

extent as it patronizes learned societies; but they have no direct bearing upon the actual work of administration. This view is, at first sight, plausible enough, but it ignores the important fact that native society is made up, of a network of sub-divisions governed by rules which affect every department of life, and that in Bengal, at any rate, next to nothing is known about the system upon which the whole native population regulates its domestic and social relations. If legislation, or even executive action, is ever to touch these relations in a satisfactory manner, an ethnographical survey of Bengal, and a record of the customs of the people, is as necessary an incident of good administration as a cadastral survey of the land and a record of the rights of its tenants. The census of 1881 has provided the necessary statistics. The relations of different castes to the land, their privileges in respect of rent, their relations to trade, their social status, their internal organization, their rules as to marriage and divorce, — all these are matters intimately concerned with practical administration. For instance, the marriage and divorce customs of the lower castes are constantly coming into the criminal courts, and it would be a decided advantage to judicial officers, if accurate information could be made available on the subject. Again, the distribution of the various castes in each district has a direct and important bearing on the relief of distress, as different classes of the population may require different modes of relief. Brahmans, weaving castes, and earth-workers cannot be treated on the same lines. The same argument applies to the working of primary village schools, and to some kinds of land questions. Thus, the Mundas in Lohardugga and the Sonthals in the Sonthal Pergunnahs and elsewhere put forward apparently fantastic claims to privileges in respect of land, the clue to which is probably to be sought in some traditional customary law peculiar to Kolarian tribes. Under the head of marriage, again, an accurate knowledge of the practices actually prevailing among the main body of the people, as distinguished from the literate castes, could hardly fail to be an important factor in any influence the Government or unofficial bodies might, at any time, bring to bear with the object of discouraging infant marriage or promoting the remarriage of widows. Finally, it is difficult to exaggerate the advantages of the hold over the people, which even a slight knowledge of, or interest in, these matters gives to both judicial and executive officers.

3. A large mass of information regarding the castes and customs of the people is already in existence, but it is buried away in books not generally known, in the journals and proceedings of learned societies, in oriental periodicals, and in official reports. These data, though of great value as materials for an account of the castes of Bengal, are, for the most part, of a fragmentary character, and can only be made accessible to men of science in Europe, by carefully collecting them, recasting them in accordance with the modes of treatment adopted by modern ethnologists, and testing them by comparison with the actual facts of the present day. This process differs widely from mere compilation, and involves the necessity of collecting fresh data on some regular system.

Es folgen dann in drei Abschnitten vertheilt die Informationen über die Fragestellungen (auf 24 Seiten), so dass reiche Ergebnisse zu erwarten stehen (in zuverlässiger Materialbeschaffung).

In der Einleitung ethnologischer Erforschungen lag es den Colonialstaaten ob, voran zu gehen, weil durch praktische Zwecke darauf hingewiesen, und so hat, allen Anderen voran, die aus anglosächsischem Stamm erwachsene Staatenbildung auf neuer Hemisphäre, als ihre Pflicht es anerkennen müssen, die in der ethnischen Unterlage des heimischen Bodens gestellte Aufgabe ernstlich in Angriff zu nehmen.

Mit einer der Weite der Aufgabe entsprechenden Erweiterung der Geldmittel werden von der Regierung der Union die zunächst dem eigenen Lande zugewandten Studien ihrer Ethnologen unterstützt, unter Anweisung von Fonds: „For the purpose of continuing ethnological researches among the American Indians, under the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution“ (s. Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington 1885). Was hier seit Begründung des „Geographical and Geological Survey“ in den letzten Jahrzehnten geleistet ist, spricht genugsam aus den stattlichen Bänden der darauf bezüglichen Veröffentlichungen, und wird, wie zu hoffen steht, als anregendes Beispiel zurückwirken, um eine Nachfolge im gleichen Sinne hervorzurufen (unter gemeinsamer Förderung einer internationalen Wissenschaft).