PART III

Roots of the Problem

CHAPTER 8

PARALLEL CASES

I. Slavery in Rome. II. Villeinage in England. III. Jews and Servility. IV. Negroes and slavery.

Social inequality is not confined to Hindus only. It prevailed in other countries also and was responsible for dividing society into higher and lower, free and unfree, respectable and despised. It would be interesting to compare the condition and status of the untouchables in India with the condition and status of the unfree and the despised classes in other countries ancient and modern. For an intelligent understanding of the differences and similarities it is essential to have some idea of the history of such parallel cases before any comparison can be instituted. It is not possible to give a survey of all such classes in all parts of the world. Nor is it necessary. A few typical cases can only be taken as illustrations.

In studying the relationship between the Hindus and the Untouchables three questions at once come to one's mind. Why has untouchability not vanished? Why does the Hindu regard lawlessness against the Untouchables as legitimate and lawful? Why does the Hindu feel no qualms of conscience in his dealings with the Untouchables?

I

Classes which like the Untouchables were lowly and despised have at one time existed in other societies also. For instance, they existed in once ancient Rome. The population of ancient Rome fell into five classes: (1) Patricians, (2) Plebians, (3) Clients, (4) Slaves and (5) Freemen.

The Patricians were the ruling class. They were the civics in every sense. The rest were all servile in status. The Plebs and the Clients were

destroyed by war. Those of the new comers who invoked the protection of the heads of Patrician families of repute and were ready to become their vassals were known as clients. Those who were too independent to brook submission to a private patron put themselves under the direct protection of the sovereign and became royal tenants and were known as Plebians. The Plebians had the right to hold property both movable and immovable to transfer it by quirtian modes of conveyance, and to have the protection for it of the tribunals. But the Plebian had no share in the Government of the City. He was a half-fledged citizen—*civies sine suffragio.* The Plebs were denied any participation in the religion of the city and as men to whom the suspicia were incompetent, any intermarriage between the Patrician and the Plebian was out of question. The client had to look to his Patrician patron for support and maintenance. The Patrician patron had to provide all that was necessary for his sustenance and that of his wife and children. This relation was a hereditary one, a client passed on from father to son. The client had not only to depend upon his Patrician patron for his maintenance but he had also to depend upon him for his legal protection. Not being a civic, a client had no right of suit and his Patrician patron had to assist his client in his redress for him for his injuries and represent him before the tribunals when he became involved in litigation.

As to the slaves there were millions of them. A single rich landholder might own hundreds and even thousands, and it was a poor man that did not have several at least. They were just things to be owned. They were not persons in the eye of the law and had therefore no rights. They received kind treatment from a few humane masters. But generally they were treated with the greatest cruelty. "If a slave coughs or sneezes during a meal, if he lets a key fall noisy to the floor, we fall into a great rage..... often we strike too hard and shatter a limb or break a tooth," said Senecca. One rich Roman used to punish his slaves for carelessness by casting them into a fish pond as food for lamprays. The slaves who displeased their masters were ordinarily sent to an underground prison. During the day, they had to work loaded with heavy iron chains. Many were branded with red hot iron. The mill where the slaves had to work is thus described by a Roman author; 'Gods! what poor shrunken up men? With white skins striped with blows of the whip..... They were only the shreds of tunis; bent forward, head shaved, the feet held in a chain, the body deformed by the heat of the fire, the eyelids eaten away by the fumes, everything covered with grain dust'.[1]

[1] Seignbbos—History of Ancient Civilization.

English society also had at one time its servile classes. One has only to turn to the Domesday Book to see what the state of English Society was at the time of the Norman conquest.

The Domesday Book which is a social survey of the land in England and its various kinds of tenants made by William the Conqueror immediately after his conquest in 1086 shows the following classes in which the population was divided:

1.	Gentry & Clergy	made up of	Tenants in Chief	1,400	9,300
			Under tenants	7,900	
2.	Freeholders Yeomen	made up of	Freemen	12,000	44,000
			Socmen	32,000	
3.	Half-free or Unfree	made up of	Villeins	169,000	259,000
			Cottars and Borders	90,000	
4.	Slaves				25,000

Out of a total of 3,37,000 souls as many as 2,84,000 were either unfree or slaves.

