

see and where even guilt has not necessarily been established with absolute scientific certainty.

They feel they are most effectively and at a minimum of cost protecting society from one miserable wretch. They think they are scaring other miserable wretches into refraining from the crime of murder. Is the mighty fabric of man's society so terrified that it must wreak vengeance upon the transgressor of the laws of the herd by repeating the crime in a cold, cruel, procrastinating and odious manner? Can society not be satisfied with rendering the dangerous one harmless by simple imprisonment, treating him as kindly as they would a man-eating tiger safely confined behind the bars of a cage in the zoo?

Capital punishment has been abolished in many countries. Great Britain has at last joined the ranks and voiced—though still by a narrow margin—its condemnation of the principle of vengeance: The vengeance of the righteous mighty against the weak sinner. Hard labour is rightly to be changed to simple imprisonment. We feel that the real crime in murder is biological rather than antisocial. What horrifies us is the taking of life as such, not so much the particular victim's misfortune.

Robbery, arson and embezzlement are social crimes. We feel that they are in a different category from genocide, murder and sex-delinquency which are biological crimes. Social or economic crimes we are fully entitled to punish because their punishment is more likely to be deterrent. Such crimes too can be judged more rationally and dispassionately than can those that violate our inherent biological instincts.

Of all living creatures man is the most gregarious. His evolution is running rapidly towards the forming of larger herds. Apparently his goal is to be of one peaceful flock all the world over. Anything that detracts from that aim those at the spearhead of his evolution feel to be retrograde, inhuman, abnormal, be it the beastliness of an individual murder, the mass-slaughter of war or any form of internecine strife and bloodshed. Any person, group or nation responsible for such devolutionary crimes the majority must and does eventually render harmless. To do this excommunicatory confinement is justified but there can be no justification for violent and blood-thirsty retribution in dealing with biological freaks who have inherited a dangerous and unhappy combination of genes from their ancestors.

It is surely an anomaly that in man's most advanced social structures the official ethical standards are far below the ethical standards of the individuals composing that structure; that the law says to the individual; 'Thou shalt not kill' and then adds: 'But I, the law, I may and will deliberately kill. Beware of my deadly vengeance.'

Individually, civilized man has long outgrown the old moral code of a tooth for a tooth. Yet

in our law relating to the *extreme penalty* we have not progressed beyond such barbarisms. Collectively, we are still on a surprisingly savage level.

How long will it take us as a species to mature from childish, primitive cruelty to gentle kindness, wisdom and bounteous goodwill to all, even to those who offend against the canons of our social and biological morality? When shall we become as truly human, as graciously magnanimous as the Mahatma taught us to be and live a life as he lived, cleansed even of the thought of hate and violence and retribution, a life of loving oneness with all creatures?

### THE CALCUTTA DEAF AND DUMB SCHOOL

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In this school of about 180 children, boys and girls are taught how to speak, read and write. The teacher articulates slowly: the pupil feels his chest and throat and watches his lips. The pupil then also articulates.

On the occasion of the visit of His Excellency the Governor of West Bengal on the 9th September, 1948, one of the boys read an Address of Welcome in Bengali. It consisted of 103 words. Four sentences are quoted to show that what the boy said was not in a mere baby language:

বর্তমানে পাঞ্চাত্যদেশের রাষ্ট্রগুলি মূক-বধিরদের শিক্ষার স্বাবস্থা করায় তাহাদের গ্রন্ত উন্নতি হইয়াছে এবং তাহারা দেশে ও স্মাজে কাজের লোক এবং মহুষ-পদবাচ্য হইতে পারিয়াছে (At the present time, due to the introduction of the improved method of education by the Western States, the deaf and dumb of those States have been immensely benefited and they have become useful members of the society as also of the country, and thereby they have attained the status of human beings worth the name)..... আমরা ও আশাকরি আমাদের দেশের মহুষ রাষ্ট্রকর্তাগণ আমাদের জন্য অহুক্ষণ যথেষ্পযুক্ত অধ্যয়ন ও শিল্প শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করিয়া আমাদের এই উপেক্ষিত ও দুঃখময় জীবনযাত্রা হইতে আমাদিগকে আণ করিবেন (We also expect that our sympathetic administrators will likewise make adequate arrangements for our education and industrial training and thereby reclaim us from the neglected and wretched life of ours)..... উপর্যুক্ত শিক্ষা পাইলে আমরা ও পাঞ্চাত্যদেশের মূক-বধির ভাইবোনদের

