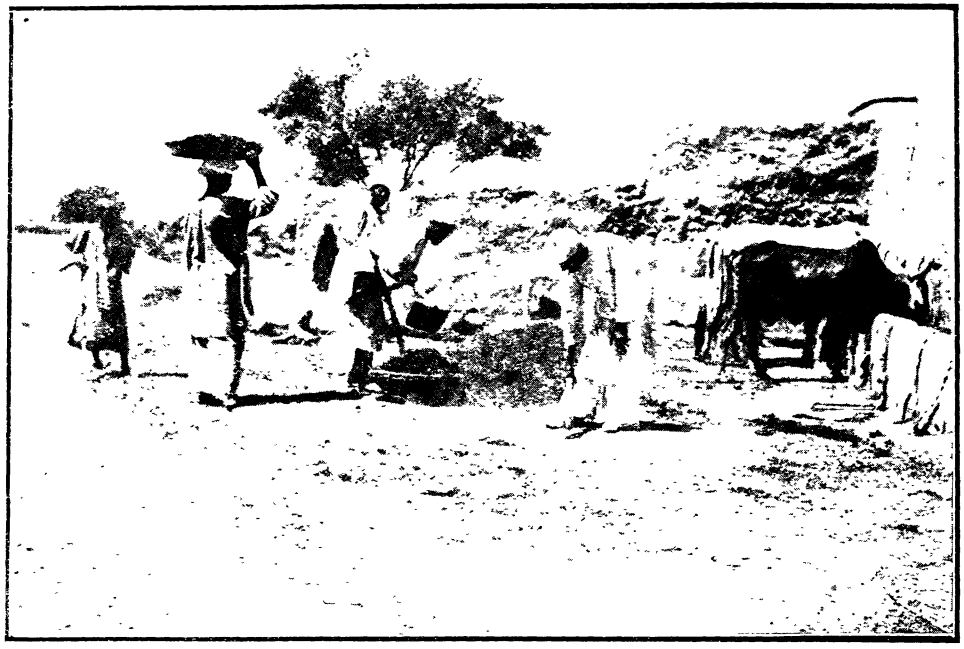
SOCRATES IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE



THE EXAMPLE OF SOCRATES

SOCRATES
IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY

LORD IRWIN

SOMETIME VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA

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To the Villagers
of the
Gurgaon District,
among whom I and my family have spent,
at work and at play, many
very happy years

FOREWORD

Socrates in an Indian Village represents, I believe, the actual record of conversations between the author and some of the Gurgaon villagers with whom he has been so intimately connected for several years past. I have read the book with admiration, and I can wish nothing better for India than that what has come to be known as 'the Gurgaon Experiment' may prove an unqualified success.

The book is lucidly and forcefully written, and lets the daylight into many a dark corner of village life. The truth of Mr Brayne's indictment is convincing, as also is the logic of his argument, and I hope that those to whom the book is primarily addressed—the villagers of Gurgaon—will be equally open to persuasion. But we must not forget Lowes Dickinson's immortal John Chinaman, who demonstrates so wittily and effectively that what an Englishman calls white a Chinaman would call black, and that neither is obviously right or wrong. Progress, therefore, is bound to be slow, and our object must be to ensure that it is on right lines, and that a sure foundation is being laid, so that the people will come to realize that the changes are really for their own advantage, and will carry on the work when the enthusiastic initiators of it have gone.

I call to mind that Socrates was put to death by his contemporaries because he pointed out to them too plainly and too often that they were wrong and he was right. I have no such fears for Mr Brayne; for both he and his wife have not confined their energies to didactics, but have given very ample practical demonstrations that what they teach is within the reach of

the ordinary villager. I am glad to see that already in other parts of India their example is being followed, in some places by the landlords themselves, in others by co-operative societies or other agencies. I am convinced that once we can persuade the inhabitants of agricultural India that the key to a great increase in their prosperity and happiness lies in their own hands, we shall have taken a very big step forward in the reconstruction of Indian life.

Mr Brayne's book gives a clear and much-wanted lead in this direction, and I recommend it with confidence to all those who have at heart the interest of the Indian ryot.

IRWIN

21 January 1929

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SOCRATES is a very rude old man, and it is only the obvious sincerity of his motives and the obvious truth of the blunt and crude remarks that he makes that prevent the villagers from at least turning him out of their villages, if not abusing and assaulting the old man, in spite of his grey hairs and venerable appearance.

We all want a Socrates and his gad-fly to stir us up and tell us the real truth. We are caked with hypocrisy, like the village child with dirt, and we conceal our faults and our inconsistencies with soft speech and insincerity, just as the villager hides the dirt and disease of his children with jewellery.

Socrates won't stand this; he calls a spade a spade, and is determined to improve the villages he visits, and he does improve them too. Look at the pits, almost universal now; look at the latrine arrangements, already begun in quite a number of villages; look at the marriage registers, also almost universal; look at the reduction of jewellery and ear-rings; look at the bright Boy Scouts; look at the girls reading at the boys' schools; the vaccination; the inoculation; look at the Persian wheels; the iron ploughs, the 8-A wheat seed, the new sugar-canes, the thousand banks and the twenty-five lakhs of capital in them, the Palwal Show, the chaupāis,[1] the dramas, the lantern lectures, the rural school, the domestic school, the Hissar bulls, the John Hall, the ladies' garden, the women's institute, the children's games, the mixed tennis club. There is much more than this, too much to repeat here. But, above all, the district has been woken up and is ready

[1] Village glee parties.

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[1] Village glee parties.

to listen, ready to experiment, and ready to improve itself.

Socrates is often an awful bore, his conversation is very plain, and he is always repeating himself. He can't help that, however. The remedies for the evils he finds are extremely simple, but they have to be dinned in a dozen times, and from several different points of view, before anyone will take any notice; and sometimes the only way of arousing the village is to be startlingly rude or extremely vulgar. The villager, however, though he often has a quick temper, has a very soft heart, and soon forgives the liberties taken by his old friend.

There is no argument in this book that has not been used a hundred times in village talks and lectures.

The whole object of Socrates is to make the villagers think. The world is changing, and customs which may have been good, or at least harmless once, are now mischievous and destructive. We must test all our customs and habits, and see whether in modern conditions they tend to improve our health, our comfort, our well-being and the out-turn of our fields. Keep the good customs by all means and stick to them at all costs, but the bad ones must be rooted out and such new ways learnt as will do us most good. If Socrates has succeeded in doing this he will not have wasted his time, and the villagers will not regret the hard words he has used to them.

F. L. B.

June 1928

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1. FOUR THINGS

SOCRATES went into a village in the Gurgaon District and, meeting several people, after Rām, Rām,[1] he asked them who they were. They replied, 'We are zamindārs.'[2]

Socrates looked around him and saw nothing but dirt and poverty—it was a village in the unirrigated part of the district, where crops often fail—so he started his usual questions.

SOCRATES: A zamindār is a man who makes profit out of the land, isn't he?

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: You are rich, then?

VILLAGER: Certainly not. What a foolish question, old man! (*The villagers had not recognized the sage.*)

SOCRATES: Then perhaps you were not quite accurate when you said you were zamindārs just now.

VILLAGER (*abashed and recognizing Socrates*): Pardon us, O Socrates; we were certainly wrong when we foolishly described ourselves as zamindārs.

The villagers began to be more cautious in their answers as Socrates went on with his questions.

SOCRATES: Then what are you, my friends?

VILLAGER: Well, anyway, we are human beings.

SOCRATES: Of course, you must be. By the way, human beings are vastly superior to animals, are they not?

VILLAGER: Why, yes; they surely are.

Just then Socrates saw a very dirty little boy playing with a nice clean little puppy.

SOCRATES: That boy is very dirty.

[1] The usual Hindu greeting. [2] Peasant farmers.

VILLAGER: Yes, sir; our children don't get much washing, I fear, hereabouts. We are poor people, and what with making dung-cakes and grinding corn and cooking food, and so on, there's little time left for the women to enjoy such luxuries as washing children.

SOCRATES: That puppy is very clean, isn't it?

VILLAGER: Yes; its mother licks it all over many times a day and keeps it spotlessly clean.

SOCRATES: But I thought you said human beings were superior to animals. Is a dirty child superior to a clean one?

VILLAGER: No, sir, pardon us; we seem again to have made a mistake. We are not superior to animals, in cleanliness at any rate.

SOCRATES: Well, anyway, human beings are literate and animals are not.

VILLAGER (*hastily*): Certainly, sir; human beings read and write and have many books.

SOCRATES: Can you read?

VILLAGER: No, sir; I cannot.

SOCRATES: And you?

SECOND VILLAGER: No.

SOCRATES: And you?

THIRD VILLAGER: No.

SOCRATES: But you said just now you were human beings, did you not?

VILLAGER: Sir, pardon us; we are cattle and very ignorant.

SOCRATES: But cows keep their calves clean and you don't keep your children clean, so how can you be cattle?

VILLAGER: What can we say? What shall we do?

SOCRATES: Well, it seems the first thing to do, if you aspire to be considered human beings, is to clean your villages and your children. To clean your village you must remove every bit of dirt daily to pits six

feet deep dug all round the village and you must wash your children daily.

VILLAGER: Sir, so will we do. We promise it.

Socrates then walked with the people and talked for some time, and they began to forget the earlier lesson. Suddenly on the path they saw a dung-beetle pushing a ball of dung towards its hole. Without thinking, one of the villagers laughed and said, 'Look, sir, at the dung-beetle. What a horrid creature it is! Why did God make such an inferior thing?'

SOCRATES: God is wonderful indeed! This beetle makes balls of dung and rolls them to his home and lives in a dark hole in the ground without light or air. Is it not so?

VILLAGER: Indeed, sir, so he does, the contemptible creature!

SOCRATES: Do your wives and daughters make dung-cakes and do they take their children with them when they go to make dung-cakes and do the children play with the dung and the dung-cakes?

VILLAGER: Dung-cakes are a necessity to our life for cooking milk and lighting the hookah.

SOCRATES: That was not my question. I may have something to say about that necessity later on, but I merely asked if your womenfolk and children made these cakes.

VILLAGER (*doubtfully*): Yes, sir; they do.

SOCRATES: Have you any windows in those mud houses you live in?

VILLAGER: We are afraid of thieves, sir.

SOCRATES: I did not ask that. If everyone had windows in his house, then you would all be the same as now and the number of thieves would not increase. Besides, I might say a lot about that subject, too, and why thieves come to your houses. But I merely asked whether you had windows to your houses.

VILLAGER: No, sir; we have not.

SOCRATES: Then your houses are dark?

VILLAGER: Yes, sir.

SOCRATES: Then you make cakes of dung and live in houses without air or light. In what way, then, are you superior to the dung-beetles?

VILLAGER: It seems, sir, that we are not.

SOCRATES: Then in order to be classed as human beings, besides cleaning your village and children, you must stop making dung-cakes and put windows into your houses.

VILLAGER: Yes, sir; we confess that your reasoning is true.

At that moment in their walk they found a bitch with six puppies, three dogs and three bitches, and she was cleaning and feeding all six.

One of the villagers threw a stick at the dog and shouted to it to drive it out of the way.

'Please don't do that,' said Socrates. 'That dog seems in some ways to be much superior to human beings.'

The villagers were rather annoyed at this, but, fearing the sage's tongue, they said nothing.

They then passed the village primary school, and about thirty little boys were at their lessons. Socrates seemed very puzzled, and after some time he said, 'Are there no female children in this village?'

VILLAGER: Of course there are; just as many as the boys.

SOCRATES: Then why are there not thirty little girls reading here?

VILLAGER (*laughing*): Of course not; girls don't learn to read and write. That's only for boys.

SOCRATES: Then you treat boys and girls differently?

VILLAGER: Yes, of course; who wants girls? It's boys that count.

SOCRATES: But they come from the same parents, don't they?

VILLAGER: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: And they will be the mothers of your grandchildren?

VILLAGER: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: And your own mothers were once little girls?

VILLAGER: Yes.

SOCRATES: The woman is responsible for the home?

VILLAGER: Yes.

SOCRATES: And the better the woman is the better will be her home, and the better and happier her husband and her children?

VILLAGER: Yes, certainly.

SOCRATES: Then surely you ought to treat your girls better than you do your boys, considering that their duties to their homes, their husbands and their children are so very important.

VILLAGER: Yes, sir; we must confess that you are again right and we wrong.

SOCRATES: Then that dog you despised so much just now was wiser than you, in that it treated all its children equally and did not prefer the dogs to the bitches?

VILLAGER: What shall we say, sir? We seem to be all wrong in our ways of life.

SOCRATES: Then we may conclude that if you wish to be numbered among human beings you must do four things, not three:

1. Clean the village by putting all the dirt and rubbish into deep pits, and clean the children.
2. Stop making dung-cakes.[1]

[1] Try the haybox for keeping milk hot. It is well known all over the world. Fill a hole in the ground or an earthen bin with bhoosa, bring your milk to the boil on a fire and then take the vessel off the fire and bury it in the bhoosa. Six hours afterwards it will still be too hot to drink.

3. Make windows in your houses.

4. Send the little girls to school as well as the boys.

VILLAGER: Yes, sir. It certainly seems as if we can hardly claim to be human beings till we do all this.

SOCRATES (*rising*): Well, I must go home; it is getting late. I have enjoyed my visit to the village. May I come again on my walks and talk when I am feeling lonely?

VILLAGER: Certainly do, sir; and I hope you will find human beings here when next you come.

SOCRATES: Good-bye. I hope so too.

VILLAGER: Good-bye, sir.

2. FEVER

WHEN Socrates next visited the village he found most of the people down with fever.

'This is terrible,' he said. 'I suppose there can be no remedy for fever and no way of warding it off, otherwise such wise people as you villagers would not be now lying helpless.'

An ex-soldier answered at once, 'In the army I never had fever. The authorities used to put a little kerosene on all the pools and puddles and ponds once a week, and used to make us take quinine twice a week and sleep in mosquito nets. If we forgot to use our nets we got severely punished.'

SOCRATES: Then why have you all got fever here? I suppose you all take the precautions this clever soldier has just told us about?

VILLAGERS: He never told us all this before and we don't believe it is true, as he doesn't do it in his own house.

SOCRATES: O fauji,[1] how false this must be! A sensible man like you must have got nets for all his

[1] Military or ex-military man.

family and made them take quinine regularly and put oil on the pools of stagnant water.

FAUJI : I brought several nets home from the army, but my wife made them into shirts, as no one used them.

SOCRATES : You don't mean to say that they disobeyed you and did not use the nets you brought! You must have given them strict orders and used one yourself and insisted on their using them too.

FAUJI : I did not always use mine and they never used theirs.

SOCRATES : Then your great reputation for maintaining discipline in the army is of no use in your home.

FAUJI : So it seems.

SOCRATES : And the army wasted its time teaching you how to avoid fever.

'Then, villagers!' said Socrates, 'you have never heard of quinine?'

VILLAGERS : Indeed, we have. The master teaches about it in the school and the zaildār[1] brought some pills and gave them to us and they were very useful.

SOCRATES : Then why don't you take it every day and cure yourselves?

VILLAGERS : There are no more pills.

SOCRATES : Quinine is very useful stuff, is it not?

VILLAGERS : Very.

SOCRATES : It is for sale in the bazaar, two miles away, I suppose?

VILLAGERS : Surely it is.

SOCRATES : Every day's fever means a loss of about a rupee at least?

VILLAGERS : Quite a rupee just now, at sowing and harvest times.

SOCRATES : Quinine is very expensive?

[1] Leading rural notable.

VILLAGERS: Oh dear, no! Five hundred pills for eight rupees.

SOCRATES: You go fairly regularly to the bazaar to buy salt and spices for cooking?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Quinine is just now far more valuable than spices?

VILLAGERS: Assuredly.

SOCRATES: You do not wait for the zaildār to come and distribute spices free?

VILLAGERS: No, of course not; we are not beggars.

SOCRATES: But you want quinine free?

VILLAGERS: The sarkār[1] supplies it.

SOCRATES: Apparently the sarkār did supply a few pills to show you the value of it. Does that mean that you must now waste your harvest and sowing times, and perhaps die for want of it, when a few pice will buy all you want?

VILLAGERS: Oh, sir, pardon us! We are very foolish. We will at once buy enough quinine to keep off fever for a year.

SOCRATES: But what about mosquito nets?

VILLAGERS: Sir, we are poor men and cannot afford these luxuries.

SOCRATES: I see you men have ear-rings in your ears and your children have bangles and anklets. Will those keep off fever?

VILLAGERS: No, certainly not.

SOCRATES: Wouldn't it, then, be wiser to buy mosquito nets instead of these trinkets?

VILLAGERS: Yes, sir, it would indeed.

SOCRATES: You love your children?

VILLAGERS: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: You would rather have a healthy child without trinkets than a sick one with trinkets?

[1] Government.

VILLAGERS : Yes.

SOCRATES : Then would not a mosquito net and a few pills of quinine be better than an ear-ring or a wristlet ?

VILLAGERS : Indeed, they would be.

SOCRATES : I hope you will do this, as it is very sad to see a whole village prostrated with fever and the children sickly and weak, when a little care and thought would put it all right.

VILLAGERS : We will do our best, O wise philosopher.

SOCRATES : Good-bye, my friends. I must go now.

VILLAGERS : Good-bye.

3. CASTE AND DEFILEMENT

SOCRATES was sitting, as usual, with the village elders, when a Chumār[1] came along and was rudely told to sit apart from the zamindārs.

SOCRATES : What has he done to deserve this treatment ?

VILLAGERS : He is a Chumār.

SOCRATES : Why should a Chumār sit apart from you ?

VILLAGERS : He is low-caste and unclean.

SOCRATES : If he touches you, you will be defiled ?

VILLAGERS : Yes, certainly.

SOCRATES : You were all born in this village ?

VILLAGERS : Why do you ask ? What are you aiming at ?

SOCRATES : Never mind what I am aiming at. I am an old man and my thoughts sometimes ramble.

VILLAGERS : Yes, we were all born here.

SOCRATES : When a child is to be born, you send for a wise woman ?

[1] Chumārs are a tribe of untouchables.

VILLAGERS: Of course. There is a dai[1] in this village.

SOCRATES: She is a zamindār's wife, I suppose!

VILLAGERS: Certainly not. This is no work for our women.

SOCRATES: Then who is she?

VILLAGERS: A Chuhri.[2]

SOCRATES: The dai, when she attends your wives, touches them?

VILLAGERS: Of course.

SOCRATES: And she is the first person to touch the new-born child and attend to it, and her finger is the first thing that goes into its mouth?

VILLAGERS: That is so.

SOCRATES: Then your wives and mothers and yourselves are all defiled from the moment of your birth. Where is your caste gone, O villagers?

Some of the villagers were very angry at this, but the more sensible among them admitted their stupid inconsistency and bowed their heads in shame.

SOCRATES: When you get a thorn in your hand and it swells up, what do you do?

VILLAGERS: We go to the doctor, if it will not get well without.

SOCRATES: The doctor, of course, is a Chuhra, the husband of the woman who attends your wives?

VILLAGERS: Certainly not, O Socrates; your suggestions are unworthy of you. The doctor is a high-caste college gentleman.

SOCRATES: Whom do you call when your cow is going to calve?

VILLAGERS: A sensible zamindār who understands these things.

SOCRATES: Child-bearing is a difficult and painful thing for a woman and may be dangerous?

[1] Midwife. [2] Chuhras, another tribe of untouchables.

VILLAGERS: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: You have not much affection for your wives and don't care much whether they and their babies live or die?

VILLAGERS: Our wives cost us much money and we want children very much and love them dearly. We have no desire to see our wives or children die.

SOCRATES: Then when your hand hurts you, you get a doctor; when your cow calves, you get a clever zamindār; but when your wife is in trouble, you get the dirtiest and lowest-caste woman in the village?

VILLAGERS: Sir, pardon us. We are very ignorant.

SOCRATES: Hadn't you better send some of your own women to the Health Centre at Gurgaon and get them trained, so that your wives may be attended by clean, clever, trained women of their own sort and not by dirty, untrained, ignorant women of the very lowest caste available?

VILLAGERS: Sir, we will do so at once. We are ashamed of our cruelty and carelessness.

SOCRATES: But as for this question of defilement, filth and dirt defile, do they not?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: What do you do with the filth and rubbish of the village?

VILLAGERS: The sweepers throw it in heaps round the village.

SOCRATES: And often inside it too?

VILLAGERS: Yes; these people are idle and will not take it away.

SOCRATES: Where do your people go to visit nature in the early morning?

VILLAGERS: In the fields near by.

SOCRATES: And sometimes in and around the village and on the roads?

VILLAGERS: Yes, unfortunately; people are often too lazy to go farther, and you cannot expect little children to go far.

SOCRATES: All this stuff dries in the sun?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And when the wind blows, it rises into the air?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: When the cattle go out in the morning and come home in the evening, their trampling fills the air with dust?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: When it rains, it is washed into the pond where the cattle drink and where you wash and sometimes drink too?

VILLAGERS: Yes and we often throw rubbish into the ponds too.

SOCRATES: And you bring it in on your shoes sometimes?

VILLAGERS: Yes, we fear so. Even that happens sometimes.

SOCRATES: When your wives are grinding the corn, this dust will fall on the flour?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And when your wives are cooking it will fall on the food?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And it falls into the wells and on to the water as it is brought from the wells?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then you are always eating a certain amount of village filth and sweepings?

VILLAGERS: So it seems.

SOCRATES: And you drink it in the water?

VILLAGERS: Apparently.

SOCRATES: And breathe it in with the air?

FETCHING WATER FROM THE WELL

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then you are defiled every day of your lives by what you eat, drink and breathe. Why bother about Chumārs? Would it not be better, before boasting about your caste and holding the Chumār as untouchable, to dig deep pits for all the manure and filth and sweepings, and insist on everyone—men, women and children—using these pits as their latrines, instead of making the whole village filthy and yourselves defiled by your present lazy, careless and filthy habits?

VILLAGERS: We will try and do something, but it is very hard to uproot the customs of ages.

4. JEWELLERY AND THE PROPER POSITION OF WOMEN

THE village elders were all sitting round talking to Socrates when two women passed, one carrying water and the other a bundle of cattle fodder. They were both covered with ornaments, of which some were of silver, and some were of gold.

'Friends,' said the sage, 'I should like to discuss the question of jewellery with you. My mind seems confused and I can make neither head nor tail of the matter.'

