

BOOKS.

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(CONTRIBUTED BY PROFESSOR PANCHANAN MITRA, M. A.).

"Books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones."

—*Shakespeare.*

I cannot philosophise with Hutton and Huxley on the geological record of rocks and streams as attesting the uniformity of the earth's perennial existence or the unmistakable evolution of present forms through countless millions of years, nor sermonise with the German poet that the three best books

Steht in Gottes Wort geschrieben

In der schöpferng, ins Gewissen

stand written in the Gospel, the universe and our conscience, but am here only in the spirit of a stale antiquarian to lay bare some strange receptacles which have actually preserved human thought.

I need not dilate on the beginnings of books on the potsherds of Hyderabad or Etrusca or on the bones of Hunan in China or on the barks of Red Indian forests, for they savour of barbarous ages of 'stocks (sic) and stones'! I pass on to the real 'king's treasures' of the earliest mighty empires as yet in human ken. I know not whether the men of Chaldæa or Egypt carried muddy or harder 'loads of learned lumber in their heads' but the fact stands that they revelled in records of baked mud or carved hills in spite of the long folds of 'papyrus' being near at hand. If you want to pre-Noah Noah and learn of pre-Hebraic deluge, thank George Smith and the thousands of 'brick-books' of the Koyunjik library of Assurbanipal or if you want to know in vivid details of the glorious victory of Rameses at Kadesh or of the solemn chapters of the Book of the Dead, 'go ye out' to study the rocks of Phoenicia and the walls of the Pyramids.

But perhaps the strangest books were to be found in our India. For I had read many years ago in some theosophical pamphlet that the books of the future would be written in 'Akasic records' and was glad not to understand what it meant, but now I find that our voluminous 'Srutis' and 'Smritis' traced for

thousands of years on the 'pia dura' or 'pia mater' (physiologists to the rescue!) of the brains of our 'rishis' were nothing less marvellous. And the modern deluge of 'printed devils' naturally makes me wish the whole fabric of the magical art of Fust and Gutenberg to have been consigned to the fire with other witcheries of the day. And lastly it is to be hoped that Edisons would not try to bring out cheaper and more durable nickel-paper but rather only under the seal of the secretariat of culture of 'the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World' golden thoughts alone were to be bejewelled in true letters of gold to make the real millennium come.

POPULATION AND THE POVERTY PROBLEM IN INDIA.

(CONTRIBUTED BY PROFESSOR DEBENDRA NATH MUKHERJEE M. A.)

In India where almost one-third of the total population is unfed or half-fed and where the average income per head is hardly Rs. 2. a month, it is natural that the poverty problem is a matter of grave and serious consideration on the part of the Government and the people. In fact, the British Government from the beginning, and men like the late Mr. Justice Ranade, Mr. R. C. Dutt, Mr. Gokhale—men who could not shut their eyes to the miseries of their own people—spent a considerable portion of their time and energy in fighting out this problem. But the field of work is so wide, the difficulties are so immense, that their efforts, though not a total failure, are far from achieving any substantial success. It is impossible that the problem can be handled with all its corollaries at the same time. That is why one or the other part of the whole problem has been taken up separately so as to set land-marks towards the attainment of the final goal.

Frequent appearances of famine, dependence of the whole population on agriculture, constant failure of harvests, heavy indebtedness of the peasants and the most conservative and unenterprising habits of the people are some of the various causes bringing