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OPINION

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TOO MANY CATTLE

Acharya Vinoba Bhave has indeed much reason for protest against the present Government. In addition to the general grounds he shares with all good Indians. The overthrow of freedom, the establishment of authoritarianism, etc. the very reasonable and moderate recommendations of his Acharya Sammelan have been treated with contumely. That in the circumstances he would act was to be expected. It is, however, unfortunate that instead of basing his protest on these very real and vital issues, he has chosen to take his stand on the stoppage of cow-slaughter, thus ensuring for himself undoubtedly a great measure of support from staunch adherents, but scarcely acting in the best interest of the country.

Below is a consideration of the question of "TOO MANY CATTLE" twenty-two years ago (19-3-54). Conditions to-day are certainly not better, generally much worse, than that time.

"One of the principal ways of increasing national wealth is by avoidance of waste. The most prominent source of waste in the Indian economy is the cattle position. One-third of the world's cattle population is to be found in India: 219 million cattle compete with 360 million people for the produce of the land. But for every person there are only 5.8 ounces of milk a day.

To give even a comparatively adequate supply, say 16 ounces a person a day, as against 30 ounces in France and even higher quantities in other countries, the milk production would have to be increased threefold. One-fifth of the cattle are practically useless. Thus the all over picture shows a tremendous waste of resources. The indications for the future moreover are towards a worsening rather than an improvement. Population, human and cattle, is rising; soil-erosion is increasing. Pasture lands are being denuded and the upkeep of the fertility of average soil is becoming doubtful. Improved methods, additional fertilizer, remedies of that nature, hardly seem likely to make any deep impression on the cattle problem. The real question is one of the number of cattle considered in conjunction with the ability of the country to support them and to increase their productivity.

The main function of the cow has always been held in India to be the production of bullocks. The supply of milk is incidental, though the demand for it has been increasing. Reporting 26 years ago, the Royal Commission on Agriculture said: "The number of cattle in a district depends upon and is regulated by the demand for bullocks. The worse the conditions for rearing efficient cattle, the greater the numbers kept tend to be. Cows become less fertile and their calves become undersized and do not satisfy the cultivators who, in the attempt to secure useful bullocks, breed more and more cattle. As numbers increase, the pressure

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on the available supply of food leads to further poorness of cows. As cows become smaller in size and greater in number the rate at which conditions become worse for the breeding of good livestock is accelerated."

This vicious circle remains today, despite the breeding of good bulls, the improvement of dairy strains in a few places and the distribution of good bulls and the rendering useless of bulls not likely to breed sound stock in quite a number of villages. Conditions continue to emphasize the validity of the statement of the Royal Commission that "no outstanding improvement in the way of breeding is possible till cattle can be better fed."

To meet milk needs, India has recourse to another animal, the buffalo, a good milk producer, which gives about double the percentage of butterfat in its milk as the cow. Thus, there is the cow kept primarily for bullocks and the buffalo for milk, two types of animals for doing that for which one, the cow, should suffice. In the end, while the strain on the cultivator's resources is greatly increased, neither is adequately fed. The order of priority for this purpose is generally the bullock, the buffalo and the cow. Male buffaloes and excess female cattle get what they can and sometimes starve to death.

The country obviously cannot afford the luxury of separate types of animals for milk and for draught. It ought to depend on a dual purpose kind of animal, the males being capable of meeting the needs of agriculture and transport and the females of yielding substantial quantities of milk. This is not practicable so long as there is no possibility of proper feeding. The dynamics of the position may be stated thus: too many cattle with too little feed leads to even more cattle even more poorly fed. Adequate feeding of all the cattle on a very reasonable and by no means extravagant standard would, according to calculations made for at least one State, probably mean putting under fodder and feed-producing crops more than twice the current acreage so cultivated.

Such transformation of the agricultural pattern is not practicable. If attempted, it would have most unfortunate repercussions in other spheres. Accordingly, it may safely be concluded that there are far more cattle to be fed than can adequately be fed even with considerable improvement in yield. From which, and from the other proposition previously stated, the corollary may be drawn: fewer cows, better fed, would produce better and more milk and bullocks.

The Government of India's solution to the problem of useless cattle is to set up gosadans in waste-lands, forests and other out of the way places with grazing facilities. Old, useless and infirm cattle are to be segregated there, the male stock being castrated. It was proposed to establish 160 such institutions at a cost of Rs. 97 lakhs, the inmates in each being 2,000. The land required would suffice for only an infinitesimal

mal number of the useless cattle—320,000 against an estimated 40 million which need to be dealt with. In fact, of course, the results reached so far have not been at all impressive either as regards the number of gosadans or the number of cattle brought into each. Clearly this is no solution. If it were really to deal with all the useless cattle, the requirements in money and land would be so large that they could hardly be met. One State alone would require 1,193 gosadans, with an annual net expenditure of nearly Rs. 120 lakhs and about 43 per cent of the available grazing lands of the State.

