

PART II

CHAPTER 6

UNTOUCHABILITY AND LAWLESSNESS

There are many people who must be wondering as to how such an established order so full of inequalities could have survived. What are the forces which go to support it? Of the forces which sustain the system the most important is the determination of the Hindus to maintain it at all cost. The Hindus are prepared to use every means to suppress the Untouchables whenever the Untouchables try to upset it even in the slightest degree. The ordinary non-violent Hindu will not hesitate to use the utmost violence against the Untouchables. There is no cruelty which he will not practice against them to sustain the established order. Not many will readily believe this. But this is a fact. For those who have any doubt on the point, I reproduce below some cases of tyrannies and oppressions practised by the Hindus against the Untouchables as have been reported from time to time in the newspapers:

I

The following news item appeared in the “*Tej*” of Delhi in its issue of 4th September 1927:

“The Shiv Temple of Vykom has been desecrated by the Harijans by their coming too near to the temple. Now the Hindus of that area have decided that the ceremony of purifying the temple should be elaborately performed at great expense before the place is fit for worship again.”

The correspondent of ‘*Pratap*’ reports the following incident which appears in its issue of 2nd September 1932:

“Meerut August 1932. On the day of Janmashtami some Harijans tried to gain admittance into Caste Hindu Temple but nothing came except widespread troubles and unrest. This year the local Dalit Association has decided that if the doors of the temples are not opened to them, they will undertake Satyagraha. When the Hindus came to know of this, they started making plans to defeat the moves of the Harijans. At last on the night of Janmashtami, the members

of the Harijan community came in the form of a procession and tried to gain access to the temple Gods. The priests, however, refused them permission to enter and said, "You can have audience of the Gods standing outside on the street." Upon this a great crowd gathered at the place. The priests tried to enter the temple and thus a clash took place between the two parties and blows were freely exchanged."

The Hindus do not allow the Untouchables to enter the Hindu temples. It would be thought that they would allow the Untouchables to have their own temples and install therein the image of God. That is a mistake. The Hindus will not allow even that. It is enough to quote two instances. One is from the '*Pratap*' of 12th February 1923:

"In the District of Agra, a Chamar who had seen a Brahmin worshipping the image of Vishnu in his house, began to do the same himself. When the Brahmin came to know of this he was most indignant and with the help of a number of villagers caught hold of the ill-fated Harijan, gave him a sound beating saying, 'How dare you try to win over the God Vishnu'. Finally, they stuffed his mouth with filth and left him. In sheer desperation the Chamar abandoned the Hindu faith and embraced Islam."

The other is from the '*Hindu*' of 4th July 1939:

"A meeting of the Bellary District Harijan Advisory Board was held on 29th June 1939 at the Collector's Bungalow. Mr. A. D. Crombie, CIE., ICS., President of the Committee and Collector presided.

With regard to the grievances of the Harijans of Narayanadevarakeri including allegations of extraction of forced labour from them and harassment by money-lenders, the Committee decided to call for official report, with a view to taking action, if necessary.

The religious disabilities of the Harijans residing in Kudathini village were brought to the notice of the Committee. It was alleged that though the Harijans constructed a temple in their colony as long as twelve years ago, they could not install the image of God which was also ready in the temple, owing to the objections raised by a section of the Caste Hindus in the place to the Harijans taking out the image in procession in the village before the installation."

II

How any attempt to take water from the Hindu well is dealt with by the Hindus can be seen from the following instances. The first one appeared in the '*Pratap*' of 12th February 1923:

“Mahashaya Chhedi Lalji has reported that a Chamar was going for idol worship, when on the way he felt thirsty. He cast his own iron pail into a well and drew out some water. Upon this he was rebuked by a high caste Hindu and then soundly beaten and locked up in a room. As it happened, I was passing by and when I enquired why this man was being kept under lock and key, the Diwan Saheb replied that this man cast his own pail into our well and wants to profane religion.”

