

Manu, will be always virtuous in conduct, and will reach whatever condition he desires."

It must be owned that the system thus developed in **Efficacy of the code.** Manu does not fail for lack of penalties or of precise directions. Its efficacy is to be sought in its gradual growth, its accordance with the ideas of creation, supreme power, and morality which had long been current, and its promulgation by those who had most intellectual power and most capability of swaying the conduct of men. Thus we may imagine the extraordinary influence which the sacred class of Brahmins attained in early Indian history, an influence which has been sufficient to perpetuate itself to our own times, which remains very great, and which more than two thousand years ago was sufficient to produce by exaggeration and reaction the remarkable religion of Buddhism. But looking on it calmly, while admitting the loftiness of many of its precepts and imaginings, it cannot be said that its general moral elevation was great. The scheme was powerful enough to bind together society for centuries, but not powerful enough to diffuse itself widely among other races, or to become more than a Hindu religion.

There is one other code to which we must refer, besides that of Manu, namely the Darma Shastra of Yajnavalkya, **Code of Yajnavalkya.** possibly dating from the first century A.D. It is still the chief authority in the school of Benares. It is much shorter than that of Manu, is more systematic, and represents a later stage of development. It adds to the sources of authority the Puranas and various traditional and scholastic authorities. To some extent caste is carried farther, and a Brahman is forbidden to have a Sudra as a fourth wife. We have reached a period when writing is in regular use, and written documents are appealed to as legal evidence; coined money is in use. It is evident that Buddhism has arisen, and that the shaven heads and yellow garments of its votaries are well known; the king is also recommended to found monasteries for Brahmins, an evident imitation of Buddhists.

Compare the following philosophy with that of Manu.

"The success of every action depends on destiny and on a man's own effort; but destiny is evidently nothing but the result of a man's act in a former state of existence. Some expect the whole result from destiny or from the inherent nature; some expect it from the lapse of time; and some from a man's own effort; other persons of wiser judgment expect it from a combination of all these." (M.W.) But there is no sufficient difference in the nature of the precepts to make it necessary to quote farther.

We may here refer briefly to the celebrated rock-temples of India, excavated in solid rock many centuries ago, but by no means confined to Hinduism, having often been excavated by Buddhists and Jains. Some of them display surprising skill in construction as well as in sculpture. Many are ornamented with figures of the gods or scenes from their supposed adventures. The majority of the Brahmanic temples are dedicated to Siva. The most famous are those of Elephanta, an island in Bombay harbour; one of them contains a colossal trimurti, or three-faced bust, representing Siva in his threefold character of creator, preserver, and destroyer. Many other caves, scarcely less famous, are at Ellora in the Nizam's dominions.





III. KRISHNA AVATARA

(From a native picture)

## CHAPTER III.

### Modern Hinduism I.

Reaction from Brahmanism—Triumph of Buddhism—Downfall of Indian Buddhism—The caste system—The Mahabharata—The Bhagavad-gita—Krishna—Incarnations of the Deity—Immortality taught—The Ramayana—Partial incarnations—Conquests of Rama—Resistance of Brahmanism—Kumarila Bhatta—Sankara—Worship of the supreme Brahman—The Smartas—Vishnu worship—The Puranas—The Vishnu Purana—Description of the Supreme Being—Great Vishnuite preachers—Ramanand—Kabir—Chaitanya—Influence of Buddhism—The linga and the salagram—Brahma—Vishnu the preserver—Incarnations of Vishnu—Rama—Krishna—Buddha—Jagannath—Lakshmi—Siva the destroyer—Ascetic Sivaites—Durga—Kali—Ganesa—Ganga—Local deities and demons—Worship of animals and trees—Deification of heroes and saints.

**I**N our chapters on Buddhism, it will be shown that the new religion which deposed Brahmanism from

supremacy in India, and greatly depressed it for more than a thousand years, was partly a natural <sup>Reaction from</sup> reaction from the haughty sway of the Brah- <sup>Brahmanism</sup> mans and their reliance on ritual and sacrifice, and partly the development of a movement which had already risen within the older system. The educated Brahmins came to see that the Vedic gods were poetic imaginations which could not all be true, and that whereas various gods—the Sun, the Encompassing Sky, the Dawn, etc.—were represented as independent and supreme, they must be emanations of one supreme Cause. While they continued to uphold the popular ideas about the gods, and to conduct the customary sacrifices, they began to develop a theological literature, of part of which we have already given an account, the Upanishads and the Puranas, teaching the unity of God and the immortality of the soul, still mingled with many myths and superstitions. Their new system involved the brotherhood of man; but it was reserved for Gautama to break through all the old conventions, and to found the great system of <sup>Triumph of</sup> Buddhism. All classes found in it something <sup>Buddhism</sup> that was lacking in Brahmanism, and rejoiced in the upsetting of many things that had been irksome. From the third century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., Buddhism increasingly triumphed, until it was professed by the majority of the Indian people. But in the fifth century the Buddhists were persecuted by the adherents of the old religion. By the end of that century the Buddhist leaders had taken refuge in China, and many of its priests had carried the faith to new lands. As late as the twelfth century a few remained in India, but now they are non-existent, unless Jainism be regarded as representing the old Buddhism. But the influence of Buddhism upon Brahmanism had been profound, and modern Hinduism is a very different thing from the religion of the Vedas and Brahmanas. Indeed, Sir W. W. Hunter terms modern Hinduism the joint product of Buddhism and Brahmanism. The latter was active and slowly changing during all the time of the predominance of the former, and we have the testimony of Greeks in Alexander's time



and later, and of Buddhist priests from China who visited India in the fifth and seventh centuries, that Brahman priests were equally honoured with Buddhist monks, and temples of the Hindu gods adjoined the Buddhist religious houses.

The Hindus date the final triumph over Buddhism from the preaching of Kumarila, a Bengal Brahman, who

**Downfall of** powerfully advanced the Vedic teaching of a  
**Indian** personal Creator and supreme Being, against  
**Buddhism.** the impersonal negations of Buddhism; but he

also shone as a persecutor. Sir W. W. Hunter, however, traces the change which followed to deeper-seated causes—such that the rise of Hinduism was a natural development of racial characters and systems. According to him, it rests upon the caste system and represents the coalition of the old Vedic faith with Buddhism, as well as with the rude rites of pre-Aryan and Mongolian races. We cannot here give an account of the caste system. The immense subdivision of castes is the result partly of inter-marriages, partly of varied occupations, partly of locality,

**The caste system.**

partly of the introduction of outside tribes to Hinduism. Religious exclusiveness and trades unionism, once grasped, made easy progress, and converted India into a vast grouping of separate classes. Caste is a powerful instrument for personal discipline and the maintenance of convention and custom, but it is a weakener of united popular action and national unity. Its great force is in its hereditary instincts and in social and religious excommunication. The offender against caste laws may be fined by his fellow-members, may be forbidden to eat or intermarry with them, and may be boycotted by the community.

We cannot understand the growth of modern Hinduism without reference to the two great Indian epic poems,

**The** the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The  
**Mahabharata** former is a vast aggregation of poems and episodes, arranged into a continuous whole, and is the longest poem in the world, being fourteen times as long as the Iliad. It includes many portions dating back to Vedic times, with others of later date up to a compara-

tively modern time. It includes the whole cycle of Hindu mythology since the Vedas, and practically represents a deification of human heroes, side by side with views of Divine incarnation. Its central story relates a prehistoric struggle between two families descended from the Moon god for a tract of country around Delhi. It is believed to have existed in a considerably developed form five or six centuries before Christ, but it has been greatly modified by subsequent Brahmanic additions, especially didactic and religious in their nature, teaching the submission of the military to the Brahman power.

The Bhagavad-gita, or song of Bhagavat, is the most important episode of this great epic, Bhagavat being a term applied to Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, the Pervader and Preserver. The Bhagavad-gita. Krishna makes a revelation to the hero Arjuna, just before a great battle, in order to remove his scruples about destroying human life. This revelation in effect teaches the supremacy of the soul over the body, and in fact its eternity of existence in the supreme Being, so that death cannot harm it. Duty to caste and its obligations is highly extolled; but the poem is most remarkable to us for its exposition in poetry of the Vedantist philosophy of Pantheism, which teaches that all the universe is indeed Brahma, from whom all proceeds and to whom all returns. Krishna, in giving an account of himself to Arjuna, says (we quote from Sir Monier-Williams's "Indian Wisdom") :—

"I am the ancient sage, without beginning,  
 I am the ruler and the all-sustainer,  
 I am incomprehensible in form,  
 More subtle and minute than subtlest atoms;  
 I am the cause of the whole universe;  
 Through me it is created and dissolved;  
 I dwell as wisdom, in the heart of all.  
 I am the goodness of the good, I am  
 Beginning, middle, end, eternal time,  
 The birth, the death of all. I have created all  
 Out of one portion of myself. Think thou on me,  
 Have faith in me, adore and worship me,  
 And join thyself in meditation to me.  
 Thus shalt thou come to me, O Arjuna;  
 Thus shalt thou rise to my supreme abode,

Where neither sun nor moon have need to shine,  
For know that all the lustre they possess is mine."

Among other revelations of Krishna, he states that he is born on earth from time to time for the establishment of righteousness. In lauding work, Krishna says:—

"Know that work  
Proceeds from the supreme. I am the pattern  
For man to follow; know that I have done  
All arts already; nought remains for me  
To gain by action, yet I work for ever  
Unweariedly, and this whole universe  
Would perish if I did not work my work."

It will be evident from these quotations that the Bhagavad-gita contains much lofty thought; indeed, it has been praised as unequalled for sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction. Yet it is in no slight degree parallel with Buddhist ideas, in preaching deliverance through self-renunciation and devotion, ending in absorption in the deity. Although women are not raised by it, yet the declaration of Krishna is, that all who resort to him will reach the highest. He says: "I have neither friend nor foe; I am the same to all; and all who worship me dwell in me and I in them. To them that love me, I give that devotion by which they come at last to me. No soul that has faith, however imperfect the attainment, or however the soul have wandered, shall perish, either in this world or in another. He shall have new births till, purified and made perfect, he reaches the supreme abode."

The repetition of incarnations of deity is an important feature in this teaching; and from this root has developed the great "avatar" or incarnation idea of the Hindus, the idea being that the deity is continually being manifested for the guidance and protection of his people. Throughout the transition period, from Brahmanism to Hinduism, varying forms of Krishna, as the incarnation of Vishnu<sup>1</sup> are continually described.

<sup>1</sup> Vishnu is a god named in the Rig-Veda as a form of the sun striding across the heavens in three paces.

He appears as the protecting hero and saint and sage, the overcomer of evil spirits, the popular wonder-worker.

From some of the characteristics of Krishna it has been imagined that he has been derived from Christ; but there



VISHNU.

(From a native picture.)

is no proof of this, and, indeed, the multiplication and varying form of the incarnations tells against this idea. In fact, the belief proceeds from a date before the Christian era. The meaning of the word Krishna, "black," also makes against the Christian relationship; it rather points

to respect for common humanity of black and white alike; for Krishna is the teacher of Arjuna, "white."

This doctrine about Krishna brings into view the essential link by which the intellectual Brahmans connected **immortality** their higher philosophy with the common beliefs of the people. Krishna manifests the noblest traits of Hindu genius; he also condescends to the most ordinary pursuits of men and children, and even to sportive recreation. The higher doctrine of immortality is preached in such passages as the following in the Bhagavad-gita, "There is an invisible, eternal existence, beyond this visible, which does not perish when all things else perish, even when the great days of Brahman's creative life pass round into night, and all that exists in form returns unto God whence it came; they who obtain this never return. . . . Bright as the sun beyond darkness is He to the soul that remembers Him in meditation, at the hour of death, with thought fixed between the brows,—Him the most ancient of the wise, the primal ruler, the minutest atom, the sustainer of all,—in the hour, when each finds that same nature on which he meditates, and to which he is conformed. . . . They who put their trust in me, and seek deliverance from decay and death, know Brahma, and the highest spirit, and every action. They who know me in my being, my person, and my manifested life, in the hour of death, know me indeed."

