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THE HINDU ORGAN:

JAFFNA, WEDNESDAY MAY 16, 1894.

THE Hon. P. RAMANATHAN. C. M. G.
ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

THE appointment of Mr. Rama Nathan to act as Attorney-General of the Colony, during the absence of Mr. Layard on leave, is a remarkable event in the history of Ceylon. This is the first occasion of a pure native being elevated, though temporarily, to this high and responsible office, not only in Ceylon, but also in India. In the neighbouring Continent several eminent and distinguished Hindus and Muhamedans have held and still hold various offices of trust and responsibility under Government. In each of the High Courts of the different Provinces of India there is, at least, one native Judge. But the Attorney-Generalship, or the Advocate-Generalship as it is called there, has been beyond their reach. The Indian Government, considering this office as a more influential and important one than even a Judgeship of the High Courts has never, as far as we are aware, appointed a Hindu or Muhamedan as Advocate-General. But in Ceylon, though no Singhales or Tamil had ever before filled the office, yet Englishmen were not allowed to monopolize it, Sir Richard Morgan and Sir Samuel Grenier having held it for a prolonged period with credit to themselves and to the Burgher community to which they belonged.

The powers, responsibilities, and influence of this office is so great in the Colony that Sir Richard Morgan declined the Chief Justiceship of Ceylon, preferring to remain as Attorney-General, and Sir Richard Cayley, quitted the Supreme Court Bench when he was a Puisne Justice in order to become Attorney-General in succession to Sir Richard Morgan. It is to this office that Mr. Rama Nathan has now been appointed; and we feel sure that the whole native races of Ceylon, the Tamils in particular, will hail the event with very great joy and satisfaction.

It is only by his intrinsic merits a native can attain to such an eminent position. Even the bitterest of Mr. Rama Nathan's opponents cannot deny that he had the highest claims for the acting appointment by reason of his being the Solicitor-General, and that he is in every way qualified for the post. His great forensic knowledge, his brilliant career as an un-official member of the Legislative Council for a period of thirteen years, and his experience as an official, however brief it may be, are guarantees to his success also in the important office to which he has just been appointed. Mr. Rama Nathan is a person who never does things by halves. Whatever he undertakes to do he does thoroughly and admirably well. His success in public life has been due to his perseverance and industry and to his unflinching zeal in the public cause. Now that he will be Attorney-General for a period of at least one full year, he has an excellent opportunity of showing what stuff he is made of, and of leaving his mark on the statute-book of the Colony.

The thanks of the native population of Ceylon are due to His Excellency Sir Arthur Havelock for having recognised the claims of Mr. Rama Nathan for the acting Attorney Generalship, in spite of endeavours in influential quarters to set them aside. His Excellency has once more proved himself to be a just Ruler, favored by no

race prejudice or hatred. Knowing His Excellency's fairness and love of justice full well, as revealed by his public acts, we were confident, even during the period of suspense, when the claims of others for the acting appointment were prominently brought forward, that Mr. Rama Nathan would be the choice of His Excellency.

THE HINDU HIGH SCHOOL.

The success of this institution has alarmed its enemies—the Christian Missionaries. Mission Agents are now busy propagating false and malicious reports touching this school, the chief of which is that the esteemed Head Master, Mr. Selvadurai Pillai, is shortly to sever his connection with it. We are in a position to state that his interest in the welfare of the School is as great as ever and that he will continue to be its Head Master for several years to come.

A paragraph also appeared in the 'Examiner' of the 10th instant from the same source, we believe, to the effect that the School has sustained a loss by the secession of a teacher as he has taken away with him nearly fifty boys to the Mission school in the neighbourhood. This is calculated to mislead the public and alarm the friends of the school in outstations. It is true that the fourth teacher of the Hindu High School was induced by the Wesleyan Missionaries to become a teacher in their school at Vannarpounai. But the number of boys who went to the Mission School from the Hindu High School was about fifteen, composed mostly of the teacher's own relations. The Missionaries had fully expected that by the secession of this one teacher the whole school would collapse. But they must have now found to their chagrin and dismay that instead of their tactics having such an effect the school is daily growing in number and increasing in efficiency, the daily attendance being new, owing to a large number of new admissions since the beginning of this month, the highest ever known, and the staff of teachers being at least as efficient now as it was before the defection of the teacher in question.

Before the establishment of the Hindu High School the Wesleyan Mission would not allow any one but Christians to remain as teachers in the Mission schools. More than one Hindu Gentleman were forced to resign their appointments under the Mission as they would not become Christians. The same Mission is now ready, to judge from what it has already done, to give very liberal salaries and promise religious tolerance to as many Hindu teachers of the Hindu High School as would take with them a certain number of boys to the Mission schools. So much for Missionary consistency and principle, O Tempora! O Mores!!