That even the Hindu women will not hesitate to take part in the assaults committed by the Hindus against the Untouchables who dare to take water from the Hindu well is a fact. Compare the following report which appeared in the ‘*Pratap*’ of 26th February 1932:

“On 19th February 1932, a very tragic incident took place in the village of Pul Bajwan. This happened when Mahashaya Ramlal went to fetch some water from a well, the same well at which on 13th January 1932 some Rajputs had belaboured Mahashaya Ramlal and his companion, Pandit Bansilal. At that time, a crowd of Rajput women came up armed with all sorts of bats and sticks and gave such a sound beating to the Mahashaya that it is difficult to describe. All his body was covered with blood by the time the Rajput women had done with him. At this time, he is admitted in the hospital of Phuklian.”

That even the support of an officer of Government in the exercise of their right to take water from the well will not save the Untouchables from assault is clear from the following incident which appeared in the ‘*Milap*’ of 7th June 1924:

“Some days ago, an officer of the Canal Department came to the village of Rahian in Tehsil Sabha and he ordered some Megha Untouchables to help in drawing out water from a well. At first they refused but the officer rebuked them sternly and forced them to draw water. The next day the Hindus gathered at the well and sent for the Megha through a Chowkidar and asked them why they dared to climb up to the well. One Megha replied that they were obliged to do so and it was no fault of theirs. For this cheek he was attacked by the Hindus with sticks and hands and until the time of writing this, he is lying unconscious. Although the doctor has declared that the injuries are minor ones, a report of attempted murder and unlawful assembly has been filed with the Police. This however has been ignored and the indifference of the police has created a feeling of great insecurity among the Megha people. The villagers are persecuting the Meghas very much, even their cattle are not allowed to drink water and all wells and ponds have been closed to them.”

The Untouchables cannot take water from the Hindu well is not all. They must not build a pucca brick well for themselves even though they may have the money to do so. For having a pucca well for themselves means an attempt to raise themselves to the status of the Hindus which is contrary to the Established Order.

The ‘*Milap*’ of 6th June 1934 reports the following incidents:

“Lala Ram Prashadji, Secretary of the Achhut Udharak Committee, Punjab, has written to the following effects:

“During this hot season, complaints are being received from everywhere that the supply of water is becoming a great problem. The Depressed Class people, who have no wells of their own sit near the well with their vessels in their hands. If someone is kind enough to pour out some water, well and good, otherwise they sit helpless. In some places, however, no one is allowed to pour out water to these people even for money and if anyone does so, mortal fights ensue. Not only is the use of the village wells forbidden to them, but they are not even allowed to make wells of their own with their own money.”

To the same effect is the incident reported in the “*Tej*” of 21st April 1924:

“The Chamars of the village, Opad, numbered about 250. About a month and half ago, they gave up drinking water out of the leather bags of the Muslim water carriers (on the suggestions of the Arya Samaj Pandits?) and now they are in great difficulties about their water supply. The Jats of the village not only refuse to let them draw water out of the village wells but do not even let them make wells of their own. The poor Chamars are living on water from ponds and ditches. Yesterday, Dr. Sukhdevji, Secretary of Dalit Sudhar (Harijan Uplift) Committee came to make investigations in Upad and saw everything with his own eyes. He found the condition of the Chamars abject beyond words and their persecution by the Jats a real fact.”

The following is from the ‘*Times of India*’ dated 9th May 1931:

“In the Baroda State the Untouchables are supposed to be better treated than in the adjoining British territory, because the State has made laws recognising the equality of the Antyaja with caste people. And yet in Padras Taluka the other day the standing crop of a poor Antyaja woman was fired and she herself brutally assaulted, because she dared to send her little son to the local primary school. Now comes a tale of woe from Chanasma in Kadi Prant where an artisian well has been sunk and built with the labour of the Antayajas who were promised the use of the well. But when the well was ready for

use they were first flatly told it was not for them, and when they complained to the Punch the latter generously allowed them to lay a pipe 500 feet long at the end of which they could have a tap all for themselves. Now an unexpected owner of the land at the tap had cropped up, so the pipe line was taken somewhere near to the local tank, but this meant pollution of the tank and therefore of the dirty linen washed there. So the tap was accommodated elsewhere. But did this mean the end of the trouble? No, the enraged caste people have cut the pipe line several times and the Antyajias are without water to drink. How very 'adequate' to use Mr. Gandhi's term, must the Untouchables feel the treatment given to them by their coreligionists."