The other great epic poem, the Ramayana, or the goings of Rama, is a chronicle which relates primarily to

**The** another region of Aryan conquest, Oudh, and **Ramayana** then recounts the advance of the Aryans into Southern India. It represents perhaps a later stage than the earlier parts of the Mahabharata, but was arranged into something like its present form a century earlier—perhaps about the beginning of the third century B.C. Like the sister epic, it presents the Brahman idea of the Godhead in the form of an incarnation, Rama, of Vishnu, to destroy a demon. Briefly stated, the story is as follows. It begins by relating the sonlessness of the king of Oudh, a descendant of the sun-god. After a sacrifice to the

gods, four sons were born of his three wives, the eldest, Rama, having one-half the nature of Vishnu ; the second, Bharata, one-fourth ; and two others, twins, <sup>Partial</sup> having each one-eighth. This exemplifies the <sup>incarnations</sup> Brahman doctrine of partial incarnations, Krishna being a full incarnation ; and, beyond this, there might be fractional incarnations of the Divine essence, in men, animals and even inanimate objects. The wonderful youth, marriage to Sita, and exile of Rama, are next told, and the refusal of Bharata to take the kingdom on his father's death. Rama continuing an exile, Ravana, the demon king of the south, heard of his wife's beauty, and carried her off in a magical chariot to <sup>Conquests</sup> Ceylon. Rama then makes alliances with the <sup>of Rama.</sup> aboriginal peoples of Southern India, invades Ceylon, slays Ravana and delivers his wife, who has to undergo the further trial of being suspected of infidelity and banished. She is the type of womanly devotion and purity, and after sixteen years' exile is reconciled to her husband, with whom she is after all translated to heaven.

Such was the framework in which the change from ancient Brahmanism to modern Hinduism was developed and taught. These epics bear witness to the fact that notwithstanding the great extension of Buddhism in India, there was no time when Brahmanism was not working with great skill and intellectual force to adapt itself to the changed conditions. At a council <sup>Resistance of</sup> of the Buddhist monarch Siladitya at Kanauj <sup>Brahmanism.</sup> on the Ganges in A.D. 634, while a statue of Buddha was installed on the first day, on the second an image of the Sun-god, on the third an image of Siva, the product of later Brahmanism, was inaugurated. A great series of Brahman apostles arose simultaneously with the decay of Buddhism, beginning with Kumarila Bhatta, about A.D. 750, who revived the old Brahman doctrine of <sup>Kumarila</sup> a personal God and Creator, and reconverted <sup>Bhatta.</sup> many of the people. He was the first of a long line of influential religious reformers, who all solemnly cut themselves off from the world like Buddha, and give forth a simple message, readily understood, including in essence,

according to Sir W. W. Hunter, "a reassertion, in some form, of the personality of God and the equality of men in His sight."

Sankara Acharya was the disciple of Kumarila, still more famous than his master; he popularised the late

**Sankara.** Vedantist philosophy as a national religion, and "since his short life in the eighth or ninth century, every new Hindu sect has had to start with a personal God" (Hunter). He taught that the supreme God Brahma was distinct from the old Brahman triad,



SIVA, BRAHMA, AND VISHNU.

and must be worshipped by spiritual meditations, not by sacrifices; and he perpetuated his teaching by founding a Brahman sect, the Smartas. However, he still allowed the practice of the Vedic rites, and worship of the deity in any popular form; and it is claimed by popular tradition that he founded many of the Hindu sects of the present day. Siva worship is supposed to be specially his work, though it existed long before; and he has ever been represented by his followers as an incarnation of Siva. Siva is, as we have said before, the Rudra or

Storm-god of the Rig-Veda, recognised as the Destroyer and Reproducer. He was worshipped contemporaneously with the Buddhist ascendancy and is highly spoken of in the Mahabharata; but Sankara's followers elevated his worship till it became one of the two chief forms of Hinduism.



SIVA.

(From a native picture.)

The doctrine of Sankara just referred to, that Brahma, or Brahman, is the supreme God, distinct from the triad Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, who are manifestations of him. The supreme Brahman is the absolute, having no form nor shape, self-exis-



tent, illimitable, free from imperfection. 'There are but a few worshippers of Brahman or Brahma alone. As creator he is believed to have finished his work, and there is now only one temple to him, at Pushkara in Ajmir. Ward, in 1818, wrote: "The Brahmans in their morning and evening worship repeat an incantation containing a description of the image of Brahma; at noon they present to him a single flower; at the time of burnt-offering, ghee is presented to him. In the month of Magh, at the full moon, an earthen image of him is worshipped, with that of Siva on his right hand and Vishnu on his left."

The Smartas of Southern India are a considerable sect who follow the philosophic teaching of Sankara. There are numerous religious houses connected with this sect, acknowledging the headship of the monastery of Sringeri, in the western Mysore hills; and the chief priest of the sect, the head of this monastery, is specially acknowledged by all Sivaite worshippers, who regard Sankara as one of the incarnations of Siva.

"The worship of Vishnu," says Sir W. W. Hunter, "in one phase or another, is the religion of the bulk of the middle classes; with its roots deep down in beautiful forms of non-Aryan nature-worship, and its top sending forth branches among the most refined Brahmans and literary sects. It is a religion in all things graceful. Its gods are heroes or bright friendly beings, who walk and converse with men. Its legends breathe an almost Hellenic beauty." This is the lofty position assigned to Vishnuism by one of the most learned and most impartial students—a very different opinion from that which regards the car of Jaggernaut as the representative of all that is vile.

The doctrines of modern Hinduism, in their learned aspect, are contained in the Puranas (in Sanskrit), a series of eighteen treatises, in which various Brahmans expound, in lengthy dialogues, the supremacy of Vishnu or Siva. The chief of them is the Vishnu Purana, dating from the eleventh century, but containing, as the word "purana" signifies, ancient

traditions, some of which descend from Vedic times; and others are traceable to the two great The Vishnu epics. "It includes a complete cosmogony or Purana account of primary creation, accounts of the destruction and renovation of worlds, genealogies of gods and patriarchs, the reigns of the Manus, the institutes of society, including caste and burial rites, and the history of the princes of the solar and lunar races, a life of Krishna, and an account of the end of the world. It is not necessary to dwell upon its contents, which would require a volume. Pantheism is woven into the general scheme, God and Nature being identified, and Vishnu, as supreme God, being incarnated in Krishna.

The style of the Vishnu Purana on its philosophical side may be gathered from the following extracts, relating to the supreme deity, as translated by H. H. Wilson: "Who can describe him who is not the supreme Being. Description of the supreme Being. to be apprehended by the senses, who is the best of all things, and the supreme soul, self-existent; who is devoid of all the distinguishing characteristics of complexion, caste, or the like, and is exempt from birth, vicissitude, death, or decay; who is always, and alone; who exists everywhere, and in whom all things here exist; and who is thence named Vasudeva (the resplendent one in whom all things dwell)? He is Brahma, supreme lord, eternal, unborn, imperishable, undecaying; of one essence, ever pure as free from defects. He, that Brahma, was all things, comprehending in his own nature the indiscrete (spirit) and the discrete (matter). He then existed in the forms of Purusha and Kala. Purusha (spirit) is the first form of the supreme. Next proceeded two other forms—the discrete and the indiscrete; and Kala (time) was the last. These four the wise consider to be the pure and supreme condition of Vishnu. These four forms, in their due proportions, are the causes of the production of the phenomena of creation, preservation, and destruction. Vishnu being thus discrete and indiscrete substance—spirit and time—sports like a playful boy, as you shall learn by listening to his frolics." Here it should be noted that the creation

of the world is very commonly considered by the Hindu to be the sport or amusement of the supreme Being.

The life of Krishna, as given by this Purana, is so full of fabulous marvels as to read like an Arabian Night's story, without its charm. It is sufficient to say that this



RAVANA.

(From a native picture. See account of Ramayana, p. 63.)

Purana did not work the great development of Vishnu worship, which was due to a series of Vishnuite preachers, beginning with Ramanuja in the 12th century, rising against the cruel doctrines of the Sivaites. It was not till the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century that the great

Great  
Vishnuite  
preachers.

development of popular religion in the name of Vishnu took place, under the apostolic leadership of Ramanand. This teacher had his headquarters in a monastery at Benares, and travelled from place to



KALI DANCING ON SIVA.  
(From a native picture.)

place in Northern India. He chose twelve disciples from the despised castes of the barbers, leathersmiths, weavers, and the like, who, like the Buddhist monks, had to forsake the world, and depend solely on alms, while they went about teaching religion. They ad-

dressed the people in the vernacular Hindi, and largely helped to make it a literary language. The inclusion of lower-caste men among Ramanand's chief disciples is a proof that his reaction was directed against Brahman exclusiveness; and it embraced many features of Buddhism, including the monasteries or retreats for the mendicants.

Kabir, the greatest of Ramanand's disciples, is notable for his effort to combine the Mohammedans with the Hindus in one religious fraternity. The caste

**Kabir.** system and Brahman arrogance, as well as image-worship, found in him a strong opponent. He taught that the god of the Hindu is the same as the god of the Mahometan. "To Ali (Allah) and to Rama" (writes one of his disciples) "we owe our life, and should show like tenderness to all who live. What avails it to wash your mouth, to count your beads, to bathe in holy streams, to bow in temples, if, while you mutter your prayers or journey on pilgrimage, deceitfulness is in your heart? The Hindu fasts every eleventh day; the Musulman on the Ramazan. Who formed the remaining months and days, that you should venerate but one? . . . Behold but one in all things. He to whom the world belongs, He is the father of the worshippers alike of Ali and of Rama." Kabir recognised in all the varied lots and changes of man, his hopes and fears and religious diversities, the one Divine Spirit; when this was recognised, Maya, or illusion, was over, and the soul found rest. This was to be obtained, not by burnt-offerings or sacrifices, but by faith and meditation on the supreme Being, and by keeping his holy names for ever on the lips and in the heart. Kabir had a vast number of followers, especially in Bengal; the headquarters of his sect is the Kabir Chaura at Benares.

The worship of Juggernaut, more properly Jagannath (literally, the Lord of the world) dates only from the beginning of the 16th century, being mainly propagated by Chaitanya, who was so great a preacher of the Vishnuite doctrines that since his death he has been widely worshipped as an incarnation of

Vishnu. He preached a religion of faith to Hindus and Mohammedans alike; but he laid great stress on obedience to religious teachers. By contemplation rather than ritual he taught that the soul would find liberty from the imperfections and sins of the body. After death the soul of the believer would dwell for ever in a heaven of perfect beauty, or in the presence of Vishnu himself, known in his supreme essence.

After the death of Chaitanya there appeared teachers who lowered the spiritual level of Vishnuism, some preaching the religion of enjoyment, others giving increased importance to the idea of physical love; one adoring the infant Krishna as the cowherd. Vallabha-Swami (sixteenth century) was one of the chief of these; he established a ritual of eight services in which the image of Krishna as a lovely boy is bathed, anointed, sumptuously dressed and fed, and in which beautiful women and other sensual delights figure largely. Such a religion appealed largely to the well-to-do, the luxurious, and the sensually minded, and was made the pretext for self-indulgence.

Before particularising the forms of modern Hindu worship, we must briefly indicate the influence which Buddhism and other popular religions of India have had on Hinduism. The brotherhood of man is implicitly if not explicitly recognised by many of the Hindu sects; the Buddhist communities or monasteries are reproduced in the monastic houses of many Hindu brotherhoods. Sir W. Hunter describes the rules of the Vishnuite communities as Buddhistic, with Brahmanical reasons. One of the brotherhoods of Kabir's followers has as its first rule the very Buddhistic one that the life neither of man nor of beast may be taken, the reason being that it is the gift of God. Truth is enjoined as the great principle of conduct; for all ills and ignorance of God spring from original falsehood. Retirement from the world is commended, worldliness being hostile to tranquillity of soul and meditation on God. Similarly the Buddhist trinity of ideas, Buddha, Dharma (the Law), and Samgha (the congregation) is largely present, more

or less openly, in Hinduism. Not the least strange conjunction of Hinduism with other religions is that in which Siva-worshippers visit Adam's Peak in Ceylon to worship the footprints of their deity. Buddhists revere the same impression as the impression of Buddha's foot, while Mohammedans revere it as a relic of Adam, the father of mankind. This is but a specimen of the common resorts of Hindu pilgrims, where Mussulman and Hindu alike revere some sacred object.

