

THE POOR BRUTES.

"Twere all as good to ease one beast of grief,
As sit and watch the sorrows of the world,
In yonder caverns with the priests who pray.

"Unto the dumb lips of his flock he lent
Sad pleading words, showing how man, who prays
For mercy to the gods, is merciless,
Being as gods to those ; . . ."

[Arnold's *Light of Asia*.]

A certain Fellow and Councillor of our Society and member of the Bombay Branch is engaged in a noble work, which reflects honour upon us all. Mr. Kavassji M. Shroff, a Parsi gentleman among the most public-spirited and intelligent of his indefatigable race, is known in England as a colleague and friend of the late philanthropic Miss Mary Carpenter, and in America as a lecturer upon Fire Worship. At Bombay his name has been long identified with movements of public importance, among them that of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, of the local Society devoted to which work he is Secretary. There have long been such praiseworthy bodies in Europe and America, but, curiously enough, our Parsi colleague has devised a new feature in their administration never yet thought of by the more experienced Western philanthropists, and which vastly enlarges the scope of their usefulness. The Bombay daily papers have noticed the scheme approvingly, and from the *Gazette* of July 22, and *Times of India* of November 6, we copy in full the extracts which follow, in the hope that they may incite humanitarians elsewhere to imitate this most laudable example :—

"We are glad to hear that there is good prospect of a hospital for animals being established in Bombay at an early date. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been in existence in this city for the last seven years, and has undoubtedly done much good work. But the preventive system at present followed, Mr. Shroff has discovered from his experience as Secretary of the Society, is not without drawbacks. As worked at present, the method is briefly this. Three or four inspectors, or agents, employed by the Society, go about in the town from 7 to 10 a.m., and whenever they see any animal, horse or bullock, that is unfit for work, they hand over the driver of the animal to the nearest policeman, who takes the offender and the animal to either of the two Presidency Magistrates' Courts. The animals thus gathered together are made to stand in a row for the inspection of the magistrate as he enters the Court. Fines varying from two to ten Rupees, according to the intensity of the cruelty, are inflicted, on the payment of which the owners are allowed to take away their animals. In most cases the cartmen are poor people who, with their families, subsist on what they earn by plying their vehicles. Suppose a cartman is fined because his pair of bullocks is unfit for work. The payment of the fine sweeps away his wages for a couple of days, and if he refrains from putting his oxen to his cart until such time as the necessary relief is obtained, there is starvation staring himself, his family and his bullocks in the face. He consequently is unmindful of the sufferings of his dumb companions, and after paying the fine, puts them to work again at once for the purpose of gaining his livelihood. The cartman once fined, falls into the clutches of the same, or other, agent over and over again. Instances have been gleaned from the diaries of the agents showing that the same cartman has been fined three or four times for the same animals bearing the same marks of cruelty. A cartman cannot take his animal when wanting curative treatment to any of the European or native veterinary establishments in the city, as the very heavy admission fee forbids it. This state of affairs puts the poor people in a sad plight. Properly speaking, the action of the Society, without affording the necessary means of alleviating the pains and cruelties inflicted on the animals, becomes a powerful instrument for inflicting misery on poor, half-clad, half-starving creatures. Mr. Shroff suggests that measures should be taken to change the plan of work, by establishing under the auspices of the Society a large hospital to which owners of diseased cattle, instead of being subjected to fines, may be persuaded to take their animals for curative treatment. Efforts have been made to raise the necessary funds by public subscription. At an influential meeting of grain and seed merchants held at the Mandvi-bunder in April last, resolutions were unanimously carried to the effect that each native merchant dealing in grain and seeds should contribute to the funds of the Society two annas for every 100 bags imported by him into Bombay. A number of mucedaduns connected with the local firms have also agreed to authorise the Society to collect one anna on every 100 bags of grain and seeds exported. In pursuance of this arrangement, an office was opened on the 1st of May last at Waree-bunder, for the collection of the fees. All the merchants' men, when they go to the G. I. P. Railway goods-

