



on new apparel. The following morning she bathes ; after which the officiating bramhūn arrives at her house, and the things necessary for the worship are brought : as, a new earthen jar, rice, sweetmeats, a new poita, a piece of new cloth, clarified butter, fruits, flowers, &c. The woman presents to the officiating bramhūn, who sits in the house on a mat made of kooshū-grass, with his face towards the north or east, a piece of new cloth ; and putting a cloth over her shoulders, and joining her hands, informs him that she intends to perform this vrūtū every month for six years, and prays him to become her representative in this work. She then rises, and the bramhūn, taking the shalgramū, places it before him, and performs the worship of Vishnoo and Lūkshmēē. In the third and fourth years, on the day preceding and on the day of the worship, she eats rice not made wet in cleansing ; the next year, on these days, only fruits ; the following year, on these two days, she fasts. On the last day, (at which time the six years expire,) the officiating bramhūns attend, to whom she says, 'I have now finished the six years' vrūtū I promised : I pray you to perform another vrūtū.' She then gives to each a piece of cloth, a poita, and some betle-nut ; and putting a cloth round her neck, and joining her hands, begs them to perform the necessary ceremonies. Placing the shalgramū before them, they then perform the worship of of Shivū, Sōōryū, Gūnēshū, Vishnoo, and Door-ga ; in which offerings are made of cloth, sweetmeats, &c. Next they worship the woman's spiritual guide ; in which, amongst other things, an offering is made of a bamboo plate, having on it a number of articles, and among the rest a piece of cloth. To this succeeds the worship of Vishnoo, Lukshmēē, and the officiating priests. A priest next prepares an altar four cubits square, by spreading sand upon the ground. At three of the corners he fixes three pieces of wood, lights some straw, and then worships the fire ; next he boils rice, and, with clarified butter, presents the burnt-offering. The female now puts a bamboo plate on her head, and walks round the fire seven times ; then, standing still, she says, 'O ! Ūgnee ! I call thee to witness, that I have performed this vrūtū six years.' She says the same to the sun, the shalgramū, and to the bramhūns. Next she gives a fee, and distributes the gifts to the priests and bramhūns. The bamboo plate which she placed on her head is laid up in the house, and the whole closes with a grand dinner to the bramhūns and others. This is the form of a vrūtū on a large scale. The Hindoos have, it is said, two or three hundred ceremonies called by this name.

Savitree-vrūtū. In this ceremony the wife of a Hindoo, in the month Asharhū, worships her husband : she first presents to him a new garment, hangs a garland of flowers round his neck, rubs his body with red lead and ointments ; and while he sits on a stool, worships him, by presenting different offerings to him repeating incantations, and praying that she may never be separat-



ed from him as her husband, nor ever become a widow. After a number of other services paid to him, among which she makes him partake of a good dinner, she walks round him seven times, and then retires.

Adürü-singhasünü-vrütü is observed every day in Voishakhü for one year. During the thirty days, thirty women, the wives of bramhüns, are entertained; a different female each day. When the bramhünēē arrives, a seat is given her on the porch, and the mistress of the house washes her feet, fans her, anoints her head with oil, combs her hair, ornaments her forehead with paint, anoints her body with perfumes, and employs a female barber to paint the edges of her feet. After this she conducts her into the house, where she is fed with all the dainties the house can afford, and dismissed with a gift of kourees. On the last of the thirty days, in addition to this entertainment, a piece of cloth is presented to a bramhünēē. The benefit expected from this vrütü is, that the female who thus honours the wives of bramhüns shall be highly honoured by her husband in another birth.

It would be easy to multiply examples, for almost every Hindoo female performs one or another of these vrütüs:^k but this will be sufficient to give the reader an idea of these ceremonies; from the merit of which some expect heaven, others children, others riches, others preservation from sickness, &c.—The vrütüs are a very lucrative source of profit to the bramhüns.

SECT. XVI.—*Fasting, (Oopūvasū.)*

FASTING is another work of merit among the Hindoos. A common fast is conducted in the following manner:—The person abstains on the preceding day from rubbing his body with oil, and from eating, except once in the former part of the day. The next day he eats nothing; and on the following day he eats once, worships some god, and entertains one or more bramhüns. If a person be unable to fast to such a degree, he is permitted to take a little milk on the second day; if he be very weak, he may add fruit, curds, sweetmeats, &c.