Hindus also absorbed or adopted many rites and superstitions of non-Aryan peoples, such as the serpent and dragon-worship of the Nagas, reverence for crocodiles and generative emblems, fetish and tree worship, etc. The worship of generative emblems (*linga*) found a wide field among the Sivantes, whose god was the reproducer as well as destroyer; while the fetish, or village, or local god, in the shape of an unhewn stone (known as *salagram*) or a tree, usually the tulasi plant, became the usual symbols of the Vishnuite. In not a few cases their rites are little elevated above those of primitive savagery as conducted by low-caste Hindus.

Coming now to a description of the chief Hindu gods as popularly worshipped, we find Brahma, the creator,

**Brahma.** represented as a red man with four heads, dressed in white, and riding upon a goose. Brahma's wife, Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom and science, is depicted as a fair young woman with four arms; with one right hand she presents a flower to Brahma; in the other she holds a book of palm-leaves; in one of her left hands she carries a string of pearls. In the Mahabharata she is called the mother of the Vedas. She is worshipped once a year in the same month as Brahma by all who have any learning; and with this worship are connected pens, ink, paper, books, etc. Women take no part in this festival.

Vishnu is adored by the Vishnuite sects as the equal or even the superior of Brahma, and is especially termed the Preserver, exempt from impatience and passion. Various legends in the Puranas de-

**Vishnu.**

scribe the other gods as submitting to Vishnu, who is termed omniscient and almighty. In pictorial representations Vishnu usually appears as a black man with four arms: in one hand a club is held, in a second a shell, in the third a discus, in the fourth a lotus, and he rides upon the Garuda bird.

Sir Monier-Williams describes both Vishnuism and Sivaism as forms of monotheism, because they set aside the coequal trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Siva in favour of their special god: but it may be doubted whether many of the Vishnuites can be called intelligent monotheists, rather than superstitious worshippers of they know not what. The opinion of this great Indian scholar, that Vishnuism "is the only real religion of the Hindu peoples, and has more common ground with Christianity than any other non-Christian faith," must be taken as having but a limited application when he has to qualify it by referring to "the gross polytheistic superstitions and hideous idolatry to which it gives rise." We must acknowledge the distinguishing merit of Vishnuism to be, that it teaches intense devotion to a personal god, who exhibits his sympathy with human suffering and his interest in human affairs by frequent descents (avatars) upon earth. Of these we must give a brief account.

As many as twenty-eight avatars of Vishnu have been enumerated in the Puranas. They represent the descent into human bodies, by birth from earthly incarnations parents, of a portion or the whole of the divine of Vishnu. essence of the god; they do not interfere with the divine body of the god, which remains unchanged. Of these we may enumerate (1) the Fish, whose form Vishnu took to save Manu, the progenitor of mankind, from the universal deluge. Manu obtained the favour of Vishnu by his piety, was warned of the coming deluge, and commanded to build a ship, wherein he was to take the seven Rishis or patriarchs and the seeds of all living things. When the flood came, Vishnu, as the Fish, dragged the ship, by a cable fixed to a horn on his head, to a high crag where it was secured till the flood went down. The avatars of the tortoise, the boar, the man-lion, the dwarf,



and Rama with the axe, we must pass over. The great

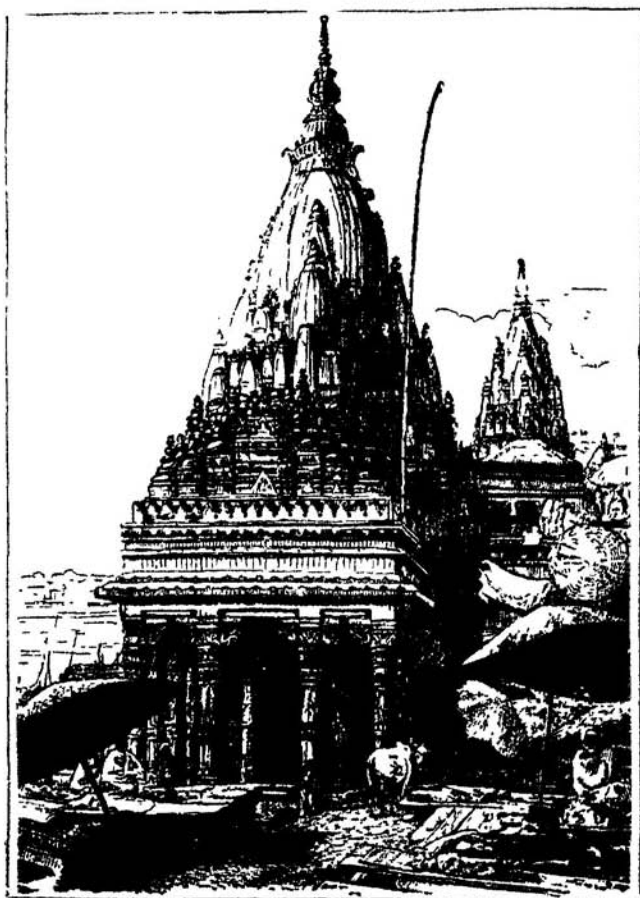
**Rama.** Rama, Ramachandra, or the moon-like Rama, has been already referred to as the subject of the Ramayana. "Every man, woman, and child in India," says Sir Monier-Williams, probably with some exaggeration, "is familiar with Rama's exploits for the recovery of his wife, insomuch that a common phrase for an ignorant person is 'one who does not know that Sita was Rama's wife.' From Kashmir to Cape Comorin the name of Rama is on every one's lips. All sects revere it, and show their reverence by employing it on all occasions. For example, when friends meet, it is common for them to salute each other by uttering Rama's name twice. No name is more commonly given to children, and no name more commonly invoked at funerals and in the hour of death. It is a link of union for all classes, castes, and creeds."

But Krishna is the most popular of all the incarnations of Vishnu, and is represented as manifesting his entire **Krishna**, the essence. He is especially the god of the lower **preserver**. orders, having been brought up among cowherds and other peasants, with whom he constantly sported. A multitude of marvellous stories are told about him; but it is evident from the history of Krishna literature and practices that he, like Rama, is a deified hero. Sir Monier-Williams identifies him as a powerful chief of the Yadava tribe of Rajputs in central India east of the Jumna, while the original of Rama was a son of a king of Oudh. So possible is it to trace gods adored by multitudes of human beings to the exaggeration and deification of heroic men.

Thus we shall be little surprised to find Buddha adopted as one of the incarnations of Vishnu. The Brah-

**Buddha.** mans account for this by saying that Vishnu, in compassion for animals, descended as Buddha in order to discredit the Vedic sacrifices. The Brahmanical writers, says Wilkins, "were far too shrewd to admit that one who could influence men as Buddha did could be other than an incarnation of deity; and as his influence was in favour of teaching opposed to their own,

they cleverly say that it was to mislead the enemies of the gods that Buddha promulgated his doctrine, that



*SIVA TEMPLE, BENARES.*

they, becoming weak and wicked through their errors, might fall an easy prey."

Not content with incarnations that have taken place, the Vishnuites look for a future descent which they call the Kalki avatar. He is to appear at the end of the Kali age (which began with his descent as Krishna), when the world has become utterly wicked, and will be seen in the sky, seated on a white horse, wielding a drawn sword, for the destruction of the wicked and the restoration of the world to purity.

We have not included Jagannath among the incarnations of Vishnu, both because it is believed that he is an appearance of Vishnu himself, and also because it is probable that he was originally the god

of a non-Aryan tribe adopted into Hinduism. It is a sight of this god that is so vehemently desired, whether as he is bathed or dressed, or being drawn on his car. Chaitanya, the reformer, is another incarnation of Vishnu, according to the popular notion, although he lived in almost modern times. Lakshmi, the wife of

Vishnu, is very considerably worshipped as the goddess of Love, Beauty, and Prosperity. She is represented as of a bright golden colour, seated on a lotus, and having only the ordinary number of arms.

Siva, the destroyer, is naturally represented as of a stern and vindictive disposition; but yet this is com-

patible with his being regarded as a beneficent deity. Death being the transition to a new form of life, the Destroyer is truly the Re-creator, and this accounts for the meaning of his name—the Bright or Happy one. Siva is exclusively a post-Vedic god, though he has been identified by the Hindus with the Rudra of the Vedas, and numerous features of Siva's character and history are developed from those of Rudra. In the Ramayana, Rudra (Siva) is represented as marrying Uma, the daughter of Daksha; it is this same Uma who is much more widely known under the names of Parvati, Durga, and Kali. It is stated that a great quarrel arose between Siva and Daksha, his father-in-law. In this quarrel Uma gave herself voluntarily to the flames, and became a sati (suttee), and was reborn as Parvati. Siva then became an ascetic, living with



GANESA. LAKSHMI. DURGA. SARASVATI. KARTIKEYA.

(From a native picture.)

Parvati in the Himalayas, destroying demons. He is represented sometimes with Parvati, wearing round his black neck a serpent and a necklace of skulls, and with an extensive series of emblems, such as a white bull on which he rides, a tiger's skin, etc.; he has three eyes, one being in his forehead. As Mahadeva (the great god), which is his most usual name, he may be shown as an ascetic with matted hair, living in meditation and self-

discipline in a forest. It is said that Siva, in a quarrel with Brahma, cut off his fifth head, which, however, stuck to the destroyer's hand. To escape from a pursuing giant created by Brahma, Siva fled to Benares, where he became absolved from his sin and freed from the head of Brahma, thus causing Benares to become a specially sacred city.

In consequence of Siva's patronage of the bull as his steed, a strange custom has arisen in connection with the funerals of Sivaites. Whenever it is possible, a bull is set free to wander, and has a sacred character, so that



BRAHMA AND SARASVATI.

no one dares to injure it; sometimes as many as seven bullocks are thus set free. This is believed to secure the favour of Siva. Similarly, since he was an ascetic, many of his followers pay court to him by a life of austerity and painful suffering. This was much more frequent in former times than now, for the British Government has discouraged or prohibited many of the most painful ex-  
 Ascetic  
 Sivaites. hibitions. Formerly many Siva worshippers would be swung from iron hooks fixed in their backs, or would jump from a height upon the edges of sharp knives. But it is not easy to put down such

practices as the maintenance of the arms and legs in one position for years, the holding of the fist clenched till the nails grow through the palm, the keeping of silence or the fixing of the eye continuously upon the sun. There are still many thousands of these devotees in India. Intoxication is also freely indulged in by Sivaites during their worship, this being believed to be pleasing to the god. After all, Siva is most worshipped under the emblem of the Linga, although he is said to have a thousand names.

The wife of Siva occupies a comparatively subordinate position as Uma and Parvati; but as Durga she is a powerful warrior, with many stern and fierce

qualities. In this character she is represented to have appeared in many incarnations, and is very widely worshipped. The name Durga was given to her as having slain a demon named Durga. The tales about this are of the most mythical and exaggerated nature. Notwithstanding

her powers, Durga is portrayed with a gentle and beautiful face and a golden colour; but she has ten arms, holding various weapons, while her lion leans against one leg and her giant against the other. Of the various forms of Durga we can only refer to Kali (the black woman), probably some tribal goddess adopted into the Hindu series. She won a victory over giants by drinking their blood with the aid of Chandi, another form



BASTHI.

(From a native picture.)

of **Kali**. The account of the image of Kali given later in describing one of the Bengal festivals will explain

**Kali.** some of her qualities. Formerly human beings, as well as considerable animal sacrifices, were offered to Kali, a human sacrifice being said to please Kali for a thousand years. Cutting their flesh and burning portions of their bodies were among the actions by which worshippers sought to please the goddess. The great number of Hindus who bear the name of Kali or Durga or Tara indicates her popularity down to the present day.