'What is your difficulty, Socrates?' asked some of the villagers.

'Why do your womenfolk wear jewellery?' asked Socrates.

'What a question to ask! Why, we all wear a certain amount, both we and our children, boys as well as girls; and the women wear plenty of it.'

'Yes, but why do you all wear it?' asked Socrates.

'For several reasons no doubt. It is the custom and it looks well. They like it, and we all like it.'

'You like it because it is the custom and because you would be thought ill of if you did not follow the custom. But a thing is not necessarily right simply because it is a custom, I suppose.'

'Why not?' asked a villager.

'Well,' answered Socrates, 'if some villagers had a custom of stealing, would you call it right?'

'No, certainly not.'

'Then customs are not necessarily right, just because they are customs?'

'No, I suppose that sometimes they are not,' answered the man.

'Then,' said Socrates, 'you must justify the wearing of jewellery on better grounds than those of mere custom.'

'We wear it,' said another villager, 'because it looks well.'

'But,' objected Socrates, 'those women whom we saw were wearing old and torn clothes, and those children playing over there, with ear-rings, wristlets and anklets, look as if they had never seen water. What clothes they have are mere rags.'

'Well, the jewellery makes them look better, anyway.'

'But,' said Socrates, 'what an amazing thing to do! You allow yourselves and your families to go dirty and in rags when washing costs nothing and clothes not a very great deal, and then counteract the slovenly and dirty result by expensive jewellery.'

'No,' persisted the villager, 'but jewellery does make them look much better.'

Then Socrates became angry. 'God,' he said loudly, 'made them beautiful, but you spoil the beauty God gave them with rags and dirt, and then try to restore their beauty with jewellery.'

'Sir,' said the man, 'you put us to shame indeed.'

'God made one hole in your ear for you to hear and

learn sense with, but you make a lot more holes to hang trinkets in, and out of these holes goes all the sense that goes into the hole which God made.'

'Don't make fun of us, Socrates. We will try and improve ourselves.'

'I am sorry for my sudden anger,' said Socrates, 'but you cannot go on for ever being the contented slaves of worn-out customs. You must certainly change this custom of putting jewellery on children. For how can children either wash properly or play properly when they are hung about with these trinkets? Aren't children robbed and murdered almost daily for the gold and silver they wear? Is not the boring of these holes in their ears and noses a very painful business? Do not the children cry much while they are being bored, and do not these holes take many days to heal? Does not the wearing of these ornaments make the children vain and conceited, and teach them to love show and extravagance? Yet you are always complaining how poor you are, and how you cannot afford any of the little things which will improve your health and your homes.'

'Spare us, Socrates. You have said enough and although in this old-fashioned village you will find our children's ears bored and both them and their mothers wearing ornaments, you will find this so in very few towns nowadays, and even in many villages this old custom is dying out.'

'I gladly agree,' said Socrates. 'This custom is certainly losing its hold in many places and that is what makes me so annoyed when I find you so obstinately sticking to a custom which has already been condemned by so many of your brethren.'

'But there is another point,' went on Socrates. 'The more you wear this wretched jewellery the quicker it wears away. Is that not so?'

'Yes, that is certainly true,' answered the villagers.

'And,' said Socrates, 'the more the women wear it, the more they envy one another because of their jewellery, and the more jewellery they demand from their menfolk.'

'Yes, that is true too.'

'Then surely the less it is worn, the better it would be in every way.'

'Yes, certainly.'

'Then, of all the silly things to allow, surely the silliest is to allow these smart ornaments to be worn with ordinary workaday clothes—and for all sorts of home and field work? Surely the only sensible thing to do is to keep your jewellery for holidays and fairs and great occasions, and to wear it only when you are smartened up and in clean clothes?'

'That is but reasonable,' said some of the villagers.

'Surely it would have the greatest effect then too?'

'Yes, but our women insist on wearing it and demand that we should give them as much as we can.'

'But,' said Socrates, 'if they demanded poison, would you give it to them?'

'Certainly not. What a suggestion!'

'Then you approve of jewellery as much as they do?'

'If it comes to that,' admitted the villagers, 'you are right.'

'Then don't blame the women for this awful waste.'

'But, Socrates,' objected one man, 'it is not a waste. The jewellery is there and it is valuable.'

'You spend a hundred rupees on jewellery and get how much?' asked Socrates.

'If the goldsmith is honest, about eighty rupees' worth; otherwise, perhaps sixty or seventy rupees' worth.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'it wears away, till in ten

years' time about twenty rupees' worth of jewellery is left?'

'Yes, that is correct.'

'If a thief comes along it's all gone in a night. You know too that many a child has been murdered for the jewellery that it was wearing, which the thief determined to get by hook or by crook.'

'Yes, that is true also.'

'For fear of thieves,' went on Socrates, 'you dare not have windows or ventilators and you ruin your health by allowing no light or air into your houses. The keeping of jewellery is no doubt a form of saving and as such is, or rather used to be, very useful. But it is long out of date nowadays with savings banks, cash certificates and co-operative banks at hand to receive your savings. Suppose, instead of spending a hundred rupees on jewellery, you put it into the co-operative bank, what will happen in ten years?'

'It will become about two hundred rupees, so they say.'

'Then, compared with that, your jewellery is a dead loss even as a means of saving money. But when you have no money and your wife wants jewellery, what do you do then?' asked Socrates.

'Why, then we borrow money.'

'So that while the jewellery is wearing away, the debt remains with its interest mounting up?'

'Yes, that is so.'

Then Socrates laughed. 'The more we go into this custom the worse and worse it gets! When will you learn sense you simple villagers?'

'But,' answered the villagers, 'our wives and children would not be happy without it.'

'It is true,' said Socrates, 'that we all desire that which is beautiful, and that we all desire to be happy. That is part of the Divine Spirit that is in us.'

'Yes, you have interpreted our thoughts as we could not do ourselves.'

'And,' went on Socrates, 'you think that jewellery will satisfy this desire?'

'What else can we do in our humble villages?'

Just then a mare passed with a foal gambolling by her side.

Socrates pointed to them. 'Look!' he said. 'They are both beautiful and happy and they wear no jewellery. Yet man is superior to animals, is he not?'

'Yes, he is supposed to be; but you make us very doubtful about it, Socrates, with all your questions.'

'Then your children are not always very happy, I fear.'

'Well, they play a good deal, but they cry a lot as well.'

'Well,' said Socrates, 'how can a home be cheerful when it is full of disease, suffering and misery? How, then, do you explain the fact that animals are happy and beautiful, while your children are often neither?'

'How can we, Socrates?' answered the villagers.

'May I try?' asked Socrates.

'Yes, please do,' answered the villagers.

'Well,' said Socrates, 'I believe the first reason is that animals are clean. Cleanliness brings health, and health brings happiness. They live in the open air, and they keep themselves and their young scrupulously clean. You live in filthy villages, with every sort of dirt and rubbish lying all round, and blowing into your food and water. You breathe it into your lungs. Flies sit on it, and then sit on your food and on your children's eyes and lips. You live in dark windowless houses where light and air cannot penetrate. Many of the children are rarely washed.

Your health is weakened and you are the prey of every disease that comes. Be clean, keep your children clean, wash your clothes, have windows in your houses, clean your villages, adopt sanitary habits of living, and then your families will be clean and healthy and therefore happy.'

'Socrates,' said one of the villagers, 'you are very hard. We cannot do all this.'

'Have I told you anything that costs money?' asked Socrates.

'No, indeed you haven't.'

'Then it is only energy and spirit that is lacking?'

'I am afraid that your accusation is only too true,' answered the villager.

'In fact,' went on Socrates, 'my remedy will save you money as you will not want so much of this out-of-date jewellery if you follow my advice.'

'That is so, Socrates.'

'Surely clean and healthy women and children without trinkets will be better and more beautiful than unhealthy ones loaded with jewellery?'

'Of course they will.'

'Then why not spend the money so saved on educating them, and on providing quinine and medicines for them when they are ill, and mosquito nets in which they may sleep when the rains come?'

'That is but common sense too, Socrates. But you cannot get away from the fact that our women will always want jewellery.'

'Then, by all means give it to them in reason, and if you can do it without borrowing.'

'That will not satisfy them.'

'Why?' asked Socrates.

'They are not always very happy in their homes, I am afraid. They have few rights, and they think that if they have plenty of jewellery, their husbands will

have more respect for them, and treat them better than if they had little or none. Moreover if by God's will they become widows, their jewellery will be a great comfort to them.'

'Then her jewellery is about the best property that a woman has?'

'Yes, that is so.'

'So they think that they had better get what they can, while they can. That is why they worry you for jewellery?'

'Yes, that is right.'

'You do not respect your wives much?' asked Socrates.

'No indeed; they respect us.'

'Then women are not held to be of much importance. Is that so?'

'I am afraid that is partly correct, Socrates.'

'You were born of women, were you not? Your children were born of women, were they not? Your daughters will be the mothers of your grandchildren, will they not?' asked Socrates.

'Yes.'

'Then your womenfolk are all part of you?'

'Yes.'

'Then if they are unworthy of respect, it means that you and your children and your grandchildren are equally unworthy of respect, does it not?'

'So it seems.'

'You love your children?'

'Devotedly.'

'And yet,' said Socrates, 'you despise and neglect the one person who is responsible for them, and from whom they derive their nourishment, character and training in the most important years of their lives! Your action seems absolutely idiotic. Surely your women are entitled to far more respect than you are,

as it is they who are responsible for the production and upbringing of your children and for the making and keeping of the home?'

'What you say is correct.'

'They are, in fact, your partners in this work.'

'Yes.'

'Perhaps then,' went on Socrates, 'if you treat them as such, and if you educate them so that they may earn and receive the respect which they deserve, and so that they may learn how to bring up their children properly, they will not demand so much jewellery from you, but will be content with their happy homes and their clean, healthy and beautiful children?'

'Yes, Socrates, I am afraid we cannot help coming to this conclusion.'

'There is another thing,' said Socrates. 'Are children and young animals the only beautiful things which God has made?'

'No indeed; God made flowers too.'

'Your homes are full of flowers then, I suppose, as you all love beautiful things, and are prepared to run into debt to get them?'

The villagers laughed. 'No, we have no use for flowers.'

'Then you don't really love beautiful things?'

'We do. But we have no time to plant them, nor do we know how to do it nor where to get the seeds.'

'Well,' said Socrates, 'why should not your partners in the home learn about flowers? I am sure that they will find time to grow a few to beautify your homes. A good woman always has time to make her home beautiful. May I suggest, too, that if they want more ornaments than you can afford to buy them, they should learn to make embroidery and lace when they are young, and should teach their daughters to do so too, so that they may compete with one another in making

beautiful things of lace or embroidery or in growing flowers instead of wasting your money in jewellery. Then the leader of the women will be the woman with the brightest home and the happiest children and not the woman whose husband has the biggest bill at the goldsmith's.'

'We will try it, Socrates.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'it seems that the conclusion of the whole matter is that you must educate your women, treat them with respect as equal partners of the home, help them to make the home beautiful and to keep the children clean and happy, get them taught to use their fingers in making themselves and their children beautiful, and taught to grow flowers in the home. You must make your village also clean and habitable, so that there may be no dirt or disease, and you must work hard with muscle and brain so that there may be money for the little things your housewives are sure to want. When all this is done, there will be little longing for more jewellery than is reasonable, and you will be able to put your spare money in the bank and see it increase year by year, instead of seeing your jewellery wear away year by year and your debts increase. Above all, you and your families will be healthy, contented, cheerful and happy.'

'Must we stop our women wearing jewellery then?'

'No certainly not,' said Socrates. 'Ten times not. The jewellery is theirs and they set great store by it.'

'Then why all this argument, Socrates?'

'What they have let them keep. But send the little girls to school so that they may learn better ways and may learn about thrift and savings banks and co-operative banks, how to sew and knit and how to make and mend clothes and all the other things that go to make the home bright. They will tell it all to

their mothers and perhaps in time their mothers may begin to prefer the new and better life to the old ways in which they were brought up. Some will never change, but the new generation is always coming on and if it is brought up in the right way, your homes will soon be changed. Knowledge is the secret. Educate the girls and give them the choice between excessive quantities of jewellery, to provide which is beyond your means and which are accompanied by debt, trouble, ill health and unhappy homes, and light, air, health and happiness, and you will soon see which they will prefer. The betterment of home and children is an instinct with them and they need but the necessary knowledge to develop it to the full.

'One thing you must do, however, and that is set your face against boring all these holes in ears and noses. One hole in each ear is ample for custom and vanity and everything else. Allow no more.'

'That is already becoming the custom in many homes, Socrates.'

'I know it and rejoice to see it. We are on the winning side and the angels of light and progress are steadily driving back the demons of darkness and apathy and ignorance.'

5. WATER, FUEL AND MANURE

SOCRATES came into a village and found stacks of dung-cakes inside the village, women busily making more and men sitting on charpoys,[1] smoking, everything dirty and neglected and showing signs of extreme poverty.

'Salaam!' said Socrates. 'How are you, my friends?'

'You may well ask us how we are,' replied the

[1] String beds; the usual seats in a village.

villagers; 'our land is bodi,[1] and what little crops there are, the wild pigs and the rats are eating, the rain has not come and the fields are drying up. We are still weak from last autumn's malaria; there is nothing for our cattle to eat, and very little for ourselves to eat. What need to ask how we are?'

Just then a puff of wind came and blew up a lot of dirt and muck into the faces of Socrates and those who were sitting near him. The villagers did not seem to mind, but it made Socrates cough and his eyes smart with pain.

'That is pretty nasty,' said Socrates.

'It is nothing,' said the villagers, 'that always happens when the wind blows. We are quite used to that sort of thing here.'

'But, then,' said Socrates, 'why are you complaining that your fields are bodi? If all that stuff was put into pits, and then, when it had matured, if it was taken out to the fields as manure, it would soon make your fields fertile.'

'Oh! we have no time to do that sort of thing; we are too poor to clean our village; that is only a luxury for rich men.'

'But,' said Socrates, 'dirty villages mean poverty; what makes your village filthy will make your fields rich. But then, why aren't you rich? I don't understand why you are not rich. As I came along the village I saw dozens of dead trees lying on the ground rotting. Nobody but rich people could afford to neglect their wood, which grows free of charge.'

'What ought we to do with the wood then? There is no market for wood here,' said the villagers.

'Burn it to cook your food and boil your milk.'

'Oh, no; we use dung-cakes for that.'

[1] **Weak**; a favourite expression in villages to explain the exhaustion of the soil from want of manure.

Socrates burst into laughter.

'Why are you laughing?' said the people.

'I can't help laughing,' said Socrates. 'You people are so funny! There you are complaining of the weakness of your fields and your own poverty, but here you are burning dung-cakes. Dung has ten times more value as manure than it has as fuel. Meanwhile white ants are eating your dead trees. Poor people can't afford to feed white ants.'

'What is that stack of cakes worth?' said Socrates.

'Oh, about five rupees,' said the villagers.

'As manure how much is it worth?' asked Socrates.

'It would add about ten maunds[1] of grain and an equal amount of straw to the crop where it was spread,' replied the villagers.

'Say fifty rupees, then?' asked Socrates.

'Not less, at any rate,' replied the villagers.

'Then that explains why your land is weak and you are poor,' said Socrates.

'How long does it take your wife to make a stack?'

'About three months,' said the villagers.

'Then three months of her dirt and degradation is worth five rupees,' said Socrates.

'What do you pay the darzi[2] for having your shirt made?'

'Four or six annas,' said the villagers.

'And how long will it take him to make it?' asked Socrates.

'A couple of hours,' said the villagers.

'But how long will it take your wife to make four annas' worth of dung-cakes?' said Socrates.

'Nearly a week,' said the villagers.

'And would it not be cheaper for your wife to make the shirt instead of making the dung-cakes?' said Socrates.

[1] A maund is 80 lb. avoirdupois. [2] Tailor.

'My wife can't sew,' said a villager.

'Of course she can't,' said Socrates. 'Since she was born she has been the slave of the corn-mill and the dung-cake. Which is more honourable work—making dung-cakes or sewing clothes?'

'Why, making clothes, of course,' said the villager.

'And yet the clothes are made by the darzi whom you call a menial and the dung-cakes by your wives whom you consider of superior caste,' said Socrates.

'Yes,' said the villagers. 'That is so.'

'And wouldn't it be more sensible,' said Socrates, 'to let the darzi make the dung-cakes and your wives make the clothes?'

'Oh, no; the darzi won't pat the cakes,' said the villagers.

'No, I don't suppose he will,' said Socrates; 'he is not such a fool. But I don't intend these cakes to be made. I think the making of dung-cakes is all the cause of your poverty.'

'How are we going to cook the food and boil the milk?' said the villagers.

'Why, with the hundreds of maunds of dead trees which are lying rotting outside your village,' said Socrates, 'and all the other waste products of your crops, the stalks of cotton, arhar,[1] til,[2] sarson,[3] grass, etc.'

'Yes, but the women will have to sit by and watch the milk boiling,' said the villagers.

'Why shouldn't they?' said Socrates. 'The time they now spend on making dung-cakes will be spent on watching the milk being boiled; and while they are watching the milk they will be making shirts for you or for your children or for themselves, so that you need not pay the darzi any more.'

[1] A pulse. [2] Oil seeds. [3] Oil seeds.

'At Palwal Show I saw a "separator" working, and after separating the milk, not only was there more and cleaner ghi,[1] but it only required one-fifth of the fuel to make it.'

'But,' added Socrates, 'you told me some time ago you had no cattle fodder.'

'Yes, Socrates; certainly we are short of fodder for our cattle,' said the villagers.

'And is it not due to the same reason?' said Socrates. 'You do not take your cow-dung, rubbish, sweepings, etc. to the fields, and how can your fields grow fodder unless you manure them?'

'But even if we did manure them, there is no rain to ripen the crops.'

'But what about the jheel[2] that I saw on the way?' said Socrates.

'That jheel is no use to us,' said the villagers; 'that water just floods part of our land which we might otherwise have sown.'

'But why not use the water to water your crops?' said Socrates.

'How can we?' said the villagers.

'Why, dig channels and put water-wheels up,' said Socrates.

'Oh! we have never done so before. There is no such custom and we have not got any money,' said the villagers.

'What about taccavi[3] and your village banks?' said Socrates.

'Oh, but the water will dry up in May,' said the villagers.

'Well, anyway,' said Socrates, 'it will ripen all your spring crops, and if you are sensible enough to plant sugar-cane, you will merely have to dig a small well

[1] Clarified butter. [2] Swamp or lake.
[3] Government loan to finance agriculture.

and go on watering from that until the rains come and fill the jheel again.'

'But then the pigs will eat our crops,' said the villagers. 'What is the use of sowing cane?'

'Where do the pigs come from?' asked Socrates.

'From the banni,'[1] said the people.

'How do they live in the banni?' said Socrates.

'Under the many hīñs[2] bushes,' said the villagers.

'But if you don't want pigs, why do you sow hīñs bushes?' said Socrates.

The villagers laughed and said, 'Nobody sows hīñs bushes, O Socrates.'

'You are the owners of the banni, are you not?' said Socrates.

'Yes; certainly we are,' said the villagers.

'Then if you don't want hīñs bushes, why do you allow them to be there?' said Socrates.

'They come of their own accord,' said the villagers.

'Of their own accord?' said Socrates. 'You said you were the owners of the banni. Do you allow hīñs bushes to grow in your homes?'

'No; certainly not,' said the villagers.

'Well, if a hīñs bush started sprouting in your home, what would you do?' asked Socrates.

'Cut it out,' said the villagers, 'of course.'

'Then why not cut it out from your banni,' said Socrates, 'so that the pigs can't live there?'

'But why do you keep a banni at all?' added Socrates.

'Our ancestors set apart this land to provide a grazing ground for the cattle,' said the villagers.

'Then the cattle eat hīñs, jāl[3] and karīl?'[4] asked Socrates.

[1] Area covered with trees and bushes.
[2] A dense evergreen bush of wait-a-bit thorns.
[3] A useless shrub.
[4] A useless shrub.

'No; they certainly don't,' replied the villagers.

'But then the ground is blocked with all these things,' said Socrates.

'That is so,' said the villagers.

'Then your ancestors' object, in leaving a banni for your cattle to graze on, has completely failed and the only thing that profits by it is the wild pig.'

'O villagers, you are too foolish. Instead of cutting out the jāl, hīńs, karīl and sowing grass, kikar,[1] shisham,[2] etc., you allow the pasture left by your ancestors to be spoiled so that there is no grazing for your cattle, and you make of it a refuge for the wild pigs so that they come out and eat up what little crops you have. You grow no timber for firewood, and what little grows of itself you let the white ants eat so that you are compelled to burn the manure; which means that you cannot manure your crops, and so the land is starved and you can get neither food for yourselves nor fodder for your cattle from it. Your village is full of muck and rubbish, which poison your children and yourselves, and which should be put into pits, turned into manure and taken to the fields. The water in the jheel you will not use to water your fields. You have got water, fuel and manure, all three of which you waste. Those are the three things which a zamindār requires to make himself prosperous. You waste all three and then complain of being poor!'

6. 'SELF-HELP' OR CLEANING THE VILLAGE

SOCRATES went into a village when the wind was blowing. He found it most uncomfortable, for the dirt and dust and ashes were flying about in the wind, and

[1] Acacia tree, fodder, fuel and timber. [2] Timber tree.

were getting into people's eyes and into their food and into their lungs.

'Are you not very uncomfortable,' asked Socrates, 'with all this dirt getting into your eyes and lungs, contaminating your food and water, giving you diarrhoea, and spoiling your health and your children's health?'

'What can we do?' said the villagers. 'We have told the sweepers to clean it up, but they are getting very independent nowadays. If we box their ears for not working, they will run us in under Section 323,[1] and we shall lose our "izzat".'[2]

'Then,' said Socrates, 'this village is owned by sweepers, is it not?'

'No, certainly not,' said the people, 'zamindārs are the owners.'

'But,' said Socrates, 'if you say that it is the sweeper who decides whether the village will be clean or dirty then it is the sweeper who decides whether you will live in comfort or not. If he cleans it, you are comfortable; if he does not clean it, then you are in the condition in which you are now. Surely you are, then, in the hands of the sweeper?'

'We are,' answered the people.

'Then surely the sweeper is the owner of the village.'

'It looks like it today,' said a villager, as he rubbed his eye to get a painful bit of rubbish out.