Mr. Sanjana in a letter to the *'Times of India'* of the 7th November 1928 reports what Mr. Thakkar saw in the year 1927 regarding the awful plight of the Untouchables in the matter of water.

"In Balsad Taluk, Mr. Thakkar saw a Bhangi woman waiting near a well for some merciful 'people' to give her some water. She had waited from morning till noon, and none had given her any. But the most exquisite touch of spirituality is revealed in the manner of giving water to the Bhangis; it cannot be poured direct into their pots—any 'people' doing so would get polluted. Says, Mr. Thakkar, 'once our teacher Chunibhai had shown the temerity of pouring water direct from his bucket into a Bhangi's pot and he had received a stern warning in consequence 'Master this sort of thing won't be (tolerated) here'. A small cistern is built below the slope of the well. Anyone who is moved by pity may pour some water in the cistern. A bamboo pipe just out of the cistern, and the Bhangi women must put her pot under the pipe, and it may get filled in an hour or so. For, adds Mr. Thakkar, it is only the unwanted water remaining over in the bucket of the woman drawing it that is as a rule thrown into the cistern, and that too if she takes pity on the waiting Bhangi woman."

III

Under the established order, the Untouchables have no right to education and certainly have no right to be admitted to the village school. Those Untouchables who have dared to make a breach in these rules of the Established Order have been severely punished by the Hindus. The following are only a few of the numerous cases that have happened:

From the '*Arya Gazette*' of Lahore dated 30th June 1921:

"A Mahashaya wrote an article in the paper '*Young India*', in which he reported that in district Surat there is a village called Sisodri. In a very short span of time it has made such progress on the path of nationalism, that it could be held up as a model of non-cooperation. With all this, however, the old contempt for the Harijan remains. The writer says that in the nationalist school of that place, I saw a Dhed caste child sitting all apart in one corner of the class room and proclaiming by his very looks that he was an untouchable. I asked the students why they did not let this boy sit with them and they replied: that this could not be until the Harijan left drinking wine and eating meat. The Harijan boy at once said that he had already given these up. The high caste students could say nothing now."

From the '*Pratap*' of 12th February 1923:

"Mahashaya Santramji has reported :

It happened recently that a Brahmin teacher was appointed by the Government to go and teach in a village school for Chamar boys. When he came there, the Brahmins, Kshatrias and others boycotted the teacher saying, 'You have come here to teach the Chamars and raise them to our level. Have You?'"

From the '*Tej*' of 11th April 1924:

"Swami Shradhanandji has written:

There was a nationalist school in Khatsayas which I visited towards the end of November 1921. When I enquired how many Harijan children read there, I was told only three and they too, sit outside the class room in the verandah. In my lecture I objected to this procedure and said that in a nationalist institution, it was only proper that these boys should be allowed to sit inside the class room. The manager of the school acted on my advice. The next day the benches of the school were all deserted and till this day the Grand building of that nationalist school stands locked out and dreary."

From "Milap" dated 18th April 1924:

"Here is an incident from Hoshungabad. The district Council sent a circular letter to the schools that the Harijan children should be educated in the schools. The headmasters began to act on the orders. When one of the schools admitted some Harijan children the Honorary Magistrate took great offence at it and withdrew his children from that school; other guardians also followed suit and all together got a meeting of the school committee convened and resolutions passed in it, that the education of Harijans in the school

is against the Public wishes. They said that after coming into contact with Harijans, the Brahmin children change their Janayu (a religious thread) therefore this school committee could not undertake the education of Harijan children.”

