

Caste Artificial and Natural.

To state with the anarchist that there should be no classes in society is to ignore all natural laws.

Yet any thinking observer must perceive that the fixed castes of India and China produce a stationary civilization; and in Europe, where caste is less absolute progress is slowest where class distinction are most rigidly drawn, while the opposite proves equally true, that where there is most freedom from caste there is the greatest advancement. This is easily perceived by noting the two extremes of Russia with her very and absolute monarch, the one as hopelessly doomed to his fate by his birth as the other, and England a limited monarchy where the humblest yeoman may become Prime Minister.

Are we to conclude then that there should be no class distinctions? Would the socialistic idea solve the question? Would political enactment make men equal? Or is there not back of all

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this a natural law which, if obeyed, would harmoniously arrange social conditions; and which, if violated prevents men from attaining unto their fullest capabilities?

Class distinctions based on birth, inherited wealth and race, being the result of neither worth nor individual ability, are artificial and therefore contrary, to natural law.

The matter of birth in India settles an individuals place for life, what his trade or profession shall be, where he shall live, whom he shall marry and even what Gods he shall worship. As a recent traveler has said "To study India and its people is like untangling a very much soiled skein of silk. When ever you get hold of a thread that you think you can unravel no matter what color, size or texture, it is sure to run to one knot in the center and that knot is caste.

Caste is the car of Juggernaut that chogs the wheel of progress, and though the railways, the telegraphs, the English

schools and the mild but firm English rule have done so much for the people and the country, still the home of the Hindoo is scarcely changed from former times because it of all things is ruled by the laws of caste.

Our country though professedly freed from the caste of birth is fast raising an artificial class of the wealthy that is as dogmatic and narrowing to the possibilities of human nature as that of birth in that it ignores real worth in any sense. This is illustrated by the fact that one of the great New York dailies gives several columns every week to the doings of the "four hundred" whose acknowledged resume is simply inherited wealth.

In the South race distinction is kept constantly before us; whether we eat or drink, attend the theater or a house of worship we are never allowed to forget race distinction. Being engaged in a Union Mission meeting in the South held in a large City I invited a minister of one of the first churches in the City

to preach the evening sermon. Upon looking over the audience he requested me to have a colored man — a fellow Christian — put out of the Tabernacle for no other reason than that he belonged to another caste or race, However as there were several Kansas boys interested in the management of that meeting the colored man was allowed to keep his seat.

But the most pathetic incident and the one with the saddest results was in connection with the management of a boy's home which was one of the practical outgrowths of the work for boys by the Young Men's Christian Association. The Home was started for homeless white boys. Soon after the opening of the home two little white boys were admitted. After being in the home six months no fault was found with their morals, intellects, or physical condition; but when it was rumored that way back they had some slight blood connection with the colored race they were immediately expelled,

thus two little boys with all probable possibilities of life and usefulness were pushed out into the world homeless because of race caste and that in a country where "all men are created equal — are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights — among these are, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The happy students of the Kansas State Agricultural College can hardly realize their freedom and privileges until they go forth to engage in every day practical work when even here in our own land they will be confronted with the barriers of race, birth, sex — yes and even religion for inconsistent as it may seem, the strongest caste of all is the religious one, illustrated by such expressions as "The old Puritan stock" a "Scotch Presbyterian" a "straight Wesley Methodist" etc, etc.

Then there are the absurdities of the caste of sex, so extensive, unreasonable, and debasing, as is shown in the

extreme degradation of woman in Turkey, India, China, and Mormon Utah.

This caste of sex has clouded to woman all our large endowed Colleges and Universities, it gives her one half pay for labor, she is admitted into the churches as a praying power and economist, and today is positively refused a setting in the councils of one of the largest Protestant Evangelistic churches in Christendom although two thirds of its membership are women, among whom are such names as Francis Willard, Mrs Jennie F. Willing and a host of other women as intellectual and spiritual not forgetting our Samantha Allen the humorist whose keen satire on "Woman's setting on the Conference" surely ought to have broken down the caste of sex in the churches. To the credit of the Society of Friends be it said that they were the first body either religious or secular to see the absurd inconsistency of the caste of sex in the churches and in the realms

of the intellectual and spiritual.

Hence for over two hundred years we have had a Christian body which recognizes the perfect equality of the sexes to equal privileges and offices in religious as well as civil matters.

And surely such women as Elizabeth Fry, Lucretia Mott, Hannah Whithall Smith and many others of that society are a guarantee that a God given natural law is always safe to follow.

We are glad that the natural law of class preference has asserted itself again and again, and regardless of these artificial castes of birth inherited wealth etc. it has been proved that "a man's a man for a' that."

What then are the real divisions that should be recognized by society?

Who are the ones that through the action of this law have taken their places in their correct and natural class?

Regardless of poverty and humble birth we see such men as Bunyan, Burns, Hugh Miller, Lincoln, and

Garfield taking their places and finding their correct class because of their - Intellectual achievement and the something within themselves that aside from the mere accident of lack of inherited wealth, obscure and humble parentage placed them in the class or caste in which we perceive they rightly belonged.

So on the moral plane an individual naturally falls into the place in which he belongs whether he be high or low, rich or poor. Thus Jennie McCauley of mission work in New York City had nothing to recommend him but his moral power.

I was at one time very well acquainted with one of the large commercial firms of the South West whose Secretary and Manager told me in confidence what I had long suspected that the man whose name stood at the head of the company was a man below the average business ability, was not as wealthy by far as several other members of the

firm, and did nothing in the active operation of the business except to draw his salary - not for his business ability nor yet his money but simply his known integrity.

It was hard for some of the early believers in Christianity to take in the individual liberty and personal responsibility taught by the great teacher. So firmly rooted were the national and religious caste ideas held by the Apostle Peter that it required the vision he received on the housetop at Joppa before he could understand and be compelled to declare "of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Thus bringing out the great truth that each man in any nation places himself in one of the two classes recognized by God, and righteousness comes comes not by birth, profession or any mere words but as the Scripture

says "Let no man deceive you he
that doeth righteousness is right-
eous."

We can see again that this is
a natural class because it
depends upon the individual choice
and individual performance.

Oh if this grand ideal, this natural
classification of man according
to his individual worth either
intellectual, moral or spiritual were
made as it should be the only
caste of society, what burdens
would drop from poor struggling
humanity, burdens of pride, false
positions, jealousies, envyings, and
misunderstandings.

H. W. Stone