Ganesa, the elder son of Siva and Parvati, the god of prudence and policy, having an elephant's head, indicating his sagacious nature, is the god of Bengal shopkeepers; he has a trunk, one tusk, and four hands. Kartikeya is the younger son of Siva and Parvati, and is called the god of war; in southern India his name is Subramanya. Lastly, we must notice

**Ganga.** Ganga, the Ganges, whose birth and doings are the subject of elaborate legends, and whose waters are believed to have power to cleanse from all sins, past, present, and future. A specially sacred spot is that where the Ganges meets the ocean, at Sagar Island, to which vast numbers of people flock each January, to bathe with joy in the flood, and to worship the long line of deities whose images are set up by priests who take toll of the pilgrims.

But when we have exhausted the list of great gods, we have only touched as it were the more prominent of Hindu deities, which are popularly said to number three hundred and thirty millions. In fact, throughout India the old local deities and demons, so much noticed in China, hold extensive sway. Every village has **Local deities and demons.** its own special guardian mother, who has a husband associated with her as protector. But the mother is most worshipped, and is believed to be most accessible to prayer and offerings, and very liable to punish, and to inflict diseases if neglected. Many have a specialty, such as the prevention of a particular disease, or the giving of children. Many are deifications of notable

women; some are in effect devils, delighting in blood. All are believed to control secret operations of nature, and to have magic powers which may be imparted to worshippers.

Some even go so far as to say that the predominant belief of the Hindus, especially in the villages, is a dread of evil spirits, who are believed to bring about all evils and diseases, and often have peculiar and special areas of destructiveness. They may have material bodies of a more ethereal structure than those of men, have differences of sex, and possess the power of assuming any shape and moving through the air in any direction. Some of these are the Asuras, or demons created at the foundation of the world or by the gods (though originally the word meant simply beings of a godlike nature). We cannot go into their classes; but it is to be noted that the majority of demons are believed to have been originally human beings, whose evil nature lives after them as demons. All crimes, diseases, and calamities are due to special devils. They mostly require food, and especially the blood of living animals. Sometimes mounds of earth, piles of bricks, etc., do duty as shrines for their "worship," the offering of food and recital of incantations being the chief rites. Every village has its own demon. A volume might be occupied in describing the devil-cults of India. In the south, where they are believed to delight in dancing, music, etc., "when pestilence is rife in any district, professional exorcisers, or certain persons selected for the purpose, paint their faces, put on hideous masks, dress up in fantastic garments, arm themselves with strange weapons, and commence dancing. Their object is to personate particular devils, or rather perhaps to induce such devils to leave the persons of their victims and to occupy the persons of the dancers, who shriek, fling themselves about, and work themselves up into a frenzy of excitement, amid beating of tom-toms, blowing of horns, and ringing of bells. When the dancers are thoroughly exhausted, they sink down in a kind of trance, and are then believed to be gifted with clairvoyance and a power of delivering prophetic utterances. The



spectators ask them questions about missing relatives or future events, and their deliverances are supposed to be oracular" (Monier-Williams). Many strange festivals are held in connection with this devil-worship in India, and the facts show how general must formerly have

**Worship of animals and trees.** been the practices now found among the more savage races. The extensive animal worship of cows, serpents, monkeys, etc., and the wor-

ship of trees still prevailing is another considerable survival of more primitive times. It depends largely in India on the view taken of the sacredness of life, and the transmigration of the souls of men into animals.

**Deification of heroes and saints.** Again, the worship of great men seems even more deeply implanted in the Hindu than in the Chinese mind, and again and again great

leaders, preachers, teachers or saints are deified, and regarded as incarnations of Vishnu or Siva; and even men of moderate fame are after death honoured and worshipped, and a shrine is set up to them in the place where they were best known. Surely we have said enough to show that in every way the Hindus are very remarkable for their worship of the superior powers in all conceivable forms.

[See "Oriental Religions: India," by S. Johnson, English and Foreign Philosophical Library. Sir W. W. Hunter's "India," vol. vi. of the "Imperial Gazetteer of India," and also separately published. Rev. W. Ward's "View of the History, Religion and Literature of the Hindus, 1818." Rev. W. J. Wilkins's "Hindu Mythology and Modern Hinduism." Sir Monier-Williams's "Religious Thought and Life in India," and "Indian Wisdom;" "Sacred Books of the East."]





A GHAT AT BENARÉS, WITH RECESSES FOR DEVOTEES.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Modern Hinduism II.

Inclusiveness of Hindu worship—Variations in modern times—Religiousness of the Hindus—Household worship—The guru—Initiation—Elements of worship—Brahman ritual—Ritual of the common people—Temple services—Temple priests—Frequent festivals—Images—Festival ceremonies—Miracle-plays—Festivals of Durga—Pilgrimages to holy places—Benares—Temple of Bisheshwar—Pilgrims' observances—Puri—The great temple—The images—Consecrated food—The Car festival—Reported immolation of victims—A touching incident—Vishnu temple at Trichinopoly—Vishnuite sects—Sivaite sects—The Saktas—The Sikhs—The Sikh bible—The Brahmo Somaj—Rammohun Roy—Devendra Nath Tagore—Keshuo Chundra Sen—The Universal Somaj—Fatalism—Maya, or illusion—Transmigration—Rewards and punishments—Death and cremation—Ceremonies for the dead—Moral state—Condition of wives—Position of women—Widows—Suttee—Disconnection of morals and religion—Hindu virtues.

IN describing modern Hindu religious practices and worship, we are met with a most varied assemblage

of rites and customs, often mutually discordant, all of which have an equal claim to inclusion under the name Hinduism. Never has there been a religion so expansive and all-inclusive. As a recent Bengal census report states, the term denotes neither a creed nor a race, neither a church nor a people, but is a general expression devoid of precision. It embraces alike the disciples of Vedantic philosophy, the high-class Brahman, the low-caste worshippers of all the gods of the Hindu pantheon, and the semi-barbarous aborigines who are entirely ignorant of Hindu mythology, and worship a stone in time of sickness and danger. There is so great a difference in the prevalent forms of worship in different districts, there are so many personal and household ceremonies, differing according to rank or locality, and also there have been so many changes in modern times, that it is quite impossible to give more than a partial view in a limited space. The common people believe their worship has lasted unchanged for long ages, and Europeans have largely adopted the same view; but while the Hindu nature remains very largely the same, variations in worship have been multitudinous. The great car festival of Jagannath is a modification of a Buddhist festival; and it would be easy to multiply proofs of the changes in modern Hinduism.

To a greater extent than any nation under the sun, the Hindus are a religious people. As Mr. Wilkins says, "To treat of the ordinary life of the Hindu is to describe the Hindu religion. From before birth to the close of life periodical ceremonies are enjoined and, for the most part, practised." Mostly they are survivals from animism, sorcery, astrology, and the like primitive beliefs. Thus, before the birth of a child the mother must not wear clothes over which birds have flown, must always have a knot in her dress round the waist, must not walk or sit in the courtyard, in order to avoid evil spirits must wear an amulet round her neck containing flowers consecrated to the god Baba Thakur, and must drink every day a few drops of water touched

by this amulet. The naming of a boy is a most important ceremony, including a thanksgiving service, with gifts for the benefit of ancestors. The names of gods or deified heroes are often chosen, with the addition of another chosen by the astrologer, who calculates the horoscope of the child.

Every household at all raised above poverty has a family priest (unless the head is himself a Brahman), who performs service, usually twice a day, in **Household worship.** a room in which the family idol is kept. There is also a platform opposite the entrance gate of the house, to receive the images made for the periodic festivals. The priest bathes and anoints the idol, recites a ritual, and presents offerings of fruits and flowers given by the family. The family, however, are not usually present, the priest being the only person whose presence is needed. The offerings are his perquisite, and he is supported entirely by one or two families. Of course he is present at all the important family ceremonies.

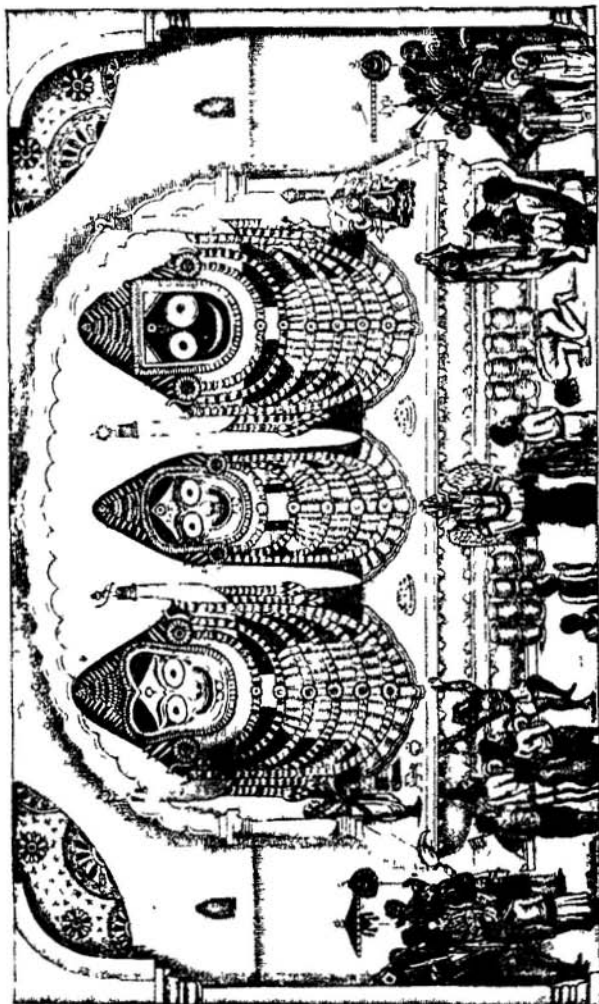
The guru, or religious teacher, is a distinct functionary; he is the initiator into the Hindu sects, and the teacher of their doctrines; but he does not live in the house of a disciple. **The guru.** The Hindus are taught that it is better to offend the gods than their guru, for the latter can intercede if the former are angry; but if the guru is offended, no one can intercede, and the curse of the guru brings untold miseries. He usually visits his disciples only once a year, unless he wants more money. His treatment of them is very lofty; and educated Hindus themselves describe the gurus as covetous, unprincipled, and familiar with vice. **Initiation.** The best entertainment, new carpets and large presents are demanded by them, and few teach anything of value. Every Hindu boy of eight years old (sometimes older) receives from his chosen guru, who need not be a Brahman, a sacred text or mantra, called the seed text, which is taught to him in private, with the name of the god selected by the guru for his special worship. **This text** must never be repeated to others, and must be said over mentally or in whispers one hundred and eight times a

cessive births and deaths, and who eagerly desire beatitude. . . ." But this prayer must be preceded by the repetition of the names of the seven worlds: 1. This earth. 2. The world of the unconscious dead awaiting the end of the present age. 3. The heaven of the good. 4. The middle world. 5. The world of births, for animals destroyed at the end of each age. 6. The abode of the sons of Brahma. 7. The abode of Brahma the supreme. The word Om is to be repeated before and after this list. Many other ceremonies follow. The heart is supposed to be cleansed from sin by drawing up a little water by one nostril and expelling it by the other. One of the prayers is, "May whatever sin I have committed by night, in thought, word, or deed, be cancelled by day. Whatever sin is in me, may it be far removed."

Before the reading of the Vedas, which follows, offerings of grain, etc., must be made to the gods, with invitations to them to be present and cheerful during the reading of the Veda; then similar offerings must be made to Yama and the great progenitors of mankind, then for the Brahman's ancestors, and for all men, with the object of relieving the wants of sufferers in hells, or increasing the blessedness of those in heaven. After this exhausting series of ceremonies, the Brahman, before taking his meal, offers a portion to deities, ancestors, and to all other beings, and must then feed his guests before partaking himself. Finally he must wash his hands and feet, afterwards tasting the water. As his food is given him, he says, "May heaven give thee!" and when he takes it he says, "May earth receive thee!" He may not yet eat until he has passed his hand round the plate to separate it from the rest of the company, has offered five pieces to Yama, has made five oblations to breath, and has wetted his eyes. In addition to these rites (which are here only partially given) there may be others significant of the particular sect to which the man belongs. Some will also wait for possible guests before taking food, for Brahma himself is represented as present in every guest.