From “*Pratap*” dated 3rd April 1932:

“Ahmedabad, 1st April 1932: A report has been received from the village of Nawagaon, Baroda State, that ever since the Harijan schools were closed down and permission given to the Harijans to enter the ordinary village schools, the villagers have been subjecting the Harijans to endless persecution. It is reported that the thousand stacks of hay belonging to Harijan farmers, were burnt down, Kerosine oil has been sprinkled into the Harijan wells and attempts made to set fire to their houses. A Harijan boy was assaulted on his way to school and a general boycott of the Harijans has been declared.”

The “*Hindustan Times*” in its issue of 26th May 1939 says:

“Several persons are reported to have raided a night school in village Catipore in the district where Kisans and others used to be taught. The teacher was caught hold of by them, and asked to close the school on the ground that the boys of the Untouchables, after acquiring education will begin to assert themselves to treat them on a footing of equality. When the teacher refused to do so he was belaboured and the students were asked to disperse.”

The last instance I would like to refer occurred in the year 1935 in the village of Kavitha in Dholka Taluka of the Ahmedabad District of the Bombay Presidency. The incident occurred on 8th August 1935.

As the Bombay Government had issued orders requiring the admission of the children of the Untouchables in public schools, the Untouchables of village Kavitha thought of taking advantage of the order. What happened to them is reported below:

“On 8-8-1935, the Untouchables of the village Kavitha took four of their children to be admitted in the village school. Many caste Hindus from the village had gathered near the school to witness this. This occasion for admission passed off quietly and nothing untoward happened. From the next day however the caste Hindus of the village withdrew their children from the school as they did not like their children sitting with those of the Untouchables and getting themselves polluted.”

“Some time thereafter an Untouchable from the village was assaulted by a Brahmin on 13th August 1935. The male members of the Untouchables of the village had come to Dholka to file a criminal complaint against the Brahmin in the court of the

Magistrate. Coming to know that the adult members of the Untouchables were absent the Hindus of the village invaded the quarters of the Untouchables. They were armed with sticks, spears and swords. Among the invaders were caste Hindu women. They started attacking the old men and women of the Untouchables. Some of the victims fled into the jungle, some shut themselves up. These invaders directed their vehemence against those Untouchables who were suspected to have taken a lead in the matter of the admission of their children in the village school. They broke open their doors and not finding them in, they broke the tiles and the rafters of the roofs over their houses.

“Terror-stricken these Untouchables men and women who were assaulted and beaten were anxious about the safety of those of their elders who had gone to Dholka and who were expected back that night. The caste Hindus knowing that the leaders of Untouchables who had gone to Dholka would be returning had concealed themselves behind the bushes and shrubs on the way to the village. Having come to know of this, an old Untouchable woman sneaked out of the village in the dark, met the leaders who were returning and informed them that armed gangs of caste Hindus were hiding themselves to waylay them and that therefore they should not come into the village. They refused to listen fearing that the caste Hindus might do greater mischief in their absence. At the same time, they were afraid that if they did enter they might be assaulted. They therefore decided to wait outside the village in the field till after midnight. In the meantime, the gang of caste Hindus who were in ambush waited and waited and finally gave up the game and retired. The leaders of the Untouchables entered the village after about 3 a.m. in the night. If they had come earlier and met the murderous gang they would probably have been done to death. On seeing the harm done to person and property they left the village for Ahmedabad before day break, and informed the Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, a body organized by Mr. Gandhi to look after the welfare of the Untouchables. But the Secretary was helpless. Not only did the caste Hindus use physical violence, but they conspired to make the life of the Untouchables intolerable. They refused to engage them as labourers; they refused to sell them foodstuffs. They refused to give them facilities for grazing their cattle and they used to commit stray assaults on Untouchable men and women. Not only this, but the caste Hindus in their frenzy poured kerosine oil in the well from which the Untouchables used to get their supply of drinking water. This, they did for days together. The result was that the Untouchables of the

village had no water. When things reached this stage the Untouchables thought of filing criminal complaint before a Magistrate which they did on 17th October, making some of the caste Hindus as the accused."

