convenient to go a mile or two to see a model farm. And what even if he goes and sees superior things and superior results? The old difficulty is still there,—he cannot afford the initial expenses, and when he can, he fights shy of what appears to him, a needless bother of a new thing. Not so when the new things are working in their midst, day after day and year after year. They move together, the conscious teacher and the unconscious pupil, and it can be shown that the results of the improved methods and things are commensurate with the outlay. This is the right sort of demonstration now advocated and carried on by the Agricultural Department but it is impossible for the government to undertake such work in each and every village. The Agricultural Department expects the kind co-operation of the rich landlords in this gigantic work of uplifting the present condition of the rural classes.

There is another way of gaining a fairly good ground for scientific agriculture. It is by opening schools for farmers' children alone. That school should be located in the fields; agreeably to the saying of professor Wrightson "agriculture is to be learnt in the field and the fold but not in the lecture room and the laboratory hall," and it should have a small farm large enough to demonstrate the advantages of everything relating to scientific agriculture. And the arithmetic that the students learn, should enable them to solve the questions of agricultural reform from a commercial point of view. The hours must not clash with the labour hours and lessons should be simple concrete and rigidly practical. It is enough if one generation is trained. When the boys grow to wield an improved plough, certainly that will be the plough the merits of which they have seen for years. Once the new system gains ground in the heart of their holdings, it will be copied by the

neighbouring farms and villages. If one generation is in for the new system, it is sure to run through posterity. Such schools may be opened and worked sufficiently long only in select centres, in the middle of a cluster of villages or at least some of the present rural schools may be modified and improved to meet this end. In the space of ten years those schools will have done the needful, and they may be even removed, just as the stove may be removed in an oil engine when the vaporiser is heated. The value of that rural education cannot be too much exaggerated.

Again, everything must be done to encourage the farmer, to keep large flocks of sheep wherever possible and poultry, the flocks for manure and poultry for the market. It is seldom, if ever, that one sees a shepherd with a flock numbering a thousand.

What with large flocks for manure the poultry for the market and cattle for the plough and the dairy, all for the improved kind of business, what with easy credit at the doors of the ryots, it may be expected that there will be a village of well-to-do farmers, intelligent enough to be amenable to industrial plans, the industries having reference only to the produce of the village, rice mills, huskgrinders, dairies, oil-mills, sugar and jute mills, etc. Cottage industries to provide work when outdoor work is not possible owing to stress of weather or during slack season must be initiated. Caste guilds must be started if the village is in a state not fit for cosmopolitan association. That is the ideal village, to which a few agricultural schools and credit banks will hasten things in a decade or two. A village with its enterprising, thrifty, intelligent and prosperous farmers need be no chimerical vision. Several families in the Godavari and Krishna deltas already belong to such ideal villages and one village of that kind will give birth to another and yet another, till the whole district is raised; and that is a result which will justify any expensive schemes, for, it goes without saying that the total prosperity of any country depends primarily on the agriculturist.

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