But it must be owned that the mass of the Hindus

have no such elaborate daily ritual. The Sakta sect, it



IDOLS IN TEMPLE OF JAGANNATH, PURI.

is true, and the more religious members of other sects,

have a considerable daily ceremony, all including much the same ideas of purification of body, averting the anger of ghosts or ancestors, the offering of sacrifices to the great gods and goddesses, the recitation of their deeds as told in the Puranas, etc. But the majority of Hindus only bathe daily, and raise their hands and bow to the rising sun. Shopkeepers have an image or a picture of Ganesa in their shops, and burn a little incense before it in the morning; Vishnuites have one or more of the god's emblems, especially the Salgrama (a fossil Ammonite), which they guard as if it were a living being, bathing it in the hot season, etc., and before these daily prayers are offered. The names of the gods are repeated a great number of times a day. However, on days when it is not very convenient to go through a long form, the Hindu will be content with repeating the text he was taught by his guru, which is often an unmeaning jingle.

The public temples contain the principal religious apparatus of the mass of the Hindus. But it must not be imagined from this that their temples are as a rule large. They are not, in general, places for the assemblage of numbers of people, and in fact they are mostly not more than ten or a dozen feet square. They are simply small buildings in charge of a priest, who takes care of an idol or image, which is supposed to be a special abode of the deity, and who receives offerings from worshippers coming one by one, and prostrating themselves before the image. Many of them have been built by public contributions, others by rulers, and many by well-to-do private persons anxious to secure merits to balance their sins. If they desire to make a large offering, they do not build a larger temple, but a number of smaller ones, seven, fourteen, twenty-one, or even more, some of which may never be used. Old temples of this kind are not repaired; the new man does not wish to do what will but add to the merit of another. Usually the temple has an outer court, often with verandahs round, in which pilgrims may lodge when they come from a distance. The temple itself has two main portions—the vestibule,

and the shrine containing the image, only large enough to admit the priest. One of the singular forms observed is the ringing of a bell to attract the notice of the god to his worshipper, who merely walks round, hands his gift to the priest, and bows to the image.

The priests of these temples are all Brahmins, who alone perform the proper worship, usually without any spectators. The sacred texts are merely muttered, and being in Sanskrit, are unintelligible to the masses; the texts, of course, differ according to the god or incarnation that is being worshipped. The essential character of this worship lies in the treatment of the image as if it were a living being, and the priest his servant; washing, dressing, feeding, decorating, putting to bed, etc., are all gone through most carefully. With all this the people have nothing to do but to bring the offerings, which become the priests' property. Of course, in the case of deities whose rites require animal sacrifices, there is a great business of slaughtering victims, and afterwards disposing of the meat not required by the priests; it finds a ready sale, being especially valuable owing to its sacred character.

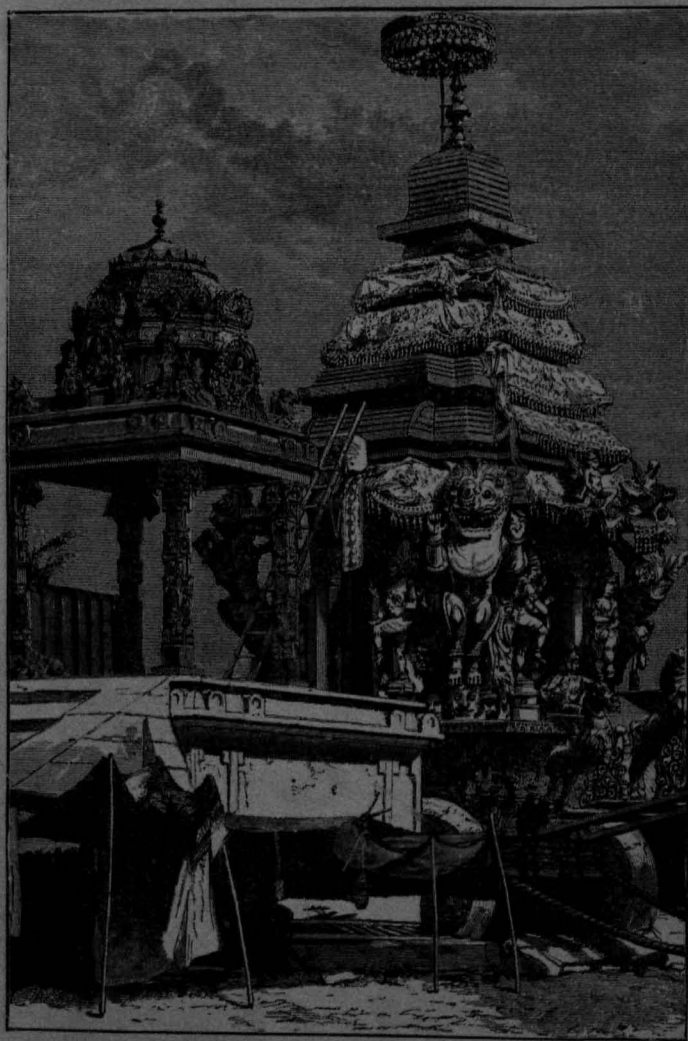
The regular daily worship of the temples forms but a small part of the religious life of the Hindu. His attention is mainly given to the festivals which occur so frequently, though somewhat irregularly, as to occupy the place of the Christian Sunday. Most of the gods have special festival days, and others are only worshipped publicly on such days. Not only are special images of the gods made for the temples, but also for many private persons, whose houses become public temples for the day or days of the festival, and are visited by crowds of people. Usually, after the proper ceremonial has been gone through, various amusements—nautch dances, plays, musical entertainments—are provided. Sometimes two or more adjoining villages will join in these celebrations, each householder paying his share.

Images are provided for these festivals by regular tradesmen. They are largely based upon bamboos tied



together, and covered with hay and mud from a sacred stream. They are then dried in the sun, and afterwards painted, dressed, and otherwise decorated according to some mode presented by the sacred law-books. When they are taken to the place of worship, the priest engaged for the occasion performs a ceremony called the giving of life, in which the god is invited to

**Images.** reside in the image for one, two, or three days. **Festival ceremonies.** It then becomes sacred, and must be touched by none but a Brahman,—must be approached by none but a Hindu. A full morning and evening worship is celebrated before the image, that in the evening being followed by amusements. The concluding day witnesses the farewell of the deity, who is thanked for favouring the worshippers with his or her presence, and is supplicated to return next year. When the god is supposed to have departed, the sacred image becomes once more common clay, and may be touched by any one. About sunset it is taken to a river bank, or to a tank, with a musical procession, dancing women and lighted torches. The image is rowed out to the middle of the stream and dropped into the water, there to dissolve and decay. The amount of worship performed by Hindus is increased by the necessity of averting the evil which other gods besides their own special deity may cause, and by their desire to gain any possible additional benefit. We cannot give space to a recital of the important public festivals which occur throughout the months of the year. These vary in different localities, and the total number is enormous. For instance, there are festivals all over Bengal to Jagannath, in imitation of the great ones at Puri, cars and great images being similarly provided. There are numerous special festivals to Sasthi, who watches over women in child-bearing, and protects children. At the festivals of Krishna miracle-plays form an important **Miracle-plays.** feature, and represent the most important events in the lives of the gods, the actors being got up to represent them, and not omitting their many indecent words and actions. By such representations, among other things, the illiterate Hindu masses come to



*CAR OF JAGANNATH AT PURI, ORISSA.*

We can only notice in any detail the two greatest places of pilgrimage in India, Benares and Puri; the former being the special abode of Siva, the latter of Vishnu. In no Indian city has gross idolatry a stronger hold than in Benares; ugly idols, monstrosities, and reproductive emblems are met with on all sides. More temples have been built and more money has been spent on worship under British rule than during an equal period of Mussulman domination; but this is accounted for by the greater wealth and freedom of the people. Some years ago more than a thousand temples were counted in Benares proper, exclusive of suburbs, and of images in house walls. These are devoted to a great variety of deities, sometimes Siva under different names, or relatives of other deities connected with Siva; and not content with an image of the god worshipped in a particular temple, in many cases the priests have added images of others in niches or in rows; sometimes even a hundred are to be seen in rows. The exceeding sanctity of Benares is accounted for by a legend which we have already given (p. 78), and this holy character extends to ten miles from the Ganges, the tract being bounded by a winding road fifty miles long, containing hundreds of temples. To walk along this road is itself a most meritorious act; residents are taught that they should walk along it at least once a year; and whosoever dies within this area, even a heretic or a criminal, gains heaven.

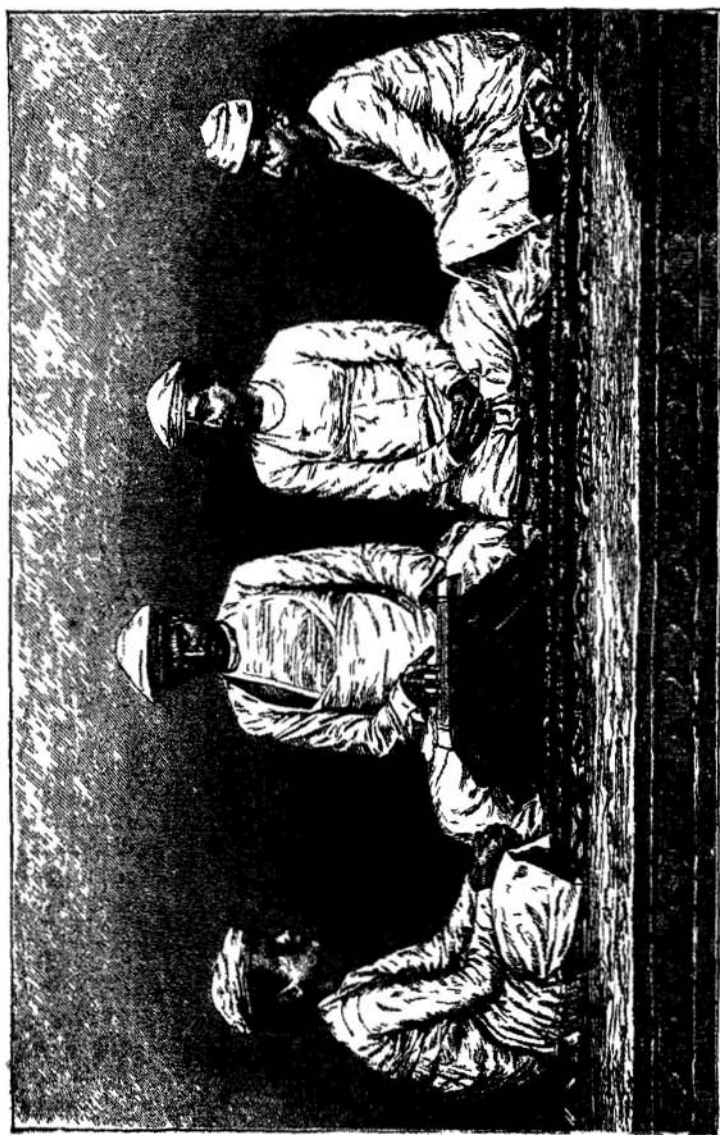
The most important temple in the city is that of Bisheshwar (god of the world), a name given to Siva as king of all the gods in the Benares territory, **Temple of Bisheshwar.** the gods of the sacred road being his police force. He is supposed to reside in a stone linga emblem, and before this crowds of people pass daily with offerings of rice, flowers, grain, ghee, and money. Many of the worshippers in approaching the god show signs of great fear, dreading to call down his anger. Another of the great places of attraction is the Mankarnika well, a foul tank of water which is believed to wash out the greatest crimes.