These are examples of servility in which race or religion played no part. But examples of servility by reason of race or religion are not wanting in history. The principal one is that of the Jews. On account of the belief that the Jews were responsible for the death of Christ, the Jews have been subjected to persecution. During the Middle ages in almost all the European towns, the Jews were compelled to reside within a restricted quarter in a separate part of the town, and this Jewish quarter came to be known as the 'Ghetto'. A Council held in Coyanza in Australia in 1050 enacted 'that no Christian shall reside in the same house with Jews, nor partake of the food; whoever transgresses this decree shall perform penances for seven days, or, refusing to do it, if a person of rank, he shall be excommunicated for a year; if of an inferior degree, he shall receive 100 lashes." The Council of Falencia in 1388 enacted that "Christians must not dwell within the quarters assigned to the Jews and Moors, and those that resided within them were to remove therefrom within two months after the publication of this decree in the Cathedral and if they did not, were to be compelled by Ecclesiastical censure." In the Middle ages the Jews were obliged to have communal baths. No Jewish community could be

destitute of such baths because the State often forbade the Jews to bathe in the rivers which the Christians used. In the fourteenth Century the Jews of Augers were readmitted to the town on several onerous conditions, one being that they would not bathe in the river Maine. The State also levied certain taxes upon the Jews. They were of three kinds—poll taxes, and particular fines and dues for individual transactions and privileges. The age at which Jews or Jewesses became liable to the poll tax varied considerably but the age was very young, and in Spain, as in England in 1273, every Jew above the age of ten was rateable. The billeting of soldiers on Jews in times of peace was a frequent species of exaction. So many were the vexatious dues exacted from the Jews everywhere throughout the Middle ages that it would be impossible to enumerate them all. To crown all this Pope Innocent III decided in 1215 that thenceforward the Jews must be marked off from the Christians by a badge prominently fastened to their outermost garment. Clear and emphatic in its demand that the Jews must wear badges, the Laternan council nevertheless avoided details. It left the definition of the size, colour, and character of the degrading mark to the taste of local Governors and States. Each Governor and State devised a badge of its own pattern. On account of the extraordinary number of modification, size and shape the badge sometimes became obsolete and the Jews managed to evade it. As the badge was often hidden, in 1525 Pope Clement VII changed it for a yellow hat or bonnet.

A consideration of the position of the Untouchables reminds one of the position of the Catholics in England. The Catholics were subjected to many disabilities. The catalogue of their disabilities is given below[1]:

"1. That of Catholic marriages or of marriages Catholics celebrated by Catholic priests being deemed invalid by the existing laws, so that if one of the parties quit the other *quicumque de causa* (from any reason whatsoever), the deserted party receives no relief from the parish, nor redress from the law of his or her country. The priest, also it is said, may be transported, or put in prison and condemned to transportation for having married the parties.

2. That of foundations or of moneys appropriated for the maintenance of priests, or to support the Catholic worship, being deemed by the existing laws to be appropriated to *superstitious purposes* and as such are liable to confiscation; and when alienated or seized upon by malevolent person cannot be recovered by law; Instances of such alienations and seizures might be adduced.

3. That of Catholics serving in His Majesty's Army and Navy being withheld from attending Divine Service according to the rite

of their own religion on Sundays and festivals, and of their being compelled to go to Protestant Churches on those days against their will—an evil which leads brave and loyal subjects to complain and be discontented at a time when every heart and hand should be united to oppose the enemy; and the United Kingdom should be as one man.

4. By the 13th Charles II. commonly called the Corporation Act, their whole body is excluded from offices in cities and corporations.