'But,' said Socrates, 'who made the place dirty and who threw all the rubbish down here?'

'Oh, we and our womenfolk did that,' said the people.

'Then if you are afraid that the sweepers will not clean it up, why do you throw it here?' asked Socrates.

[1] The section about 'simple hurt' in the Indian Penal Code.
[2] Respect, credit.

'Oh, it is our custom to throw it here,' said the people.

'Why not throw it into the pits you have recently dug,' said Socrates, 'instead of throwing it here in the hope that the sweeper will take it away? Your village will then be clean in spite of the independence of the sweeper. But why don't you clean your village yourselves?' said Socrates.

'We are zamindārs. Cleaning the village is menials' work,' answered the villagers.

'Then dirtying the village is zamindārs' work, and cleaning the village is sweepers' work?' asked Socrates.

'Certainly,' said the villagers.

'Which is more honourable, to dirty a thing or to clean it?' asked Socrates.

'To clean it; obviously,' said the people.

'The sweeper is of a higher caste than you are then?' said Socrates.

'No, certainly not,' said the villagers.

'Then why don't you do the honourable work of cleaning your village yourselves?' asked Socrates.

'It is not the custom for us to clean things,' answered the people.

'Then why make a custom of dirtying them?' said Socrates. 'The ordinary rule of the world is that as a man sows so shall he reap. Therefore, if a man dirties the village the same man must clean the village. Does your religion forbid you to live in cleanliness?'

'Certainly not,' said the people.

'Then why not clean your village yourselves? If you have to clean it yourselves, you will be very careful not to dirty it,' said Socrates. 'Besides, everything that you take out of the village is going to be used for manure, so the more you scratch and

clean the streets, the more manure you will get. Collecting manure is farming, isn't it?'

'Yes, the very best farming,' said the villagers.

'Then if you call it the collection of manure instead of street cleaning, it will become an honourable work which a zamindār can do, will it not?' said Socrates.

'Yes, that might answer,' said the villagers.

'Then,' said Socrates, 'give up talking about cleaning the village. Make it a rule that every zamindār shall every day, without fail, collect as much manure as he possibly can. Then your village will never be dirty again.'

'We will try to do that, Socrates.'

'What it comes to,' said Socrates, 'is this. Those who rely on menials to clean their villages don't mind how dirty they make them. Those who have to clean their villages themselves are very careful not to dirty them. Therefore the true zamindār, knowing how unhealthy a dirty village is and what good crops come from the use of manure, collects all the manure he can and, by recognizing that the cleaning of the village is merely the collection of manure, keeps the village clean himself and does not ask anyone else to do it for him. He is thus in truth the master of his village.'

'But,' said Socrates suddenly, 'what is that smell that I notice?'

'That is because we go out towards the fields to ease ourselves in the morning,' said the villagers.

'Then the wind blows and there is a smell all day in and around the village. The flies come and sit first on this filth and then on the children's eyes. And still you cannot understand why they go blind!' said Socrates. 'I suppose you think the flies take off their shoes or clean their feet before they sit on your food or on your children's eyes!'

'But we have always done it. It is a custom,' said the villagers.

'But,' said Socrates, 'now you have dug these pits, why not use them? Put a couple of planks of wood across each pit and a wall or screen round it, and you have a very good latrine. After using it every day throw in the ashes and the rubbish which are now thrown into every street, and into every open space. Night-soil makes an excellent manure, and so do ashes and rubbish, so that if you use the pit as a latrine and then throw in afterwards the ashes and rubbish, you will get a lot of extra manure of the very best kind. Moreover you will have no smell in your village, nor will you have ashes and rubbish blowing about all day and getting into your eyes and food.'

'We will do so, Socrates,' said the villagers.

'At present,' said Socrates, 'you say that, according to your religion, you cannot handle dirt and that therefore you cannot clean your village. But when the wind blows or the cattle go in and out of your village, all the dirt on the ground rises into the air and you breathe it into your lungs, take it in with your food and drink it down with your water. Does not your religion forbid you to eat dirt, to drink it, or to breathe it?'

'Certainly,' said the villagers, 'our religion directs us to be clean in every respect, and we will follow your advice and keep our village clean. At the same time there will be a great increase in the supply of our manure and thereby we shall get more crops for ourselves and for our cattle.'

'That is right,' said Socrates, 'and I hope that you will take to heart what I have said. Then your village will soon be fit for human beings to dwell in, and for children to be born and brought up in. Good-bye, I must go away now; I am feeling a little

faint from the smell and from the dirt that is blowing about.'

'Good-bye, Socrates; we will make the place fit even for you to sit in before you next come to see us.'

7. HELPLESSNESS, OR 'ĀP HI HOWĒ'[1]

SOCRATES came into a village one afternoon and sat on a charpoy, looking very puzzled, and the villagers, gathering round him, said, 'What ails you this afternoon, Socrates? You seem disturbed in your mind.'

'I am, indeed,' said Socrates. 'You have always been complaining to me of your poverty, but when I was coming along the village I saw that your fields were being eaten by rats, rat-holes everywhere and I saw the rats actually nibbling at the crops quite fearlessly as I came along.'

'Āp hi howē,' said the villagers. 'How can we help it?'

'And then I came along a little further and saw your cattle standing out on a bare plain with nothing to eat and a large banni near by covered with a dense tangle of hīṅs bushes. I asked the herd-boy, "Why don't they eat that lovely green stuff?" but he just laughed at me. I asked him "Don't cattle eat jāl, hīṅs and karīl?" and he simply touched his forehead to show he thought I was loose in the head.'

'Certainly,' said the villagers. 'No wonder he thought you were afflicted in your mind, asking him such a question.'

'But,' said Socrates, 'why do you sow hīṅs, jāl, and karīl, if the cattle will not eat them?'

'Āp hi howē,' said the people.

Before Socrates could reply to this there was a

[1] 'It happens of its own accord.'

tremendous noise of dogs fighting and struggling, and somebody came running up and said that a dog had gone mad and bitten a child.

'Are these dogs of any value to you?' said Socrates.

'No,' said the people.

'Then why do you keep them?' said Socrates. 'I see them in every village with many puppies. If they are of no use to you, why do you keep them?'

'Āp hi howē,' they said.

'My dear villagers,' said Socrates, 'are you the owners of this village?'

'Certainly we are,' said the villagers.

'Then what is all this āp hi howē, āp hi howē, you talk about? If you don't want rats, why not destroy them? If you don't want dogs, why not destroy them? If you don't want useless bushes and trees growing on your land, why not destroy them? Why not destroy the useless bushes and trees and sow valuable grass and valuable trees? Why not get rid of all these useless dogs and each keep his own dog and properly feed and train it, so that it becomes his faithful friend and servant? And why not destroy all the rats and have really good crops on your fields. A good zamindār will not allow his grazing ground to be spoilt by useless bushes; he will plant such trees and bushes as he wants there. He will not allow his fields to be eaten by rats; he will destroy the rats. And he will not allow a horde of stray dogs to remain in the village; he will either have no dogs at all, or else keep properly trained and domesticated dogs. If you allow rats in your fields, then you are musōn ke maurusi;[1] the rat is the real owner, as he has the first, and often the only, cut at the crops. If you leave the villages to be cleaned by the sweeper, then you are bhangi kā ghulām.[2] If you allow yourselves to be worried by

[1] Tenants of rats. [2] Sweepers' slaves.

numerous stray dogs, then you are kuttōn kā shikār.[1] If you allow your grazing grounds to be blocked with hīṅs, jāl, karīl, etc. then you are hīṅs kā ghulām.'[2]

8. VILLAGE DOGS

SOCRATES had just walked through the village, accompanied by a group of villagers. When he had got some distance away from it he said to his companions, 'Now that we have got sufficiently far from your homes to be able to breathe fresh air, untainted by smells and by dust, let us sit down and talk a while. There is a new subject on which I should like information from you. Your village appeared to be full of dogs, but they seemed to have no masters, nor were they doing any useful work, and for the most part they were in deplorable condition—mangy, dirty and covered with sores. In fact, they were in even worse condition than your children and that is saying a very great deal! Tell me do you not look after them at all?'

VILLAGERS: Socrates, we have not the time; besides, they are only dogs, and useless.

SOCRATES: Why, then, do you keep them at all?

VILLAGERS: We are not responsible. They come of their own accord.

SOCRATES: My dear villagers, how many times must I explain that you are responsible for everything in your villages? You, and not the dogs, are the masters of the village, and you are therefore responsible for their existence and their behaviour. Now you said that they are useless. From the amount of food they steal, from the noise they make and from the danger

[1] The sport of curs.

[2] The bondsmen of thorns.

of their going mad and biting you, they are clearly worse than useless, they are positively harmful.

VILLAGERS: Exactly.

SOCRATES: In that case, why do you not destroy them?

VILLAGERS: Religion and custom forbid it. After all, though they are but dogs, God created them, as He created everything else.

SOCRATES: A very proper answer, my friends. Dogs, like men, are God's creatures. But why, then, did God create dogs? The dog is a domestic animal. The other domestic animals have all been created for your benefit, the horse for you to ride, the cow to give you milk, and so on. Was the dog given to you simply to be a nuisance and a danger to you?

VILLAGERS: It looks like it, Socrates.

SOCRATES: But, foolish ones, is God, then, to blame? Do you not see that once more you are throwing the blame of your own stupidity and cruelty on God? It is the new proverb again: 'Zamindār ki be-aqli, Parameshar kā qasur.'[1]

VILLAGERS: Explain then, please, Socrates, why God created dogs.

SOCRATES: Listen, my friends. God gave you dogs for the same reason as He gave you cows, for your benefit. In most other countries of the world every dog has its master who looks after it, feeds it and trains it to help him. A dog thus used is the most faithful servant in the world, for it will serve, love and protect its master at all times. It will guard the house against thieves, kill the rats that spoil the fields or eat the grain in the house and it will look after its master's property, his food and clothes, while he is away at work. It can be trained to do all manner of work, and farmers especially find it a useful helper. A dog

[1] 'Providence is to blame for the farmer's folly.'

will soon learn to look after a herd of cattle or a flock of sheep and prevent them from straying, and will round them up and bring them home at its master's command. There are many other ways in which a dog can be useful, but these I will explain when you have learnt its most elementary uses, and you will gradually find out many yourselves. And all this a dog will do simply in return for its food, and a little attention and affection. Surely, then, did not God create dogs with the intention that you should treat them thus, and find in them a blessing instead of a curse?

VILLAGERS: You are right, Socrates. Evidently we have been blind in this, as in other things. God has ordered all things for our benefit and we have failed to see it.

SOCRATES: And do not let your children throw sticks and stones at them just because they do things you do not like. Remember that until you train them they cannot possibly know what to do and what not to do, so that when they do wrong it is not the dogs which are to blame but you, for teaching them no better.

9. GOOD TRADITIONS AND THE SCHOOLMASTER'S IDEAL

VILLAGER: Socrates, you are trying to turn my village upside down and change everything.

SOCRATES: No, I am not, O zamindār, but when I see obvious evils and cruelties they make my blood hot and I must speak out.

VILLAGER: But you are for ever complaining and chiding.

SOCRATES: Yes, I do complain a lot, but then I see a lot of evil.

VILLAGER: Don't you ever see any good?

SOCRATES: Yes, plenty of good, but there is no need to talk about the good. It is good and it is going on, and I am very pleased to see it. After all, the doctor is a stranger to the strong and healthy; his work is with the diseased and weak.

VILLAGER: Yes, but if you don't occasionally keep an eye on the healthy and strong, perhaps they will become ill one day.

SOCRATES: Yes, I admit that too, and it reminds me that you people are beginning to forget your good customs and are dropping them, and are sticking only to the bad ones. You are quick enough, too, to pick up a bad custom, but very slow to pick up a good one. You took to smoking cigarettes like a duck takes to water, but what a job we had to make you dig pits for your refuse!

VILLAGER: Yes, good habits are difficult both to introduce and to stick to. Evil habits come almost instinctively, and the old good habits we are dropping very rapidly.

SOCRATES: Yes; in the old days the villager was abstemious and virtuous, but nowadays, what with motors and trains and education, I think, he is beginning to lose his old virtues and not only keeps his old vices, but is finding a lot of new ones too.

Just then the schoolmaster came up.

SOCRATES: Now, masterji,[1] this is your job.

SCHOOLMASTER: What is this, O Socrates? I am overworked enough already with my monthly returns and all the new things I am expected to know and teach.

SOCRATES: Masterji, you are the custodian of the good old customs.

SCHOOLMASTER: Yet another job for me. Shall I be paid an allowance for this?

[1] 'Ji', used alone or as an enclitic, signifies respect.

SOCRATES: No, masterji; but in your hands lies the future of the village. As you mould the character of these little boys and girls—quite a number of girls are now attending your village school, I am glad to see —so will be the future character of your village.

SCHOOLMASTER: My job is to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, with history and geography.

SOCRATES: Bother history and geography, masterji; your job is to educate, to train the character as well as to teach the brain.

SCHOOLMASTER: How can I, Socrates, with all I have to do?

SOCRATES: You are a good man yourself, and you believe in preserving the good old customs and in weeding out the bad ones?

SCHOOLMASTER: Yes, I hope so.

SOCRATES: And you don't want your boys to pick up new bad customs, do you?

SCHOOLMASTER: I hope not.

SOCRATES: Well, by your character and your own actions, and by a little said here and said there, and by your attitude in always supporting the good and opposing the bad, you have to set a good example to your pupils and lead them into good ways.

SCHOOLMASTER: I can do that, Socrates, of course.

SOCRATES: Well, do it. It takes no time and costs nothing. You are a lamp of culture shining in the darkness of your village and you have got to keep your lamp bright.

SCHOOLMASTER: That is a great ideal for a poor village schoolmaster, but I will do my best.

SOCRATES: And your village will bless you in the days to come. These children are entrusted to you; see that you fail not. Set an example of good. That reminds me; yesterday, when I passed your school, I saw a lot of boys and girls wearing jewellery, and

ADVISING THE MOTHERS

A Health Visitor, or District Nurse, advising mothers at the Health Centre

their hands and faces were so dirty I could hardly believe they had ever been washed since they were born. Why, some of the girls had so many wires and things in their ears that I thought they'd got some sort of machine there.

SCHOOLMASTER: Yes, they always come like that.

SOCRATES: But isn't it very silly putting jewellery on children, wasting money in this way, instead of spending it on soap and quinine, mosquito nets, and so on?

SCHOOLMASTER: Yes, it is very silly.

SOCRATES: Then what is the use of teaching them to read and write when they are in this condition?

SCHOOLMASTER: Well, they come to school to learn and it is my job to teach them. These other things are none of my concern.

SOCRATES: Your job is to educate, and what is education without health and cleanliness?

SCHOOLMASTER: It is not much good, I agree, but it is not my job.

SOCRATES: Then whose is it?

SCHOOLMASTER: I don't know; not mine, anyway. Perhaps it's the parents' job.

SOCRATES: Yes, certainly; but they were only brought up as you propose to bring up these children. So they don't know. Who is to make a beginning, masterji?

SCHOOLMASTER: I don't know; it's not down in any of my school textbooks.

SOCRATES: Perhaps these books were written by people who didn't know village life and ways.

SCHOOLMASTER: Very likely, indeed.

SOCRATES: Well, what is the object of your school education?

SCHOOLMASTER: To teach reading and writing, etc.

SOCRATES: And what is the object of reading and writing?

SCHOOLMASTER : I don't know; to make children able to read and write, I suppose.

SOCRATES : But there must be some final object of it all?

SCHOOLMASTER : I can't see any, unless it is to enable them to earn their living.

SOCRATES : But if they learn to waste their money on jewellery, where will their living be? And if they live in dirt, most of them will die of disease before they grow up.

SCHOOLMASTER : You confuse me, Socrates, with all your questions and theories.

SOCRATES : Well, I suggest that the object of education is to make the boys and girls better, and better able to live good, healthy, happy lives. They learn to read to enable them to learn how to improve their homes and farms.

SCHOOLMASTER : Yes, that must be the real object of education in the end, I suppose.

SOCRATES : Then surely the first lesson at school is not A B C, but to wash face and eyes and hands; and not to wear jewellery, but to use quinine and mosquito nets instead.

SCHOOLMASTER : These are excellent lessons, certainly.

SOCRATES : Can you think of any better?

SCHOOLMASTER : No, certainly not.

SOCRATES : Then why not teach them?

SCHOOLMASTER : Then I shall fail to pass them through the classes and so lose my promotion.

SOCRATES : No you won't, masterji. This is practical education, and your boys and girls will never let you down if you teach them in this way. Their intelligence and keenness will increase so much that they will pass all the more quickly, and you will be doing at last some real genuine education, preparing

the children for the great battle of life when they grow up.

Just then a mother was heard scolding her child and using language which made Socrates jump with horror. No one else took any notice.

SOCRATES: There's a horrible custom.

SCHOOLMASTER: What? I noticed nothing.

SOCRATES: Didn't you hear that filthy language?

SCHOOLMASTER: Oh, that's nothing. I use that to my pupils as terms of affection, and everyone uses it, both to children and to cattle. No one means any harm by it.

SOCRATES: But do you really think it is right to use these filthy words?

SCHOOLMASTER: No, I suppose I don't; but we mean nothing by it, and no one minds and it does no harm, I dare say.

SOCRATES: Of course it does harm and you know it perfectly well, masterji.

SCHOOLMASTER: Well, I suppose it does when you come to think of it.

SOCRATES: Then stop it and teach your pupils to abhor filthy language. How can you ever command respect and how can your children ever respect their sisters and mothers, when you all use such disgusting words?

SCHOOLMASTER: You are very particular, Socrates, but you are really right. This habit of using filthy language is most deplorable.

SOCRATES: Then set yourself to kill it, at any rate in your village. Why, when I was a boy, if I said anything dirty, my mother took soap and a brush and scrubbed my tongue to clean it. I can tell you I soon learnt to avoid using nasty words!

SCHOOLMASTER: I think if we used that method here we should soon scrub away the whole of the

tongues, not only of our children but of ourselves too.

SOCRATES: Well, make a beginning, anyway. It is wonderful what power you schoolmasters have if you will only use it aright.

10. THE VILLAGE LEADER

LAMBARDĀR:[1] Socrates Sahib, I have tired myself out explaining to the people how to improve their life, but no one obeys.

SOCRATES: I think I shall have to write a song, the refrain of which is, 'Bahutērē samjhātā, koi nahin māntā.'[2] I hear it wherever I go, lambardārji.

LAMBARDĀR: It is very true, O Socrates. Our lot is very hard these difficult times; no one obeys our orders.

SOCRATES: Why is it, lambardārji? Have you no rob,[3] no izzat? Do you command no respect?

LAMBARDĀR: I have plenty of both, Socrates, but I don't know what it is; no one obeys us nowadays.

SOCRATES: Surely when they see the great difference these improvements make to your own health and wealth and happiness, they hasten to follow such an excellent example?

LAMBARDĀR: What do you mean, Socrates?

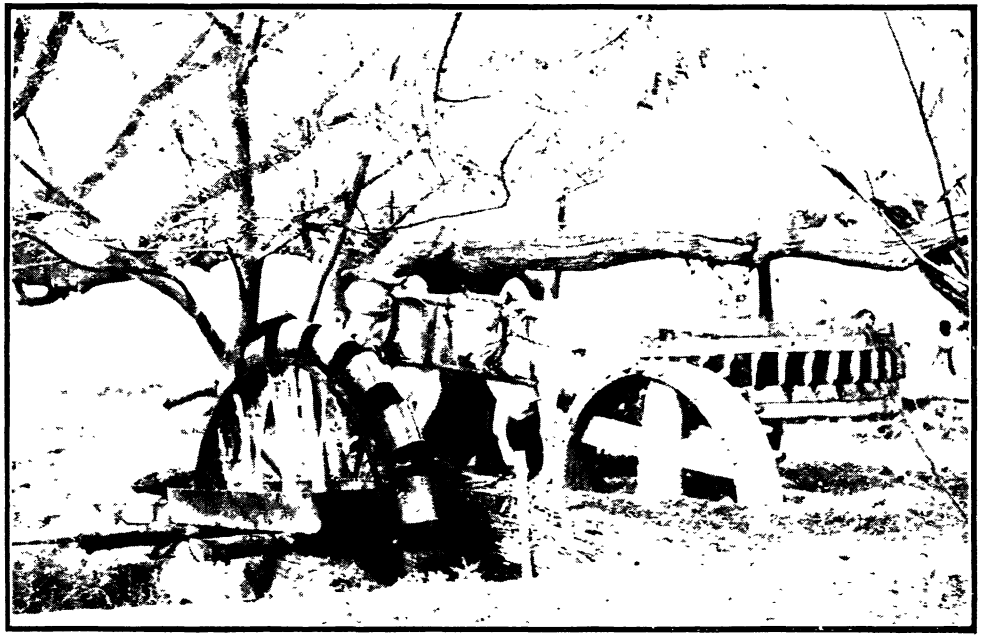
SOCRATES: What I say, of course! When they see the advantages of your Persian wheel,[4] surely they put them up themselves?

LAMBARDĀR: I have no Persian wheel, Socrates.

SOCRATES: But you have been urging the people to put them up for years, haven't you?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, for years, day and night, but no one has obeyed. 'Bahutērē samjhātā, koi nahin māntā.'

[1] Village headman; a hereditary officer, appointed by Government.
[2] 'I talk all day and nobody minds.' [3] Standing, prestige.
[4] A water-raising machine.



A PERSIAN WHEEL

SOCRATES: Lambardārji, it is said that an ounce of practice is worth a pound of preaching. Whenever you make yourself hoarse by preaching, people laugh and say, 'If the thing is as good as he says it is, he would surely have done it himself; so let us wait until he puts up a wheel himself, and then we will follow his example.'

LAMBARDĀR: I never thought of that, Socrates. I thought my duty was merely to tell the people to obey what I say.

SOCRATES: In fact, your tongue supports uplift, but your heart is still devoted to your dirty old ways.

LAMBARDĀR: Oh no, Socrates, hardly that.

SOCRATES: Then when you tell the people to abandon the dog-like habit of easing themselves everywhere in and outside the village, are you still following the customs of the dog yourself and are also your wife and children, or have you set an example of cleanliness and self-respect?

LAMBARDĀR: I am afraid not, Socrates; I do as other people do.

SOCRATES: Then your heart is not with us, lambardārji.

LAMBARDĀR: I suppose it is not.