Pilgrims taking the fifty miles journey round Benares

have to go through a severe ritual; they must, if possible, bathe before starting, and at the end of each day, and must walk barefoot, must provide for their own wants without receiving from or giving to others, must not quarrel or use bad language on the road, and must give gifts to the priests of the Mankarnika well at the end of the journey.

In a somewhat different way from Benares, Puri (the city) on the coast of Orissa is as famous and holy in the eyes of Hindus. Here Vishnu is worshipped as Jagannath (the Lord of the World); and a series of notable festivals throughout the year keep up a continual round of religious excitement, culminating in the famous Car Festival, attended by something like 100,000 pilgrims. There seems little doubt that Puri was a Buddhist sanctuary, to the reputation of which Jagannath has succeeded. The present temple dates from the end of the twelfth century, and is a pyramidal building on a site about twenty feet above the surrounding country. Vishnu worship was greatly modified by Chaitanya, who taught that faith and love were more acceptable to the deity than penance and rites. The temple already had a large double enclosure with lofty walls; and Chaitanya taught that within it men of all castes were equal, and might eat together of the sacred food. Altogether the worship of Jagannath became that of a gentle, genial deity with human feelings and sympathies, and having no trace of those blood-thirsty qualities generally associated in this country with the "car of Juggernaut." No doubt the genial has become the jovial and the voluptuous with many of the worshippers, and the worship itself is accused of licentiousness, but as warmly defended from the charge by some who have had good opportunities of knowing.

The inner enclosure of the great temple, nearly four hundred by three hundred feet, includes a number of small temples and sacred places and trees as well as the large temple. The latter contains four principal halls, the Hall of Offerings, the Dancing Hall for amusements, the audience chamber, and the shrine proper, both the



BRAHMAN OF BENGAL.

latter being eighty feet-square. In niches in the shrine are three large images of three of Vishnu's incarnations—the Boar, the Man-lion and the Dwarf. The principal images (p. 89), are those of Jagannath, painted black; of Balarama, his brother, white, and Subhadra, their sister, golden yellow. They are made of one <sup>The images.</sup> block of iron-wood, and are most uncouth representations of human bodies without hands or legs, the arms being stumps to which golden hands are fixed. The male images are about six feet high, the female four and a half feet. The clothing and ornaments of these images are changed several times a day, so that they appear very different at different hours, sometimes being dressed as Buddha, sometimes as Krishna, sometimes as Ganesa. Various stories are told to account for these ugly images, one being that God is so great that no figure can properly represent Him, consequently these ugly ones are made to inspire people with fear, that they may propitiate Him by gifts. Most probably they are modified forms of Buddhist images; there is an additional shapeless stump about six feet high, which is said to have the mark of a wheel on the top, representing the Buddhist wheel of the law. A certain relic is imbedded in the image of Jagannath, and is carefully transferred when new images are made; what it is, none but the priests know, and it is probably a Buddhist relic.

Numerous other gods or forms of the principal gods have images in or near the shrine. The chief images are only moved at the great festivals; but <sup>Consecrated</sup> daily services of a complete character, as if <sup>food.</sup> they were human beings, are performed. At the four chief meals of the day large quantities of cooked food are brought into the temple and consecrated by being set in front of the idol. It is cooked by men of low caste, and eagerly eaten by pilgrims of all castes after consecration, or even taken home as a sacred treasure. On some days this food is supplied to 100,000 people, for payment, of course, so that the profits of the priests in charge are enormous. The great festivals at Puri are the Dol Jatra festival, a sort of spring carnival; the

Snan Jatra, when the images are bathed with sacred water and beautifully dressed, after which they are supposed to have taken a fever from exposure and are put in a sick chamber for a fortnight, during which time they are repainted; and then follows the Rath Jatra, or

**The Car  
Festival.**

Car Festival, when the gods are taken for a ride on their cars. These chariots have often been described; they are of immense weight and cumbrousness, that of Jagannath being forty-five feet high, and having sixteen wheels. Amid an enormous concourse the images are placed on the cars, and dressed, and have golden hands and arms attached to them. When this is complete, the chief guardian of the temple, the Kurda Raja, termed "the sweeper of the temple," sweeps the road for one hundred yards in front of the cars, worships the images, and touches the ropes of the car as if he were dragging them; then hundreds of Hindus specially set apart for the office, aided by the attendant pilgrims, drag the car slowly to a set of temples about two miles distant. This great effort, however, occupies four days, and on arrival at the destination the image of Lakshmi is taken to see Jagannath. After four or five days the return journey takes place. It is at this festival that

**Reported  
immolation  
of victims.**

immolations of pilgrims have been supposed to take place as part of the routine, so that the car of Juggernaut has become with many almost synonymous with a system of ruthless crushing of human victims; but this is really contrary to the spirit of the worship of Vishnu. No doubt self-immolation has not unfrequently taken place, because the worshippers felt their sins were all atoned for, and they did not wish to return to the world to commit fresh sins; and in the crowds many have no doubt been accidentally crushed to death; but human sacrifice is not inculcated by the priests nor in any way encouraged by them, for a drop of blood spilt in the presence of Jagannath pollutes priests, people, and consecrated food. If a death takes place within the precincts of the temple, the worship is suddenly stopped, and the offerings are taken away from the sight of the offended deity. There is an almost



continual round of festivals at Puri, which indeed lives on its religious character, having no other attraction.

Other notable localities for pilgrimages are the great temples of Tanjore, Madura, and Ramesvara (an island between India and Ceylon), these being seats of Siva worship. It is a great pilgrims' feat to visit Benares and bring from thence a pot of Ganges water to Ramesvara, to pour it on the symbol of Siva and then bathe in the sea, of course with payment of fees. Sir Monier-Williams relates a touching incident in connection with this. "Shortly before my arrival at the temple incident. a father and son had just completed their self-imposed task, and after months of hard walking succeeded in transporting their precious burden of Ganges water to the other side of the channel. The longed-for goal was nearly reached and the temple of Ramesvara already in sight, when the father died suddenly on the road, leaving his son, a mere child, utterly destitute and unprotected. The boy, however, had one treasure left—his jar of Ganges water. This, if only it could be poured upon the sacred symbol, would prove a complete panacea for all his earthly troubles. Eagerly he grasped his burden once more and hurried on to the shrine. Imagine the child's outburst of passionate grief when the door was closed against him. He had no fee for the presiding priest."

The most remarkable Vishnu temple in southern India is that of Sri-rangam, at Trichinopoly. It has a vast series of seven enclosures one within another, in which hundreds of Brahmans live. The Vishnu temple at corners of the four gateways of each square Trichinopoly. have splendid pyramidal towers. The whole is supposed to represent Vishnu's heaven. The principal image is lying down, and believed to be immovable—of course with a legend to account for the position, and there is a shrine over it in the shape of the syllable Om. A second image of Vishnu is kept for carrying in processions at the Car Festival, etc. The crown of the idol is covered with diamonds, pearls, and rubies, and the other ornaments are equally rich. Temples like this maintain large



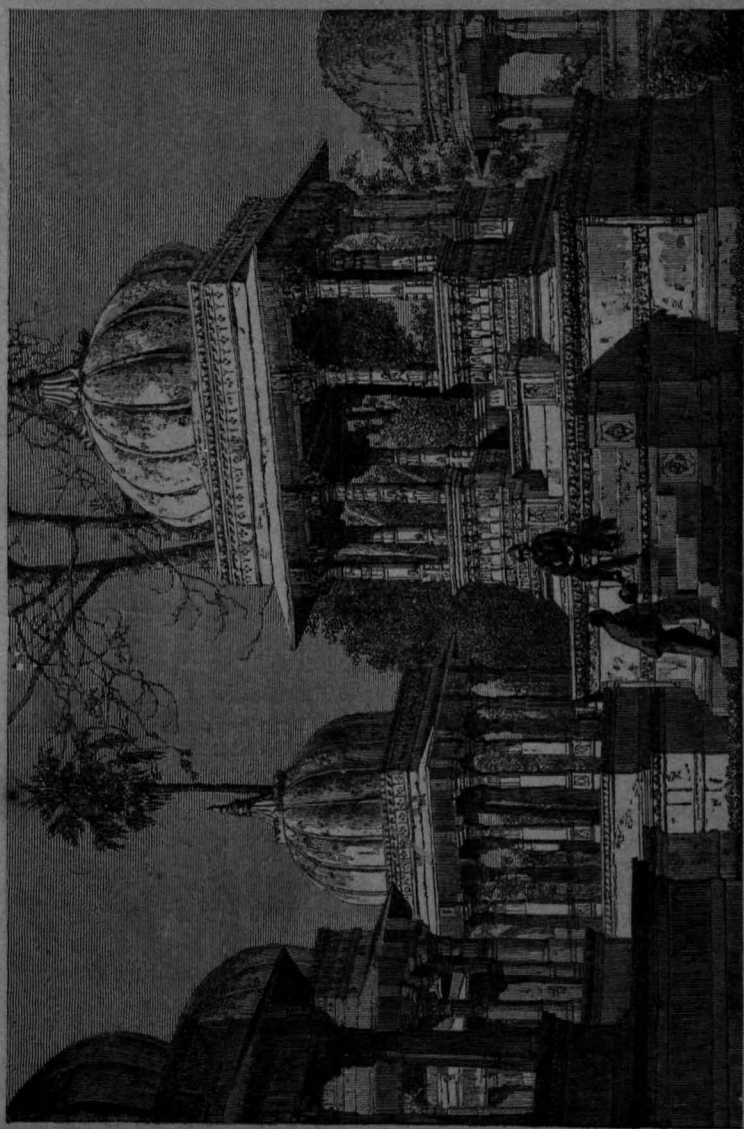
bands of musicians and troops of dancing girls, to take part in the festivals.

We must now give some brief account of the sects into which the Hindus are divided. To some extent these

**Vishnuite sects.** follow lines already indicated, as worshipping Vishnu or other gods under different manifestations, or following the teaching of particular reformers. Thus, to begin with the Vishnuite sects, there are the Ramanujas, or followers of Ramanuja, the Ramanandis, the Kabir Panthis, and numerous other sects founded by individuals. All these have special marks which must be painted on their foreheads, after bathing at the great festivals, with a special white earth. The Ramanujas, for instance, are distinguished by two perpendicular lines passing from the roots of the hair to the eyebrows, and a transverse line across the top of the nose connecting the other two. In the centre is a transverse streak of red. They are also marked with patches of red and white on the breast and arms, supposed to represent certain signs of Vishnu. Their chief special belief is that Vishnu is Brahman, the supreme Being. The Ramanandis specially worship Vishnu as Ramachandra, with Sita his wife. This sect has many monasteries, and many travelling members, who collect offerings and visit shrines, all these being celibates. They practically disregard caste. The Kabir Panthis, following Kabir, believe in one god, and need not join in the outward worship of the Hindu deities; but they sing hymns to Kabir, their founder. Their moral code is excellent, including truth, humanity, and hatred of violence.

There are very many worshippers of Vishnu under the form of the infant Gopal, child of the cowherd. This sect, founded by Vishnu Swami and extended by Vallabha, is notable for its belief in costly apparel and liberal feeding as meritorious, in opposition to asceticism. The chief temple of Gopal is in Ajmir.

The Madvas of Southern India are followers of Madhava, said to have been an incarnation of the god Vayu in the 12th century. They wear a single cloth of a dirty yellow colour, go bareheaded, and have the symbols of



THE MAHA SATI AT AHAR, RAJPUTANA (CONTAINING TOMBS OF ALL THE CHIEFS OF OUDYPORE).

Vishnu stamped with a red-hot iron on their shoulders or breast. They worship a plurality of gods, but teach that the human spirit is distinct from the Divine Spirit, though united to it, and that absorption in the godhead is impossible, thus differing markedly from the ordinary Hindu belief.