"The strange part of the case is the part played by Mr. Gandhi and his henchman, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. With all the knowledge of tyranny and oppression practised by the caste Hindus of Kavitha against the Untouchables all that Mr. Gandhi felt like doing was to advise the Untouchables to leave the village. He did not even suggest that the miscreants should be hauled up before a court of law. His henchman Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, played a part which was still more strange. He had gone to Kavitha to persuade the caste Hindus not to molest the Untouchables. But they did not even give him a hearing. Yet this very man was opposed to the Untouchables hauling them up in a court of Law and getting them punished. The Untouchables filed the complaint notwithstanding his opposition. But he ultimately forced them to withdraw the complaint on the caste Hindus making some kind of a show of an understanding not to molest, an undertaking which the Untouchables can never enforce. The result was that the Untouchables suffered and their tyrants escaped with the aid of Mr. Gandhi's friend, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel.

IV

The Untouchables are claimed by the Hindus as Hindus. But the dead body of an Untouchable cannot be cremated in the Hindu cremation ground.

The "*Free Press*" of 7th June 1946 reports the following:

"Citing a recent criminal case in which two Madura Harijans were sentenced to four months rigorous imprisonment for doing an act which was likely to wound the feelings of others, Mr. A. S. Vaidyanatha Iyer in a communication to the press draws the attention of the public to the 'cruel suffering which the Harijans have to bear by reason of Untouchability.'

Mr. Vaidyanatha Iyer says: 'A Madura Harijan who had lost his eldest child cremated the body in the Madura municipal burning ghat in a shed which is said to be set apart for caste Hindus instead of in the one reserved for Harijans. The Harijan's plea was, he did not know of any such reservation, that it was drizzling and that the former place was better. No caste Hindu raised any objection nor was there any proof that anyone's feelings were wounded. The incident came to the notice of the Madura police who prosecuted the father of the child and another near relation on the ground that such act was likely to wound the feelings of others because the Harijans were Untouchables.

Mr. Iyer adds, "he brought this case to the notice of the Madras Ministry."

The '*Savadhan*' of 22nd April 1945 says:

"On 18th March 1945, a sweeper died in the village Floda, District Muzaffarnagar. The Sweepers of the village took the dead body to the cremation grounds. This enraged the Tyagi Brahmins of the village who abused the sweepers for their audacity in bringing their dead to the caste Hindu grounds. The sweepers protested that they were Hindus and would cremate the dead. But the Brahmins were not at all amenable to reason and told the sweepers that irrespective of their being Hindus and Muslims they must bury their dead and if they failed to do it they (Brahmins) would themselves bury the dead body. When the poor sweepers were thus threatened and were also afraid of being beaten they buried the dead body."

This is not all. There is a further point to be noted. The Touchable Hindus dispose of the dead body by cremating it. Just because it is a presumption on the part of the Untouchables to initiate the ways of the Hindus which are marks of their superior status, the Untouchables must necessarily bury their dead even if they do not wish to do so.

An instance of this compulsory burial was reported in the '*Milap*' of 6th June 1924:

"The chief cause of the awakening among the Untouchables is the tyranny of the Hindus. I was not aware of this but the reports that I have received from various workers has caused me much pain. From one place I am informed that the Untouchables of that place are not allowed to even burn their dead. This, however it seems has created a new spirit among the sweepers of the place. They have started burying their dead with the head downwards probably to distinguish themselves from others who bury the corpse in a lying position. The Sweepers think that if they also act in imitation of others, it is derogatory."

V

The wearing of the sacred thread is evidence of noble birth. The Untouchables with the idea of ennobling themselves thought of wearing the sacred thread. The atrocities committed by the caste Hindus on the Untouchables of the village Ringwari in Garhwal District in U. P. are reported in the '*National Herald*' of 6th June:

"After leading a fugitive life for well nigh two months as a result of persecution at the hands of the caste Hindus, ten families consisting of 33 Harijans have now been able to return to their homes in village Ringwari of Chandkot with the help of the district

authorities of Garhwal. These Harijans, it may be recalled, had taken full advantage of the social movement started for their uplift by Mahatma Gandhi and the late Swami Shradhanand. They had taken the sacred thread and made it a part of their duty to perform 'Sandhya'. But this was resented very much by the caste Hindus of Garhwal as according to them it amounted to a virtual invasion of their 'right and privileges'. The resentment found expression in a number of assaults on Harijans and persistent social persecution. They were asked to desist from using 'polies' and 'palkies' in their marriage procession and four of them were compelled at one place to kill a buffalo and eat its flesh. At Ringwari these atrocities reached a climax, when all the water springs, grazing grounds and other public places were closed to the Harijans who refused to submit to the caste Hindus. In consequence the abovementioned ten families had to leave their villages at dead of night, in order to avoid further persecution."