LOCAL AND GENERAL.

The Weather—The South-West Monsoon has set in, and the wind continues to blow rather strong.

Tobacco—The curing of tobacco in the District is not yet over. It now turns out that the crop is not a bumper one as was expected. The storm of last month, if it had not blown down the plants, has dwindled their growth and prevented the development of the leaves. Intelligence reaches us, however, from Travancore that there is a tendency of fall in the high price the Jaffna tobacco has been for some months past commanding in that market. The crop of the cigar tobacco is a good one we understand.

The Entrance Examination of the C. University—Twenty-four students came off successful in this Examination from Jaffna, 16 from the Jaffna College, 4 from the Hindu High School and 4 from the St John's College, Chundicully.

Mr. R. Kantiyah—Mr. Conolly in his reply to the Address presented to him by the Jaffna Bar, spoke in glowing terms of the ability, intelligence, and business habits of Mr Kantiyah, Head Clerk of the Jaffna Minor Courts, and expressed the hope that he would soon be the Secretary of the District Court here.

Mr. C. W. Thamotheeram Pillai B. A. B. L.—This gentleman has arrived in Jaffna from India and is at present at Keerimalai, the Sanitarium of the Hindus of Jaffna.

—Dr. Pararasasingha Mudaliyar, Medical Officer at Vavuniya is under orders to proceed to Mullattivu in the place of Dr Hallock Saravannamatto who goes to Chillaw. He is now in Jaffna on one weeks leave.

The Jaffna Kachcheri—Mr C. Vytianather, who was appointed by Government as Police Clerk at Kurunagalla but who petitioned His Excellency the Governor to give him another office in Jaffna, has been temporarily provided with a clerkship in the office of the Registrar of Lands here worth Rs250 per annum. Government has promised him, we learn to give him some other appointment here with his present salary of Rs400 per annum, as soon as a vacancy occurs. It appears that Mr Twynam's recommendation giving promotion to the clerks of the Kachcheri in consequence of the retirement of Mr Graeier and appointing Mr Vytianather as the 8th clerk has not yet received the sanction of the Government.

We have great pleasure to give insertion, at the request of the Hony Secretary, Mr. C. Vallipuram Pillai, to the following report of the Trincomalee Friend-in-need Society for 1895:—

In presenting to the General Public the Annual Report of the Trincomalee Friend-in-Need Society for 1893, it is gratifying to state that the Institution has been brought to a thoroughly working order since the publication of its report for 1892. The Society may be said to have been reorganised and brought to a sound footing during 1893

There were held 8 meetings of the Society during the year under review, as against only 2 in 1891 and 3 in 1892, and schemes were proposed and measures adopted for the better management of the affairs of the Society. At the meeting held on the 4th May it was decided to publish Annual Reports on the working of the Institution with a view to the existence of the Society being widely known. The first report was accordingly submitted and adopted at the meeting held on the 1st June. 500 copies of the report were printed and widely circulated in due course; and its publication had the desired effect, for in the month of August the number of permanent monthly subscribers to the Society rose from 32 to 56. The heads of the Naval and Military Departments recognised the usefulness of the Institution and helped it by donations (Vide Appendix B). On the 15th September a Special Committee was elected to frame a set of rules which were duly submitted and passed on the 5th October, when a Committee of Management was also formed consisting of the Office Bearers and five unofficial members.

The Society proposes to appoint a Visitor for each 2 or 3 of the Divisions of the town to help the Committee in dealing with applications for relief and in securing new subscribers.

A System of appointing a Revisal Committee half yearly to enquire into and report on the circumstances of the pensioners aided by the Society has already been introduced, and it enables the Society to help only such cases as are in real distress.

The balance to the credit of the Society on the 1st January 1893 was Rs. 817-82. The receipts during the year amounted to Rs. 584-50 and the payments to Rs. 695-84 and show an increase of Rs.78-75 and Rs.448-14 respectively over those for the year 1892. The payments exceeded the receipt by Rs. 111-34 which was met from the balance of the previous year. A Detailed Statement of Revenue and Expenditure is annexed (Vide Appendix A.)

The amount of collections from subscribers averaged Rs. 20 per month, and was in excess of the average monthly collections for 1892 by Rs. 5.

The permanent allowance paid by the Society monthly to its pensioners amounted to Rs. 50 on the average per mensem as against Rs. 16 during 1892.

The Society paid in March last the funeral expenses of the late Mr. Wambeek a respectable but poor Burgher resident of the town; and also resolved to continue the allowance paid for the education and clothing of his children.