A good deal of rethinking cannot be avoided. It must be done dispassionately. The emotional overtones that surcharge this subject must give way to a consideration of what is necessary in the interests of man and cattle alike. Talk of planning to increase the national wealth has little meaning while this enormous avoidable waste continues unchecked."

As to the cow's plight in this country let her speak for herself. In Shakuntala Paranjpye's very perceptive "International Conference of Cows" (*Opinion*, 29-11-66) the Indian cow presiding over the Conference says: "All of you, o dear brothers and sisters, seemed very much impressed by the halo that man puts round my head and the way he raises me to divine heights. Gods in my country are plentiful but food is scarce. Not long ago there were more gods than humans in India. But these gods are fortunate. They don't eat. While we the bovine gods need food to keep body and soul together. There are over 20 crores of us, or according to your system of enumeration we are over 200 million."

"Man is against cow slaughter but he does not mind condemning us to a life of slow starvation. When we are useless we are turned out to fend for ourselves. We roam the country in search of grass and water till gradually we are reduced to skeletons. The crows and vultures start pecking at us. They even pick out our eyes and we have not the strength to lift our tails to ward them off. That is how the cow mothers breathe their last. Birds and beasts eat what is left of our flesh and meat, rats and vermin nibble at our hides and our bones rot away in the sun. But to kill us would be a sin. I would request those who are leading the cow slaughter ban agitation to adopt a cow each and care for her. Then they will learn from experience how hard it is. I listened to the figures quoted by our three sisters regarding milk production and consumption in their countries. Our average yield is less than 2 pints per cow and the human consumption is less than a $\frac{1}{4}$ pt. per head per day.

While I heard the excellent account of cattle care from our three sisters I recalled a remark reluctantly made by an orthodox Hindu woman a few days before I left for this conference. गोभक्षकच खरा गोरक्षक आहे. It means that only he who eats a cow knows how to care for her. You see this woman's daughter was studying in Canada and from her letters

Continued on (Page 2)

ANTIGONE

AMIYA RAO

When France was part of Hitler's Europe and the dictator's storm-troopers were the background of every-day life, the people had only two alternatives left to them—to accept that regime or to resist it. The acceptors, quickly enrolled themselves as honorary members of the Pig Society; only they became more active than the original ones.

The artists among them overnight produced portraits of the tyrant as a divinity incarnate, Zeus. The intellectuals wrote volumes on the adequacy of losing the cherished rights of the people and the laws which preserved them. They distorted facts and, without the least compunction, presented falsehood as truth. The linguists got busy adding new connotations to old words: 'responsible criticism' for instance, meant undiluted praise; socialism no longer was a definite concept; it could change to suit the occasion and the mood of the ruler; similarly 'dictatorship' was equated to democracy and 'censorship' to freedom of the press. The journalists were not to be left behind, they too began to see the evils in dissent, and the virtue in equating the tyrant with the country. To prove that they were progressive, they happily approved the death-warrant of freedom of expression. The technicians handling the mass media produced films spreading the poison of personality cult far and wide and denigrating men whom the nation revered. All were suitably rewarded with a crumb here and a crumb there.

The process could have gone on smoothly, crushing out every spark of life but for those who had chosen the second alternative—to resist. The writers among them flooded the country with literature telling the men and women active in the Resistance that all was not lost yet. The words of Camus set the theme: "despite men's suffering, despite the blood and wrath, despite the dead, we must utter not words of anger but words of hope, of the dreadful hope of men isolated with their fate".

And that winter night in 1942 when Antigone was staged right in front of the Nazi army and the citizens of Paris, Jean Anouilh was saying the same thing, asking men to hold on to their faith in the ultimate triumph of human dignity. Who could have imagined in that distant era when Sophocles wrote his moving play Antigone that it would be so transformed by another author in another century, that the young girl Antigone would stand as the symbol of Fighting France proud and unyielding?

The demand of young Antigone is simple—to exercise her right to bury her brother Polynices who had been denied burial by Creon, the dictator king of Thebes. Not that she is not afraid. Antigone is young, she would much rather live than die; but, says Anouilh to his young friends, "there is no help for it—when your name is Antigone there is

only one part you can play, and she will have to play hers through to the end". There is discouragement; her own sister Ismene cries out, "Creon will have us put to death". But Antigone is firm in her resolve, "Of course he will. He will do what he has to do and we will do what we have to do". The Gestapos, the armed police, the Reserve police, the military forces roam the streets, "You shout an order, and if one man refuses to obey, you shoot straight into the mob. Into the mob, I say". And there is no remedy. With more power they have become more corrupt, more ruthless. The police of Thebes, "Creon's mob will seize our arms", whispers the frightened sister; "we will be dragged—for torture surrounded by guards with their idiot faces—no shrieking, no begging will make them understand that we want to live, for they are like slaves who do exactly as they have been told without caring about right or wrong".