SOCRATES: And you are not a leader, but a follower. You bark like a dog behind the heels of progressive people, but do nothing yourself to help; you wait for other people to go in front and try the new improvements, and then if they are successful you will try them too. What a miserable position for a lambardār, or for anyone who considers he has any position or is a big man in the village! Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Don't you despise yourself?

LAMBARDĀR: You do make me ashamed, Socrates, but it is very hard to stand alone against the laughter and jeers of the village.

SOCRATES: Someone must go first, lambardārji, or there will never be any progress at all.

LAMBARDĀR: That is very true.

SOCRATES: Then who better to go first than you, the acknowledged leader of the village? You can afford to try new things as you are a man of some wealth. Even if they are not successful at first, you do not mind; you will not be ruined. These little men cannot afford experiments. They must wait till the big men have worked them out and then copy them if they are good. As a matter of fact, none of the new things advertised in our district have failed. They are all thoroughly tried out first and, only when successful, are they advertised in the *District Gazette* and in the posters, songs and dramas of which you see so much and take such little notice.

LAMBARDĀR: I see your meaning, Socrates: I am a leader and I must lead. I will try.

SOCRATES: And you, Subedār[1] and Risaldār[2] Sahib, you slap your chests and show your medals and say how bravely you led your comrades in France and Mesopotamia; why can't you lead your village at home as well?

SUBEDĀR: It takes a braver man, Socrates, to lead his village away from old and bad customs than to lead a company into battle.

SOCRATES: There you are quite right, but why not earn more laurels, Subedār Sahib, by leading your village to uplift and enlightenment at home?

SUBEDĀR: I will try, old man; but I came home to rest and not to start another war—the war against dirt, squalor and disease, and degradation and poverty.

SOCRATES: Well, have a try. The reward is certain and there are no casualties. Laughter does not kill

[1] Senior Indian commissioned infantry officer.
[2] The same, but cavalry.

like bullets. You will soon be immune against ridicule and the more they laugh at you the more will you set your teeth and fight for the uplift of your village.

SUBEDĀR: We will join you in your holy war, Socrates.

SOCRATES: It's a war where we are bound to win, and every victory adds strength to our army. Every man won over, every family persuaded to do as we say and as we do (remember that it is a war of action, not of words), is an ally, an advertisement; so we are bound to win in the end.

SUBEDĀR and LAMBARDĀR: We believe you are right. 'Taraqqi ki jai!'[1]

11. PUBLIC SERVANTS

SOCRATES came into the village and found the patwāri[2] and the kānungo[3] and the zaildār and sufedposh[4] sitting with the lambardārs, discussing the new jamabandi[5] which was being prepared. Socrates was in a very angry mood, as the village had not been cleaned for days and there were heaps of dung-cakes about and dogs barking and all the evil things which irritated the old man so much every time he saw them.

'Good morning,' said Socrates, but no one answered him. 'Good morning,' he said still louder.

'Silence!' said the patwāri. 'Can't you see the hākims[6] are taking counsel together? Who are you, old man, to interfere with your croaking?'

SOCRATES: What hākims, O young and mannerless bābu?[7]

[1] 'Hurrah for progress!'
[2] Village revenue accountant and field-mapper.
[3] His superior officer.
[4] A leading landowner, but of a lower grade than a zaildār.
[5] Village land record or domesday book.
[6] Rulers.
[7] Clerk.

PATWĀRI: Be careful, old man, or your tongue will lead you into trouble. Am I not a public servant, a patwāri, third grade, confirmed these six months and are not these gentlemen also public servants?

SOCRATES: Pardon me, O mighty one, but you first said you were hākims; now you say you are public servants.

PATWĀRI: Yes, of course; we are all hākims.

SOCRATES: But how can a servant be a hākim?

PATWĀRI: Of course he can. Are we not Government servants and thereby also hākims?

SOCRATES: But the duty of a servant is to serve his masters. How can he also be a hākim?

PATWĀRI: We are Government servants and therefore hākims. Be careful how you insult us.

SOCRATES: I will be very careful; but, pardon my curiosity, as a servant whom do you serve, please?

PATWĀRI: Government, of course, O stupid old man.

SOCRATES: But what is this Government? Is it a man or a thing or what? How does it exist?

KĀNUNGO: Let me deal with him, patwāriji. You go on working out the land revenue bāch.[1] Understand, old man, that Government is a great institution for the organization of the country and exists by the taxes and land revenue which it raises.

SOCRATES: Thank you, kānungoji. Then who pays these taxes and land revenue?

KĀNUNGO: Why, the zamindārs and shopkeepers, of course.

SOCRATES: Then they own this great Government if they pay for it?

KĀNUNGO: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: Then this great Government must exist for their benefit?

KĀNUNGO: Yes.

[1] Distribution of the land revenue demand over the holdings of land.

SOCRATES: And all these Government servants the honourable patwāri mentioned are the servants of this Government?

KĀNUNGO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then if the Government belongs to the people who pay taxes, those servants belong to the people too?

KĀNUNGO: Yes, that must be so.

SOCRATES: Well, as they all pay land revenue in this village, all these Government servants exist for the benefit of this village then?

KĀNUNGO: Why, yes, I suppose so.

SOCRATES: Then all this high talk of hākims is quite wrong. You, patwāri, and all of you are the servants of the public and of the people of this village too?

KĀNUNGO: I suppose so.

SOCRATES: Then would it not be better to teach this patwāri, before he gets any older, to curb his tongue and remember he is the servant, and not the tyrant, of the villagers?

KĀNUNGO: I will indeed, Socratesji.

SOCRATES: All you public servants are educated, are you not?

KĀNUNGO: Yes; why, how could we do our work if we weren't?

SOCRATES: Then you have all read the posters and notices issued about pits and cleanliness and education and vaccination and uplift, and you read the newspapers, don't you?

KĀNUNGO: I have seen these things, I believe.

SOCRATES: And you have heard the Deputy Commissioner[1] lecture and explain exactly what ought to be done to put things right in the villages?

KĀNUNGO, PATWĀRI, ZAILDĀR AND SUFEDPOSH (*all together*): Have we heard it indeed? We have heard

[1] The head official of the district.

it till we are sick of it! Such rubbish you never heard! What's it all got to do with us, we should like to know! Why, even the tahsildār[1] is sometimes infected with the same madness and tries to make our lives a burden. But we are glad we have so far escaped.

SOCRATES (*aside*): If you call this madness, I wish the Deputy Commissioner would bite all of you. (*Aloud and very angrily.*) Well, I think you all namak harām.[2]

KĀNUNGO: Be careful, Socrates; these words are too hard. We don't mind humouring an old man for a bit, but you are going too far now and will repent it.

SOCRATES: Why, O hākim—pardon me—O public servant? You know all about this work and know that all this work is good and will improve the people and yet you despise it and laugh at those who try to carry it out, and refuse to help.

KĀNUNGO: It is no duty of ours.

SOCRATES: Why, O hākim—pardon me—O public servants, the servants of those very villagers who are dying of dirt and disease and living in squalor and degradation and in wholly unnecessary poverty and suffering.

KĀNUNGO: We have our duties and these are not among them.

SOCRATES: But you are paid by the taxes these people pay, you use the schools, roads and hospitals these people pay for and yet you recognize no responsibility to help and to improve the conditions in which they live.

KĀNUNGO: We have plenty of other duties and this has never been one of them.

SOCRATES: No wonder the villages are in this awful condition, when you educated people—the only ones

[1] A sub-collector of revenue.
[2] Absolutely faithless to your salt.

with the knowledge of what should be done—refuse to recognize any duty of service to your people. If a boy or a cow or even a woman—excuse my putting the woman last and least important, but I speak from experience—falls into a well, do you say, 'I have many other duties and it is not one of them to cry for help and pull them out'?

KĀNUNGO: Don't be foolish, Socrates! This is a matter of common sense and common decency. I should shout for help, pull off my pagri[1] and make a rope to pull them out.

SOCRATES: But you might lose an hour of time and spoil your pagri.

KĀNUNGO: I should do all I could, even though I spoilt my clothes.

SOCRATES: And if a house caught fire?

KĀNUNGO: It would be my plain duty to help, Socrates.

SOCRATES: The same sense of duty?

KĀNUNGO: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: And yet when the children are losing their sight and their health and their beauty and their lives by dirt, disease and ignorance, and when the villagers are losing half their crops by ignorance of what to do and how to farm properly, it is no part of your duty to tell them what they should do?

KĀNUNGO: Hitherto I have never looked at it like this, but you make me doubt much in my mind whether, after all, you are not right and we public servants are not, after all, faithless to our salt.

SOCRATES: Surely it makes little difference whether a child dies of drowning in a well or of smallpox or dysentery, except that the drowning is less painful and others will not catch it as well.

KĀNUNGO: You are right, Socrates. You have

[1] Turban, consisting of many yards of cloth.

given me an entirely new idea of our duties. I will act on what you say, and I hope you will find me and my patwāris your strongest allies. And you too, zaildār and sufedposh, bear this all in mind. We have great influence and great opportunities. Let us see that we use them properly and try to uplift our people, instead of living on them like locusts. Good-bye, Socrates and thank you for a hard but excellent lesson which I shall never forget.

12. THE ASCENT OF MAN

SOCRATES: I have been thinking long over your village life, O elders, and I really do not think you are very much superior in your ways and methods to the wild animals, who you boast are your inferiors.

VILLAGERS: You are very aggressive this afternoon, old man. Why do you condemn us wholesale?

SOCRATES: Well, as I was coming along in the early morning, I found many people easing themselves in the fields and on the village paths, in no way different from animals—no attempt at privacy, no attempt at cleanliness. Why, animals are often cleaner than you in this respect!

VILLAGERS: Well, we all must do it somewhere and some time, Socrates. We admit our ways are crude and the smell is obnoxious, but we are used to it all and don't notice it now. Anyway, what do you suggest we should do?

SOCRATES: Well, there are your village pits, aren't there? You all dig pits for refuse nowadays, don't you?

VILLAGERS: Yes; we owe that to you, Socrates, and our villages have been infinitely cleaner ever since, our children have been healthier and their eyes better, there are fewer flies, less dust and double the crops. Yes, indeed, our pits are a great source of profit to us.

SOCRATES: Well, use those pits as latrines. Put walls or screens round and two planks across, and you have a first-class latrine. Reserve some for men, some for women, all round the village, and you will have still more manure, no smell and no one will be able to accuse you of being no better than animals. The daily refuse and cattle-dung and ashes will cover up the night-soil and stop all smell and flies, and your health will again improve, as at present flies sit on this filth and then sit on your food and on your children's eyes.

VILLAGERS: We will try it for our women, and perhaps later on for ourselves.

SOCRATES: But that isn't all, O villagers. You are like animals in many other ways.

VILLAGERS: For instance?

SOCRATES: Well, your houses are dark and have no windows—just like a rat-hole or a porcupine's earth.

VILLAGERS: Well, yes; but some of us have started putting in windows, Socrates. We don't all disregard your constant complaints.

SOCRATES: Then your marriages are just like the mating of birds—recorded nowhere.

VILLAGERS: There you are wrong, Socrates. Since you last came we have introduced marriage registers and we hope soon to move Government to make registration compulsory, as it has reduced litigation and trouble considerably and everyone now agrees that it should be universal and compulsory.

SOCRATES: Excellent. Then you are rapidly rising superior to the animal creation.

VILLAGERS: Of course we are; but you forget many things, Socrates. What about our books, our great buildings, our railways, our sewing machines and bicycles?

SOCRATES: Can you write?

VILLAGER: No, I cannot.

SOCRATES: Can you build a masonry house?

VILLAGER: No, I am not a mason.

SOCRATES: Can you make a bicycle or a sewing machine or even a cart?

VILLAGERS: No, we are not khātis,[1] or lohārs[2] or mistris.[3]

SOCRATES: Can you make a railway?

VILLAGERS: No, we are not engineers. We are zamindārs, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then in all these things you differ in nothing from animals, as you can make none of them?

VILLAGERS: No, but we can use them.

SOCRATES: Yes; a rat can sit in a railway train, but that does not make him human. Besides, if your bicycle or sewing machine goes out of order, you have no idea of putting it right.

VILLAGERS: Well, anyway, we are very superior to animals, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Superior—no! Different—yes; and I'll tell you how. First, your children are dirty and you never wash them, and your homes are dirty. Animals keep their children beautifully clean, and their homes too. So, too, animals are not diseased and their children's eyes are not bad like yours and your children's. Animals do not neglect their female children as you do. They treat all alike. Animals do not lock up their females as you lock up your women-folk and keep them in bad health and discomfort. Animals do not run away with each other's wives as you do. Animals do not go to law against each other, nor do they foul their drinking water as you foul your well water.

[1] Carpenter caste. [2] Iron-working caste. [3] Mechanics.

VILLAGERS: Stop, stop! You are shaming us intolerably, O Socrates, today.

SOCRATES: Well, am I speaking the truth or lying?

VILLAGERS: The truth, Socrates; but it is none the less hard to hear.

SOCRATES: Would you have me speak comfortable lies?

VILLAGERS: No; that would not help either, Socrates. We have heard them for hundreds of years, but go a bit slowly, Socrates—one thing at a time—and we will follow out all you say. Our brothers and our wives have to be persuaded as well as ourselves and it takes a long time to get each new thing accepted.

SOCRATES: That I can well understand, but some days I feel impatient and think that you will never be any better.

VILLAGERS: We are already better, Socrates, and no one knows it better than you do.

SOCRATES: Yes, I see changes. The manure pits, and the marriage registers, and some windows, and the reduction of jewellery, and many other improvements I see.

VILLAGERS: Thank you, Socrates; you are encouraging us greatly.

SOCRATES: Yes (*with a sly smile as he disappeared round the corner on his way home*). In one thing you are vastly ahead of the animal creation and I must mention it before I go. Animals can neither drink alcohol nor smoke a hookah. Farewell!

13. TRAINING

SOCRATES: How are you today, lambardārji?

LAMBARDĀR: Very well, thank you; and you?

SOCRATES: So, so. I am an old man, you know,

and alone. By the way, where is your son this morning?

LAMBARDĀR: He's training a horse out there in the fields.

SOCRATES: What is it being trained for?

LAMBARDĀR: For riding, of course.

SOCRATES: I did not know any special training was needed.

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, of course, Socrates. Bullocks must be taught to plough and pull carts, and horses must be taught to carry riders and to play polo and every other of the many duties they may have to perform.

SOCRATES: Indeed! How elaborate is the work of a zamindār when he has to train all his animals for their work.

Just then the lambardār's wife called to the lambardār and asked whether all the arrangements were complete for their daughter's wedding.

SOCRATES: Oh! may I congratulate you? When will the wedding take place.

LAMBARDĀR: The ceremonies will start tomorrow.

SOCRATES: Your daughter has been taught and trained, I suppose, for her future married life?

LAMBARDĀR: What do you mean?

SOCRATES: Well, didn't you say your animals had to be carefully trained for all the duties they might have to perform.

LAMBARDĀR: Yes; what has that to do with it?

SOCRATES: Well, isn't it equally necessary to train girls for their future duties?

LAMBARDĀR: Well, she can grind corn, she can make dung-cakes, and cook a bit. What more would you have? After all, she's only a woman.

SOCRATES: Splendid! Her husband will be indeed lucky to have such a carefully-trained wife.

LAMBARDĀR: Of course he will be; and haven't I spent a fortune on her jewellery? Ah me! He is a good lad, though. God grant he may have children to carry on his name! His father's grandchildren have so far all died in infancy—such is his luck!

SOCRATES: It is the heart's desire of every villager to see his children grow up strong and healthy?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, indeed, that is our whole prayer.

SOCRATES: Who brings up the children?

LAMBARDĀR: Their mother, of course.

SOCRATES: And this is her most important duty?

LAMBARDĀR: By far.

SOCRATES: And with all the diseases and accidents and the unfortunately insanitary state of our villages, it must be her most difficult duty?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, it is. As I said, our friend's grandchildren have all died young and he is still without grandchildren.

SOCRATES: The responsibility of the mother is indeed great.

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, it is. I hope my daughter will not fail.

SOCRATES: Not with the careful training I am sure she has had.

LAMBARDĀR: There you go again! What do you mean?

SOCRATES: Didn't you just tell me that all your animals are carefully trained for their future duties? Your daughter is far more important than your cattle. You have surely trained her thoroughly in all the difficult work of bringing up children.

LAMBARDĀR: What do you mean? I told you she could grind corn, make dung-cakes and cook rough food. What more do you want?

SOCRATES: I suppose your daughter has been taught about washing and feeding babies, making and

mending their clothes, how to deal with their simple ailments, sore eyes, cuts and bruises and pains inside? She knows how to ventilate her house and how to avoid smallpox, fever, plague, and so on?

LAMBARDĀR: Don't be foolish, old man. What do I know about all these things, let alone my daughter, who is a mere child and a woman at that? These things are all decreed by fate. If God wills, her children will grow up straight and healthy. If God wills otherwise—well, it is fate.

SOCRATES: But what about vaccination, and quinine, latrines and mosquito nets? You were a soldier once and know all about these things, and you know very well that the more attention paid to these things the healthier the regiment was.

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, you are right; but what has a woman to do with all that?

SOCRATES: A very great deal, indeed, O lambardār, if she wants healthy children! Can your daughter make clothes?

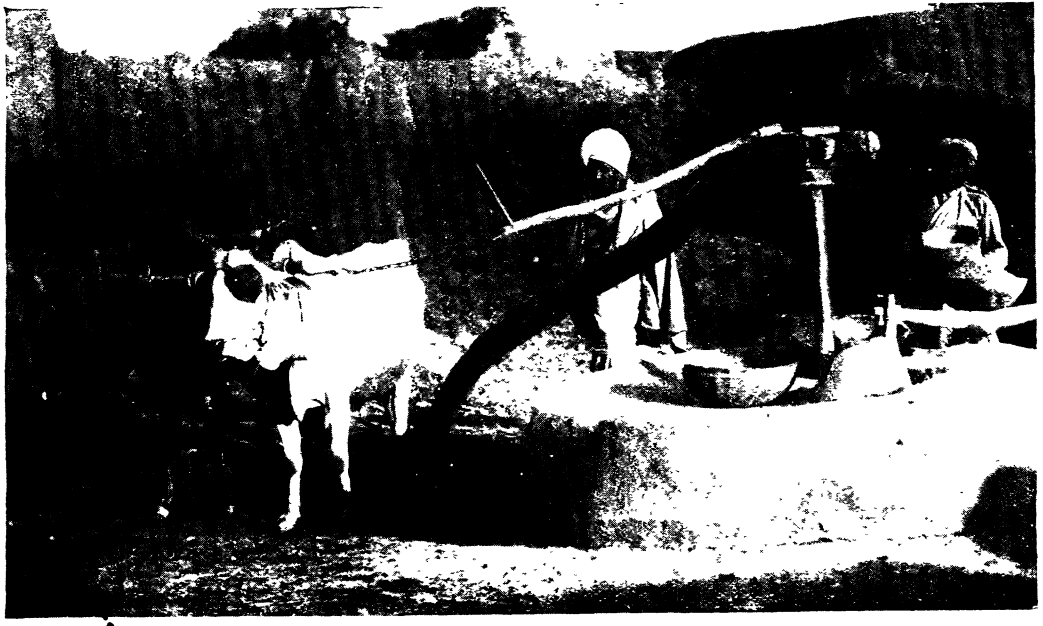
LAMBARDĀR: No, I'm afraid not; there's not much time to learn—the flour-mill and the dung-cakes and all the other work leave little leisure. Besides, who's to teach her? Her mother never learnt to sew.

SOCRATES: But the cattle can easily grind the corn with a kharās[1] and, as for dung-cakes, why not look for other things to burn and learn to make your ghi without all these hours of simmering on the cow-dung fire. Besides saving time for your womenfolk to spend on more important work, you would get more manure for your fields and so more crops.

LAMBARDĀR: I could do that, I dare say; but she's only a woman. What's the use of bothering about her?

SOCRATES: But you just said the bringing up of children was the most important duty of the girls?

[1] Bullock-driven flour-mill.



THE KHARĀS AT WORK

The bullock-driven flour-mill to relieve the women of the drudgery of grinding corn
If the oxen were not blindfolded they would get dizzy and fall down

LAMBARDĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And it was of vital importance to have healthy children to carry on your name?

LAMBARDĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And you said the children were very apt to die in infancy?

LAMBARDĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And you admitted that a lot could be done to make things healthier in a regiment?

LAMBARDĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And a village is much the same as a regiment, I suppose?

LAMBARDĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And so you admit that, after all, it is not all fate?

LAMBARDĀR : Yes, I suppose so.

SOCRATES : Then why not give the future mother a chance and train her for this, her most important duty?

LAMBARDĀR : How?

SOCRATES : Send her to school.

LAMBARDĀR : Where? There's no girls' school here.

SOCRATES : There is a boys' school?

LAMBARDĀR : Yes, of course.

SOCRATES : Who is going to bring up the children—the father or the mother?

LAMBARDĀR : The mother, of course.

SOCRATES : Then why not send her to school instead of the boys! Why have a boys' school when a girls' school is far more necessary! But why shouldn't your girl and your boy go to the same school?

LAMBARDĀR : Don't be silly, Socrates; you know it is impossible.

SOCRATES : Why, O lambardār?

LAMBARDĀR : Boys are boys and girls are girls; how can they go to school together?

SOCRATES: They all play together round the village, don't they?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: No one supervises them or looks after them?

LAMBARDĀR: No.

SOCRATES: Do they ever come to harm?

LAMBARDĀR: No, of course not; don't insinuate such a thing against us honest villagers.

SOCRATES: They will be supervised and looked after at school?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, I suppose so.

SOCRATES: Well, why should they come to harm there, then?

LAMBARDĀR: Well, when you put it like that, Socrates, I really do see no objection.

SOCRATES: Then send your girls to school, so that they may acquire some education and be able to learn the simple principles of running a home and bringing up children. Perhaps then you won't be so absolutely the slaves of fate, and have to see your children die through the neglect and ignorance of their mothers.

LAMBARDĀR: Socrates, it is too late for me, but I will try and make my children educate their girls for their future responsibilities.

14. THE COST OF UPLIFT

WHEN Socrates reached the chaupāl[1] he found a great stir and everyone talking at once.

SOCRATES: What's the matter, brothers? Has someone invented a new machine for cutting the crops, or a new pump for getting water out of the well?