The case of a distressed Sinhalese family at Madawachchi in Kaddukkulam Pattu, which consisted of a widowed mother with five children all of whom are deaf and dumb and too young to take care of themselves, was brought to the notice of the members by the Presidents in July last, and the Society at once gave the family relief by sending a bonus of Rs. 5 through the the Koralai of the Pattu.

In October last one Mr. Reid, a destitute Englishman, was helped by a donation of Rs. 5.

as a Christian. The rice among the pensioners and cost the Society Rs. 24.

There was an increase in the number of pensioners aided by the Society from 16 to 28 among whom were five deaths during the year.

Considering the extended usefulness of the Friend-in-Need Society, it deserves the steady support of all enlightened and well-to-do members of the Community. In conclusion, the Society avails itself of this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude its thanks to Government and the public for the support annually accorded by them.

EXTRACT.

THEOSOPHY AND THE HINDOOS.
AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

LATE on Thursday evening, Mrs. Besant reached her home at Avenue-road, Regent's park, after nearly five months' lecturing tour in India and Ceylon, where she has been expounding to the Buddhists their own faith. The gift of lucid speech, which has placed Mrs. Besant in the front rank of women orators, has made her reception among all classes of people in India one of enthusiastic appreciation. Triumphant arches, unceasing garlanding, and incessant rose-sprinkling have attended her journeyings about. The people have heard her gladly, and priests and philosophers have literally sat at her feet. At Adyar, for many days in succession, she sat in the hall receiving and answering questions. She has aroused the leaders of Indian Society to an interest in their ancient institutions and religion never before manifested.

Shortly after her arrival yesterday morning she was kind enough (says a DAILY CHRONICLE interviewer) to give me an audience. I found her seated in her study, looking in very picturesque, in a simple Tuscan dress, with an Indian shawl arranged gracefully over one shoulder, and around her waist. An Indian servant, in native head-dress, was in attendance. Mrs. Besant's hair is now silvery white, and her face has a fuller contour than of yore, and a deeper and more introspective expression.

"Would you explain the object of your Indian tour, Mrs. Besant?"

"I have travelled on behalf of the Theosophical Society and in company with its president, Colonel Olcott. All the arrangements were made by the Indian section of the society. My object has been to show to the Hindoos that Theosophy is identical with the teachings of their own scriptures, and that Madame Blavatsky had the special mission of bringing back to India the knowledge which it had itself lost and then of spreading that knowledge through the world. Her claim, which I have supported, was that Theosophy was the underlying truth of every religion, and that the ancient Hindoo scriptures contained the fullest presentment ever made public. I have endeavoured to justify that position in India by proving every point of Theosophical teaching by quotations from the Hindoo scriptures.

"In towns where the population was mixed in faith I used the scriptures of the Parsees, Christians, and Mahomedans, and in Ceylon where the population was Buddhist I used the Buddhist scriptures. The enormous majority of my lectures were delivered to almost entirely Hindoo audiences. I confined myself to the Hindoo scriptures, and in all cases, I stated that I regard those scriptures and the Hindoo religion as the origin of all other scriptures and all other religions. This was the position learned from Madame Blavatsky, and which I have held since I joined the Theosophical Society.

"How was your teaching received by the people of India?"

"Everywhere I met with enthusiastic receptions. The Pundits, or spiritual teachers, gave me the warmest welcome, and continually expressed their extreme pleasure at this justification of Hindooism before the world, as the source of all great religions and philosophies?"

"Did they not seek to test your knowledge, Mrs. Besant?"

"Yes; the learned Brahmins would come to me with obscure passages and allegories from the sacred writings, asking for interpretation. My answers were based upon the teachings which I have myself received from my master, one of the great Eastern teachers to whom I was led by Madame Blavatsky. It is this teaching which enabled me to deal with the learned and spiritual questioners who came to me with their problems. I was able to show them that there really was attainable a secret knowledge which threw light upon the obscurities of their own scriptures. I found no one who was inclined to deny the existence of such knowledge, but I found many who feared that it was entirely lost and who rejoiced at this definite proof that it was still within reach."

"For how long do you think the true Hindoo religions has been practically lost?"

"The process of deterioration has been slowly going on for thousands of years. Gradually the people have become less spiritual and less able to understand the secret teachings, and so the old knowledge has been lost."

"Did you, Mrs. Besant, meet with any teachers who had retained the old faith in its spiritual purity?"

"Just a few. There exist some who are the recipients of the ancient teachings handed down in their true spiritual form."

"What has been the result of your mission to India?"