Yet basically the army and the police are "not a bad lot—they too are bothered by the little day-to-day worries that beset us all. At the same time they are policemen—eternally innocent, eternally indifferent, prepared to arrest anybody at all." Yet a dictator has to use them, he is a man who lives in fear and these are his mascots. The moment these dumb instruments of torture, these unthinking automatons begin to think, where is he? In his scheme of things he must be at the centre of his universe and that universe rests on these pillars and in that universe none is allowed to think or to criticise; one can only agree and applaud. To remain in power he has to crush both labour and intellect.

Creon is a frightened man; his is not the party dictatorship or ideological dictatorship; his is a personal dictatorship and to preserve it he has constantly to keep guard. The report that "the earth was scattered over the body of Polynices—and the corporal found a shovel, a kid's shovel—maybe a kid did it" arouses his fears—"a kid—their kid—very useful to the party, an innocent child, a martyr—A free gift to their cause—they must have accomplices in the guard itself". But what is worse, he had announced that with the steps he had taken Thebes had overcome the period of darkness, that the people had accepted the shot of discipline with acclamation; he had dubbed leaders of men as fascists and reactionaries and had them thrown in secret dungeons—thus "I broke the back of rebellion, but like a snake it is coming together again, leaders of the mob allied to envious princes"—the despicable foreign agents are active again.

The atmosphere becomes stifling, "The spring is wound up tight—one question too many, idly thrown out over a friendly drink and the tragedy is on—you don't need to lift a finger. The machine is in perfect order; it has been oiled ever since time began—Death, treason and sorrow are on the march and they move in the wake of storm, of tears, of stillness". But granting this Anouilh would not let the resister rest. True, "there isn't any hope, you are trapped. The whole sky has fallen on you", yet, "You can—shout. Don't mistake me. I said 'shout', I did not say groan, whimper, complain—you can shout aloud; you can get all those things said

that you never thought you'd be able to say—or never even knew you had it in you to say—Antigone is caught—little Antigone is going to be able to be herself."

The interrogation begins; and as in all police states it follows a set pattern: face to face the relentless inquisitor with enormous power and the defenceless accused with the sole power of her spirit; probing questions, crude intimidation, wooings, threats, hopes of release and then back to intimidation. "Have you tortured perhaps?", says the dictator. "But there is still a chance that I can save you—give up your crazy purpose—I want to save you." Back comes the quiet answer, "Neither save me nor stop me". There is a pause; a new style of approach—the dictator a trusting friend—"Won't you try to understand me?" The country was in danger, we have done things which we would not do and quite frankly I don't like doing, but it was a question of that or allowing anarchy. Somebody had to agree to captain the ship. "She had sprung a hundred leaks; she was loaded to the water-line with crime, ignorance, poverty. The crew refused to work and were looting the cargo". They would have killed me and my family. "Was that the time for a man to weigh the pros and cons . . . You grab the wheel. The thing that drops when you shoot . . . has no name". The country is in danger. "Now, do you understand?" asks Creon. There had to be discipline, discipline is the need of the hour; and dissent has no place now. "'No' is one of your man-made words". Look at the animals. Do they say no? asks Creon. "They move in droves, nudging one another onwards, all travelling the same road . . . no matter how many may fall by the wayside—travelling the same road, unchanged from those who went before". Antigone exposes the secret longing of Creon, the longing of every dictator: "Oh Creon—what a king, you could be if only men were animals". "Listen to me", pleads Creon—"There is nothing more you can tell me now", says Antigone.

Failing everything the dictator deals her the final blow—the cruellest of all—to shake her faith in the rightness of the cause, in the integrity of the person she was standing up for. With lies heaped on lies each uglier than the other he proceeds in his task of character-assassination: "I want to make one last appeal, Antigone; do you know what you are dying for?—A cheap idiotic bounder that is what he was —He struck your father in the face with his fist. Your father sat at his desk with his head in his hands. His nose was bleeding. He was weeping with anguish". Who could approve of such a scoundrel who believed in violence and had hurt the king—the father of the nation? And that is not all: he was a reactionary, a foreign stooge, he had recourse to foreign money—"that loyal prince had offered to sell out Thebes to the highest bidder"—that much for his incorruptibility, his patriotism, his non-violence.