The majority of the Vishnu worshippers of Bengal belong to the sect founded by Chaitanya, whose influence raised the festivals of Puri to such popularity. His followers believe that Vishnu is the supreme soul and the one substance in the universe, and that Chaitanya was an incarnation of him. They also lay great stress upon *bakti*, or faith, of which there are five degrees: (1) peace, calm contemplation; (2) servitude; (3) friendship; (4) filial affection; (5) sweetness. Their cult is a joyous one, qualified by the necessity of implicit obedience to the guru. Caste is laid aside at their feasts.

The distinguishing marks of the Sivaitic sects are horizontal lines instead of perpendicular; and differences of width and colour indicate the particular sect. The Sivaites are very largely Brahmans, and the sects are not so extensive and popular as those of the Vishnuites. Among them are the Dandis, or staff bearers, mendicants who spend most of their time in meditation. Often they become almost idiotic from their perpetual suppression of thought and speech. The Yogis are another sect of meditationists with very special regulations, which are believed to give them the power of levitation, of travelling immense distances instantly, of rendering themselves invisible, etc. Many of them are practically jugglers and fortune-tellers, travelling about and practising on popular credulity.

The Saktas include those sects specially devoted to the worship of female forms of the deity, such as Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Sita, Parvati, Durga, Kali, etc. The Saktas look upon their female deity as the active energy of all things, and the source of all beings, for without the female element they could not be born. It is chiefly in modern books termed Tantras that these views are taught. They have been called the Bible of

the Saktas, and are akin to the Puranas in parts, but in others deal largely with the peculiar rites of the Saktas, and charms and spells, mostly being in the form of dialogues between Siva and his wife. No doubt in this cultus the lowest grade of Hinduism was reached. It upholds and propagates the most unbridled ideas of sensuality, in the belief that to indulge the grossest appetites with the mind fixed on the supreme Being was the most pious act possible. The drinking of alcoholic liquors forms a great element in Sakti worship, as well as the eating of meat. The powers supposed to be acquired by meditating on the texts and spells of the Tantras outdo anything imaginable. By them it is possible to predict the future, work more wonders than the gods, inspire any one with love, turn plants into meal, etc. Credulity cannot go farther than in the case of the believers in Saktism. It is believed, however, that the spread of education by the English has done much to diminish the sway of these baleful notions.

Here we may call attention to an opposite phenomenon in modern Hinduism—the spread of the theistic sects of an increasingly pure tendency. The Sikhs of the Punjab owe their rise to Nanak, a follower The Sikhs. of Kabir in the 15th century, born not far from Lahore in 1469. He became a guru or teacher, and his followers were termed Sikhs or disciples. He taught a religion free from caste and idolatry, having been largely influenced by the growing Mohammedanism around him; but he still remained more of a pantheist than a monotheist, and he taught that God should be especially worshipped under the name of Hari, one of the titles of Vishnu. After his death there succeeded him a line of chief gurus, who, at first friendly, developed great hostility to the Mohammedans, and became largely military leaders. Their political history must be read elsewhere. The fourth guru, Ram-das, set up a lake temple in the sacred tank at Amritsar, which became the head-quarters of the Sikhs. The fifth guru, Arjun, compiled the first Sikh bible largely from the precepts of his predecessors. Govind, the sixth guru, compiled a second book or sup-

plement, devised a form of baptism, imposed a vow not to worship idols, to bow to no one but a Sikh Guru, and in many ways cemented the bonds of the party. War was made a religious duty; and while Govind refused to name a successor as guru, he created the Sikh bible (or

**The Sikh bible.** Granth), a permanent object of worship with the title Sahib. Henceforth it was to be their infallible guide; whatever they asked it would show them. The Sikh bible is written in the old Hindi dialect, with a peculiar mode of writing. It declares the unity of God, but is based on pantheistic ideas. Many of the names of Vishnu are accepted as names of the supreme Deity. It forbids image worship, but the way in which the Granth itself is worshipped, dressed, and decorated, goes far to elevate it into an idol. Many ordinary Hindu superstitions are included in it, such as the belief in the sanctity of the cow, the vast number of transmigrations of souls, and complete submission to the guru. In recent years the Sikh faith has very considerably retrograded towards Vishnuism. Many Sikhs now adopt caste, wear the Brahmanical thread, and observe Hindu festivals and ceremonies. There is a notable temple to Govind at Patna containing many remains of him. The temple at Umritsur is one of the most striking sights in India; it is dedicated to the one god under his name Hari; but he is believed to be visibly represented by the Sacred Book.

A very significant development of modern Hinduism is that represented by the Brahmo Somaj, which represents **The Brahmo Somaj.** a revival of the theism to be found in the Vedas, influenced not a little by the teaching of Christianity. Rammohun Roy (born 1774), founder of the Brahmo Somaj, was a high-caste Brahman, son of a Vishnu worshipper, and highly educated in Persian, **Rammohun Roy.** Arabic, and Sanskrit. At the age of sixteen he wrote a tract against idolatry, and excited such opposition that he left home for some years, studying Buddhism in Tibet. He afterwards studied English, obtained government employment, and mixed with Europeans. After his father's death he was more free in his opposition to what he considered pervertions of the true

Vedic religion; and he particularly drew attention to the fact that suttee, the self-immolation of widows, was not sanctioned by the Vedas. In 1819, after studying Christianity, he published a book, "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness," in which he stated that he found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other that had come to his knowledge. Nevertheless he strongly objected to accept the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, for he considered it to be of the same nature as that of a plurality of gods. Thus he is properly described as a Unitarian. He preferred to choose the best from all religions, believing that inspiration was not confined to any age or nation; thus he accepted whatever was good in the sacred books of all nations.

The Brahmo Somaj was finally established in 1830, "for the worship of the eternal, unsearchable, and immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the universe." No image or portrait was to be admitted, no sacrifice was to be made, and nothing worshipped by other men was to be spoken of with contempt in the building. Although he has spoken and written against the caste system, Rammohun Roy did not give it up, nor abandon the Brahmanical thread. The Vedas were still read at his meetings, while the Bible was not introduced. In 1831 he visited England with several objects, but fell a victim to the climate, and died in 1833 at Bristol. To him must be given the credit of the first striking new departure in the elevation and purification of modern Hinduism.

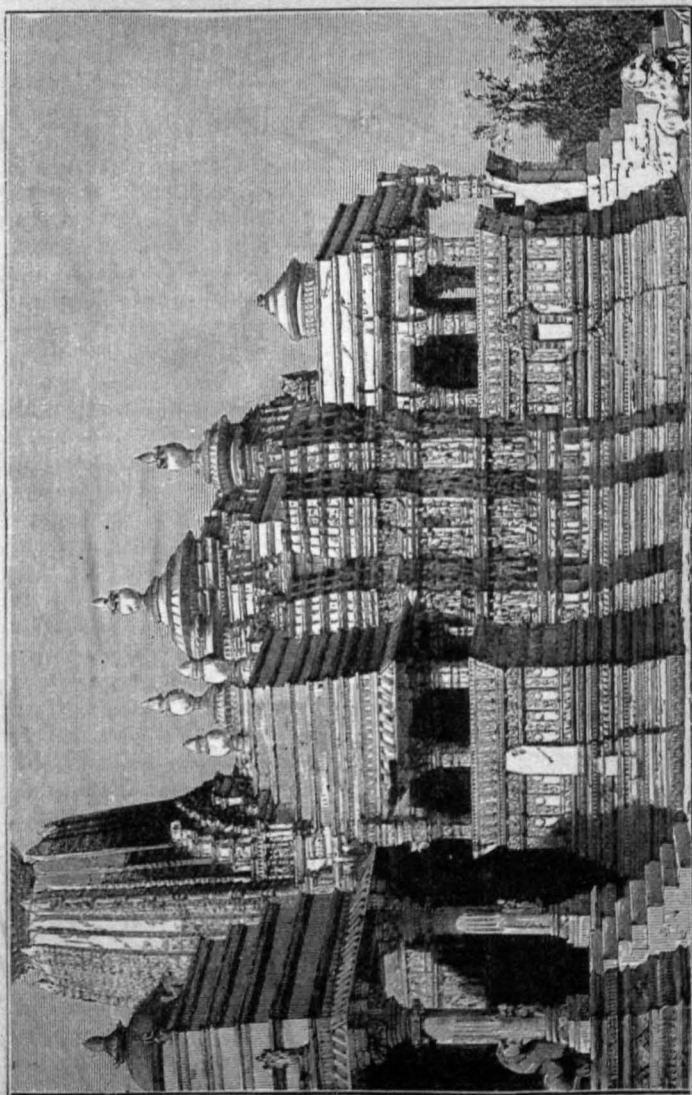
His practical successor was Devendra Nath Tagore, born in 1818, who in 1839 formed a society for the knowledge of truth, and in 1841 joined the Brahmo Somaj. He prepared a scheme for organising that society as a church in 1843, including seven solemn vows to be taken by members. The members were to abstain from idolatry, to worship the great God, Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, through the love of God and doing works dear to God,—to lead holy lives and to seek forgiveness through abandonment of sin. A

Devendra  
Nath  
Tagore.

minister was appointed, and by 1847, 767 persons had taken the vows, while many others adhered to them. About 1850 it was decided that the Vedas were not infallible, and that only such views as were in harmony with Theistic truth were to be accepted from them. Approved extracts were made from the Vedas, Manu, the Satapatha Brahmana, etc. The views of the church include the Fatherhood of God, who has never become incarnate, but whose providence is over his creatures, and who hears their prayers. Repentance is the one path of atonement, forgiveness, and salvation. The only necessary religious deeds are good works, charity, contemplation and devotion, and the attainment of knowledge, all penances and pilgrimages being useless. The only sacrifice is self-sacrifice, the only temple is the pure heart. Caste is not acknowledged.

With all these advanced views, much tacit recognition of Hinduism, and even conformity with it was still maintained; and in 1865 a new reformer proclaimed his mission, the well-known Keshub Chunder Sen, imbued with more advanced views as well as a more emotional and spiritual nature. He wished to abolish all caste observances, and thus led to a rupture. A new form of initiation, the admission of women, and the reform of marriage observances followed; but after vigorous work for a number of years, Keshub agreed to the marriage of his daughter while a child to the Maharajah of Kuch Behar, at which some Hindu ceremonies were observed, and this caused much scandal. Nevertheless his church, the Progressive Brahmo Somaj of India, showed much vitality under his almost autocratic rule up to his death on January 8th, 1884. The original society, now known as the Adi Somaj, continues under the guidance of Devendra Nath Tagore, but has somewhat gone back towards Hinduism. Keshub had the skill to introduce new festivals to replace the older Hindu celebrations, including religious meetings with public processions, music, and singing. He also professed himself inspired to put down sectarianism and discord between sects. His influence still lives; the apostolic





TEMPLE OF KALI, RAJGRIHA, INDIA.



Durbar of his church refused to allow the platform from which he taught to be used, and declared that Keshub was still the leader of the church. It would be curious to note if this is followed by any further step towards his deification.

The party who left Keshub after the marriage of his daughter have formed a stronger church than the one they left, under the title of the Universal Somaj. They have adopted a sort of presbyterian government, to prevent the autocratic rule of one man, and only those who have given up idolatry and caste in private as well as in public can be office-bearers. Altogether there are about 1,500 strict members and 8,000 adherents of these various Theistic bodies in India, distributed over 178 churches.

We have said little hitherto of certain common notions of the Hindus, which however influence them very greatly and hinder improvement. For instance, fatalism is one of their strongest beliefs. All a man's life is controlled by the Deity, and it is fruitless for man to oppose the decrees of God. It is this resignation to fate which so largely paralyses the efforts of the people, especially in regard to sickness. The belief in

Maya, or illusion. Maya, or illusion, is another of their beliefs. It is said that all mankind are the victims of illusion, especially in imagining themselves to be something different from God. It is commonly said that the supreme Being was tired of being alone, and formed the world as a sport or amusement, and that all the miseries of life came from Maya, the creatures being ignorant that they are really one with God.