5. By the 25th Charles II, commonly called the Test Act, their whole body is excluded from civil and military offices.

6. By the 7th and 8th William III, c. 27 Roman Catholics are liable to be prevented from voting at elections.

7. By the 30th Charles II, s. 2. c. 1, Roman Catholic peers are prevented from filling their hereditary seats in Parliament.

8. By the same statute Roman Catholics are prevented from sitting in the House of Commons.

9. By several statutes Roman Catholics are disabled from presenting to advowsons, a legal incident of property which the law allows even to the Jew.

10. Though a considerable proportion of His Majesty's fleets and armies was Catholic, not only is no provision made for their religious comforts etc., but by the articles of war they are liable to the very heaviest pains and penalties for refusing to join in those acts of conformity to the religious rites of the Established Church. By the articles of war, section 1, a soldier absenting himself from Divine service and sermon is liable, for the first offence, to forfeit one Shilling, and for the second and every other offence, to forfeit one Shilling and to be put in irons. By the same articles section 2, article 5, 'if he shall disobey any lawful command of his superior (and of course if he shall disobey any lawful command of his superior to attend Divine Service and Sermon) he shall suffer death or such punishment as by general court martial shall be awarded.

11. In common with the rest of his Majesty's subjects the Roman Catholics contribute to the support of the Established Religion; they have also to support their own religious functionaries; and thus have a double religious establishment to defray. Of course, however, they do not complain; but they think it a serious grievance that their own religious endowments are not legalized like those of the Protestant Dissenters.

12. In hospitals, workhouses, and other public institutions the attendance of the ministers of their own communion is sometime denied to the poor of the Roman Catholic religion, and the children

of the Roman Catholic poor are sometimes forced into Protestant schools under the eyes of their parents."

Like Catholics, the Untouchables also suffer from certain disabilities.

II

[*The following essay has been received from Shri S. S. Rege. As it deals with 'Negroes & Slavery' (One of the subjects of the scheme of this Chapter) which has not been dealt with in the above discussion, it has been included here*—Ed.]

Providence it seems has inexorably doomed the continent of Africa to be only a nursery of slaves for the free and civilized peoples of Asia and Europe. The Negro was imported as a slave by the Arabs into Asia long before he was introduced as a slave by the Europeans into America. Although this is so, Negro slavery in America and in the English Colonies has had a sorrowful history which has made people forget the importation of the Negro as a slave in Asia—and quite naturally—because Negro slavery in America as carried on by the Europeans was a most revolting thing. It began in the first decade of the 16th Century and lasted till the middle of the 19th Century.

In the half century after Columbus first landed in the Bahama Island in 1492, the Spaniards conquered and partly occupied a huge area stretching from Mexico through Peru to Uruguay and including all the larger west Indian Islands, while in 1531 the Portuguese began the colonization of Brazil. At once the new comers, the Portuguese and the Spaniards, set themselves to exploit the great natural wealth of their acquisitions, to work the gold and silver mines on the main land and to lay out plantations of tobacco indego and sugar in the rich soil of the island. But they were soon confronted by the difficulty of procuring the requisite supply of labour. A great deal of it was needed, and the cost of white men's wages and the heat of the tropical sun made it virtually impossible for the Europeans to provide it for themselves. The only labour supply of a non-European character available on the spot consisted of the native Indians. The Portuguese and the Spaniards had massacred many Indians during the conquest. Many had fled to the mountains and forest from the scourge of the invadors. Those that were available were made slaves and made to work in the mines. Under the lash of the Portuguese and the Spaniards and the relentless labour that was exacted from them in the mines and in the fields the Indians sickened and died.