Antigone is visibly shaken, "Why do you tell me all this?" She asks. "Would it have been better to let you die a victim to that obscene story?"

replies the sly dictator. "It might have been better. I had my faith". Why insist, why defy, why court death, for an ideal which was one's own creation. What has the dictator been saying repeatedly—I don't think we had very much choice. Extraordinary situations demand extra-ordinary remedies. Then had the situation got that desperate—maybe it had—and was he the enemy of the country? Maybe, he was. Dazed she rises, "I shall go up to my room".

As the resistance is on the point of breaking down, with her faith nearly shattered, the dictator in his zeal over-reacts—so go now, he advises, "Get married quickly. Antigone be happy. People will tell you that's not life, life is something else—they want to make use of you. Don't listen to them. Life is nothing more than the happiness you get out of it".

Happiness! That one word lashes Antigone out of her torpor. How could she have forgotten!—Was not the happiness of an entire nation at stake? And the struggle—the humiliation and silence, the mid-night arrests, the pale frightened faces of emaciated children and the loss of every freedom that man has cherished? And how many have died and how many have been languishing in their solitary cells—for getting just that happiness back—total and complete.

Turning to the dictator Antigone replies with great calm, "What kind of happiness do you foresee for me?—What are the unimportant little sins that I shall have to commit before I am allowed to sink my teeth into life and tear happiness from it? Tell me to whom shall I have to lie? Upon whom shall I have to fawn? To whom must I sell myself? Whom do you want me to leave dying, while I turn away my eyes? . . . I spit on your happiness."

The dictator is beside himself with anger. True, nothing of all this will reach the people, the outside world will know nothing—yet Antigone is shouting: "I order you to shut up—the ante-room is full of people. Do you want them to hear you?" But the words have wings, the people have heard, the frightened, the lost-hopes, the hesitant, the timid—all have shed their fear. Ismene rushes in. "Forgive me, Antigone. I've come back. I'll go with you now. I will do it alone tonight". "The thing is catching! Who knows but that lots of people will catch the disease from me", are the prophetic words of young Antigone, before she is led out to her death.

Meanwhile the struggle continues; it will be long.

"We are of the tribe that asks questions and we ask them to the bitter end".

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BE GOOD, OH BE GOOD, DO BE GOOD

(Continued from 18th May)

[Of late, Authority, if its exhortations are to be taken seriously, has been greatly exercised about the lack of the old administrative virtues among public servants generally, and in particular among those public servants who deal with the people. Be just, remove grievances, sympathise with difficulties, be responsive, be patient, try and understand, be helpful, be honest etc., etc.—the great ones at conference upon conference reiterate. And who would object? Not we certainly; quite the contrary in fact. The only caveat we would enter would be to remind the mighty exhorters, flushed with power, of the proverb that an ounce of example is worth more than a ton of adjuration; also, of the Confucian maxim that the superior person first practices and then preaches according to his practice, while the inferior person just preaches.

With this prelude, turn we to a tale of olden times relevant to the trend now being sought to be set, almost entirely by words:]

(The Story upto now: A young woman presents a petition to the Assistant Collector at his tent-door saying she is leaving her husband of her own accord. She, it appears, is travelling with a young man who wrote the petition and who also has two other women travelling with him. The man was at the back of the assembled spectators in the camping-ground, and has just come forward at the Naik's suggestion.)

Scarcely had the young man stepped in front and made the Assistant Collector a courtly bow, when a brightly-clad youth in the first row of spectators, who was accounted a notable traveller by his home-staying neighbours, cried out, "Why, it's the famous Gulal, who owns the House of Joy in the city two hundred miles to the South. He is very well-known there you know and thought of very highly by all the world of fashion. Yes, it is he." "Is that true, Sir?" asked the Assistant Collector "Are you a brothel-keeper?" Shuddering all over his body and applying the perfume-box to his nose several times, the fashionably-dressed young man said "Oh, the rude North! What a word to use. A, a——, no I can't say it. I have a few houses undoubtedly to which young men who are well-endowed resort, schools, so to speak, for the removal of inhibitions and the teaching of manners. But that is all. The utmost gentility, I assure you. Polite society, pleasant recreation, the practice of the arts, singing, dancing, the study of exotic literature, science from all quarters of the globe readily available through skilled practitioners. A veritable university, in fact, lord; no student ever fails there." "H'm," said the Assistant Collector, "A brothel-keeper truly. And the profitable employment you offered this petitioner," pointing to the married woman, "was in that House of Joy no doubt". "Well, lord, I will not deny that. Just look at her. Is she not admirably fitted for the art? Clearly it is her metier. She has just the proper air." "You did not tell her what

you intended though, did you?" asked the Assistant Collector. "No, lord how could I? Women are so queer; she would have taken fright perhaps for no reason at all, not even realising that this was her great chance," said the young man. "Well, young lady, now you know what your good friend has chosen for you, do you still wish to go with him?" asked the Assistant Collector. "Lord," said the woman, "this man, so handsome seeming, is a devil. I know what happens to the women who live in these places. One of them came to die in our village. No, lord, no, never. I would rather kill myself than go further with him."