VILLAGERS: No, of course not; why should anyone do anything of the sort? Aren't you satisfied with

[1] Assembly-room.

what we've got already? You're always worrying about new-fangled things.

SOCRATES: Well, what is it, anyway, that's exciting you?

VILLAGERS: We've been asked to pay a subscription every harvest.

SOCRATES: What tyranny!

VILLAGERS: You may well call it tyranny. Unheard of! What an insult! We wretched zamindārs, who're already ground down with taxation!

SOCRATES: I do sympathize with you in this dreadful calamity. You won't pay, of course?

VILLAGERS: Oh dear no.

SOCRATES: Quite right, too.

VILLAGERS: Why, only last week a bābuji[1] came, in lovely European clothes, and said, 'If you elect me your member next time, I will get your land revenue and taxes reduced in Council.'

SOCRATES: Splendid fellow! I hope he succeeds in the election.

VILLAGERS: We are sure he will. We'll all vote for him.

SOCRATES: What was this subscription wanted for? Building a clock-tower in Simla, I suppose?

VILLAGERS: No, not exactly. They wanted it for the uplift campaign, they said.

SOCRATES: Oh, well, that's not so bad. I hardly call that tyranny and insolence.

VILLAGERS: Why not? Isn't it the duty of Government to do all this?

SOCRATES: Yes, of course; but isn't it your duty to help too?

VILLAGERS: No; why?

SOCRATES: Well, all these things cost money, don't they, unless you do them yourselves?

[1] Educated man.

VILLAGERS: Yes, they do.

SOCRATES: If you expect Government to send men specially to your village, it must cost money?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: They have to be trained, they have to travel about, and they want pay and travelling allowance and all these things?

VILLAGERS: Yes, naturally.

SOCRATES: They must make a living, even if they are doing good work?

VILLAGERS: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: And it costs many more times to get this work of preaching uplift and showing you what to do done by a paid staff, than if you spent your spare time doing it yourselves?

VILLAGERS: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: Then who is to pay for it?

VILLAGERS: Why, Government, of course.

SOCRATES: But in the last six years you've had many miles of metalled roads built.

VILLAGERS: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: And many hospitals opened?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: And the schools and pupils have nearly doubled?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: In fact, everything has been done for you with increasing rapidity?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: And have your taxes increased?

VILLAGERS: No, not at all.

SOCRATES: And everything is more expensive nowadays than it used to be?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then where do you suppose the money is going to come from for doing all this work?

A HISSAR BULL

VILLAGERS: From Government.

SOCRATES: But isn't Government you yourselves, and don't you provide all the taxes; or does Government get the money from some mine or treasure house?

VILLAGERS: We pay all the taxes, of course.

SOCRATES: Then how is all this increasing work to be done if you don't pay more?

VILLAGERS: But we are so poor.

SOCRATES: But doesn't all this work vastly increase your wealth?

VILLAGERS: How?

SOCRATES: Well, take this 8-A[1] wheat seed; it gives you more grain and more straw.

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: What is the difference in value per acre? About ten or fifteen rupees?

VILLAGERS: Quite that.

SOCRATES: And how much is now sown in the district?

VILLAGERS: We hear about ten thousand acres.

SOCRATES: That makes one to one and a half lakhs extra value for the crops?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: What about Hissar bulls?[2] There are now seven hundred in the district?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is true, we believe.

SOCRATES: I suppose each bull gives fifty calves a year?

VILLAGERS: More than that; it's about seventy-five or a hundred, we believe.

SOCRATES: Well, take fifty. How many calves will seven hundred bulls give a year?

SCHOOLBOY: Thirty-five thousand, Socratesji.

SOCRATES: I thought your father couldn't work

[1] Punjab 8-A, an improved variety of wheat.

[2] Bulls from the Government Cattle Farm, Hissar.

that out! And how much more is each calf worth than if its sire were an ordinary Brahmini bull?[1]

VILLAGERS: Oh, anything from twenty-five to a hundred rupees.

SOCRATES: And then, in three or four years, these half-bred Hissar cow calves will have calves, and further improvement will take place?

VILLAGERS: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: Well, shall we allow an average of thirty rupees per calf?

VILLAGERS: That is well within the mark.

SOCRATES: Then thirty times thirty-five thousand?

SCHOOLBOY: One lakh, five thousand.

SOCRATES: Think again, my boy.

PATWĀRI: Ten and a half lakhs.

SOCRATES: That's better—ten and a half lakhs of rupees a year. And what about the pitted manure? You get more manure now you pit it?

VILLAGERS: Yes, much more.

SOCRATES: And it has much more strength than the stuff in the old heaps?

VILLAGERS: Yes, very much.

SOCRATES: And there are about fifty thousand pits now?

VILLAGERS: It is said so.

SOCRATES: And each pit is emptied once, and sometimes twice, a year?

VILLAGERS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And its contents are worth at least thirty rupees in extra crops?

VILLAGERS: It is more like a hundred rupees each, Socrates!

SOCRATES: Well, say thirty to be on the safe side. That gives how much extra crops a year?

[1] Bull loosed for religious reasons; selected for its cheapness, not its pedigree or shape.

SCHOOLBOY: Fifteen lakhs, Socratesji.

SOCRATES: Right this time, my boy; and what about the reduction of disease by the new cleanliness and the reduction of fever?

VILLAGERS: That's worth a good lot, too.

SOCRATES: And the twelve hundred Persian wheels you have now?

VILLAGERS: They're a regular gold mine, Socratesji!

SOCRATES: And the reduction of jewellery and men's ear-rings and children's ornaments, and the reduction of expenditure on weddings and 'wakes', and so on?

VILLAGERS: That's worth a good deal.

SOCRATES: And what about the interest saved on your twenty-five lakhs of co-operative bank capital?

VILLAGERS: That's a tidy sum too, we dare say; only we never could work out sums of interest.

SOCRATES: Shall we say fifty lakhs a year for everything put together?

VILLAGERS: That's a very low estimate.

SOCRATES: Well, anyway, let's take it at that. And what's your land revenue?

PATWĀRI: Sixteen lakhs for the district.

SOCRATES: Then you get at least three times your land revenue in extra profit from the money spent on the uplift work?

VILLAGERS: That seems so.

SOCRATES: And yet you grudge a subscription and want your taxes reduced?

VILLAGERS: Till now we did, but you make us a bit uncertain.

SOCRATES: It seems that every rupee spent in this work brings in every year at least ten or twenty rupees profit to yourselves?

VILLAGERS: Much more than that, when you come to work it out as you have done.

SOCRATES : Then it would be wiser if you paid more, instead of less, taxes?

VILLAGERS : We really think it would be, Socrates, but we never thought of it like that.

SOCRATES : And if you did get your taxes reduced, the money saved would only go in jewellery or litigation?

VILLAGERS : That is quite certain, Socrates.

SOCRATES : And your would-be member of Council, when he asks for your votes so that he may reduce your taxes, is really going to harm you instead of benefiting you?

VILLAGERS : It seems so, indeed.

SOCRATES : So that money spent in uplift and development is really an extremely sound investment and brings in a huge return in improved crops and improved health, comfort and happiness?

VILLAGERS : That is certainly true.

SOCRATES : Then pay the subscriptions and, instead of electing a member who will reduce your taxes, elect one who will develop and uplift the country and will not be afraid to raise more revenue to do so.

VILLAGERS : We will, Socrates, most certainly.

SOCRATES : One more thing, O foolish villagers! I believe you waste more money every year on jewellery, on litigation, on bribery, on compound interest and on such-like useless and wicked expenditure, than would pay all the land revenue and all the subscriptions you were ever asked for ten times over.

VILLAGERS : That's perfectly true, Socrates. We are bound to admit it.

SOCRATES : And, what is still worse, you will spend a thousand rupees on a lawsuit or on jewellery without a murmur, while if anyone asks you for five rupees for the Boy Scouts or to help a Baby Show, you will make a noise all round the village and say you are being robbed and looted.

VILLAGERS: You make us hang our heads with shame.

15. SENSIBLE FARMING

SOCRATES and the lambardār came walking along the road to the village. Suddenly Socrates stopped and put the tail of his pagri to his nose and said, 'What a stink!'

LAMBARDĀR: It is some wretched child. They are always fouling the village—the little beasts!

SOCRATES (*laughing*): Then I should say the whole population of your village consists of children—from what I have seen and smelt, lambardārji! Who looks after the children?

LAMBARDĀR: Why, the mothers, of course.

SOCRATES: And the children do what their mothers teach them to do?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, they do.

SOCRATES: And they do what they see their mothers doing and what they see their fathers doing?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, they do.

SOCRATES: Then, until their mothers and their fathers stop fouling the village, there is little hope that the children will behave any better.

LAMBARDĀR: That is so, I suppose, Socrates, and I am afraid it is the parents that teach the child bad habits.

Just then a man came up with a bag of seed on his head.

'Rām, Rām,' said Socrates. 'What are you carrying today?'

'Wheat seed,' said the man.

SOCRATES: Where did you buy it?

VILLAGER: From the bania.[1]

SOCRATES: What kind of wheat seed is it?

[1] Shopkeeping and money-lending caste.

VILLAGER: Just the ordinary stuff which everyone buys.

SOCRATES: And the same sort of stuff that he sells for you to eat?

VILLAGER: Yes, just the same.

SOCRATES: The bania, I suppose, selects the best seed for sowing and is an expert in the various kinds of seeds and the various qualities?

VILLAGER: Far from it, Socrates! He just takes what people bring him and sells it indifferently for sowing or for eating.

SOCRATES: Where do you buy your ironwork?

VILLAGER: From the smith.

SOCRATES: And your jewellery?

VILLAGER: From the jeweller.

SOCRATES: And your sweets?

VILLAGER: From the sweetmeat seller.

SOCRATES: Then why on earth do you not buy your seed from the seed merchant, instead of buying it from the ordinary shopkeeper?

VILLAGER: There is no seed merchant.

SOCRATES: What about 8-A wheat seed? Can you not buy that?

VILLAGERS: Yes, we can; but it is one seer[1] less to the rupee than what the bania sells.

SOCRATES: And how much more grain does it yield to the acre?

VILLAGER: Well, I am told that the yield is from half a maund to a maund more per kacha bigha[2] than the ordinary wheat.

SOCRATES: That is from two and a half to five maunds more to the acre.

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: And how much seed do you sow to the acre?

[1] 2 lb. avoirdupois. [2] One-fifth of an acre.

VILLAGER: More than half a maund.

SOCRATES: So if you use 8-A wheat seed, it will cost how much more to the acre?

VILLAGER: Between eight annas and a rupee.

SOCRATES: And the crops will be worth from ten to twenty rupees more?

VILLAGER: That is so.

SOCRATES: Then, would it not be more sensible to buy your wheat seed from the Government seed-agent than from the ordinary shopkeeper?

VILLAGER: It seems so, Socrates; but Government will want cash.

SOCRATES: Can you not get taccavi?

VILLAGER: Yes, taccavi is to be had for the asking.

SOCRATES: And what interest will the money-lender charge you?

VILLAGER: For seed, anything up to fifty per cent.

SOCRATES: And there is a co-operative bank in your village?

VILLAGER: Yes.

SOCRATES: And what interest do they charge?

VILLAGER: Twelve per cent, I believe.

SOCRATES: And you have not joined the bank?

VILLAGER: No, not yet.

SOCRATES: So that your idleness in not taking taccavi or joining the bank or buying seed from the Government depot is costing you enormous sums in interest, and you are getting many maunds less crops than you would otherwise.

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so, Socrates; but laziness is very difficult to overcome.

SOCRATES: And why do you sow wheat at all, living so near Delhi?

VILLAGER: All good farmers sow wheat.

SOCRATES: But there is a metalled road and a railway running into Delhi?

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so. What have they to do with it?

SOCRATES: The people in Delhi pay high prices for vegetables, for charcoal, for doob[1] grass, and for all manner of crops like garlic, tobacco, cummin, etc.

VILLAGER: Yes, I suppose they do. What has it got to do with us? We are zamindārs, not mālis.[2]

SOCRATES: But when wheat is ripening you are very liable to get hail?

VILLAGER: Yes, unfortunately, we often do.

SOCRATES: And when you want labour to cut your wheat everyone else is reaping his wheat?

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: And labour is very expensive then?

VILLAGER: Yes, it is.

SOCRATES: So not only is your crop liable to destruction by hail, but most of the profits of growing it go in labour.

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: Then why not take advantage of Delhi, follow the example of the māli, grow expensive crops and be comfortably off?

VILLAGER: We never thought of that. We have always left those sorts of crops to the mālis.

SOCRATES: But is there anything disgraceful in making big profits out of the land?

VILLAGER: No, certainly not. It is the wisest thing to do.

SOCRATES: And you have a Persian wheel now?

VILLAGER: Yes, I have.

SOCRATES: But it is idle for six months in the year?

VILLAGER: Yes, it is, I am afraid. We only use it for growing wheat in the rabi.[3]

SOCRATES: So the money you spent on the well and

[1] The best fodder grass. [2] Gardener caste.
[3] Spring harvest.

on the Persian wheel lies idle for six months every year?

VILLAGER: Yes, it does.

SOCRATES: And if you kept on sowing something and reaping something all the year round, of the various crops I have mentioned, you and your cattle and your wheel would never be idle, nor would you be overworked at harvest time and have to waste your money hiring labour as you do now.

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: Then make your plans so that you and your cattle will always be busy, but never overworked and never idle, and in this way you will get the greatest value both from your well and from your Persian wheel.

16. THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

'I am in very low spirits today, O citizens,' said Socrates. 'I expected to see some model villages.'

'Well, did things not come up to your expectations?' asked one of his hearers.

'The villages that I saw were models, sure enough, but they were models of dirt and squalor.'

'Why, where have you been?'

'Well, I thought that if I went to a village where there was a rural dispensary, I should find everything perfect, and the village clean and sanitary, the children neat and clean and bright, mosquito nets in use, and everything spick and span.'

'Well,' said one of the citizens, 'wasn't it so?'

'Not in the least,' answered Socrates. 'To my dismay the village with the dispensary, with a cultured and educated doctor, was just as dirty and insanitary as any other, and even in the neighbourhood of the dispensary, within a stone's throw of the doctor's own

dwelling, not a thing had been done to improve matters.'

'I don't wonder, Socrates, that nothing had been done. The villages with schools in them, where there are half-a-dozen masters, are just as bad as the others where there are no schools. So why should you expect the presence of a hospital to improve matters?'

'Then,' went on Socrates, 'I went to a village owned by a single man who is educated and wears foreign clothes and is highly cultured.'

'What did you expect to find there?' asked another man.

'Why,' answered Socrates, ' a perfect spot, of course.'

'And did you?'

'Well, I was so taken aback, that I made certain that I was in the wrong village, as it was exactly the same as any other village. It took a long time to persuade me that I had come to the right place. But there it was, just as squalid as any other. And so it is with the towns which are full of people who are supposed to be up to date and enlightened citizens.'

'You are an optimist, Socrates,' said one of the citizens. 'When will you learn that most people are all alike, whether they are educated or uneducated, rich or poor? As long as they themselves are not disturbed, and can get their food and their pleasures, little else matters.'

'This is indeed depressing. There must be something wrong somewhere, as this means that there can never be any progress until this attitude is quite changed.'

'You are right.'

'I think,' said Socrates, 'that the only thing to do is to tackle the young since you greybeards are beyond all change now.'

'There you are right. It will be easier to change the children than to change the elders.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'we must get hold of the children and teach them there is more in life than eating and sleeping and talking, and we must try to make them desirous of improving themselves and desirous of helping one another.'

'That,' agreed all who were listening, 'would be an excellent thing. But, Socrates, how on earth will you do it? You will have your work cut out.'

'I seem,' answered Socrates, 'to remember hearing of an institution called the Boy Scouts. Do you know anything about it?'

'Yes,' said one man, 'you are right. There is such an institution. We see the Boy Scouts at our fairs, helping the old women and the children and doing all manner of menial work for other people.'

'That's the thing I want—people who will do even menial work to help others. I want people with ideals of service who will spread abroad the desire for improvement, and the spirit of unselfishness.'

'Excellent, Socrates. We must try to find these Boy Scout workers, and see if they can help you.'

'But,' said Socrates, 'I don't want the little boys only. I want the college lads too, so that every man who becomes a Government servant or a teacher will have in him a determination to help his fellow men and to make the world better.'

'You want a great deal, Socrates. You must tackle our colleges and schools, our professors and teachers, and try to make them all do as you wish.'

'Indeed I must,' answered Socrates. 'I see that we must get a new spirit spread abroad among our educated people—the spirit of service—and then, whatever

profession they follow, they will always be ready and anxious to help, and to turn their knowledge to good account.'

'But,' objected one man, 'if the doctor helps to clean the village, and the engineer gives a lecture on ventilating the houses, or the schoolmaster tells the women how to clean their children, they will all want extra pay and allowances.'

'No,' answered Socrates, 'no, they won't; not if they have imbibed the true spirit of service. They will be Boy Scouts when they are at school, and will learn habits of self-reliance, usefulness and social service. When they go to college they will continue to cultivate this spirit so that when they go out into the world they will do their best to help their fellow men and women to improve their homes and villages and towns, and to lead better lives in every way, without expecting any pay for what they do.'

'Well, Socrates,' said all the citizens, 'may you succeed, and when you do so you will indeed make such a world of difference to this country that it will become a paradise.'

17. BURNING SILVER AND GOLD

SOCRATES was going through the fields with several zamindārs, and the crops were very poor.

'Why are the crops so bad?' said Socrates.

VILLAGERS: The land is bodi and is getting more and more bodi every year.

SOCRATES: Why is that?

VILLAGERS: We are sure we do not know, but this is a fact.

SOCRATES: I, too, have heard many people say so You burn your cow-dung here, I suppose?

VILLAGERS: Yes, of course we do and have always done so.

SOCRATES: You cultivate all your land every year, nowadays, don't you?

VILLAGERS: Yes, we have to. Our population has increased and all the land has come under cultivation.

SOCRATES: In the old days the land used to lie fallow every second or third year?

VILLAGERS: Yes, it did.

SOCRATES: You put very little manure into the land nowadays?

VILLAGERS: There is not nearly enough for every field every year.

SOCRATES: Manure is the food of the land, isn't it?

VILLAGERS: Yes, it is.

SOCRATES: And the cow-dung that you burn is the best food of all for the land?

VILLAGERS: Yes, it is.

SOCRATES: And this cow-dung comes out of the land in the shape of grain and straw?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: So every year you take strength out of the land, but refuse to give the land back its due?

VILLAGERS: Yes, we suppose that is so.

SOCRATES: And year after year you keep the land hungry and expect it to work for you?

VILLAGERS: Yes, we are afraid we do, Socrates.

SOCRATES: In the old days, when you only took occasional crops out of the land, it had time to recover, but now you cultivate it every year. The land is getting weaker and weaker because you refuse to feed it.

VILLAGERS: That must be correct, Socrates, and explains why we get poorer crops now than we used to.

SOCRATES: And yet you blame the land by saying

it is weak, instead of saying, 'We have starved the land and it can no longer serve us.'

VILLAGERS: Yes, you are right, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then if you want good crops you must either find something else to burn or you must find something else for manure. You must go on trying until you succeed, as you will never get good crops the way you farm at present.

VILLAGERS: That seems so, Socrates.

SOCRATES: I think the easiest thing to do is to find something else to burn.

VILLAGERS: What shall we burn?

SOCRATES: The principal thing you want dung-cakes for is to boil the milk and keep the hookah going?

VILLAGERS: That is so. We can cook our food over wood or charcoal.

SOCRATES: Well, then, abandon the hookah for a bit until you have found something else instead of dung-cakes, and as for the milk, many people already set their milk without a fire.

VILLAGERS: Yes, we have heard of that, but we prefer a fire.

SOCRATES: Well, use a wood fire and a haybox.

VILLAGERS: But if we use a wood fire the women can't leave the milk boiling while they attend to other work.

SOCRATES: What other work?

VILLAGERS: Why, making dung-cakes, for one thing, of course.

SOCRATES: But then, if you burn wood there will be no dung-cakes to make and the woman will then be able to sit by the fire, and while she is tending the fire she will be able to sew or knit, teach the children to read, or do any of the other things you want your women to do.

VILLAGERS: That is true, Socrates. Once our

women can stop making dung-cakes they will have leisure for the many things which, since the girls have started going to the village school, they have learnt to do.

SOCRATES: Then stop making dung-cakes, and let those who want to boil milk boil it over a wood fire and then put it into the haybox.

VILLAGERS: But where will the wood come from?

SOCRATES: Wood is like wheat or any other crop. If you want it you must sow it.

VILLAGERS: Who ever heard of sowing trees!

SOCRATES: Every sensible man sows trees if he wants timber or firewood.

VILLAGERS: Very well, we will sow them; but where?

SOCRATES: Why, on your waste land outside and inside the village, in your yards, round your ponds, along both sides of your roads—there are plenty of places to sow trees; and many of your villages have got hills and waste grounds where nothing else would grow and many of your villages have got bannis which are usually full of rubbish that is useless either for firewood or timber. Cut all that out and sow firewood trees.

VILLAGERS: Even then we doubt if we shall have enough.

SOCRATES: Well, there are the stalks of cotton and the stalks of the oilseeds, like sarson and til and the stalks of arhar,[1] and gowär,[2] and then there is pampas grass and near the rivers you have jhao.[3]

VILLAGERS: Well, even all that will probably be insufficient.

SOCRATES: Make the most of them all, and if that

[1] A pulse. [2] A fodder seed.
[3] Tamarisk.

is not enough then experiment with coal and coke, and see if it is not cheaper to buy (co-operatively, of course) truck-loads of coke and coal for your fires, and save your precious manure for the fields.

VILLAGERS: That is very advanced, Socrates; but for those living near the railway it might be possible, when we have all learnt the tremendous value of dung as manure.

'And, finally,' said Socrates to the villagers as he went away, 'there is a wonderful new magic called bijli.[1] It is made somehow out of the rivers and carried on wires wherever you like, and this wonderful bijli will give you light or cook your food or do anything you want. It is possible that in time, if you can't get enough fuel to burn, it will be worth your while to bring in this bijli from the rivers by wires, to cook your food for you, so that you may be able to save the precious cow-dung for your fields.'

VILLAGERS: You are looking a long way ahead, Socrates, but we have never found you wrong yet, so even this wonderful thing may come to pass.