shed in the neighbourhood to clear their masters' goods, step up to the Society's office daily and pay the fees due. The merchants and mucedaduns have authorised the Society to devote the amount thus collected to the maintenance of the proposed Hospital for Animals; to engaging a sufficient number of agents to suppress all sorts of cruelties; to providing water-troughs in the city where they may be needed; and to establishing branches of the Society in such towns in the Presidency as the Committee of the Society may deem proper. This is a satisfactory beginning; but the revenue derivable from this source is not considered sufficient to enable the Society to carry out all the proposed measures; and we are told that the local Government has spontaneously offered to co-operate with the Society in this instance, by offering to establish a veterinary college in connection with the proposed hospital for the purpose of training a number of young men in veterinary science. A Parsee gentleman, we are further informed, has offered to contribute a large sum for the purchase of the ground and the erection of the necessary buildings for the hospital."—[*Bombay Gazette*.]

"An influential meeting of native cotton merchants was held yesterday afternoon at Petit House in the Fort, for the consideration and adoption of measures for the furtherance of the establishment of a hospital for the medical treatment of temporarily disabled animals. The hospital is to be located somewhere near Chinchpogooly, where is situated a valuable parcel of land which has been presented by a munificent Parsee millowner of this city, Mr. Dinshaw Manockjee Petit, for the purposes of the hospital. In addition to this, the same gentleman has promised the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, by whom the institution will be worked, funds to erect suitable hospital accommodation on the above piece of ground. Mr. Dinshaw Manockjee Petit, who was unanimously voted to the chair, suggested the levy of a pound of cotton per each candy sold as a means of providing funds for the maintenance of the hospital. Mr. K. M. Shroff, honorary secretary to the S. P. C. A., appealed to the sympathy of the assembled gentlemen, and adduced a number of facts and arguments to prove that such an institution was a long-felt desideratum in a large city like Bombay. Mr. Shroff's remarks were received by the meeting with great approval, several of the members endorsing and supporting them subsequently. It was then unanimously resolved, after a brief consultation, that further consideration of the question be adjourned until Sunday, the 26th instant, to enable the cotton merchants, some of whom were unavoidably absent, to agree to the terms proposed. In the meantime, Mr. Shroff was requested to print and circulate copies of the draft deed. A general wish was expressed that more Hindu members might be introduced on to the managing committee of the S. P. C. A. than has hitherto been the case. Mr. Shroff replied to this complaint by stating that it was no fault of the Society that more Hindu members were not to be found on the managing board; in fact, it was the fault of the parties themselves, who took very little interest in other ways than by contributing handsomely to the Society's income. Mr. Shroff took this opportunity of eulogizing the energy and deep interest displayed in the Society's cause by such representative men as the Hon. Justice Bayley, Mr. Dinshaw Manockjee Petit, Mr. Henry Cleveland, Sir Frank Souter, &c. Mr. Shroff remarked that the infusion of a similar ardent spirit by his native brethren into the cause of the Society would be heartily welcomed, not only by himself, but by his fellow workers. Nosegays and rosewater having been distributed, the meeting separated after according the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman."—[*Times of India*.]

Unless we mistake, posterity will offer a more lasting homage to the names of Mr. Dinshaw Manockjee, Mr. Shroff, and their colleagues than "nosegays and rosewater." For a very great body of people in these Asiatic countries have in their natures an inbred tender compassion for the brute creation; and long before the London S. P. C. A. arose, there existed in a Hindu quarter of Bombay, a refuge for animals called "Pinjrapol," where even the fleas and bugs are fed on the bodies of living men who hire themselves out for this curious service at so much per night! It is a common thing for a Hindu merchant or speculator to vow that if he succeeds in a certain venture he will buy so many cattle, sheep or other animals doomed to the shambles, and send them to Pinjrapol to be kept at feed for the rest of their natural lives. But though Pinjrapol is richly endowed, having a revenue of, we believe, more than a lakh of rupees annually, its internal management leaves much to be desired. This, under the intelligent supervision of Mr. Shroff, is most likely to be avoided in the proposed Animal Hospital, and as we remarked above, it is a cause of honourable pride to every member of our Society that so Buddha-like a practical charity should have been set afoot by our Parsi colleague and brother. We hope these lines may come under the eye of Mr. Henry Bergh, the American zoophile.