"Now, you two, what about you?" said the Assistant Collector, turning to the two women who had accompanied the fashionable young man. "Are you proposing to go along with him?" The women looked at one another, totally bewildered, then one said "He told us that he could easily in view of our fine physique get us married in small zemindar households, where the men had no money to pay the bride-price. He would get a good fee, we would get good husbands. He talks so convincingly, lord, and he treated us with such respect—we have been travelling with him and his two servants for over forty-eight hours—that we readily believed him. Thank God, we learned what he really is in time. No lord, we do not go with him, but what is to happen to us, I do not know." "Well, supposing each of you tells us what brought her to this plight, perhaps something might arise," said the Assistant Collector.

"I," said the one who had spoken "am twenty-eight. I was engaged to be married to a youth I loved, when one night, the enemy fell upon his village and wiped it out with all its inhabitants. I was seventeen then and though my brother with whom I lived tried to get me married several times, I just could not get myself to agree. Recently he has married the queen of all subtle shrews, and life became so difficult for me with her turning my brother against me, that I decided to leave." "I was married, lord," said the other, "and very happy in the love of my husband. I bore two children, a boy and a girl, but God took them away. Suddenly, three days ago, my husband came back from a trip with a very handsome woman, much better-looking than me, and said she too was his wife. I seized an axe and rushed to kill the intruder. She was fleet of foot and fled up the steps even upto the roof-tower, I following, axe in hand. Just as my axe was descending for the fatal blow, my husband caught me from behind and carrying me down, beat me cruelly. I called him every name I could think of, and told him I would certainly kill that woman sooner or later. 'Look,' he said, 'there are too many ties between us for me to kill you. I give you your deferred dower and divorce you. Go in peace and leave me in peace.' 'Peace, indeed,' I cried, 'Alas that my brothers are dead, and my people scattered. Else I would have shown you peace.' However, the mahr I took and left his house as soon as possible. Some day, God willing, some day _____. "Well, ladies," said the Assistant Collector, "after such grievous misfortunes in life's voyaging, it is only meet that you be settled in safe

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havens. If we can in any way help to bring about that desirable end, we shall count it a privilege. Now, Mohamed Khan, what about this? Do you think it will work? There are nearly 500 gathered outside. Supposing you proclaim the two eligible ladies here are considering marriage with suitable husbands, no bride-price required. Those who wish to can speak in person, specifying the one they wish to marry. The decision will rest with the ladies themselves and there must be no questioning of their choice and no disputes about it. All present are welcome to give advice and to mention any disqualification on the part of the persons applying, so that the ladies who have no personal knowledge of the locality can be properly guided. This is a task of much merit, let all help. What say you, ladies?" A smile broke on the perplexed face of the first lady, and turning to the other, she embraced her. Then both, looking at the Assistant Collector, said enthusiastically, "It's a wonderful idea, lord. If it goes through, we promise you we shall make your men devoted and loyal wives." "And you, Mohamed Khan," said the Assistant Collector, "How think you?" "Well, Sir, marriages made after much deliberation also sometimes end in shipwreck, so why not try this?"

Moving forward a little, with a loud clap of his hands, the Naik called the assemblage to attention and then in a truly carrying voice, set out the position, pointing to the two ladies as prizes. Such was the dignity of his bearing, the seriousness of his voice, that not even a ripple of laughter passed over the large crowd. Men began to look at one another and at the two women, who now the plunge had been taken, stood their ground, appearing superbly unconcerned, their gazes directed into middle space. A few minutes of silence, and then a tall, decoratively-turbaned man stood up and said 'Lord, I offer myself for the taller lady. I am a widower, my wife died a year ago. I have two children, five and three, who need a mother. You have seen my land. Bread and meat are not lacking in my house, though I have no wealth. I kill in fair fight, but never otherwise. If any here know anything to my disadvantage, let him say so freely. Of me he has leave, and I shall bear him no malice for it. I was a good husband, her relatives will tell you, to my last wife, and God willing, I shall make you a good husband, too, lady, if you will have me.' The Assistant Collector looked around and signalled to a village-officer, and then the lady in question. "Tell about him" he said to the village-officer. "Land about 300 acres, lord" said the village-officer, "140 acres flow, two crops, good cultivator, drives the bullocks himself on occasion, first-rate wrestler, good natured, seeks no quarrels but is never backward if one is forced on him. Firm but generous, I would give him my daughter if I had one." "Thank you," said the Assistant Collector "a very fine summing-up. You heard, lady? No, wait, don't speak yet. There may be another candidate." Cried the Naik "Hurry up, gentlemen. This is not the time for bashfulness. He who will not when he may/when he will he shall have nay." Said a five foot-two man, very solidly-built and an obvious personality with his