The conquistadors—as the Spanish pioneers in South America were called—under the leadership of Nicholas de Ovando who followed promptly the trail of Columbus, brought with them a young priest

Batrolome' de Las Casas who was well known for his piety. Las Casas was charged by the Court of Spain to deal lovingly with the Indians in the hope of bringing them to a knowledge of the sacred Christian faith. Las Casas was the first Bishop of Mexico. In performing the duty with which he was charged Las Casas while in Haiti witnessed the cruelties that were practised by the conquistadors upon the Indians and engaged himself passionately to the end of his life in preserving the pitiable remnants of the Caribbeans as the Indians of Haiti were called, from the inevitable destruction at the hands of their masters. The Caribbeans were a gentle, unoffending and hospitable race. They numbered no less than 1,000,000 persons when Columbus found them, formed into kingdoms and ruled peacefully by their caciques. Under the systematic cruelty of these Spanish adventurers who came after Columbus their numbers were reduced to a bare 60,000. It is recorded that entire villages committed suicide inviting others to join them as the only way of escaping this scourge and this tyranny. Las Casas was a spectator to many of these scenes of self immolations. He protested in righteous anger. But his protests went in vain and were bound to go in vain. The clearing of the forest, the tilling of the soil and the working of the mines had to go on. Without this the kingdom given by God could not become the Paradise of man. Las Casas realized this. But he was also overwhelmed with grief at the thought of what the Indians would have to go through if this plan was to be realized. His benevolent instincts led him to petition the King of Spain to allow the free importation of Negroes. The Spanish Government in 1511 decreed that a large number of Negroes should be transported to the New World. In pursuance of this there came ships laden with African Negroes as cargo to make the New World a Paradise for man. For a few years both worked under the Conquistadors, Indians as well as Negroes. The sturdiness of the Negroes as compared with the Indians was soon proved. One of the Conquistadors has testified that when he prepared his timbers for the four brigautines that pass through the Isthmus from the Atlantic to the waters which flowed into the Pacific, he had used several hundred Indians and thirty Negroes, and, in the execution of this task, he found that 500 Indians perished and the thirty Negroes survived. The Negroes not only survived but prospered so much that it came to be a common opinion "that unless a Negro should happen to be hanged he would never die; for as yet, none had been known to perish from infirmity". The Negro by his own conduct and character gave evidence that he was a more efficient tool than the Indian. The result was that the Indian was let go and the Negro was preferred for the labour, the former because God made him less sturdy

and the latter because God made him more sturdy. The result was that the Indian escaped slavery and the Negro took over the destiny which was intended by the Conquistadors to apply to him—a destiny to which he was invited by the pious and benevolent priest Las Casas and for which the Negro showed his own credentials of fitness.

Having found that "one Negro does more work than four Indians" there was opened at once a regular market for trading in Negroes. The market which was opened by the Portuguese on the West Coast of Africa began immediately to show its profits and quite naturally because the exploitation of the untold wealth of the New World was impossible without Negro labour. People became so engrossed in this new business in human beings that the search for a new route to the East, which began it all, was abandoned.

There was a keen competition between the various nations of Europe for a share in this new line in commerce. A papal Bull of demarcation had created for Spain and Portugal a monopoly on the wealth flowing in from the New World. The English and the Dutch feared there was danger to all Europe in this monopoly of American resources and were determined not to allow it.

The English took a good hand in securing this trade for the benefit of their nation. The first deal took place in 1553 when 24 Negroes were brought from the Coast of Africa and quietly sold in the English market. The most intrepid, and who later became the most heartless of man stealers known to history was John Hawkins. Under Elizabeth he sailed forth in the good ship *Jesus* to get Negroes from Africa whom he sold into the Spanish Colonies. Bent on breaking the monopoly of Spain Sir Francis Drake followed Hawkins. International disputes over the pirating of these adventures arose which culminated in the clash and destruction of the Spanish Armada. It is interesting to bear in mind that in these disputes each nation shamelessly asserted that these acts of piracy committed by their subjects in stealing Negro slaves were "no private but public actions" supported by the respective states.

