

CANADA AS A HINDU SAW IT

Article IV

(Continued from last issue)

The cafe I had ushered myself into was typical of such high-tone restaurants. I esconced myself in the mahogany chair. If one was to glance around such a place he would notice that the class of men and women, conventionally spoken of as ladies and gentlemen, who visit these cafes are neatly dressed, don clean linen, manifest a kind of etiquette or discipline, are more or less a reserved set, sometimes altogether stiff-necked, and on the whole appear to belong to the cultured and prosperous class.

In the dining saloon a scrupulous cleanliness prevails and this is generally true of the kitchen. The decorations present a pleasant and asthetic taste, the furnishings are solid, elegant and comfortable, the silver plate, the China, the linen, etc., is of a fine texture, and spotless serviettes, bill of fare, boquets of flowers, etc., are all found well arranged on the tables.

I do not tuck my serviette high up in my top buttonhole, and when not on guard I sometimes rub my hands instinctively as if I were to taste directly some fresh kill, in the manner of my primitive ancestors.

Unless you have an epicurean taste, on the a la carte plan, when you have had your fill with several delectable courses capped with ices, sweets, etc., together with the use of finger bowl, the cost for a meal, on an average, comes to about \$1.25 to \$1.50. If cost is of no concern you can go into a heavier outlay, but I have no experience of such luxury to write about.

This account relates to the tourist and birds of passage, for business meals at appointed hours, though not elaborate yet fairly appetizing, can be had for half the above cost and are limited to the prescribed dishes.

Roughly a dollar is worth Rs3 As2 or 4s 2d in English money and is divided into half a dollar, a quarter or twenty-five cent piece, a dime or ten cent piece, and a five cent piece, which is the smallest in British Columbia.

The service, cleanliness, and general management of such cafes in Canada are as fine and decent and at a par with the cafes of other metropolitan cities and this can be considered a most remarkable phenomenon in colonization for the fact that Vancouver is only a newly settled and freshly developed city, having only a growth of about 25 years, while the cities of Europe are the product of many centuries.

Women form only one-tenth of the population of B. C., and being a small population, the ladies who join with their husbands or escorts are therefore few in this country, many staying in their swell homes and pretty residences, but they may be seen in these cafes in larger numbers at special social functions, banquets and such occasions.

In the evenings the electric chandeliers hanging from the ceilings, the electric lamps of very pretty shades leaning out from the wall brackets, diffuse a very pleasant soft soothing brilliancy of light and strains of music in certain restaurants in the city heighten the sensation of felicity which the nourishing viands give to the palate.

At late hours, in the progress of night, sometimes with, sometimes without the knowledge of the man-

agement, but detected by observing eyes, certain love-sick swains make certain swell cafes their rendezvous, and commercialized love and musings find vent at such places which is as much a feature, a necessary corollary of Western institutions, as it is in England, or the European continent, or America.

Strict monogamous laws, absence of red light districts, extreme liberty of the women, and highly favorable economic conditions, i. e., a class of rich men existing with extremely poor people, in the Occident, generates commercialized vice which must find its outlet—we do not write in a condemnatory sense—the East has its own social evils—in such quarters, whatever the statutory laws may be.

When you have satisfied the inner man you pick up your bill or check and pay at the counter where the cashier in charge, always an attractive person, puts the amount paid through a mechanical cash register, now a regular feature in all hotels and cafes.

The cash registers of today have undergone a marvellous development and they are more than the name suggests, as they alone function as cash boxes, mechanical accountants, inspectors of cash receipts, etc., and other utilities they serve will be explained when we discuss "machinery on the American continent."

It was pointed out in the third article of this narrative that the Hindustanees of Canada, as a rule, do not resort to "coffee-and" and it is equally patent that they do not visit the aforementioned type of cafe, patronized by the prosperous privileged classes.

It is not Hindustanees alone, but Chinese and Japanese, and by far the majority of English, Scotch, Irish and other Europeans called the white working population who do not enter into these top-notch restaurants, for the reason that the price, the linen and the dress, the airs, and the class affinity in them to meet together are lacking.

Away back in my youth I had learned the saying amongst Westerners that a gentleman is known by the linen and leather he keeps, and the same Western dictum is still in force in Canadian society.

The social life of the Hindustanee, the Chinese, the Japanese, and the white working-man, owing to economic conditions, and particularly the recurring laundry expenditure, on an average is that of regular "rough-necks," and the majority of them being shod with unpolished hide are out of tune with the high-class Western restaurant.

One most surprising feature to a Hindustanee about the feeding houses in America is the epicurean Chinese Chop Suey Houses. The delicacies that are procurable here and the expenditure that is entailed in them surpass the restaurants of the Western people. These Chop Suey Houses are barred to none, are resorted to by all, and are in a highly flourishing condition.

The economic conditions and early associations have kept Hindustanees from pursuing the liberal and desirable use of clean linen, and knives and forks, etc., being not requisitioned by Rotée, stews, and Dholls, they are not appreciated nor adopted as it should be in the new environment in which they live.