"Amongst the educated Hindoos, who were becoming materialistic, there is a considerable turning back towards the Hindoo religion; especially amongst the younger men. The great bane of the Hindoo is the copying of Western customs. I have laid much stress on the maintenance of the various national costumes, and of the Eastern method and customs of living as against the Western. I urged them to follow the Indian simplicity of material life instead of the costly and more luxurious Western habits. The great hope for India is to recover the spiritual basis of life; she has be-

come materialistic through Western ideas, and it has been my object to bring her back to her old simplicity of habits and to her old spirituality."

"What have you to say Mrs. Besant, regarding caste in India?"

"I consider that the four great castes, based on the fact of reincarnation, and which serve as schools for the reincarnating soul, should be maintained and gradually brought back to their original purpose. But the endless modern sub-divisions of caste, as well as the rigidity of the modern system are mischievous religiously and socially, and indefensible either from the Hindoo or from a rational view of human life. The four great castes of India are natural divisions of humanity, such as under the names occur in our own and other nations, and must practically always exist in social life."

"What are your views regarding the position of women in India?"

"I have had a good deal of talk with the leading Brahmins on questions touching the education of women and other social problems. Considerable efforts are being made with regard to female education but these efforts are very much hampered by the unwisdom of many of the attempts made under Western influence, because these, disregarding the social customs and the religious feeling of the people, alarm those who value the Hindoo religion lest in accepting education they should at the same time undermine all that they most value in religious and social customs. I hope I make it clear that it is not female education which is objected to. Customs very enormously in different parts of India, and the question of woman's position is far more complicated than many English reformers are inclined to think. It may seem strange to English people, but as a matter of fact, the Hindoos look with great disapproval on many of the ways and customs of European women, and consider that the Western ideal of womanhood is far lower than their own. They hold to family ties far more strongly than is done in the West, and fear the disintegration of the family would be one of the results following on the Western education of women."

"No man in marrying leaves the family home and the grand parents, and married sons all share the same home. The feeling against giving pain to the mother and grand mother is tremendously strong. A little incident will illustrate this. I was talking to a gentleman friend in India, and urging a certain thing upon him. He excused his hesitation to comply by saying that 'he did not know what his grandmother would think. Now, a young man of thirty in this country would not, I fear, give such open reverence for the opinion of his grandmother. The sons are brought up in India to regard the parents with exceeding reverence. It is only under such a system that this joint family life would be possible. I do not care to say more on the position of Hindoo women, as I hope to write on the subject shortly.'

"It is reported, Mrs. Besant, that while in India you received some wonderful revelations from a native Palmist. Is this so?" "I think the story must be a good deal exaggerated. I did, however, have my hand read by a Palmist, and he told me several small points in my past life which had never been published. I believe that people can, by looking at the palm of the hand, tell the general character and at least some of the past life of the person. I have made no study of the subject myself, but have come across various facts which convince me that this is possible, although I do not understand the method by which the knowledge is gained. Speaking generally the human body is the result of past thoughts, and from this standpoint there is nothing PRIMA FIZIE irrational in the hands, like the face, expressing individual characteristics; nor does it seem likely that the extreme difference found in the markings of the hand of different persons should be unmeaning."

"And what about the story that you bathed in the sacred river, Mrs. Besant?"

"It is a pure myth which was started by a hostile Anglo-Indian newspaper. It is perfectly true that, with a party of friends, I visited the great festival at Allahabad, but I took no kind of part in any of the ceremonies that were going on, nor did I, while in India, bathe anywhere out of my bathroom," said Mrs. Besant with a laugh, for the story seemed to afford her great amusement.

"What truth is there, Mrs. Besant in the statement that you have embraced Hindooism?"

"There is no truth in the statement as made, but it is true, as I have already explained, that I regard Hindooism as the most ancient of all religions, and as containing more fully than any other the spiritual truths named Theosophy, in modern times. Theosophy is the ancient Brahma Vidya of India. Of this Hindooism is the earliest and best exoteric presentment, Exoterically, therefore, I am a Hindoo in my religion and in my philosophy, but this was as true when I went to India as it is true now. There is absolutely no change in my position. It was just because I was Hindoo in religion and philosophy that I was given the mission of recalling to the modern Hindoos the real grandeur and sublimity of their religion. This could not have been done as effectively by any one who was not at one with them in the broad outlines of religious faith. To the occultist the ceremonies of the Hindoo religion are full of significance, for they are all based on the experimental knowledge of the existence and of the powers of spiritual intelligences. As a philosophy intellectually accepted, Theosophy may remain apart from all religious faiths, but regarded from the spiritual side—if devotion is to form any part of the life the Theosophist will use religion most adapted to his own nature. In my own case that religion is Hindooism in its ancient and pure form."