As though the irony involved in using the Ship *Jesus* for carrying the Negroes for enslavement was not enough there occurred another event which also was full of irony. It was the simultaneous landing of the Pilgrim Fathers on Plymouth Rock in the *Mayflower,* and the landing of twenty Negroes at Jamestown in Virginia from a barnacled and sea worn brig which sailed up the James river and brought them for the use of the gentlemen adventurers of the first successful English Colony of Virginia in America.

Thus were introduced into America the Negroes and the Pilgrim Fathers who stepped into it almost at the same time, the Pilgrim Fathers for preserving their liberty and the Negro for losing his freedom. For a long time the Negro formed a dominant element in the population of the American Colonies so far as numbers were considered. In a real sense America including its islands was settled chiefly from Africa and by Negroes. Before 1800 the number of Negroes brought in America was more than twenty times that of all Europeans combined. This was inevitable. The population of Europe was small, reduced further by its long wars and just emerging itself from a backward culture. For a long time the status of the imported Negro was undefined. The twenty Negroes brought by the Dutch and who landed in Jamestown were not immediately stamped in the Colony as slaves. They were accepted on much the same basis as the indentured servants. It has been found that in the muster rolls of the Colony of Virginia in 1624 and 1625 there were recorded 23 Negroes all of whom were listed as 'servants' as were the whites of the same class. It is also recorded that thirty-four years after the arrival of the twenty Negroes one of them Anthony Johnson got a judgment from the Court sustaining his claim to perpetual service of John Caster, another Negro. The status of slavery was not crystalized for fifty years and steps by which it became crystalized were very gradual.

To begin with there was the law of servitude which applied to all servants whether they were Negroes or whites. In course of time a distinction came to be made in the treatment of the Negroes and white servants due to the fear of an alien and pagan people which as they became traditional and gained the sanction of custom, gradually modified the status of the African and transformed Negro servitude into Negro slavery. The slavery of the Negro in the American Colonies grew by the gradual addition of incidents modifying the law and custom of servitude. In this transition from servitude to slavery there are two principal steps. The first step in the transition was taken when the custom of holding Negroes "servants for life" was recognized. As has been observed, the distinguishing mark of the state of slavery is not the loss of liberty, political and civil but the perpetuity and absolute character of that loss, whether voluntary or involuntary in origin. It differs then from other forms of servitude limited in place or time, such as medieval vassalage, villeinage, modern serfdom, and technical servitude, in degree rather than in kind. The efforts of the planters to lengthen the terms of the service of their servants which failed with the white servants succeeded with the black. Public opinion supported the change because the blacks were regarded as dangerous if left

uncontrolled. The second step by which Negro servitude was converted into Negro slavery was taken when the condition and status of the mother was extended to and continued in her offspring. The transmission from mother to child of the conditions of slavery for life grew naturally out of the fact that the master necessarily controlled the child, controlling the mother. It was evident that parents, under an obligation of life service, could make no valid provision for the support of their offspring and that a just title to the service of the child might rest on the master's maintenance. This change which had undoubtedly been effected in custom long before it was formally sanctioned by law was recognized by statute in the different states of America between 1662 and 1741.

This is how the Negro who was originally only a servant became a slave. It is to be noted that slavery in Africa the home of the Negro is a native institution and is very ancient. The most common ways of becoming a slave were: (1) By being born a slave, (2) by being sold into slavery for debt, (3) by becoming a slave through capture in war and (4) by kidnapping individuals and selling them into slavery due to revenge or greed and gain. The Negro was really familiar with the slave system and tasted the pleasures of a slave owner. One therefore may not feel the same sympathy with the Negro when he was made to give up the status of a master and made to occupy the position of a slave. But looked at even as a case of retribution well deserved, his condition as a slave in the New World to which he was transplanted, cannot fail to excite a righteous indignation for the miseries to which he was subjected by his new and alien masters.