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tufted eyebrows, stern face and clipped moustaches, "If the second lady will excuse my lack of height, I should like to offer for her. I admire her spirit and think it would suit mine. I am forty and have never been married, for I thought I could not abide a woman around me, but she I think I could abide. I have some land. What kind of a husband I would make, I know not, for I have never been one. But she likes taking a chance I think, and so here I am." The woman, who had been looking at him off and on all the time, said straightaway, "Sir, I am honoured by your offer and accept it. Nay, I do not want to wait to hear anything to your disadvantage. My mind is made up." "God bless you both," said the Assistant Collector, as the man moved up and stood beside the lady. After a short silence, the first lady said, "Lord, I think I am well satisfied with the gentleman who offered for me." "Good luck to all of you, then" said the Assistant Collector. And to the Naik's second assistant, "Sanobar, here is twenty-five rupees. Ride with the two couples to the nearest kazi, have the weddings performed, and entered in his register, distribute sweets, then return and report, leaving them to celebrate at leisure." "Lord," said the first lady, "From the bottom of our hearts we thank you. You have raised us from despair to happiness." And the second "Bless you, lord." "Go, go now, get married and I hope you will be able to say the same a year hence" said the Assistant Collector, and to the two men "Forget not, Sirs, these are our wards. They will make good wives, be you good husbands too, or you will see us beside them."

The five departed, bowing low again and again, and the Assistant Collector's gaze turning from them, fell upon the fashionably-dressed brothel-keeper, who stood with a sneering smile upon his face. "Ah, yes," said the Assistant Collector, "and now you. Shall I bind you down to keep the peace and refrain from rascally behaviour for six months, refusing sureties and keeping you in jail, or would you prefer to fight?" "But I have done nothing, I have committed no offence, I shall send for my lawyer, I shall fight to the High Court, I shall —" expostulated the man. "You have done nothing, of course, only misled three unfortunate women into accompanying you, whom but for the grace of God, you would have led right into Hell, making quite a handsome thing out of it for yourself. I am kind to you, oh leper. I am generous to you in offering you a choice. What you deserve is that I should toss you to that crowd and let them tear you limb from limb and feed you to the dogs. Come, I have no wish to degrade myself by arguing with you. Go to jail or fight. Which?" said the Assistant Collector. "I'll fight of course," said the young man. "It is good to see you have courage" said the Assistant Collector. "Well what is your weapon? If it is the axe, or axe and dagger, Mohamed Khan will no doubt be delighted to send you to hell; if it is the iron-ringed staff, your humble servant will be pleased to oblige; if it is the long or short-stick, Anwar here will with pleasure beat you to a pulp. Choose" "I have an aversion to taking life, so the short-stick for me" said the young man. "Besides I am quite a

champion with it. Don't be surprised if your man flees the field before I've done with him." "Right, the short-stick it is, clear the square, begin in three minutes" said the Assistant Collector.

Within a minute and a half Anwar Khan was ready, head and chest bare, feet naked, a five-foot long resilient bamboo in his hand. He swished it round and turned to the Assistant Collector who said "Don't kill him. No strokes on the vital spots, temples, etc., but beat him up properly and thoroughly. Let him groan with pain every time he moves a muscle for the next six weeks. I don't need to tell you any more. The scoundrel seems to have got away with everything in that damned corrupt city of his, and we must so deal with him that the very idea of coming North will send him into a raging nightmare. He may be good. Watch carefully for the first few minutes. When you've got his measure, hit, hit and hit again. Good luck." The young man stripped cleanly and displayed quite a turn of speed in addition to skill. In five minutes, however, Anwar had him breathing hard, then forced down his guard and rained blows upon him with such celerity that one could hardly see the stick falling. In ten minutes the fellow had lost touch completely, and Anwar drew back, but the Assistant Collector wouldn't let the fight end. He called for a three-minutes break, let the man's servants refresh him with water and then set the two to it again. Scientifically Anwar worked over the man from neck to ankle and back again until groaning and crying the man tumbled down in a heap. "Go now, oh brothel-keeper" said the Assistant Collector "and remember if you or your myrmidone ever come to these parts again, you will not escape so lightly". The man was carried off by his servants on a stretcher, and on that same stretcher that night they carried him to the nearest railway station to catch the train going South.

