

even if giving it results in inconvenience to yourself, as for example when going a distance with a full waterbag, for opening it and giving out only a small portion of the contents would have the effect of making the water shake, which is unpleasant to the carrier. Another vow is always to help a brother of the apron when in distress, assist his family should he die, and start his boys in life with the implements of the profession.

When a member of the fraternity meets a person he does not know, with a *longi* round his waist and carrying water, he proceeds to put to him certain questions, the answers of which are known only to the initiated, and are secrets never yet divulged to others. Some of these questions are:—How many mouths has a well? How many mouths has a mussuk? How many straps in a mussuk get wet and how many remain dry? and the like. If the man displays ignorance he is reported to the brotherhood as one carrying on the profession out of the pale of the fraternity, and is promptly obliged to select a preceptor and get properly instructed and initiated. Caste and creed have nothing to do with the matter. Hindu bhists who wear the *longi* sit in *panchayat* with Mahomedans, and, as far as I can see, there is nothing to prevent Christians joining the brotherhood.

A master-bhisti is recognized by his proficiency in leather work and leather decoration. One is spoken of as being able to make leather *hookah* bottoms of such strength that they recover their shape after a heavily-laden cart has gone over them.

Bhists never hesitate to take service in any part of India, and you rarely meet an old bhisti who has not travelled, and who does not, when applying for a place, talk of having gone with Mr. Thompson to Assam, and with some one else to Peshawar, and to a dozen other opposite points of India. The reason is that they know they will find, like Freemasons, a protecting brotherhood everywhere. They are

less liable, I understand, than other native camp-followers to shirk the battle-field; and their neutrality, evinced in the moral obligation to give drink to friend or foe being recognized by all, secures them an immunity from hostile interference that would not, I am afraid, be accorded to a Sister of Mercy. The quickness and ease with which bhists organize a strike must have been often remarked, particularly in hill stations.

With regard to the strap and hook worn over the shoulder by the bhisti for suspending the bucket while filling his bag and the leather belt worn over the apron, I believe their adoption is not enforced by the brotherhood; but as the alternative in the absence of the hook is to suspend the bucket by holding the rope with the teeth, Hindus, who are very particular about contamination, refuse to drink water from those who do not wear it. I have not had an opportunity of analysing the cause of objection by the Hindus in the Punjab to drink from bhists who do not wear a leather belt over their aprons.

A bhisti who, by some extraordinary good fortune, sat on the throne of Delhi for a few days, is said to have issued a leather currency; a leather disc with a gold pin riveted in the centre, worth about Rs. 2-8, I have never seen a specimen myself, but have heard of the existence of the coin; and if my memory does not deceive me, Thomas says something about it in his *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings*. The motto of every true bhisti should be, "There is nothing like leather." I feel sure that similar associations will be found to exist in many other Indian trades and professions.—*Allen's Indian Mail*.

The Lodge or Grand Lodge that cannot support itself without the financial aid of those who have been active members for twenty-four years, is not worth the name of Lodge or Grand Lodge.—*Comp. Thomas J. Wilder, Dakota*.