How great were the miseries of the Negro in the New World when he became subject to the system of slavery, it is not possible for the inhabitants of Europe or Asia to imagine. They may be described under three heads. The miseries of his capture, the miseries of travel and the miseries of his toil. First as to the ways of capturing Negroes for enslavement. In the early days Negroes could be rounded up by sudden landings on the coast; but in time the Negroes learned to watch for the coming of the ships and take refuge in the bush; and, though adventurous traders sometimes penetrated inland themselves, their usual custom was to do business with professional native or half-caste dealers who took the cheap goods they had bought from Europe—cloth, beads, hardware, muskets and powder, spirit—and bartered them for slaves with chiefs up-country. There is nothing to show that the chiefs, of the stronger tribes at any rate, resisted or wanted to resist the fascination of these wares, especially the guns and drink. Enslavement within a tribe, it was observed, became the penalty for

less and less serious offences; and inter-tribal warfare with slaves for its motive as well as the kindnapping of women and children in peacetime became a more or less constant feature of African life, spreading steadily into the interior of the continent with the steady infilteration of the trade.

Secondly as to the mode of transporting the Negro to America. Having bought his slaves, the dealer marshalled them, men, women and children, in a caravan for the march, sometimes a very long march to the coast. Usually fetters were put on them to prevent escape and often they were locked in the "slave stick"—a long pole with a crutch at the end for fastening round the neck. They carried on their heads the loads of foodstuffs and other baggage required for the journey or the ivory or other native produce which the dealer might have bought. The rigours of the march were often too much for the weaker members of the party. Slaves who fell sick were killed or left to die. The more frequented slavetracks were strewn with human bones. Arrived at the coast, they were stowed on board the slave ships, which were specially fitted for their transport. The hold was divided horizontally by decks about three feet apart with a gangway down the middle. On these shelves the slaves were laid, handcuffed in pairs, men and women in separate holds. Since the bigger the cargo, the bigger the profit, they were some times packed so tightly that they could scarcely turn round. In a ship of 150 tons as many as 600 slaves were carried. The direct voyage to Brazil was fairly short, but the so-called "Middle Passage" to the West Indies—the main centre of distribution—might be protracted for several weeks by adverse or dropping winds. If it was calm enough, the slaves were brought up on deck and urged or forced to dance for exercise. In rough weather conditions of the slaves in the hold may be imagined. Disease of course, was rife on board. Though instruments were provided for forcibly feeding those who refused to eat, it was reckoned in the latter eighteenth century that on the average at least one-sixth of a cargo died on the voyage. As the end of the voyage approached, the slaves were examined and prepared for sale. Wounds, caused by storm or ill usage, were doctored up and as far as possible concealed. But the agents at the ports often complained that the "parcels of Negroes" landed were "bad" or "mean" or "much abused". Finally, on ship board or in the public slave market, the slaves were put up for sale by "scramble" or auction. The price of a healthy man rose as high as £ 60 during the eighteenth century. The sick and injured were lumped with feeble women and children and sold off cheap as "refuse". Even when at last they reached the plantations, the slaves had to face one more ideal before they settled down to

endure what was left to them of life. The first months of employment were known as the period of "seasoning" and during it no less on an average of one third of the novices failed to adjust themselves in body or spirit to the new conditions of climate or food or labour and died. Taking all the deaths together—in the slave-catching wars or raids, on the march to the sea, during the "Middle Passage" and in "seasoning"—it has been moderately reckoned that for every African Negro who became "seasoned" at least one other Negro was killed.

Thirdly as to the actual conditions of life which a "seasoned "Negro slave had to undergo. The Negro slavery gave the Master two rights which were indisputably established, the right to own and the right to punish. The right to own was given a wide meaning. By virtue of it the Master had not merely a right to the services of the Negro as a servant, but he had also the right to sell those services, to transmit by inheritance and to alienate them in any way he liked. The effect of this conception of the right was "to completely confound and identify the person of the slave with the thing owned." The conception of the slave as property made the Negro liable to be seized in payment of his master's debts. Even after such slaves had been emancipated they were still liable to seizure for the payment of debts contracted prior to their emancipation. The conception of a slave as property rather than as person added further disability to the legal or civil status. He could neither own nor enjoy property in his own right. This was unlike the Roman Law which did allow the slaves to own property which was called peculium. It was a limited right but it was still an important right because it shows that the Roman Law did recognize that a slave though property was also a person. Not being a person a Negro as a slave could neither engage in trade nor marry. The right of the Master to punish a slave was also given a very cruel interpretation in its application to the Negro. In a case which arose in the state of North Carolina Court in 1829 the Cheif Justice in acquitting the Master who was indicted for beating his slave observed:

> "It was a mistake to say that the relations of Master and slave were like those of parent and child. The object of the parent in training his son was to render him fit to live the life of a free man, and, as a means to that end, he gave him moral and intellectual instruction. With the case of the slave it was very different. There could be no sense in addressing moral considerations to a slave. The end of slavery is the profit of the Master, his security and public safety; the subject, one doomed in his own person and his posterity to live without knowledge and without capacity to make anything his own, and to toil that neither may reap the fruits. What moral

consideration shall be addressed to such a being to convince him, that it is impossible, but that the most stupid must feel and know can never be true—that he is thus to labour on a principle of natural duty, or for the sake of his own personal happiness? Such services can only be expected from one who has no will of his own, who surrenders his will in implicit obedience to that of another. Such obedience is the consequence only of uncontrolled authority over the body. There is nothing else which can operate to produce the effect. The power of the Master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect."

The result of such an interpretation of the Master's right to punish was that for a long time in the U.S.A. if a Negro slave chanced to die as a consequence of " a lawful correction" it was regarded by law as a lamentable and accidental homicide. How mercilessly this right to punish was exercised by the masters will be realized by a perusal of the extracts from letters written by a resident in Antigna in 1787. Says the writer—

"The Negroes are turned out at sunrise, and employed in gangs from twenty to sixty or upwards, under the inspection of white overseers, generally poor scotch lads, who by their assiduity and industry frequently become masters of the plantations, to which they make out as indentured servants. Subordinate to these overseers are drivers, who are mostly black or mulatto fellows of the worst dispositions; these men are furnished with whips, while on duty, which they are obliged on pain of severe punishment to have with them, and are authorized to flog wherever they see the least relaxation from labour; nor is it a consideration with them, whether it proceeds from idleness, or inability, paying at the same time, little or no regard to age or sex. At twelve they are turned in (that is leave off work) to get what they can to refresh nature with; at half past one the bell rings, when they turn out and resume their labour until sunset.....

* * *

"The punishments inflicted on slaves in this island, are various and tormenting..... Among which is the thumbacrew, a barbarious invention to fasten the thumbs together, which appears to cause excuciating pain. The "iron necklace" is a ring, locked and rivetted about the neck; to these, collars are frequently added..... which prevent the wearers from laying down their heads with any degree of comfort. The "boots" are strong iron rings, full four

> inches in circumference; closed just above the ankles; to these some owners prefix chain, which the miserable sufferers, if able to work, must manage as well as they can, and it is not unfrequent to see in the streets of this town, at midday, Negroes chained together by these necklaces, as well as the boots. ... The 'spurs' are rings of iron, similar to the boots, to which are added spikes from three to four inches long, placed horizontally. A chain fastened about the body with a pedlock is another mode of tormenting this oppressed race of being."

It would be a great mistake of judging a whole class of slave owners by the vice of individuals. Often enough, the attitude of slaves to their Masters was quite friendly and equally often the attitude of the Masters to their slaves was kindly. None the less the system was a system founded on a purely economic basis making it inevitable that human being be created as mere tools to be used without being influenced by any considerations of humanity.

It is unnecessary to adduce any more cases to illustrate the fact that the lowly, unfree and unprivileged classes have existed in the past in countries other than India. What is of importance is that these unfree, unprivileged classes have disappeared as a separate class and have become part and parcel of the great Society. The question is: Why has untouchability not disappeared ?

There are various reasons. They are discussed in the following Chapters.

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