সম্পর্যায়ে উঠিতে নিশ্চয়ই সক্ষম হইব এবং তাহাদের ন্যায় দেশের ও দশের মেবায় লাগিবাৰ জন্য উপযুক্ত হইতে পাৰিব (Given adequate education and training we too will rise certainly to the same status as has been acquired by our Western brethren and serve the country and people).....  
বাংলাদেশ আপনাৰ মত শুণী ও সহদয় ব্যক্তিকে পাইয়া যেমন ধন্য হইয়াছে আমৰাও আজ আপনাকে আমাদেৱ মধ্যে পাইয়া তেমনই গৌৰবাদ্বিত বোধ কৱিতেছি এবং আশাপূৰ্ণ হৃদয়ে আপনাৰ সমীপে আমাদেৱ দুঃখেৰ কথা জানাইতেছি (Blessed is Bengal by getting a sympathetic and learned man like you, so, too, do we feel glorified to have you in our midst: with hopeful and expectant heart we appeal to you for the redress of our miseries).

As remarked by His Excellency the boys and girls look particularly alert, happy and bright.

In addition to speaking, reading and writing scholars are also taught handicrafts and art. The articles of utility and ornament produced by them were also exhibited at very reasonable prices. They were in no way inferior to similar articles seen in shops. In fact they must be superior inasmuch as each was made individually and had the attention which is not given to mass produced articles.

It is estimated that in West Bengal there are about 4,000 deaf mutes of school-going age. 180 is but a small fraction of this figure.

The school has been in existence for the last 55 years and is the premier school of its kind in India. The annual recurring expenditure is of the order of Rs. 1,20,000, of which Rs. 36,000 is received as grant in aid from the Government.

The education of deaf mutes is more expensive than that of normal children because of closer personal contact between teacher and pupil.

Usually a class consists of 8 children with one teacher.

All the scholars do not come from poor homes only. Three children belong to medical men. Nor are speaking, reading and writing and handicraft the sole aims. Several boys are studying for a university degree.

No research work on the cause, heredity and psychology of deaf mutism appears to have been done in Calcutta in spite of the existence of this excellent school.

The purpose of His Excellency's visit was to receive a purse of Rs. 1,500 for the school from

Sri D. N. Mukerji of the Hooghly Bank Ltd. The money was collected 'over the counter in the half year since January last for the school'. This collection 'over the counter' for humanitarian purposes is in itself an innovation which is being fully utilized by Sri Mukerji, the Managing Director of the bank which only the other day had collected Rs. 25,000 for the proposed Cancer Institute. The bank has now launched a new drive for collection of the funds for the West Bengal Leprosy Relief Association.

Any further information concerning this excellent institution, especially with respect to research, may be obtained from the Principal, Rai Sahib A. C. Chatterji, the Honorary Secretary of the school, Mr. N. C. Paul or the Honorary Secretary of the Convention of the Teachers of the Deaf in India, Mr. N. Majumdar. The address of the school is 293, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta 9.

#### THE DEATH PENALTY (Abstracted from the *Lancet*, ii, 24th July, 1948, p. 165)

THE House of Commons on 15th July considered the Criminal Justice Bill. Sir Hartley Shawcross, Attorney-General, moved that the House should disagree with the Lords' amendment to delete Clause I (suspension of the death penalty for murder). He urged the merits of the Government's proposal to recognize two categories of murder—the capital and non-capital. He thought that juries would have no difficulty in deciding whether a murder came into one of the five classes for which capital punishment was reserved : (1) Those committed in connection with robbery, burglary, or house breaking (gangster offences); wounding by three or more persons acting together; offences committed with explosive or destructive substances; rape, indecent assault and sodomy; (2) murder of a police officer, or a civilian who was assisting a police officer in the execution of the law; (3) poisoning when the poison had been systematically administered; (4) the murder of a prison officer; and (5) second murders. Mr. Winston Churchill said that the Government's clause would weaken the jury's sense of responsibility and introduce distinctions that would puzzle and baffle them, while its inconsistencies and absurdities would tend to bring the law into disrepute. The most frequent types of murder, such as wounding, stabbing, and drowning, and the most wicked murders, would not carry the death penalty. Sir John Anderson thought the new clause was unsatisfactory because it sought to substitute a rigid and elaborate statutory code for the existing flexible, well-tried system. He thought that the words 'express malice' would give rise to serious difficulty. The only possible and sensible course for those who believed that the capital sentence was an unavoidable evil and would like to see it got rid of to the fullest possible extent and as speedily as possible, was to proceed by the exercise of the Royal prerogative. Mr. Chuter Ede, Home Secretary, on the other hand, believed that the wider use of the Royal prerogative would involve the Home Secretary in considerable difficulties. The Government had put before the House a method by which steady amelioration of the law could be carried forward in a way that would not violently offend public opinion.

After a series of divisions, the Government's compromise clause was carried by 307 votes to 209.