Still unfinished business, one petulant but now somewhat frightened female, reflected the Assistant Collector. A tall, thin man in a long black coat and with a black cap on his head, bowed before him and said in a low voice "I am the physician whose wife has filed a petition before you that she is leaving me of her own free will. I was away when she left home, and following her, have just come up to learn that you saved her from certain destruction. I am greatly your debtor, lord." "This is a bad business, Hakim Sahib. According to the lady, you have no time for her, her youth is being wasted, and so, as one lives but once, she wants to leave you and start again elsewhere. What think you of it?" "It is as I expected. I married this woman, lord, not just because I wanted a wife, but because she would provide me with an interesting subject for study. The moment I saw her I knew she lived in two worlds. I thought if she was left with her brother, a good, solid character, utterly disgusted with her strange whims, she might lose completely the balance of her mind. She is certainly attractive, too, so I married her and brought her home. The first year she was completely normal, her daughter was born, she was a careful mother, I hoped all would go well. Then, she

began to be moody. I watched, and waited, I tried to influence her, I was as kind as I could be, but I saw it wasn't working. At last, I discovered what was wrong; I wasn't beating her. She was convinced that any husband really fond of his wife, if he found her as neglectful of her household as she was, would beat her mercilessly. So I couldn't be fond of her. Now, I admit it is just not possible for me to beat anyone, even a child. My business is to save, not to kill; to cure, not to hurt. Hence this escapade." "What do we do then?" asked the Assistant Collector. "If you are satisfied that she really wants to go, why bother about petitions?" asked the Hakim. "I am quite ready to divorce her, peace be with her, and send her back to her brother." "Well," said the Assistant Collector, "let us hear the lady in your presence."

On being called, the young woman walked up, gave a quick glance at her husband, then averted her gaze and stood silent. "Here is your husband come to take you home. Now I take it you will go with him," said the Assistant Collector. "No, no, lord, not with him. He is inadequate, I tell you, he is too old for me. Let me go. I will find my way to my cousin who lives a hundred miles from here. She will look after me." "Look, woman, you have a little daughter of one, has she no claim upon you? Tell me, if your husband were not what you call inadequate, you would not want to part from him?" asked the Assistant Collector. "No, lord, of course not, why I'm very fond of him and also of my child," said the woman. "But I can't just bear this weakness of his." "Hakim Sahib, to my inexperienced mind, the solution seems simple. All that is necessary is to convince the lady you are not inadequate. I take it in no sense are you that," said the Assistant Collector. "Of course not, Sir," said the doctor smiling. "Well, now, there is a little garden pavilion quite empty but nicely carpeted two fields away. Why don't both of you ride down to it and talk things over?" "No lord no, I won't go with him, I won't go with this bloodless person. He is so inadequate," said the woman. Said the Assistant Collector, "While one may very legitimately have a strong prejudice against beating one's wife, Hakim Sahib, surely one can have none against picking her up gently and tenderly, putting her up on a horse before one and riding off to this pleasure-pavilion for a chat." "No, lord, no" cried the lady, while the Hakim, suddenly inspired, pounced upon her, and before she knew what was happening, was carrying her off, all her protests dying away in her astonishment. "He's dumped her on his horse, jumped up behind, and is galloping away", reported the Naik, trying hard to look serious. "Thanks be to God," said the Assistant Collector, "Well, that finishes petitions for the day. Tea, now, please, Dhanji, tea, lots of tea, I am dry from all this talking." Three quarters of an hour later, when the Assistant Collector sat dealing with files, waiting for Alfresun, the physician and his wife were ushered in. The woman's face was radiant and she immediately burst out with "Lord, I am a fool. I came to apologise. My husband and I are both very deeply obliged to you." The Hakim just smiled. "Good luck go

with you both and Hakim Sahib, you no doubt know the Saint-Poet's lines," and the Assistant Collector raised his voice in song,

"To be rough, to be kind,
To be bland, to be unkind.

All Roughness is not cruelty
Much Roughness can be love.

Love, love then, bold lover
Be tender and be rough.

The mood of the moment by no principle is bound,
Whatever is called for, let that quickly be found."

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THE WORLD'S MOST INSIDIOUS AND EXPENSIVE DISEASE

A. RAMSAY TAINSH

Primary Mycotoxicosis in man and beast is caused by ingestion of fungal poisons in food, beverages and feed. When mould-damaged feed is fed to livestock the mycotoxins pass into the flesh, milk and eggs. The consumption of these products, when laden with sublethal doses of mycotoxins, leads of Secondary Mycotoxicosis.

The whole subject of Secondary Mycotoxicosis has been sadly neglected by health authorities, as if it were a political issue too hot to touch and one that may conveniently disappear if ignored.