Other instances of similar sort are given below:

1. "Some Arya Samajists managed to raise the caste of some Untouchables and gave them the sign of the caste, namely, the religious thread worn round the neck. But the mass of the Sanatanists could not bear even this because their religion does not allow the Untouchables to wear the thread. This is why thread-wearing Untouchables are daily persecuted by the high caste Hindus."

2. "Bhagat Harichand of Moila, District Mirpur, Jammu State was purified by the Arya Samajists and given the thread to wear. The Hindu Jats of the place began to victimize him and ask him to put off the thread. Harichand however remained steadfast on his religion. At last one day when the Bhagat Harichand had finished the Gaitri Path, he was caught hold of by the Hindu Jats and severely beaten and his thread broken. The cause of their incensement was this that wheareas before the Shudh, Shudha Meghs had addressed the Jats as 'Gharib Nawaz' (the benefactors of the poor), now they only use 'Namastey'."

From the *Arya Gazette* dated 14th September 1929:

"The Hindu Rajputs of the village Ramani, near the town Berhampur, Distt. Gurdaspur, called the Untouchables of their villages from their homes and ordered them to put off the holy thread at once and swear never to put it on again otherwise their lives were in danger. Upon this Untouchables calmly replied 'Maharaj why are you angry with us. Your own brothers, the Arya Samajists have very kindly put these threads round our necks and

have ordered us to always protect them for they are the true symbols of the Hindu faith. If you take objection to them, you can tear them off our bodies with your own hands'. Upon this the Rajputs fell upon the poor men with their lathis and kept on thrashing them for a long time. The Untouchables put up with this persecution with great fortitude and refused to resist or protest. But their torments took no pity on their helpless condition and three or four Rajputs actually tore the holy thread off the body of a Harijan named Gori Ram and bruised his body with a hoe in mock imitation of the sign of the thread."

From the 'Milap' dated 12th October 1929:

"The Rajputs of the village Bahmani have from time past launched a programme against the Untouchables. There is a case going on in the court about the breaking of a holy thread and there is another case too, about an Untouchable woman who was going on to the field to cut the harvest on 7th October 1929 when a Rajput severely thrashed her and caused serious bruises. The woman was brought home on a bed."

VI

What happens to an Untouchable if he remains seated on a cot in the presence of a Hindu can be seen from the following incident reported in '*Jivan*' of July 1938:

"Nanda Ram and Mangali Prasad of village Pachhahera, Police Post Margaon, Tehsil and District Sitapur, invited their friends and relatives for a communal feast. When the guests were sitting on cots and smoking, Thakkur Sooraj Baksh Singh and Harpal Singh, Zamindars of the village, came there, sent for Nanda Ram and Mangali Prasad and asked who the people sitting and smoking were and why they were sitting on cots. Mangali Prasad said that they were his friends and relatives and asked if only Thakkurs could sit on cots. Enraged by this, the Thakkurs beat both the brothers and their men beat the guests severely as a result of which one man and one woman became senseless and others sustained serious injuries."

VII

The Untouchables are Hindus. They are also citizens with the same civic rights. But the Untouchables cannot claim the right of the citizenship if it conflicts with any rules of the Established Order.