SOCRATES: We will see; but, whatever else you do, stop burning silver and gold as you do now when you burn upla.[2] You wouldn't burn the food of yourselves or your cattle, so why burn the food of your land?

VILLAGERS: That is certainly sound common sense, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And only the other day I saw a cream separator working, and I was told it produces more and cleaner ghi, takes far less time, and only a fifth of the fuel. Why not try one of them?

VILLAGERS: We will, Socrates.

[1] Electricity. [2] Dung-cakes.

18. WASTE

VILLAGERS: We get poorer every day, Socrates.

SOCRATES: I believe it, O villagers, and am not surprised.

VILLAGERS: Why, old man?

SOCRATES: You waste everything you have.

VILLAGERS: Waste! How waste? We are far too poor to waste anything.

SOCRATES: You are the most wasteful people in the world.

VILLAGERS: Explain yourself a bit, Socrates. We neither gamble nor drink. We don't buy expensive clothes or ride in motor cars.

SOCRATES: There are many other ways of wasting your wealth than these.

VILLAGERS: Well, tell us some of them.

SOCRATES: Well, first you waste your village refuse and sweepings by throwing them out in the open on heaps, where they will blow away in the wind, be scattered by cattle, dried up by the sun and washed away by the rain.

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is true, we fear.

SOCRATES: And you waste the most valuable thing that God has given you.

VILLAGERS: What do you mean?

SOCRATES: You burn all your cow-dung.

VILLAGERS: That is also true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And you waste your time and labour by sowing bad seed instead of good.

VILLAGERS: That is true, Socrates. We do not bother much about where we buy our seed.

SOCRATES: And you breed and feed bad cattle instead of good, although bad cattle eat just as much as good, and they do only half the work and give less than half the milk.

VILLAGERS: We are afraid you are right again there.

SOCRATES: And you waste your women's time grinding the corn which your cattle could do much quicker, and in making dung-cakes, when they ought to be doing the far more important work of looking after and washing their children and making clothes for the whole family.

VILLAGERS: That is true also.

SOCRATES: So that you have to waste your money buying clothes from the darzi and your children remain dirty, uncared for and unhealthy.

VILLAGERS: That is a fact, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And you use a charsa[1] instead of a Persian wheel, and that wastes the labour both of yourselves and of your cattle.

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: And you reap your crops with an implement not much bigger than a toothpick, and thereby waste more time and labour.

VILLAGERS: Yes, Socrates; our sickle is not a very big implement.

SOCRATES: And you plough with an antiquated piece of twisted wood, when you know very well that one ploughing with the Gurgaon plough is equal to four with your old wooden plough.

VILLAGERS: That is quite true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Does not that waste time and labour?

VILLAGERS: Yes, it does.

SOCRATES: And you put your money into jewellery, losing money in the making of the jewellery.

VILLAGERS: Yes, we lose money in making jewellery.

SOCRATES: And it is steadily worn away by use.

[1] Leather bag, requiring four able-bodied men and four bullocks to work it.

THE CHARSA

The leather bag—the most expensive form of irrigation ever devised

THE WOODEN PLOUGH

VILLAGERS: Yes, it soon wears away.

SOCRATES: Whereas if you put it into the co-operative bank it would steadily increase.

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: And you waste your health by not using mosquito nets and quinine and by not vaccinating your children.

VILLAGERS: Yes, we do.

SOCRATES: And you waste your money over expensive marriage ceremonies, death ceremonies, wakes, etc. and in litigation.

VILLAGERS: Yes, a lot of money is spent in these things.

SOCRATES: And you borrow money at thirty-six per cent, instead of joining the bank and getting it at twelve per cent.

VILLAGERS: That is also true.

SOCRATES: Shall I tell you any more, or is that enough to convince you how wasteful you are?

VILLAGERS: Enough, enough, Socrates! We are indeed a feckless people.

SOCRATES: What it comes to is, then, that you do not so much need wonderful new inventions to make you rich as to be told how not to waste the wealth and resources that God has already given you. You want to be taught how to use and how to spend what you have already got, rather than to be taught new things and shown new schemes. But I will tell you one more thing that you waste, if you like.

VILLAGERS: What is that, Socrates? We may as well hear it all now you are wound up.

SOCRATES: What about the time spent sitting round the fire in the early mornings in the winter? And the straw and grass burnt then which would be useful as fuel or manure? The way to get warm is to work, not to sit around a fire.

VILLAGERS: You are again right, Socrates.

SOCRATES: When you stop wasting your resources you will no longer be poor men, but not till then. It is no use going on as you are doing now, and looking continually to Government to produce some miracle to double your wealth or run the administration without taxes. Your remedy lies in your own hands.

VILLAGERS: From all you have said, Socrates, we believe you are right. We must revise our ways of living and farming and not go on with our stupid old ways, foolishly hoping for some miracle to make us millionaires.

19. BAD BULLS

SOCRATES was sitting talking to a Brahmin, and the cattle were passing by. Presently a little Brahmini bull came by, misshapen and undersized.

SOCRATES: Whose bull is that, misrji?[1]

BRAHMIN: That belongs to no one; it is sacred.

SOCRATES: But it is used by you for your cows?

BRAHMIN: Oh, yes; it is the only bull we have and we keep it for our cows.

SOCRATES: Then, misrji, I am surprised at a Brahmin like you patronizing the slaughter-house.

BRAHMIN (*very angry*): I do not understand, Socrates; and if you suggest such a thing here you will be killed.

SOCRATES: I am indeed sorry, misrji, but the truth will slip out of my stupid mouth every now and then.

BRAHMIN: You lie, old man; it is not true. I do not patronize the vile thing you suggest.

SOCRATES: Yes, you do; why pretend you don't? It does not make things better.

BRAHMIN: How is it true then?

SOCRATES: That bull is very bad, isn't it?

[1] Title of respect of a Brahmin.

BRAHMIN: It is not very good.

SOCRATES: I say it is extremely bad.

BRAHMIN: Well, it is rather poor.

SOCRATES: I say it is what is called 'damn bad'.

BRAHMIN: I don't know what you mean by your dam sham,[1] but I admit it is not a good bull.

SOCRATES: And its male calves will not be fit for ploughing and its cow calves will give very little milk.

BRAHMIN: The offspring will be poor, I admit.

SOCRATES: And will be slaughtered, will they not?

BRAHMIN: Shame! Shame! Never! God forbid! How dare you insult me in this way?

SOCRATES: But if they are useless to you, you must get rid of them?

BRAHMIN: We may sell some of them, certainly.

SOCRATES: And the man you sell to will slaughter them?

BRAHMIN: Certainly not; we will make that a condition of sale. We never sell to butchers and such-like people.

SOCRATES: What will your purchaser do with them?

BRAHMIN: I don't know, I am sure.

SOCRATES: He will sell them in turn?

BRAHMIN: Yes, he may.

SOCRATES: With any condition?

BRAHMIN: How should I know?

SOCRATES: And so it will go on, every purchaser will find them useless and sell them?

BRAHMIN: He may.

SOCRATES: And finally the butcher will buy them.

BRAHMIN: That is, I fear, possible in the end.

SOCRATES: So that you are really patronizing the slaughter-house, after all, misrji.

[1] Urdu idiom of repeating the vowel sound with changed consonants.

BRAHMIN: But in any case the butcher must slaughter something. That is his profession.

SOCRATES: Will he slaughter the calves of Hissar bulls?

BRAHMIN: No, certainly not; they are worth far too much to waste in that way.

SOCRATES: Not even a butcher would do that?

BRAHMIN: Never!

SOCRATES: Then if you all keep Hissar bulls, it doesn't matter how you sell them or what you do with them, they will never see the slaughter-house?

BRAHMIN: That is so.

SOCRATES: Then as long as you keep bad bulls you are a patron of the slaughter-house.

BRAHMIN: It seems so, Socrates, but we have never thought of it that way before. We consider it wicked to castrate a Brahmini bull, however bad.

SOCRATES: But in reality it is more holy to castrate it than to allow it to breed?

BRAHMIN: It seems so.

SOCRATES: And it is evidently never safe to follow an old custom blindly. Follow nothing blindly. Keep your eyes open. Consider it carefully and, if it is good, follow it; if not, leave it.

20. TWO TREASURIES

SOCRATES was sitting in the chaupāl when the Jemadār[1] came by, looking very busy and girded for a long walk.

'Where are you going,' said Socrates, 'Jemadār Sahib, today?'

JEMADĀR: I am going to the treasury to draw my pension.

SOCRATES: What is the treasury?

[1] Indian commissioned officer.

JEMADĀR : Don't you know? It is the place where Government collects all its valuables.

SOCRATES : Then I suppose you all have treasuries in your village.

JEMADĀR : What do you mean, Socrates? We are very poor people. We have no treasuries.

SOCRATES : You have dug a pit now, haven't you, Jemadār Sahib?

JEMADĀR : Yes, I certainly have, after much persuasion from you.

SOCRATES : And you throw into it all your rubbish and muck?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And your house sweepings?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And all your ashes?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And all the weeds that grow round the village in the monsoon, you cut and throw in there?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And the old thatches of your huts you throw in there?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And the dung of your cattle you throw in there?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And the scrapings and sweepings of the streets and farmyards?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : In fact, Jemadār Sahib, you put everything in there that you can possibly collect?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And it all rots, and several months afterwards you take it out and use it for manure?

JEMADĀR : Yes, I do.

SOCRATES : And you get double the crops you used to ?

JEMADĀR : You are right, Socrates. I get at least double as much crops as before I started taking your advice in this matter.

SOCRATES : Then your pit is not a pit, but a treasury ?

JEMADĀR : Yes, Socrates, indeed it is. You are right. I have really got a treasury now.

SOCRATES : You belong to the village bank, don't you ?

JEMADĀR : Yes, I do ; again on your advice.

SOCRATES : And you put into it all the money you can save by the sale of your crops and by your pension as well ?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And by the sale of your cattle ?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : And all the money you can possibly get hold of ?

JEMADĀR : Yes.

SOCRATES : You don't invest any money in jewellery now ?

JEMADĀR : No, I don't.

SOCRATES : So all your spare rubbish goes into the pit and all your spare money goes into the bank ?

JEMADĀR : That is so, Socrates.

SOCRATES : Then you not only have one treasury in your pit, but you have a second treasury in your bank ?

JEMADĀR : Yes, Socrates, you are right again ; I have two treasuries.

SOCRATES : So every sensible zamindār has two treasuries—his pit and his bank—and as long as he abides by these two he will never be in want.

JEMADĀR : You are right, Socrates. I have never been in want since I took your advice and dug a pit and joined the bank.

SOCRATES: Good luck, and a pleasant tramp to the treasury and back.

JEMADĀR: Thank you; and good day, old friend.

21. FATALISM, OR 'MĀLIK KI MARZI'[1]

VILLAGER: O Socrates, my cup of woe is full; my crops are rotten, my children sick and my debts increasing. We zamindārs have a very miserable lot. If only Government ——

SOCRATES: So, it's Government to blame, is it?

VILLAGER: The rain——

SOCRATES: And God is not faultless either.

VILLAGER: Well, don't I work hard and am I not worthy of all pity? When Government——

SOCRATES: Government again?

VILLAGER: Don't I pay land revenue? And then the soil——

SOCRATES: God once more in trouble! O unfortunate Providence, O wretched Government! You zamindārs burn your manure or use it to poison your village, plough with an antiquated piece of twisted wood, buy seed from the sweetmeat seller instead of from the seed merchant, use a charsa instead of a Persian wheel to water with, borrow money at thirty-six per cent when the co-operative bank offers it at twelve per cent, live in filth, have no windows in your houses, refuse to vaccinate your children, and then, when your crops fail, your debts increase and your children fall sick, you blame God and Government. My friends, you want a 'bara double Parameshar'[2] and as for Government you want a poor-house, not a Government.

VILLAGER: Well, Socrates, what are we to do?

[1] 'The will of the Almighty.'

[2] 'A double extra powerful providence.'

SOCRATES: Well, when things go wrong, think it out and see who is to blame, and whether you have done everything possible to keep yourselves in health and make your crops good; and if you have really done everything possible, then, if your state is still bad, you can begin to think of blaming God or Government.

VILLAGER: But when our crops fail or our children get smallpox, it is Mālik ki marzi, isn't it?

SOCRATES: But vaccinated children don't get smallpox?

VILLAGER: No.

SOCRATES: Then is the vaccinator more powerful than the Mālik?[1]

VILLAGER: No. What an idea!

SOCRATES: When plague came, why did your children die?

VILLAGER: Mālik ki marzi.

SOCRATES: But the Deputy Commissioner came along and got you all inoculated and no more died?

VILLAGER: Yes, that is so.

SOCRATES: Then is the Deputy Commissioner mightier than the Mālik?

VILLAGER: Of course not.

SOCRATES: Then vaccination and inoculation are also Mālik ki marzi?

VILLAGER: It seems so.

SOCRATES: And perhaps it is the will of God that the stuff which, if left in the villages will poison you and your children, should, if put in the field, give you double crops?

VILLAGER: That is probably very true also.

SOCRATES: And iron ploughs and Persian wheels are also the will of God?

VILLAGER: I suppose so.

[1] The owner of the world, God.

A COMFORTABLE VILLAGE

SOCRATES: Perhaps then it is the will of God that you should live and not die, be healthy and not sick, have good crops instead of bad?

VILLAGER: I suppose so.

SOCRATES: Then when your crops fail and your children die, don't say it is Mālik ki marzi, but find out what is wrong and put it right. The Mālik wishes you good, not evil, and it is only your idleness and stupidity that attribute all your misfortunes to Him instead of to your own folly and ignorance.

VILLAGER: I shall remember this, O Socrates.

SOCRATES: And leave Government alone, too. Government takes your land revenue, which would not be a twentieth of your crops if you manured the land and farmed properly, and in return gives you protection, gives you schools, hospitals, roads and a hundred things you never heard of in the old days. So don't put the blame for your own follies and mistakes upon Government, which is taking infinite pains to tell you how to put things right in your village.

VILLAGER: Very well, Socrates; I shall bear in mind what you say, and before badnāming[1] God and Government will see if it is not I myself who am to blame.

22. COMFORTABLE VILLAGES

SOCRATES: Rām, Rām, chaudhriji.[2] Where have you come from?

CHAUDHRI: I have been to my garden.

SOCRATES: Where is that?

CHAUDHRI: Outside the village there on my well.

SOCRATES: How far away?

CHAUDHRI: About half a mile.

SOCRATES: How long have you been there?

CHAUDHRI: Only one night, Socrates.

[1] Giving a bad name to.

[2] Title of a farmer.

SOCRATES: I hope you left your wife and children in good health there, chaudhriji—it must be such a jolly place for them to live in, away from the dogs and the smells and the dust of the village.

CHAUDHRI: What do you mean, old man? Your mind seems to be wandering today.

SOCRATES: Well, you said you had a garden, didn't you?

CHAUDHRI: Yes.

SOCRATES: And I know you have a family.

CHAUDHRI: Yes.

SOCRATES: Well, where else would they be except in your garden, where they can live in healthy fresh air and sit and play among beautiful flowers?

CHAUDHRI: There are not many flowers there, Socrates, and my family is in that house yonder.

SOCRATES: Well, what's the use of having a garden if your family don't enjoy it? They must leave the village at once to live there.

CHAUDHRI: Socrates, will you never be satisfied? We have made pits and put up screens round them, and two planks across them, for use as latrines. We clean the village daily and have an extra special cleaning day once a week, and at your bidding I have put up a Persian wheel and planted fruit trees and some vegetables at my well. We are all very grateful to you, as our health is far better and our crops are double, what with more manure, better water arrangements, better seed, more and better ploughing and new and more valuable crops. What more do you want, you restless old man?

SOCRATES: Well, your village is certainly clean, as you say; there is no smell and the pits used as latrines are a godsend, especially to your women. Your houses are light and airy, chimneys take away the smoke and rats can find no place to harbour in.

CHAUDHRI: Yes, we do all that and like it now, although it took a long time and a lot of persuading and pushing and driving.

SOCRATES: Well, somehow the village still isn't right. As I come along I find the place so untidy, so tumbledown, so ramshackle, I despair of your ever being comfortable.

CHAUDHRI: What is wrong then?

SOCRATES: Well, to start with, the streets are all so narrow that a cart can't go along many of them, and two carts can't pass anywhere. Lucky you are generally so good-tempered, or there'd be many a fight when two carts met in your streets!

CHAUDHRI: Yes, the streets are narrow, there's no authority to stop people building out, and where the streets are wide people build steps and chabutras[1] in front of their houses, and there's no one to say them nay.

SOCRATES: And then there are those nasty drains running down outside the walls of the houses from the upper storeys. They are horrible.

CHAUDHRI: I agree, but how can we avoid them? House work is often done upstairs and the waste water must go somewhere.

SOCRATES: Indeed it must, but it mustn't go splashing down the outsides of the houses leaving a sour stinking crust on the walls. These wall-side drains can never be kept clean. They must always stink.

CHAUDHRI: Well, what are we to do?

SOCRATES: Nothing should be done upstairs which will cause water to run down the outside of the walls. All work involving the use of water must be done on the ground floor.

CHAUDHRI: That might be arranged Socrates, with a little trouble.

[1] Raised platforms.

SOCRATES: And then there are the cesspools outside the houses. They too are horrible.

CHAUDHRI: What are we to do with them?

SOCRATES: Those who have them must certainly arrange to empty and clean them regularly, but even then they are very nasty things and should not be allowed.

CHAUDHRI: You are making things very difficult, old man.

SOCRATES: No I am making them clean and once they are clean and you have learnt clean ways you will bless the day that I came and worried you.

CHAUDHRI: That I believe, but how are we to set about this last 'counsel of perfection'?

SOCRATES: There can rarely be proper drains in a village so that some sort of sump for the water is essential if you are going to do any washing in your houses. But this cesspool should not be outside but inside your premises so that it will catch the eye—and if neglected, the nose—of your careful and thrifty housewife. She will see to its being kept clean and sweet.

CHAUDHRI: You are right there, Socrates, but you are adding more work for her.

SOCRATES: Why not for you, O hookah smoking gentleman of ease and leisure! But in any case it must be kept clean by someone. That even you will admit, and better let your wife see about it than cause an unhealthy stink. But most of the work can be avoided by doing as much as possible of the washing of yourselves, your children and your clothes and dishes on the wells, where you can have a proper drain running to flower beds which will absorb the waste water and in return give you things beautiful to the eye and nose.

CHAUDHRI: That is possible, but it will mean

building washing places for the women and children on the wells.

SOCRATES: And why not, old man? Your women have a hard enough life as it is, and without making a mess of their backyards cannot enjoy a good wash.

CHAUDHRI: True, Socrates; and, to please you, we will make a washing place on the drinking well where the women can wash themselves and their children and clothes in comfort and privacy.

SOCRATES: That's right, but I haven't done with your narrow streets yet.

CHAUDHRI: What more, old man?

SOCRATES: And when one meets anyone carrying rubbish—generally a woman, as you men are too 'noble' to clean things yourselves—he is lucky if some of the dust and muck does not go down his neck, so narrow are the streets.

CHAUDHRI: Yes, that is true.

SOCRATES: And quite unnecessary.

CHAUDHRI: Oh, how? My wife would gladly be rid of the trouble of carrying basket-loads of rubbish on her head—we've learnt that much, Socrates, from you, that if we want a clean house and village we must clean it ourselves and not rely on sweepers.

SOCRATES: That is good—and you gain in crops by the additional manure, and in health by the additional cleanliness. The sweeper cares nothing for your health or your crops, so will never scrape the place as clean as you zamindārs will, however severely you talk to him.

CHAUDHRI: Yes, yes; but you need not preach us that sermon now. We want to know how to avoid carrying muck on our heads.

SOCRATES: Shābāsh, old man, but your wife's head you mean I think—not your own? I've never seen you carrying anything yet on your lordly head.

CHAUDHRI: Well, let it pass; my wife's head, if you will, but go on.

SOCRATES: Why, use wheelbarrows, of course, instead of baskets. The village carpenter or blacksmith can learn at Gurgaon how to make them, and one trip with the barrow is equal to four or five with a headload, and your poor wife won't hurt her eyes or get her hair and clothes filthy with the muck that drops or blows out of the basket.

CHAUDHRI: Thank you, Socrates, that does sound a really useful idea and I'll try it.

SOCRATES: And then, perhaps, O noble man, you will condescend to help your overworked wife by occasionally wheeling the barrow yourself now that your noble head need not carry an inferior basket.

CHAUDHRI: I'll try, at any rate, Socrates, as you seem so particular about it.

SOCRATES: I haven't done with your village yet.

CHAUDHRI: What, still more, old man?

SOCRATES: There are so many ruined houses, the home of rats and snakes, and the ground is all uneven and it is all so untidy, I want you and your Boy Scouts to spare a little time and level all that up, so that your children can run about there and play if they want to. Pull down all the ruins and level the ground, and make the place smart and tidy, and pave the streets and lanes with brick or stone.

CHAUDHRI: That is not hard, and once done will last a long time.

SOCRATES: Then do it, chaudhriji, and quickly.

CHAUDHRI: I will, old man.

SOCRATES: And why make your garden a mile off the village? Why not make your village itself a garden?

CHAUDHRI: How?

SOCRATES: Well, I hardly know myself, but I think

you must begin living on your wells and making them comfortable little homesteads, with flowers round them. Keep your cattle there too, and gradually reduce the size of the ābādi,[1] so that the people left there can make themselves more comfortable, widen the streets and have little gardens in their courtyards, and so on.

CHAUDHRI: That is not impossible, but it will require energy and some organization, both of which are not too common in our village.

SOCRATES: Yes, the hookah again, and your eternal jealousies and quarrels. Well, why not let the schoolmaster and his Boy Scouts run your village gardens?

CHAUDHRI: That is possible, Socratesji, as the Scouts are getting better and better nowadays and more willing to help, more sensible and more handy. Besides, the master has been well trained, and there are few questions he can't answer and few things he can't do. Why, he can adjust an iron plough and, what is more, he can plough straight furrows. He is a schoolmaster after my own heart.

SOCRATES: Splendid! I am glad you like the new kind of teacher, trained in the ways of making village life more comfortable, and I am glad you like the teachers trained there. Now consult masterji and see how you can make your village still better than it already is, and ask him to buy you some pretty, coloured pictures for the walls of your houses. Now that your houses are light and airy you want something to decorate them with.

CHAUDHRI: I will, Socratesji, and we will see what we can do to please you still more.