Mycotoxins are stable cumulative chemicals which begin by attacking the living cells of the central nervous system and then every vital organ and part of the body. Mycotoxins break down the body's natural defences against infectious, contagious and other non-communicable diseases. Mycotoxicosis is a form of malnutrition and often has the symptoms of avitaminosis but will not benefit by vitamins, trace elements, antibiotics and other pharmaceutical preparations.

The only successful way of treating Mycotoxicosis in man and beast is to stop feeding mould-damaged food and feed. Fish and fish-meal are the traditional antidotes for Mycotoxicosis and fresh produce are the healers. In the case of human beings, the diet should be boiled fish, fresh fruit, fresh green vegetables, roots, spices, herbs, onions and garlic. In the case of animals and poultry, fish-meal and fresh fodder.

W.H.O. has issued a warning that although better housing, piped water, improved sanitation and hygiene have almost eliminated the infectious and contagious diseases that killed so many children seventy years ago, hospitals are fuller than ever. The new non-communicable diseases fill hospitals beds for long periods and do not respond to medication. Failure to diagnose Mycotoxicosis and side-effects from modern drugs may well explain why one patient in five now develops an iatrogenic disease.

W.H.O. has appointed a three-man Commission to investigate the spreading of Mycotoxicosis resulting from the growth of the international trade in food and feed grains. This is a step in the right direction but every farmer, agricultural association and government should realize that modern agriculture methods have not only increased yields but have introduced new problems. Machines and chemicals have reduced the labour on the land the increased the profits for a while, but since the price of crude oil has been increased four to five-fold, it has been calculated that the traditional methods of farming in terms of energy were much

more efficient. Further studies show that these traditional methods produced more wholesome crops and healthier livestock.

The industrial Gross National Product may rise by three and four per cent per annum but this is offset when the agriculture Gross National Waste is 30 to 60 per cent for harvested grain and another 20 to 30 per cent higher for perishable produce.

In 1973 in the French protein factory farms, between 20 and 25 per cent of the livestock died before reaching slaughter weight. These losses were caused by an "unknown" virus or an unknown aetiology. These medical and veterinary mysteries will not disappear until the universities provide training in mycology and mycotoxicology for not only medical and veterinary students but public health workers, nutritionists, agriculture students and everyone concerned in the agriculture and food industries.

In 1886 Louis Pasteur introduced the germ theory and after a while the importance of his work was realized by the manufacturers of soap, laundries, sanitary engineers, architects etc. The manufacturers of agricultural chemicals and machines did not realize that modern agriculture would make it difficult to dry grain, hay and straw, and that this would enable fungi and actinomycetes to flourish.

The traditional farmer works to improve the drainage of his land and build up the humus of his soil. It is the soil animals, insects bacteria, fungi etc., etc., which alone break down the mineral and organic content of his soil and produce plant food. Trees and the rotation of crops are needed to ensure that all the different plant foods are available and that the crops are healthy. Healthy crops, like healthy men and livestock, have a natural resistance to disease and pests. The use of chemical fertilizers starve the soil animals and they die off. This spoils the drainage of the soil and enables the rain and wind to carry it away. Chemically fertilized crops are deficient in protein, trace elements, vitamins and enzymes, but laden with unwanted moisture.

Combine harvester salesmen advise farmers to combine the grain just before it is fully ripe. This prevents scattering and spillage of the grain which can reduce the harvest by 20 to 25 per cent. But it also means that the grain that falls into the hopper has a moisture content ranging from about 22 to 50 per cent. While combine harvested grain waits to be cleaned and mechanically dried, the air-space between the grains provides an ideal micro climate for the fungi in and on the grain to grow, sporulate and produce their mycotoxins.

(To be continued)

Continued from Page 5

this Hindu woman came to know about the cattle over there. There is a very old maxim in Sanskrit "जीवो जीवस्य जीवनम्" meaning life lives on life. And man in my country does not object to the killing of goats, sheep, chicken, etc. But the cow is holy. To kill her would amount to matricide. It matters not if you condemn her to a living death. But the knife must not be brought down upon her. Does it mean that man is kind to her? If I told you of all the methods he employs to extricate the last drop of milk from her udders you will faint. The buffaloes or water buffaloes as you call them are also comprised in cattle. Their milk is richer in fat content but as the male buffalo is practically of no use to man and the female buffalo yields milk without the presence of her calf, man breeds calves and abandons them to die of starvation. And this is done to save all the trouble to the mother for sake. Is that kindness? I will tell you of just one cruel practice of man in my country. By feeding a cow only on plant leaves with no other form of feed or even water to drink the animal produces a certain expensive dye in her liquid manure. The animal thus treated does not last long and dies in agony for want of food and water. But what of it? It is not slaughter. The cow is the mother god. She must not be slaughtered. It matters not if as a consequence she lives in greater distress and dies in greater pain. That is the price she has to pay for the holiness imposed upon her by man."

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