The lined and leathered gentleman class look very much askance at the Hindustanees, for not introducing these civilized utilities in their society and the turbans and untrimmed hair on the heads of the

Sikhs mark them out as such among all the rest of the population.

These preliminary remarks about my having landed in Canada and the first hour of my faring in Vancouver, B. C., diverting me to write about cafes, may not be a very fitting introduction to my theme of "Canada as a Hindu Saw it," but the reader might note that the main story on Canada begins about now.

It is proposed that a full and complete account of the colonial life of the Hindustanees in America, describing their incomes, industry, the part they play in the production of Canadian wealth, their social life, their religion and politics, and the modification which their present environment has made upon themselves, be given as a whole, which must be included in this work on Canada.

An account of Canada, the Canadians, and other people of this continent, their place among the nations of the earth, a review of their domestic and public institutions, their mode of life, labor and government in Canada, the economic, moral, religious, and political affairs, and their specific characteristics, with a brief history of the past must also be rendered, so as to form a fair perspective of the development of this Dominion, and the writer hopes that it will not fail to serve a moderately useful purpose to all, though written by one of the much despised and little understood Hindustanees.

When in a city, its bazaars, or main thoroughfares, its civic centers, museums, parks, churches, official government quarters, the men, women and children, arts, traffic, etc., become the objects of observation to a practical tourist, whether standing on his pair of legs, or riding the cars, or driving around in automobiles. It will bear repeating that which all tourist writers say for the benefit of their readers, that a tourist first eagerly makes himself acquainted, with the assistance of guide books, maps and other means, with a working knowledge of the country of his visit, as it is geographically or topographically situated.

Therefore, before writing about Canada, or the Province of British Columbia, of which Vancouver is the leading city, though not the capital, a brief mention of the geographical features of Canada will be in proper order.

Canada is separated from the United States by an imaginary line and both countries geographically are a vast stretch of continuous territory forming the North American continent, or the New World, the hope of the surplus population of the Old World, the cradle of democratic institutions, the land of the free and home of the brave, and the experiment ground of many a momentous problem of human progress.

These several millions of square miles of country, known to the Hindustanees, until the beginning of the present century, practically as read in books and newspapers, is a land of bewitching scenery with glorious forests, snow-clad mountain ranges, magnificent rivers, rivulets, and springs, hills, harbors, lakes, birds, animals, prairies or plains of bewildering magnitude, and with its wild flowers and a rich virgin soil can afford to the settlers a sustenance as a mother would comparatively to a new-born babe.

Out of the 16,500,000 odd square miles of country which comprises the whole of the American continent, North America contains about 9,000,000 square miles, shared between Canada and the United States,

QUESTION OF HINDUS IN CANADA IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF INDIA

Demand for Publication of Papers

Mr. Clark, replying to Sir Fazulbhoy Currimbhoy's question regarding grievances of Canadian Indians, said: "Correspondence is still in progress between His Majesty's government, the Dominion government and the government of India and papers cannot be laid on the table. As regards (c) the Canadian law requires that the immigrant should arrive upon a continuous journey as well as upon a through ticket. As there is no direct line of steamships running from India to Canada the first condition cannot be fulfilled, and it does not appear that any advantage would accrue to Indian emigrants from the issue of through tickets. As regards (d) the government of India have as yet received no information beyond that already published in the press, and referred to by His Excellency the Viceroy in his reply to the Sikh deputation as to the likelihood of legislation being undertaken by the Dominion Legislature in the direction indicated by the honorable member. He may, however, rest assured that should any such legislation be introduced the government of India will use their best endeavors, as they have always done, to protect the interests of Indians."

the territory south of the Panama Canal forming South America.

The United States has exercised and is now evincing an overwhelming influence on Canada, these countries being historically, geographically and economically placed in juxtaposition with each other, I must, therefore, before specializing on Canada, deal with the topography of North America as a whole.

On the west coast of North America, which is separated from the South by the Isthmus of Panama, now converted into the famous Panama Canal, a work of greater significance in the economy of human progress than the Suez Canal, there is a high range of volcanic mountains.

The middle of North America is occupied by a vast plain, running from the Arctic Ocean way down over the full stretch of the northern continent, and reaching to its southern boundary, the Gulf of Mexico. This plain or prairie, as it is called in America, is many many times larger in extent, and being virgin soil, is much more fertile, than the Gangetic plain of India.

On the east coast of North America there runs a lower range of mountains running parallel to the coast, and as colonization moved from east to west, the former underwent early development and the seats of the Federal governments in both countries are therefore located in the east.

The greatest length is 4,500 miles and greatest breadth, which is at 45 deg. north latitude, is 3,100 miles.

The estimated length of the coast line of North America is 24,500 miles. The eastern coast is deeply indented, whereas the western coast, with which Asia stands in close proximity, and on which the city of Vancouver is situated, is comparatively regular, there being no indentation of any magnitude.

(To be continued in next issue.)