SOCRATES: Don't please me, old man. Make yourselves comfortable; that's all I ask.

[1] Village dwelling site crowded with houses and no room to turn round in.

23. B.A., LL.B.

SOCRATES came into the chaupāl, as usual, and found a smart young man, in 'Europe' clothes, talking to the village elders in a very superior way, and the elders seemed very proud of him. The elders had their hookah, of course, but the young gentleman was smoking cigarettes. 'Good evening, sir,' said Socrates to him, and 'Rām, Rām,' to the elders.

'Rām, Rām,' said the lambardār, 'this is my eldest son—B.A., LL.B.'

'I am very glad to meet him,' said Socrates, 'and I am sure he will be a credit to you. I see he has learnt the law.'

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, he is a pleader now.

SOCRATES: Then I suppose he has come to warn you all against the futility of litigation.

LAMBARDĀR: Indeed, no; he has come to ask us to give him all our cases, and I hope that you, my bhaibands,[1] will use no one else but my son—and, by the way, chaudhriji, this seems a good opportunity for you to sue that vile fellow in the next patti[2] for the land he has encroached upon. God knows my son's education has cost me enough, and we must get some return for it.

CHAUDHRI: Yes, I might think of that case now.

SOCRATES: Then he will charge no fees for his services?

FATHER AND SON (*together*): Oh, won't he? Of course he will. We have to live, haven't we?

SOCRATES: Then this legal training is going to stir up still more litigation and make the village still more quarrelsome and still more poor?

FATHER: Litigation is a curse, to be sure; but what can we do? This son of mine went to college and

[1] Caste brothers.

[2] Subdivision of a village.

that was the most popular course of study to take, and he did what the others did.

SOCRATES : Why didn't he become a doctor or an engineer ?

FATHER : That was a long and difficult course, and he said that a lawyer was a much more important man than either of these.

SOCRATES : Why ?

FATHER : Well, he said a lawyer was allowed to say and do very much what he liked, and need respect no one nor pay attention to anyone. He joins what he calls a Bar Association, which has no rules and no discipline, works when he likes and gets big fees, and altogether he said it was such a jolly life that he must become a lawyer.

SOCRATES : But if every boy becomes a lawyer how will they all live ?

FATHER : I am sure I don't know, but there is plenty of litigation from us and our bhaibands to keep him busy.

SOCRATES : But, Pleader Sahib, what is your profession really ?

PLEADER : We argue cases in the courts.

SOCRATES : What is the result ?

PLEADER : One side or the other wins.

SOCRATES : And the other loses ?

PLEADER : Yes, of course.

SOCRATES : And both sides are poorer than before ?

PLEADER : Yes, generally.

SOCRATES : So that really both sides lose ?

PLEADER : I suppose they do.

SOCRATES : Then your profession just helps people to become poorer ?

PLEADER : Yes, that seems so.

SOCRATES : You don't help anyone, as a doctor does ?

PLEADER : No.

SOCRATES: You don't build anything, like a bridge or an engine?

PLEADER: No.

SOCRATES: And you don't make anyone better, as a teacher or a preacher does?

PLEADER: No; they are probably made worse by their experience in the law courts.

SOCRATES: Then you produce nothing. Your industry is not productive, as they say at your colleges?

PLEADER: No.

SOCRATES: You live and make money upon the quarrels and troubles of other people?

PLEADER: Yes, that is right.

SOCRATES: So that really your profession is parasitical; you live upon the public like a flea or a tick and do them no good?

PLEADER: You are hard, Socrates, but I cannot truthfully deny it.

SOCRATES: And, like a plague flea, you may do a lot of harm, as your litigation often leads in the end to riots and broken heads?

PLEADER: That is true, I fear, Socrates; but that's not what my students and professors taught me at college.

SOCRATES: Perhaps they are only paid to teach you law and not to open your eyes to the truths of real life. But, lambardārji, tell me now about this litigation. The lawyer's fees are the whole expense, I suppose, and you generally win and get it all back, and much more, I suppose.

FATHER: Would to God this were so. The lawyer's fees are but a fraction of the cost, and, win or lose, we gain nothing by it. The trouble and bother of collecting and tutoring the witnesses, going to and from court, getting copies and stamps, and the anxiety and everything else, the cost in time and worry and money

is enormous, and these cases only make bad blood worse and the end is generally a fight, and then the police come in and a whole lot of new trouble starts.

SOCRATES: Would it not be better to teach them something useful, like farming or doctoring, than let them go into this useless and overcrowded profession?

FATHER: Yes, it would; but they don't obey their parents nowadays.

SOCRATES: Because you and your wife don't command very much respect. You are ignorant and the slaves of custom and superstition, and the moment your children learn to read and write your authority is gone, as it has no real foundation; and they begin to laugh at you, instead of respecting you more and more as they grow older and realizing that you know as much and far more than they do.

FATHER: I fear you are right, Socrates. We old men don't count for much in this changing world.

SOCRATES: You only count in hugging the old dirty ways and resisting real progress. Good customs you let go and only stick to the bad ones.

FATHER: I fear there is truth in that, too, old man. You seem to see pretty deeply into our little troubles.

SOCRATES: Well, let that alone now. But about this lawyer son of yours now, wouldn't it be easier and cheaper to pay him to stay at home and do nothing rather than encourage him by giving him as many cases as possible?

FATHER: Far better; but our B.A. sons won't stay quiet in the villages. They are restless and dislike our villages.

SOCRATES (*laughing*): There I heartily agree with your B.A. son.

FATHER: Why, indeed? This place has been good enough for me and my ancestors since the village was founded. What is wrong with it for my son?

SOCRATES: Well, old man, times change. Your B.A. son doesn't like your hookah, and you don't like his cigarettes. He's learnt to sit on a chair and wear foreign clothes. You wear homespun and squat on the ground. You both irritate each other. He wants a daily newspaper and an occasional visit to the theatre or cinema. Your streets are so narrow, your village is so dirty and filthy; he is used to big college buildings and the streets and shops of the town.

FATHER: It is very hard for us old-fashioned people to keep pace with the changes of the world.

SOCRATES: You don't try, old man. Haven't I been telling you for years to tidy up your village and to educate your daughters?

FATHER: What difference would that make, O wise man?

SOCRATES: Well, if your son's wife was educated the same as your son is, they could be companions and she could make his home comfortable and pretty and cook his food properly; as it is, she is a drudge and the food is badly cooked, the home is uncomfortable, and your son's ideas and thoughts are entirely different from his wife's.

FATHER: That is so. I never thought of that when I married my son. We had no such ideas when we were young, and I didn't realize that my son's school and college would make all that difference. I heard that the girl the barber[1] suggested was industrious at making dung-cakes and grinding corn, and I thought that was all that was needed.

SOCRATES: Your son is a B.A., LL.B. His wife is a B.A. of corn-grinding and an LL.B. of dung-cakes. How can they be happy together, old man? Her only idea is to wear more jewellery than her neighbour, and she will waste all that her husband earns; and the more

[1] The traditional village match-maker.

her husband earns, the more the community is wasting its resources in litigation.

LAMBARDĀR: You paint a very ugly picture, but it is no more than true; litigation is waste, and jewellery is waste.

SOCRATES: And until you make your villages comfortable and your homes comfortable, and educate your daughters to match your sons, your education will be wasted, as it will make your sons discontented and dissatisfied with their homes, and they will leave the village and take all the knowledge you have paid for with them.

LAMBARDĀR: That seems true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: It certainly is, lambardārji, and the sooner you realize it the better for you all.

24. CHILD MARRIAGE

SOCRATES was going along the road one day when he met a marriage procession. He took care to greet the father of the bridegroom and to congratulate him.

'Your son is a lucky man, chaudhriji,' said Socrates.

'Why Socrates?' asked the father.

'Well,' said Socrates, 'look at the number of carts and all the jewellery. He has made a good start in his married life with so much wealth.'

'Oh, dear no, Socrates. This is all done on borrowed money. I borrowed two thousand rupees for this wedding.'

'Then your son starts his married life with a heavy load of debt?'

'Yes, he does,' answered the father, 'and so did I and so did my father before me.'

'But,' said Socrates, 'isn't this a very foolish thing to do?'

'It is our custom, Socrates.'

'But wouldn't it be wise to think ahead a little, instead of continuing this foolish custom which ensures that your sons shall remain in debt all their lives?'

'Indeed it would be, Socrates. But these customs are so hard to break.'

'But doesn't your son object to this folly? He is surely educated and up to date. Doesn't he raise his voice against being saddled with this burden of debt? If you spend all this money on his wedding you have surely spent double this on his education, so as to give him a chance of recovering from these debts which you force on him?'

'What do you mean?' asked the father. 'He is only in the second class, and that costs nothing.'

'What do you mean?' asked Socrates. 'Your son is grown up and is only in the second class. How is that? Is he an idiot?'

'No, Socrates. Don't insult me. My son is a very clever lad.'

'I don't understand you,' said Socrates. 'One minute you say your son is going to be married, and the next minute you say he's a lad.'

'Well, what about it?'

'But children don't marry.'

'Why not, Socrates? I was married when I was twelve, and so was my father. What's the matter with that?'

'What an appalling idea, to marry boys and girls before they leave school.'

'Why, old man? I see no harm in the custom. It enables us to see our grandchildren growing up before we die.'

'Yes, perhaps that's why you die so young, and why you are old men before you are forty. If you waited

A YOUNG BRIDEGROOM

till you were grown-up before you married, perhaps you would live longer.'

'That may be so, Socrates. I have heard old men say that myself, but we don't listen to them when our customs are at stake.'

'Surely,' said Socrates, 'early marriage will stunt the growth of the children and prevent them from being as big and as strong as they would be otherwise.'

'Yes, that is probably so.'

'And it will interfere with their schooling too,' said Socrates.

'Yes, that is certain.'

'And interfere with the development of their minds too.'

'Yes, I dare say.'

'And they will never learn the useful lesson of self-control.'

'No, they certainly won't do that.'

'These young married children will have children, I suppose,' said Socrates.

'Yes,' answered the chaudhri, 'I hope so.'

'But the children of children will never be as strong or as big as the children of grown up people.'

'No, that is correct.'

'Perhaps that explains what you are always saying about the people being weak nowadays.'

'Yes, that may be the cause. Generations of child marriage may have weakened the race.'

'And these children of children will require more care and attention than others if they are to be brought up. Is that not so?'

'Yes, of course.'

'But their parents, being children themselves and therefore untrained in these matters, have no knowledge of how to bring them up.'

'Yes, Socrates, that is so.'

'So that their children run a double risk of dying as babies, being the children of children, and having parents who are quite ignorant of how to bring them up.'

'It stands to reason, I fear, Socrates.'

'So that several of these poor babies will probably die before the mother learns how to bring them up.'

'This is often the case, Socrates.'

'And how cruel to the poor mother, first to have to bear children when she is still herself a child and immature, and secondly to see them die one after another, after having had all the pain of bearing them and the trouble of tending them. This is all because she was sacrificed by the stupidity of her parents and compelled to undertake these serious responsibilities before her body was ready for them or her mind had been trained to enable her to carry them out.'

'Your charges are correct, I fear, Socrates.'

'There is yet one thing more, chaudhriji. Your son is still a boy and wants playthings, not a wife.'

'Well?'

'And yet, for better or for worse, you put him in charge of another human being.'

'Well, and why not?'

'The husband has not learned self-control, nor has he learnt to respect people nor what respect means.'

'That is correct.'

'And his mother, as far as he has observed, gets little izzat at home, and is more a drudge than a companion to you.'

'I fear so Socrates. Your accusations are hard but true.'

'And the poor little girl you put at the mercy of this boy is untrained and uncultured and uneducated, is looked down on, can command no respect, and is entitled to none.'

'Yes, that again is true.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'your child husband starts by not respecting his wife. He will never learn to respect her, and she will never command his respect. At best she will be his plaything, and when the poor boy tires of that she will be his drudge, and, having never learnt self-control, there is nothing to prevent his bullying her and knocking her about if he is so inclined.'

'I admit all this, Socrates,' said the chaudhri.

'Poor girl, poor boy, and poor country!'

25. A RIDDLE

SOCRATES was sitting with the greybeards, late in the afternoon, when a man came up and joined them, with dust on his shoes and clothes as if he had walked far. With a sigh of relief he sat down and started puffing away at the ever-ready hookah.

'Whence come you, O villager?' asked Socrates, after he had given him time to puff away the worst of his fatigue.

VILLAGER: I have been to court to give evidence, and a long and troublesome job it was, too.

SOCRATES: Why, my friend, it's your best hobby.

VILLAGER: They keep you waiting all day till you've forgotten what you came to say, and then all of a sudden they shout for you, and if you don't answer on the second they get ever so angry, and when you go in they all shout questions at you at once till you don't know where you are.

SOCRATES: What sort of questions?

VILLAGER: Well, they start off, all in one breath, with your name and your father's age—I mean your age and your father's name—and your profession, and so on. Fancy asking a zamindār his profession!

SOCRATES: Fancy indeed! I should have thought that that at least was obvious without asking.

VILLAGER: Certainly it was.

SOCRATES: Well, what did you say?

VILLAGER: Why, farming, of course. What else did you think I should say?

SOCRATES (*slowly and deliberately*): Well, from my somewhat extensive observation of your habits, my friend, I should have thought that a truer description of your profession would have been——

VILLAGER (*eagerly*): What, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Hookah-kashi![1]

When the villagers had stopped chuckling at their friend's disaster, Socrates remarked quietly:

'I want to ask you villagers which is the implement upon the development and improvement of which you and your ancestors have spent the most time and thought, and in the perfection of which the greatest variety of material and the greatest amount of ingenuity have been utilized.'

VILLAGERS: The plough?

SOCRATES: No, certainly not.

VILLAGERS: The farmer's cart?

SOCRATES: No.

VILLAGERS: The well?

SOCRATES: No; guess again.

VILLAGERS: The charsa?

SOCRATES: Impossible.

VILLAGERS: Are you serious, Socrates, or are you up to your old tricks again?

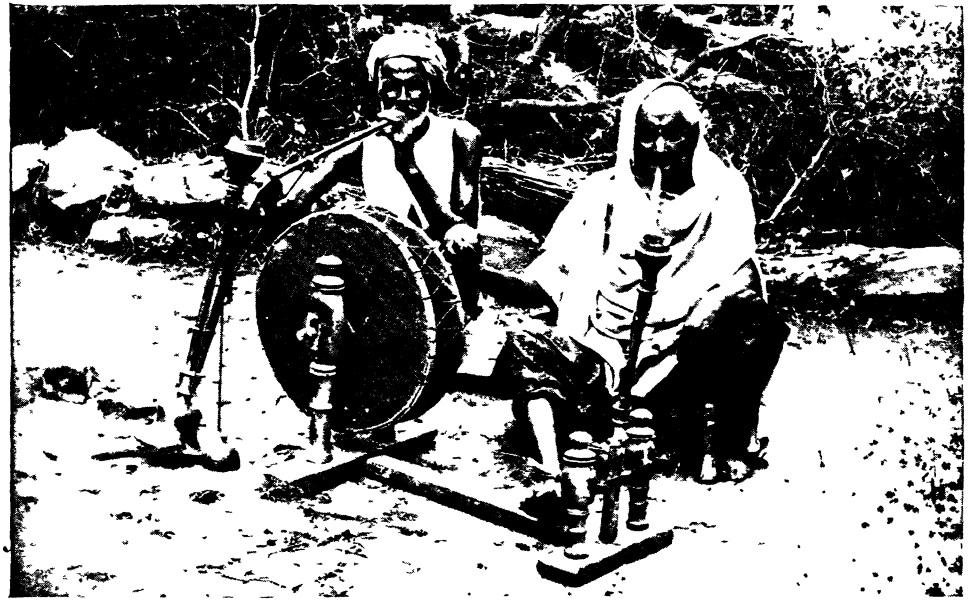
SOCRATES: I was never more serious in my life.

VILLAGERS: Then we cannot guess the answer to your question.

SOCRATES: Shall I tell you?

VILLAGERS: Do, please.

[1] Pulling at the hookah.



DARBY AND JOAN

Old men and woman at work, the one at the hook-it and the other at the pump-wheel

SOCRATES: Promise not to be angry.

VILLAGERS: How can we be angry with our best friend?

SOCRATES: Well then, I'll tell you, but I'm sure you'll be annoyed.

VILLAGERS: No we won't.

SOCRATES: Then here it is—THE HOOKAH!

26. 'HÃÑJI' AND CO-EDUCATION

SOCRATES came into the village past the new school, and peeped in, but saw only boys in the big classroom. Between there and the chaupāl, however, he saw a lot of little girls, of nine or ten years old, playing in the muck and pretending to make cow-dung cakes. They were not a bit clean, either. Socrates saw no one about and went on, grumbling to himself as he walked, 'I've got a rod in pickle for my friends today. When will they ever do what they promise? Why, they swore time and again they'd send their girls to school, and there's still not a single girl to be seen there. They'll break my heart with their "Hāñji, Hāñji,"[1] and nothing to show for it. Hāñji ke bachā![2] I'll "Hāñji" them when I see that old lambardār. He talks to me smoothly, as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, and then does nothing, and the rest of the village take their cue from him. I'm tired of him!'

As he reached the chaupāl, 'Rām, Rām, Socratesji,' cried the lambardār; 'it's a pleasure to see you again in the village.'

SOCRATES: Rām, Rām, lambardārji. (*Aside*) It's little enough pleasure to me, you old deceiver. (*Aloud*) Have you done everything I told you last time, old man?

[1] 'Yes, sir'; Hāñ (nasal n)=yes; ji=sir.
[2] Children of 'Yes, sir'.

LAMBARDĀR: Hāñji!

SOCRATES (*aside*): There he goes again! (*Aloud*) Shābāsh! I am delighted to hear it. Then the pit, six feet deep, is ready at last?

LAMBARDĀR: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: Then let's go and look at it at once.

LAMBARDĀR: Why bother, Socrates? Any time will do.

SOCRATES: No time like the present, you know, lambardārji. (*Aside*) I'll bet it's not yet more than three feet deep. (*Aloud*) Let's go right away and have a look. I do love looking at work well and truly done. It's so rare and so refreshing. Come along. Let's see, it's down this lane, isn't it?

LAMBARDĀR: No—yes—no—well, you can get to it that way—but—but, why worry just now, Socrates? You've come a long way and would like to sit and rest a bit, I dare say, this hot weather.

SOCRATES: Lambardārji, have you ever known me tired?

LAMBARDĀR: No, I can't really say I ever have; anyway, you've never admitted it or acted as if you were when there was work to be done.

SOCRATES: Well, why this sudden anxiety now?

LAMBARDĀR: I don't know at all. I just thought you might like to sit down for a bit, you know.

SOCRATES: Look here, lambardārji, look me straight in the face and tell me plainly. Is that pit six feet deep?

LAMBARDĀR: Well, now you are so particular, perhaps it is not quite six feet deep yet. But I was working on it when I saw you coming and it's practically ready.

SOCRATES: That was suspiciously like a hookah that I saw you put down as I came round the corner, lambardārji!

LAMBARDĀR: Impossible, Socrates, at this time in the morning.

SOCRATES: Well, let that pass. Is your pit five feet deep?

LAMBARDĀR: Well, you are particular, Socrates. Perhaps it's not quite five feet; no, I should think it possibly is not exactly five feet, but it's as good as five feet deep, Socrates—yes, quite!

SOCRATES: Very well, let's go and measure it.

LAMBARDĀR: No, please don't bother, Socrates; it's some way from here.

SOCRATES: Well, is it waist-deep?

LAMBARDĀR: No, not quite waist-deep yet, perhaps.

SOCRATES: Is it knee-deep—one hāth[1] shall we say?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, it's a full hāth deep, Socrates, I'll swear to it. Haven't I been working at it for hours with my own hands?

SOCRATES: I'm sure you have, but don't bother to make an oath about it. Oaths are hard things, or should be!

Just then several of the villagers came up and found the lambardār looking rather uncomfortable and Socrates a little hot and irritated.

VILLAGERS: Well, what is it, today, lambardārji? Has the sage caught you out again? It won't be the first time if he has!

LAMBARDĀR: Silence, brothers!

SOCRATES: Why silence, lambardārji? Rām, Rām, zamindāro![2] The lambardār has been very kindly describing to me how he has dug his beautiful pit.

VILLAGERS: What pit, O sage?

SOCRATES: Why, the new rubbish pit he promised to dig last time I was here.

VILLAGERS: Oh, really?

[1] Literally, a hand, the usual village measure, from the finger tips to the elbow; 1½ feet, a cubit. [2] O farmers!

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, you all know it very well; the new one at the corner of my gatwār.[1]

VILLAGERS: Oh yes, we know; that one those Chumārs were scratching at last night. Yes, that's almost one hāth deep now, Socrates, a fine pit.

SOCRATES (*aside*): Alas for promises and alas for the truth! (*Aloud*) Well, anyway, you've all sent your girls to school now, as you so faithfully promised me when we discussed it last time?

VILLAGERS: We haven't, Socrates. To tell you the truth, our bhaibands told us not to, and said we must have a girls' school first, and then we could send them.

SOCRATES: Who is going to teach at the girls' school?

VILLAGERS: Why, a woman, of course.

SOCRATES: Where's she going to come from?

VILLAGERS: We don't know. The District Board will send her.

SOCRATES: Where will the District Board get her?

VILLAGERS: We can't say.

SOCRATES: Is there an educated woman in this village?

VILLAGERS: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: Or in the next?

VILLAGERS: No.

SOCRATES: Or in any village within a dozen kōs[2] from here?

VILLAGERS: Not that we know of.

LAMBARDĀR: Certainly not, there are no literate zamindār women in any of our villages.

SOCRATES: Then where will she come from? From *the towns?*

VILLAGERS: Certainly not! No town women will ever come to this outlandish spot; and if they did they

[1] Farmyard.

[2] One kōs is 1¾ miles.

would not understand us, nor we them, and they'd do no good at all. Besides, there's nowhere they could live either.

SOCRATES: Then it looks as if you'll never get a teacher for your girls' school till some of your own women learn a bit?

VILLAGERS: That seems so.

SOCRATES: And till you send your girls to the boys' school none of your village women are ever going to begin to learn anything.

VILLAGERS: It looks very much like it, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Besides, wasn't it you who were saying only the other day that you already paid too many taxes, and thought that they ought to be reduced?