For instance, no Untouchable can claim lodging in an inn even though it be public. In '*Jivan*' of August 1938, is reported the experience of an Untouchable named Kannhaiya Lal Jatav of Fetegarh:

“When I went to stay in Dharmashala near Allahabad Junction on 15th August 1938 at 10 p.m. there was no difficulty and I laid down on a cot after paying an advance of Re. 1. But at 11 p.m. when the lodgers went to the Manager of the Dharmashala to note down their addresses, and while noting down my address I put down my caste as Jatav, the Manager got wild and said that the Dharmashala was not meant for the stay of low caste people and asked me to get out at once. I pointed out to him that according to the rules of the Dharmashala, it was meant for Hindus only and there was no ban on Untouchables and asked if I was not a Hindu that he was asking me to leave. I also pleaded that being resident of Farrukabad and not acquainted with anyone in Allahabad there was no place where I could go at 11 p.m. On this, the Manager got furious and repeating the couplet from Ramayan (Shudras illiterate, cattle and women all these deserve to be beaten) said that in spite of being a low-caste he dared to talk about rules and law and will not get out unless he is beaten. Then suddenly he got my bedding etc., threw out of the Dharmashala and all of them were ready to beat me. In the face of such odds, I at once left the Dharmashala and lay down on a plank of wood in front of a shop facing the Dharmashala and had to pay annas 2 as rent to the shopkeeper for a night. I therefore appeal to my Scheduled Caste brethren to hold meetings everywhere and request Government to construct separate Dharmashalas for our people in every town or to get all the existing Dharmashalas opened for us.”

VIII

Under the Established Order, the work of lifting and removing dead cattle as well as doing the scavenger's work is beneath the dignity of the Hindus. It must be done by the Untouchables. The Untouchables have also begun to think that it is derogatory to their status and are refusing to do it. The Untouchables, however, are forced by the Hindus to do it against their will. The '*jivan*' of June 1938 reports:

“One day, in May 1938, Bhajju Ram Jatav of village Bipoli, Police post Barla, District Aligarh was sitting in his house at about 11 a.m. when some Brahmins namely Prithik, Hodal, Sita Ram, Devi and Chuni, all of whom had lathis came and tried to force him to lift dead cattle; and when he refused saying that he was not used to that work and asked them to go to some one who does that sort of work, he was mercilessly belaboured with lathis.”

The same journal in its issue of October 1938 gives the following news item:

“On 24th October 1938, some cattle of a Brahmin of village Lodhari, Tehsil Sadabad, District Muttra, died. The Scheduled Caste people of the village who were asked to lift it refused to do so. This enraged the caste Hindus so much that they have asked the Scheduled Caste people not to go to their fields for ablutions nor to allow their cattle to graze in their (caste Hindus) fields.”

IX

The Untouchables must not wear decent and clean clothes and they must not wear gold or silver ornaments. If the Untouchables defy these rules, the Hindus will not hesitate to bring them to book. The Untouchables have been trying to defy these rules, with what consequences will be seen from the following incidents which have been reported in the newspapers:

“Until 1922, the Untouchable caste of Dalai in Berar District of Bundi, were forbidden to eat wheat. In February 1922, a Chamar woman was put on the Rock in Sakatgarh, Jaipur, simply because she was wearing silver ornaments on her feet. The reason given was this that only men of the high castes were allowed to wear silver or to eat wheat. The low caste people should not dare to aspire to these things. So far we had been thinking that such antiquated ideas were supposed to have had probably died out by this time.”

The ‘*Times of India*’ in its issue of 4th January 1928 reports the tyranny and oppression practised upon the Balais who form an Untouchable community in Central India for their daringness to wear clean clothes and golden ornaments. Says the ‘*Times*’:

“In May (1927) high caste Hindus viz., Kalotas Rajputs and Brahmins including the Patils and Patwaris of villages Kanaria, Bicholee Hafsi, Bicholi Mardana and of about 15 other villages in the Indore district informed the Balais of their respective villages that if they wished to live among them, they must conform to the following rules:

1. Balais must not wear gold lace bordered pugrees;
2. They must not wear dhoties with coloured or fancy borders;
3. They must convey intimation of the death of any Hindu to relatives of the deceased—no matter how far away these relatives may be living;
4. In all Hindu marriages, the Balais must play music before the processions, and during the marriages;
5. The Balai women must not wear fancy gowns for jackets;