Again, belief in the transmigration of souls pervades all India. It will be found to constitute a prominent feature in Buddhism. We may here briefly state the essential details of the creed. Existence after death is a matter of course. A predominantly good life is rewarded with heaven, an evil life with hell. After a longer or shorter time the soul returns to earth to be re-born in a higher or lower station, according to its good or evil deeds.

Re-births may be indefinitely numerous, and may be alternately higher and lower, or higher only if the conduct has been sufficiently good. Many of the gods are believed to have a heaven of their own into which they take their worshippers for a longer or shorter time, and admit them to various degrees of nearness to themselves. Many are the acts which confer these privileges, but especially pilgrimages, acts of worship, sacrifices, building temples, giving gifts to Brahmans, and honouring gurus. The higher states of blessedness are exclusively for Brahmans; but those of lower caste may by good works earn re-birth in higher castes till they at last become Brahmans.

The various hells and heavens are elaborately described in the Puranas. There are said to be a hundred thousand hells, one for each class of offence. For instance, a glutton is to be cast into boiling oil; he who injures a man of superior caste is punished by being torn by swine; one who contemptuously treats a religious mendicant is made to stick fast in the mud with his head downwards. But fortunately for both sinners and priests, these punishments may be remitted if appropriate atonements, good deeds, and offerings are made. For corporeal sins, says Manu, a man will be re-born as a plant or a mineral; for verbal sins, as a bird or a beast; for mental sins, in the lowest human state. The slayer of a Brahman will be re-born as a dog, boar, ass, bull, etc.; he who steals gold from a priest will be born a thousand times in the bodies of spiders, snakes, etc. But the earlier books are far surpassed by the later ones in their teaching on this point. Thus, in the Agni Purana it is taught that "a person who loses human birth passes through 8,000,000 births amongst inferior creatures before he can appear again on earth as a human being. Of these he remains 2,100,000 among the immovable parts of creation, as stones, trees, etc.; 900,000 amongst the watery tribes; 1,000,000 amongst insects, worms, etc.; 1,000,000 amongst birds, and 3,000,000 amongst the beasts. In the ascending scale, if his works be suitable, he lives 400,000 lives amongst the lower castes of men, and 100 amongst Brahmans. After this he may obtain absorption into Brahma."

To such an extent can the policy of frightening people into goodness, or rather into compliance with priestly demands, be developed. Happily the Hindus, as a rule, do not remember the sufferings of their imaginary previous lives or conditions; and it is a ready way of accounting for any misfortune to say that it is a punishment for sins committed in a former life.

With such views it is not surprising that death and its approach should be made the occasion for endeavouring to obtain future benefits, or relief from penalties. **Death.** The Hindu is taught that after death his spirit will wander in wretchedness, unless he dies near the Ganges or some holy stream, or unless his body is burned on its banks, or at any rate near some water, and some portion of his ashes must be thrown into it. This leads to a custom of exposing the dying on the banks of rivers. Long rows of steps line the banks and rude buildings, used for the dying to lie in, called ghats. The benefits of so dying are represented as so great, that relatives often believe it to be the greatest kindness to expose them, often carrying them through terrible heat, and exposing them at imminent risk. Great numbers of lives have been sacrificed in this way when the disease was by no means mortal; the word of the native doctors is taken as sufficient, and great haste is made lest the patient should die at home. The whole scene is repulsive and injurious in the highest degree. A few minutes before death is expected the victim is brought down to the brink of the river, where he dies more or less immersed in the stream. No doubt in some cases advantage is taken of these circumstances to administer poison. A native writer says: "Persons entrusted with the care and nursing of a dying man at the burning ghat soon get tired of their charge (no women being allowed to be there); and rather than minister to his comforts, are known to resort to artificial means. The process of immersion is another name for suffocation." So tenacious are some people of life, that they will sometimes survive nine or ten immersions, and be brought home again; but their continued life is considered disgraceful.

The burning of the corpse follows quickly on death. "The corpse is removed from its resting-place to the burning ghat, a distance of a few hundred yards, and preparations for a funeral pile are speedily made. The body is then covered with a piece of new cloth and laid upon the pyre, the upper and lower parts of which are composed of firewood, faggots, and a little sandalwood and glue to neutralise the smell. The Manipora Brahman, an outcaste, reads the formula, and the son, or nearest of kin, changing his old garments for new white clothes, at one end of which is fastened an iron key to keep off evil spirits, sets fire to the pile. The body is consumed to ashes, the portion remaining unburnt is thrown into the river. The son, after pouring a few jars of holy water on the pile, bathes in the stream and returns home with his friends." Then follow wild expressions of grief on the part of the women. Often the family cannot afford to buy enough wood to consume the corpse, and part is left for jackals and vultures. The Brahmins of course go through much more elaborate funeral ceremonies than are here indicated.

After the cremation come the Shradda, or ceremonies for the benefit of the dead; these may be comparatively inexpensive, or may be made the occasion of lavish expenditure. On the thirtieth day after death, offerings of food, sweetmeats, etc., are made to the spirit of the deceased and his or her ancestors, and at the same time a number of Brahmins and persons of other castes are entertained. These ceremonies are evidently much akin to the ancestor-worship of the Chinese, as already detailed, showing how powerful a factor this reverence for ancestral spirits has been in races very dissimilar. One of the prayers is "May those in my family who have been burnt with fire, or who are alive who are yet unburnt, be satisfied with the food presented on the ground, and proceed contented towards the supreme path! May those who have no father nor mother, nor kinsman, nor food, nor supply of nourishment, be contented with this food offered on the ground, and attain, like it, a happy abode!" Some of the food is cast

into the fire, by which means it is supposed to reach those for whom it is intended. Brahmans repeat these ceremonies frequently in the first year after death, and afterwards annually. The title to property is most intimately bound up with the funeral rites. Only a son or near male relative is properly qualified to perform them; but if males fail, females or other heirs may undertake the duty. Large promises are made in the Puranas and other sacred books to those who properly perform the Shradda rites, including the forgiveness of all their own sins. The details, like those of all religious matters in so religious a people, are far too lengthy to be given.

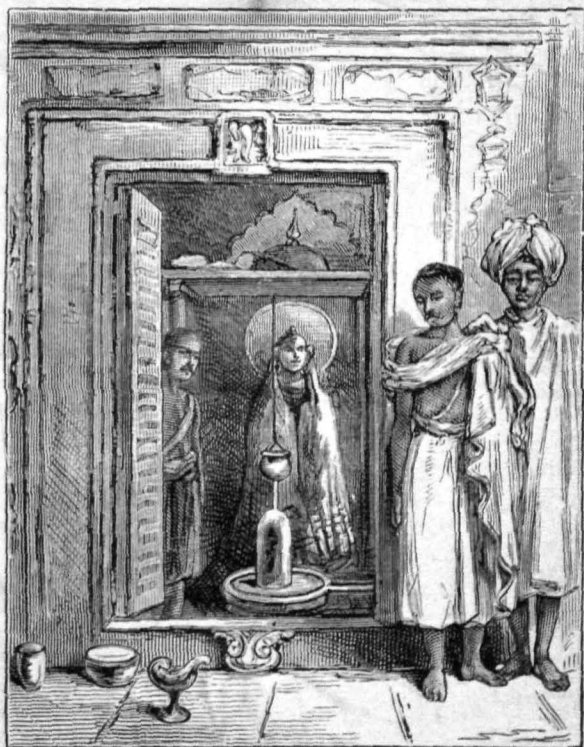
What about the influence of Hindu religious ideas upon their moral condition? Many writers agree that this is

**Moral state.** bound up with the position of women, and that until they are freed and elevated no permanent improvement can be made. Here is an extract from a Hindu lady's book on the duties of wives. "The husband is the wife's religion, the wife's sole business, the wife's **Condition of** all-in-all. The wife should meditate on her **wives.** husband as Brahma. For her, all pilgrimages should be concentrated on her husband's foot. The command of a husband is as obligatory as a precept of the Vedas. To a chaste wife her husband is her god. When the husband is pleased, Brahma is pleased. The husband is the wife's guru, her honour, the giver of her happiness, the bestower of fortune, righteousness, and heaven, her deliverer from sorrow and from sin."

Of course the seclusion of women is not generally possible among the lower classes, but it is often aimed at by them; and the full consequences of the **Position of** belief that the birth of a girl is a misfortune **women.** follow most Indian women through life. On the contrary, Hindu women pray, make pilgrimages, fast, and make costly offerings, that they may have sons who can by performing the Shradda rites deliver their ancestors from sufferings after death. All a girl's worship is directed towards obtaining good husbands and sons, by a series of rites which we cannot particularise; nor can we enlarge upon the evils of girl marriages (at the age of

from seven to ten), and of plural marriages in the higher castes, or the details of wedding ceremonies, which however are full of religious significance.

The wives of the poorer people have considerable freedom; but among the richer classes a wife is the servant



SHRINE OF THE GODDESS PARVATI, WIFE OF SIVA (EARLIER FORM OF KALI, DURGA, ETC.), IN A TEMPLE AT POONAH.

not only of her husband but of all the older women of his family. She must always be visited in the presence of her brothers-in-law, and must not speak to her husband in the daytime, nor even take her meals with him. Too

frequently she is the subject of painful tyranny and abuse on the part of the older women of the zenana.

Yet the life of a Hindu wife is heaven compared with that of a childless widow. The faithful wife was long expected to sacrifice herself on his funeral pile (suttee), and, according as she did it or not, was lauded or cursed. Many widows in the past, from lack of courage to perform what they vowed, had themselves drugged and forcibly immolated. Frequently widows would most calmly and impassionately devote

themselves to the fire never giving a cry or a sigh of pain. So powerfully can the belief that they are doing what is pleasing to the gods and their deceased husbands work upon the Hindu women. In 1830 suttee was prohibited in States under British rule; but it was still practised in some of the native States. Mr. Wilkins states that the last case he heard of was about 1880.

The extreme difficulty experienced in abolishing suttee is explained by the treatment to which surviving widows are subjected, especially childless widows, who are forbidden to marry again, and become the household drudges and objects of scorn of the zenana. One meal a day, with a fast for two days a month, is their hard lot; with the deprivation of ornaments and of every pleasure. In many cases the sufferings of a widow are such that she would gladly die. No doubt the older widows are able to assert themselves, and in time gain influence. But enough has been said to show that the key to much of the religious and social question in India is bound up with the condition and education of women. Some improvement has already come with the improved education of the better classes, and the partial opening of the zenanas to European ladies and to lady doctors; and herein lies great hope for the future.

The Hindu system is such that merit and pardon can be obtained for gross offences without any re-  
**Disconnection of morals and religion.** form of heart and life. Thus it is not surprising that theft, dishonesty, lying, ingratitude, forgery, perjury, revenge, cruelty, and personal immorality

are very rife among them. Mr. Wilkins says: "It does not surprise me at all to find the Hindus morally what they are, as I remember that whilst their books contain some of the highest and noblest moral precepts, their deities, when incarnate, are described as ignoring these beautiful moral lessons; and still further, when I see that religion and morality are quite separate in their view. . . . When a Hindu's anger is excited, truth, honour, trust—all are forgotten, and no means are left unemployed that can injure an enemy. The term 'mild Hindu,' certainly is the purest sarcasm; they submit to oppression and cruelty because they are physically incapable of resistance. Only give them the opportunity to avenge themselves and to oppose others, and certainly they are as vindictive in their way as any race of men on earth. They do not use the knife or the dagger, it is true, but they resort to poison, and, what is sometimes even worse, the poison of their own untruthful tongues." On the other hand, we must credit the Hindus with much fraternal affection and filial regard, much Hindu  
Virtues. charity in the form of gifts, great patience, industry, and ingenuity. Out of these elements and their great intellectual powers we may hope that there may yet arise a nation mighty in goodness and noble in character.

[In addition to works referred to in the previous chapter, the following are valuable: Bose's "The Hindus as They Are"; H. H. Wilson's "Hindu Sects"; "Medical Jurisprudence," by Dr. Norman Chevers; Dr. Lall Mitra on "Orissa"; Rev. T. E. Slater's "Life of Keshub Chundra Sen"; many articles in *The Calcutta Review*.]

