

PREFACE.

A good deal has been said and written by the Americans and Canadians about the "Hindus" or Hindustanees on the Pacific Coast. As most of the speeches and writings were the outcome of the agitation against Hindustani immigration, they were generally prejudiced and erroneous. To find out the truth about the social and economic conditions of these Hindustanees had for several years been the intention of the writer. But the proper facilities for the study were not available until the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, became interested in the subject.

The purpose of this study is not, however, the advocacy of Hindustani immigration. There exists in America a good deal of superstition and prejudice against Asian and Eastern European races and nationalities, some of which have migrated into America. The origin of such superstition and prejudice lies in ignorance. Although the Hindustanees in America are insignificant in number, they represent a great nation. The interpretation of their life to the American people is one of the objects of this study.

There is still another important object which has prompted the writer to this undertaking. Long before his arrival in America, he had been interested in social movements in India. With her immense resources and vast population as well as the spiritual and intellectual wealth of Hindu and Mohammedan civilisations, to which has been added Western culture, India stands today on the threshold of a new epoch and has all the possibilities of building up a new and great civilisation. The greatest part of the material for the upbuilding of this civilisation will come from the wants, requirements, ideals and aspirations of the masses, which have remained up to this time inert and passive. The Hindustanees on the Pacific Coast offered a splendid opportunity for the study of their latent faculties as compared with those of the other people and for the ascertainment of their ability to respond to the new social, political and economic conditions.

The writer does not claim anything new in the subject-matter or methodology. In fact, much more thorough studies have been made on similar subjects. But in most of the studies, the workers have been regarded as a bundle of material wants rather than a group of moral and intellectual beings. If the new democracy for which idealists are looking forward is ever achieved, it will be done not only by equalising opportunities in political and industrial fields, but also by establishing the fact that the life of the working classes is pervaded by the same spiritual and intellectual ideals which are found among the so-called upper classes. The writer did not fully accomplish what he aimed at. The unit of the study was too small and the time at his disposal was too short. Moreover, the investigation was carried on under the auspices of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the scope of which is restricted to the collection of industrial statistics rather than the interpretation of social facts. The writer has nevertheless attempted to make a comprehensive survey of a group life including both social and economic conditions as well as spiritual and intellectual ideals.

In presenting this treatise to the public, the writer wishes to express his deep gratitude to Mr. Ethelbert Stewart, Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, whose kind interest made this study possible. He is thankful to Mrs. Margaret Gadsby of the same Bureau and Mr. S. N. Kar, M. A., of New York for kindly reading the manuscript and offering valuable criticisms. He also takes this occasion to thank the men and women in the United States and Canada, who, through reports, statements, interviews and many other ways, helped him complete the investigation.

New York, May 15, 1922.

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