VILLAGERS: That's right, we pay far too much.

SOCRATES: Well, if you all want girls' schools, they'll have to find buildings as well as teachers; or are you going to lend them your chaupāl again?

VILLAGERS: God forbid! We've only just got it back from the boys' school. They borrowed it to start a boys' school five years ago, and said they'd build their own house in a year and give us back our chaupāl. Well, they've only just built the new school and we didn't get back into our chaupāl till a week ago. No; we won't lend it again in a hurry—certainly not for a girls' school.

SOCRATES: There you are! Schools cost a mint of money, and so do teachers. There are about fourteen hundred villages in the district, and they've built schools in about two hundred of them so far, and already you want yet another school in each village for the girls, and in the same breath you want your taxes reduced. You aren't a bit unreasonable, are you?

VILLAGERS: We do seem to be, Socrates, we fear.

SOCRATES: Besides, some of you observe purdah, don't you?

VILLAGERS: Yes, that is so. Some of us do, but we ourselves don't, we are glad to say.

SOCRATES: Well, some of your girls will want a purdah school. Will those that don't observe purdah go to a purdah school and learn purdah?

VILLAGERS: Certainly not! God forbid that those of us whose women do not keep purdah should ever learn the habit at school. We'd rather they didn't go to school at all. Why, purdah is impossible in a village, where there's so much work for the women to do, and those who have to keep purdah are getting poorer every year and their families are dying out from ill-health.

SOCRATES: You are right there. Purdah is a terrible handicap to villagers. So, then, many villages will want two girls' schools, one for the purdah and one for the non-purdah girls.

VILLAGERS: Yes, that's right.

SOCRATES: And no extra taxes either! So that puts separate girls' schools out of the question, I think, for the ordinary village.

VILLAGERS: It looks like it, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And even if you get your girls' school, who is going to inspect it and see that all is going well?

VILLAGERS: A lady, of course.

SOCRATES: And how's she going to get to this out-of-the-way village? How often does the inspector visit the boys' school?

LAMBARDĀR: Once in three months, I dare say, and he always says it's a terribly difficult and troublesome place to visit.

SOCRATES: So you'll be lucky if your lady inspector comes once a year.

VILLAGERS: Probably.

SOCRATES: And a lot of good your girls' school will

do, with no one to visit it and see that it's going on all right!

VILLAGERS: It certainly won't do much good unless it's pretty regularly visited. Even we know that, Socrates.

Socrates did not seem to have quite done with the subject, however, and after a moment's silence he suddenly started again.

SOCRATES: You don't give much izzat to your womenfolk, do you? When you are riding along the road and you see a woman ahead, you just shout 'Hutt, aurat, hutt!'[1] don't you?

VILLAGERS: You've rubbed that in again and again, Socrates. Why do you keep harking back to it?

SOCRATES: But I'm right, am I not?

VILLAGERS: Yes, we fear you are.

SOCRATES: And your conscience is beginning to prick you a bit about it now, I think, isn't it? And you are getting a bit ashamed of yourselves in this matter, eh?

LAMBARDĀR: Yes, I believe that's so, Socrates. If you tell us often enough about a thing, we begin to think about it, even if we do nothing, and we discuss it among ourselves and it sinks in; and in this case we're bound to admit we are all wrong, and I think you'll find things gradually improve.

SOCRATES: Yes; but surely the children are the best ones to learn this new lesson?

ALL VILLAGERS (*eagerly*): Certainly they are. We've always told you that. Leave us grown-ups alone and teach your new-fangled notions to the children.

SOCRATES: Yes, but how are the children to learn to respect their mothers and sisters? Certainly not from you!

VILLAGERS: No, we fear not.

[1] 'Out of the way, woman, out of the way.'

SOCRATES: Then where will you teach them?

VILLAGERS: At school, we suppose.

SOCRATES: Yes, but how will you teach them if only the boys are at school, and how will the girls become worthy of respect if they get no schooling and remain dirty and ignorant?

VILLAGERS: Those are difficulties, certainly.

SOCRATES: Don't you think, too, that as long as you hide the girls away separately in one corner of the village—segregate them, as the doctors say—to teach them, so long will your bad old ways continue? If you want the boys to respect their mothers and sisters, you must send them when they are quite small to the same school, where the master, and in time, I hope, the mistress, will teach the boys, by practice and precept, to respect the little girls at school with them, as well as their mothers at home; and the little girls, by learning lessons with the boys and being treated just the same, will realize they are as good as the boys, and not inferior creatures, and will respect themselves, and, by their schooling, will become worthy of respect. And when they grow up and marry, they will be honoured by their husbands and pass on these lessons to their children.

VILLAGERS: That seems perfectly reasonable, Socrates, but your ideals will take many years to reach.

SOCRATES: Then start at once by sending the little girls to school. It is unfair to expect boys who have been to school to respect mothers who are utterly ignorant and illiterate, and sisters whose only ideas are dung-cake making and the wearing of jewellery. I tell you, villagers, you miss a great deal in life. All the good I ever learnt I learnt from my mother, and her memory is the most sacred thing I have.

VILLAGERS: She must have been a very honourable lady.

A KNITTING LESSON AT THE DOMESTIC SCHOOL

SOCRATES: She was; but no more than the mother of every one of you should be to you—and will be, my friends, when you bring up your girls properly and hold your women in honour. And what is more, O zamindārs, it is from their mother that my children are now learning all these lessons.

VILLAGERS: That does not surprise us, Socrates, for has she not visited this very village, and looked at all our babies and told their mothers how to bring them up; and did she not take the finest baby of all in her own hands and hold it up—it was a girl baby too! —for all to see and tell us to bring them all up like that?

LAMBARDĀR: And it was a Chumār's baby at that!

VILLAGERS: Have we not seen her own children, too, playing outside her tent? They are clean and bright enough. Their clothes must have all come from England, so warm and good they were.

SOCRATES: Quite wrong, my friends. They were all made by the children's mother, and clothes just like them are being made by your own women in the Domestic School, where we are training women teachers for your village schools. So send your little girls to school, and teach the little boys to honour and respect them. If you want good children you must have good mothers, and mothers can't be good unless they are honoured and respected.

VILLAGERS: We will tackle our bhaibands again on these lines, Socrates, and persuade them to let us send our girls to the new boys' school—well, it is a boys' school now but it will then be just the village school.

SOCRATES: Yes, that's better, the village school. And if those bhaibands of yours won't see reason, let me have a go at them—if they really exist, that is, and you are not just hiding your own laziness and

conservatism behind some imaginary bhaibands who object to all change. I've often been more than a bit suspicious about these bhaibands of yours, my friends.

VILLAGERS: Well, sometimes, we dare say, your suspicions may be well-founded, Socrates, but in this particular case, of course, our caste-fellows feel rather strongly in the matter.

SOCRATES: Yes, I can understand that; pardon me for uttering my unworthy thoughts.

LAMBARDĀR: No need to ask us for pardon, Socrates. I am afraid you are right nine times out of ten in what you say about us.

SOCRATES: Possibly ninety-nine times out of a hundred, eh? Well, good-bye, friends; I have already been here too long today, and must hurry away.

VILLAGERS: Rām, Rām, Socrates; Rām, Rām.

27. GOOD-BYE

SOCRATES came into the chaupāl looking very grave, and the villagers guessed something more than usually serious had occurred—more than a bad smell or a dirty child.

SOCRATES: I am a sad man today, villagers. I must say good-bye and leave you.

VILLAGERS: Why, old man?

SOCRATES: Well, I have children of my own, and must take them to their home and put them to school and see my native land again. I love you and your village and am very loath to leave you, but go I must and I cannot wait any more.

VILLAGERS: What shall we do when you are gone? We shall slip back into the old, dirty, wasteful ways.

SOCRATES: No you won't; you have learnt that cleanliness means health and wealth, that waste brings

want, and that a cultured wife means a happy home and bonny children.

VILLAGERS: That's all very well, but you know how slack we really are and how quarrelsome, and how difficult it is for us to join together for any good purpose.

SOCRATES: You join quick enough for evil, my friends. That I do know.

VILLAGERS: There you go, Socrates. Even on your last day here your tongue is still sharp; but it's true enough what you say, and we don't see how all this good work you have taught us is to go on.

SOCRATES: Then you must combine and keep it going.

VILLAGERS: How?

SOCRATES: Call in the co-operative people and form a society.

VILLAGERS: How can that be done?

SOCRATES: Well, first you make the society, and then all the new ways and habits are passed as rules, and you are bound to keep them; if you don't, the other members fine you.

VILLAGERS: That's a good idea, but how will it be kept going?

SOCRATES: By the co-operative staff, just as they keep all your banks going.

VILLAGERS: Very well, we will do that at once.

SOCRATES: Well, good-bye, friends. My tongue has been sharp at times, but I love you and am sorry to go.

VILLAGERS: Socrates, you have completely changed us and turned us into happy, healthy, comfortable human beings. May God bless you and bring you back quick!

SOCRATES: Back quick? How am I going to come back again?

VILLAGERS: Of course you must.

SOCRATES: Well, I'll tell you what. If you carry on all the new things we have started together and don't drop back into your old, dirty ways, I will promise to come back.

VILLAGERS: We promise faithfully.

SOCRATES: I know what a zamindār's promise is!

VILLAGERS: Your old tongue again, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Sorry, friends, but I've known you for many years now.

VILLAGERS: But this is a pakka[1] promise; and haven't you taught us to be men of our word, and aren't our children growing up truthful now?

SOCRATES: Yes, that is so; and if you will keep your promise and spread the light abroad in other districts, so that Gurgaon uplift shall become Indian uplift, I will surely return to see you all again and how you are faring.

VILLAGERS: And perhaps you will have some more suggestions then for our betterment?

SOCRATES: Surely, we have only made a beginning so far.

VILLAGERS: Oh dear! Hard and steep is the path of progress.

SOCRATES: There you are right. Each step brings new difficulties and problems which have to be faced and settled.

VILLAGERS: But your country at least is perfect by now, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Oh dear no. There is still an immense lot to do, in spite of all our progress; in fact, I think the more progress the more problems, and I hope I may be able to help a bit in my own country.

VILLAGERS: Don't get too interested and stay there, Socrates. If what you say is right, we shall want you again before very long.

[1] Sure, certain, genuine.

SOCRATES: Why?

VILLAGERS: Because we are determined now to make progress, and you say the more progress the more problems. So hurry back please, Socrates.

SOCRATES: You keep your promise and I'll keep mine.

VILLAGERS: Very well, that's pakka.

SOCRATES: Good-bye, friends, and God be with you!

VILLAGERS: God bless you, Socrates; good-bye!

28. L'ENVOI

THE news of Socrates' approaching departure soon spread, and the animals began talking about it too. 'Buzzzz,' said the mosquito, 'I'm glad he's going. I'm the last of my tribe in this village. They've drained all the old pools of water and they put oil on any water that collects in the rains, so that there's nowhere for me to lay my eggs; and the houses are so light and clean and there's so little rubbish inside or outside that I cannot find a place to live in.'

'That's my trouble, too,' said the fly; 'nowhere to lay my eggs and nothing to eat, as all the food is covered up.'

'What about me?' said the flea, hopping feebly. 'I like a dark place, and the houses are all light and airy nowadays.'

'You can easily carry on,' said the rat. 'I'm far more unhappy than you. If I show my nose in the houses they blow poison gas into my home, and if I go into the fields they do the same there. Besides, my eyes won't stand the light, and every room has windows now.'

'Bow-wow,' said the dog. 'I love Socrates. I've got a home to live in now. I'm well fed; they've given me a name—look at this lovely collar; and I've

been taught how to guard the house, how to catch rats and all manner of useful things. I'm the friend of man now. Socrates ki jai, jai, jai!'[1]

'Wuff, wuff,' said the village pig. 'My food has all gone now. They keep the place clean and put all the rubbish in the pits. I shall have to go elsewhere.'

The game in the banni also started discussing the changes that Socrates had brought about. The partridges were very annoyed. 'In the old days,' said an old hen bird, 'the grass and rubbish in the fields were so thick that we could hide all day in them with safety; now they've started using iron ploughs the fields are so clean and smooth, there's nowhere to hide our coveys while the crops are growing up.' 'Never mind that,' said an old cock bird. 'There's nowhere even to sleep safe at night, now they've cut down the hīñs and cactus; these kikars are very bare. Give me back the old days. Away with Socrates!'

'Wah, wah,' said a starling; 'since they took to iron ploughs they turn up so many grubs for me that I can bring up two families a year now. Socrates ki jai!'

Just then a wild boar came past, and he was full of grumbles. 'Why, when I was young, we used to live in peace in the bannis all day and feed on the sugar-cane at night. But they farm the banni for grass and firewood nowadays, there's no shelter for me and I have to go all the way back to the kadir[2] jungles every morning now. Besides, these new canes are so hard my old teeth can't touch them. Wugh, wugh —why, here he comes! I must be off quick.'

'All right, old enemy,' said Socrates, 'you are safe from me this morning. I've forgotten to bring my spear.'

A young cow with a lovely calf saw him coming, and said, 'Good riddance to that nasty man! Why,

[1] 'Hurrah for Socrates!'

[2] River bed.

he said these dirty humans were only just better than cattle. Better than me, indeed! Look at me and my calf. I clean her a dozen times a day, and till quite recently the humans didn't clean their children once a month. Besides, look at my breeding. I'm pure Hissar.'

'Silence, silly!' said an old cow standing by, and gave her a butt in the ribs. 'You're only pure Hissar because Socrates made the humans get your ancestors from Hissar! And you're too young to know how we used to live till he came along. Look at our lovely airy stable. We used to live in darkness and dirt and drink filthy black water, and were lucky if we ever got a good meal. Our water is now clean and our food ample. Don't complain, you foolish girl. Socrates made the humans stop burning our dung and made them take it all to the fields, and since then we've never been short of food. Just you join with me and say, "Socrates ki jai!" '

'Hee-haw, hee-haw,' said the old donkey. 'I get good food now. I don't have to scavenge for filth on the muck heaps and jostle with the pigs for my meals.'

'Kook, kook, kook, kook,' said the peacock. 'I used to sit on the muck heaps; now I preen myself in a lovely little flower garden. Clean and pretty women and children feed me every evening. Kook, kook, kook, kook! Socrates ki jai! Kook, kook, kook, kook!'

8-A. A celebrated Punjab wheat, developed at Lyallpur and now widely sown in the Punjab. It gives a longer straw and a heavier yield of grain, and is suitable for wells, canals and dry farming as well.

ĀBĀDI. The village site where the people live in houses packed like sardines; no room for gardens or anything. A survival of the days when villages had to have walls round them. We want the people to spread a bit now, and those who have wells on their farms to live on them, instead of herding in the unhealthy slums of the old ābādi.

ĀP HI HOWĒ. It happens of itself. The aorist form 'howē' typifies the fatalist attitude of the villager towards the doings of nature.

ARHAR. A pulse, growing five or six feet high, with woody stem and branches.

BĀBU. A literate man, or clerk; often used by villagers of anyone not dressed in village homespun, as almost the first result of learning to read and write is to abandon village dress.

BACH. The distribution of the village land revenue demand over the holdings of the peasants. This is done every harvest by the patwari.

BANNI. A word usually applied to an area of common land, of varying size, reserved from time immemorial for trees and grass by village edict. Now almost invariably overgrown with trees and shrubs, useless either for grazing or firewood. Owing to the decay of village organization, there is no authority to administer and develop this trust, and it does more harm than good to the village.

BHAIBAND. Caste-fellow; 'bhai,' brother, kinsman; 'band' is the root of the verb meaning to bind.

BIGHA. A measure of land; a 'kacha bigha' is about one-fifth, and a 'pakka bigha' about two-thirds, of an acre. The peasant invariably thinks in bighas, although he can often understand acres.

BODI. Weak, exhausted; invariably applied by Gurgaon villagers to themselves, their cattle and their land, and, usually implying that things were better in former years. This idea of progressive deterioration is very common in Gurgaon District, and, considering the facts of village economy, farming, cattle-breeding, etc., it is very likely true.

BRAHMANI. Applied to a bull loosed, from motives of piety, for stud purposes. From motives of economy, however, the most miserable young animals are usually selected for this purpose, thus perverting an institution designed to improve the cattle into the surest way of ruining the breed. Once a young bull is branded and turned loose in this way it is the height of impiety to castrate it, although now in Gurgaon it is at last realized that it is even worse to allow bad bulls to go on breeding.

CHABUTRA. A raised platform, erected outside houses and shops to sit on, display wares, etc. A favourite form of encroachment even in the narrowest streets and lanes.

CHARPOY. String bed; the usual seat in a village, where a chair is still an exotic.

CHARSA. A leather bag, used with a rope and pulley, to raise water from a well for irrigating crops, and requiring four able-bodied men and four bullocks to manipulate. Probably the most expensive form of irrigation known to man. The man working the charsa gives his orders to the others in the form of a rather picturesque chant.

CHAUDHRI. Chaudhriji, the courtesy title of a farmer or country gentleman. There is a title for every kind and class of person in northern India, and, as the title is always used instead of the name, names are of little account.

CHAUPĀI. A primitive village glee party. In parts of the Gurgaon District these are formed in early spring and go from village to village singing. We have roped them in to compose and sing 'uplift' songs, and they are extremely effective, as hundreds of people will sit for hours at a time and listen to them. The majority of the party are usually boys, and they generally have a small harmonium, as well as cymbals, etc., to accompany their singing.

CHAUPĀL. An open building with a raised platform (chabutra) in front, used for communal purposes. Each village has as many as it wants for its several sub-divisions, but there is always at least one. Women are not allowed in it, of course, and it serves the purpose of a village club or public-house, although nothing is sold there. The men collect there and sit and smoke and gossip. A lot of precious time is wasted at the chaupāl, which would be far better spent tidying up the village!

CHUMĀR. A tribe of untouchables which works in hides and leather.

DAI. Midwife; untrained, except for what she picked up from her predecessors; in Gurgaon, of the lowest caste, with no notion of cleanliness—and often partially blind.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER. The chief official and head of the district.

DOOB. A grass of great value for horses and cattle; the best fodder grass in northern India.

GATWĀR. Fenced-in yard, where straw and dung-cakes are stored, and cattle sometimes penned.

GHI. Clarified butter; universally used for cooking in India. Made from milk by continuous simmering, and responsible for the ruin of agriculture, as it demands an infinite supply of dung-cakes. The solution of the agricultural problem in India is the rescue of the cow-dung from the housewife—and it is nothing like as difficult a problem as it is usually made out to be!

GOWAR. A pulse, with somewhat the habit of the broad bean in England.

HĀKIM. A ruler, often a jack-in-office.

HINS. A dense evergreen bush of wait-a-bit thorns.

HISSAR. There is a Government cattle farm here, which provides magnificent stud bulls of the Hariana breed at concession rates to those wise enough to want them.

HOOKAH. The water pipe, or hubble-bubble; a great waster of time.

IZZAT. Respect, self-respect, 'face'; a very expressive word in India.

JAI. A cry corresponding to Vive or Hurrah; used in India instead of cheering, although the schools have made cheering now quite common.

JĀL. An evergreen shrub or tree, useless for any purpose.

JAMABANDI. The record of rights in the land, revised every four years for every village; the basis of the land revenue system of the Punjab. A sort of Domesday Book.

JEMADAR. The lowest rank of Indian commissioned officer in the army.

JHAO. Tamarisk, growing in huge areas in the beds of rivers above the cold-weather level of the water.

JI. A title, used alone or as an enclitic, denoting respect and often affection. It is less formal and more familiar than 'Sir'.

KACHA. Literally, unripe; used of anything inferior or unready. The opposite of 'pakka', which means ripe or cooked, and is used of everything proper, well-organized, in good order; e.g. a pakka road is a metalled road, and a kacha road an unmetalled one. 'Kacha' applied to weights and measures means a smaller kind of measure generally, only used now away from the towns, where weights and measures have been more or less standardized, in relation to English measures.

KĀDIR. That part of a river valley liable to be flooded in the monsoon.

KARĪL. A useless shrub, with a pretty salmon-coloured flower.

KHARĀS. Bullock-driven flour-mill in common use in the central Punjab, but still to be made universal in Gurgaon, to save the women from the drudgery of the flour-mill and give them more time to look after their homes and children.

KIKAR. Thorny acacia, useful as firewood and timber, and its foliage and seeds as fodder. Quick-growing and very easy to establish.

LAMBARDAR. Village headman, one or more to each village according to its size; hereditary office, appointments made by Government. The lambardar represents Government in the village and is responsible for the collection of the land revenue, but he is rapidly losing his authority over the villagers.

MĒLA. A fair; usually of religious origin, as in England.

MISRJI. 'Misr' is an old name for a Brahman, 'ji,' for respect.

PAKKA. See KACHA.

PATWARI. The lowest grade in the revenue hierarchy responsible for the papers of one or more villages. The papers contain all the rights in the land, both of owners and tenants, all the details of crops, rents, land revenue and everything else. The patwari is a man of great power, both for good and for evil. His pay starts at about £20 per annum (including fees).

PERSIAN WHEEL. An endless chain of buckets, operated by bullocks, for raising water from wells for irrigation. In Gurgaon miniature wheels, worked by hand, have been designed for raising drinking water.

RABI. The harvest which is sown in the autumn and reaped in the spring.

RĀM, RĀM. Usual form of greeting among Hindus. Rām means God.

SARSON. An oil seed with a long woody stalk.

SHĀBĀSH. Well done! Bravo!

SUFEDPOSH. Means clothed in white. The title of a leading country gentleman, selected by Government to help it in all its work, in a group of villages, and given a small honorarium for doing so. He is junior to the zaildar.

TACCAVI. Money advanced by Government to peasants, to finance agriculture, at a low rate of interest, and recovered in easy instalments.

TAHSILDAR. A sub-collector of revenue. A tahsil, or taluk, is a sub-division of a district.

UPLA. Dried cakes of cow-dung (used for fuel).

ZAILDAR. The leading country squire, selected and paid a small honorarium by Government, to help it in all its work in a group of villages, called a zail.

ZAMINDAR. The owner or farmer of land; a large owner, a small peasant proprietor, or even a tenant farmer; it includes everyone living on the soil, however

large or however small his interest or holding. The word usually implies membership of what are known as the agricultural tribes, though anyone farming land, whether of menial caste or of money-lending caste, is equally entitled to describe himself as a zamindar. This is its meaning in the Punjab, but in the United Provinces it merely means a big landowner.