Some Hindoos fast on the 11th^l of the increase, and the 12th of the decrease of the moon in every month; on the 11th in

^k Vrütüs are unconditional vows to perform certain religious ceremonies; but what is called mününī (see a preceding article) is a conditional vow, promising to present offerings on condition that the god bestow such or such a benefit.

^l Widows keep this fast so strictly, that if a widow were dying, and a draught of water would prolong life, her friends would scarcely give it.



Shravṇṇū, Bhadrū, and Kartikū;^m on the 12th in Shravṇṇū; on the 14th of the decrease of the moon in Phalgunū;ⁿ on the 9th in Chaitrū;^o on the 8th in Bhadrū;^p and on the 8th in Ashwinū.^q In this month many natives of Hindoostān fast on the first nine days of the moon, in honour of Doorga; and observe, as they say, a total abstinence, even from water. Fasts precede some of the festivals: after the death of parents, Hindoos fast three days; after that of a husband, a wife fasts three days; before offering an atonement, a fast is observed; the day any pilgrim arrives at a holy place he fasts; in fulfilling vows, the Hindoos keep many fasts; some persons enter into a resolution to fast every other day, and persevere in this for years. Some renounce rice altogether, and keep a perpetual fast, living on milk, fruits, &c. Others (pilgrims) offer a certain fruit to some idol, and renounce this kind of fruit, promising never to eat of it again to the end of life. The gods, it is said, delight to see their followers renounce anything as an act of devotion or attachment to them. This person presents to bramhṇs fruit thus renounced, on the anniversary of the day on which he renounced it.—Another custom, bearing a similarity to fasting, also prevails among the Hindoos:—In the months Asharhū, Shravṇṇū, Bhadrū, and Ashwinū, many renounce certain articles of diet, and others omit to be shaved, as acts of devotion to the gods.

The blessing expected from fasting is, that the person will ascend to the heaven of that god in whose name he observes the fast.

SECT. XVII.—*Gifts, (Danū.)*

PRESENTS to learned bramhṇs; to those less learned; to unlearned bramhṇs; to one whose father was a bramhṇ, but his mother a shōōdrū; and alms to the poor, are called by the name of danū. The things which may be presented are, whatever may be eaten, or worn, or is in use among Hindoos. These are the common gifts, but the shastrū have pointed out extraordinary gifts: a daughter in

^m On the first of these days Vishnū goes to sleep; on the second he turns to the other side; and on the third he awakes.

ⁿ The occasion of this fast is thus related:—On a certain occasion, Doorga asked Shivū what would please him most, and be a work of the greatest merit. He replied, to hold a fast in his name on the 14th of the wane of the moon in Phalgunū.

^o The birth-day of Ramū.

^p Krishnū's birth-day.

^q The time of the Doorga festival.

^r From da, to give.



marriage without receiving a fee ;^{*} a pool of water ;^{*} a shalgramū ; a house containing food, clothes, &c. for twelve months ; gold ; cows ; elephants ; horses ; palankeens ; a road ; a copy of a pooranū ; a mountain of gold,^{*} silver, brass, rice, or other articles ; land ;^{*} *a person's whole property ; yea, even his life.*

There are three ways of presenting a gift ; one in which the person worships the receiver ; another in which he gives as an act of benevolence ; and the last, in which the giver prays for some blessing on presenting his gift. If a shōōdrū wish to present a gift to a bramhūn, he bathes, and carries it fasting : on arriving in the presence of the bramhūn, he sprinkles the gift with water, repeating an incantation that it may be thereby purified, and then presents it with such words as these : ' Sir, I have presented to you this gift : let me have your blessing, that I may obtain heaven, or, that my father may obtain heaven, or that it may be imputed to me as an act of merit.'

If a man present land to bramhūns, he will obtain heaven ; if a cow, he will after death ride on a cow across the river Voitūrūnēē ; if water, after death he will find refreshing water in his journey to Yūmalūyā, (the residence of Yūmū, the regent of death) ; if a house

^{*} The generality of the respectable Hindoos say, that receiving a fee for a daughter is like selling flesh ; yet the lower orders of bramhūns commonly receive money on giving a daughter in marriage. Formerly the Hindoo rajas assisted the bramhūns by giving them money for the expenses of their weddings. A story is related of a raja, who was intreated by a bramhūn to bestow a gift upon him for the expenses of his marriage. The raja ordered him to put a garland round the neck of the first woman he met, and let her become his wife. The bramhūn went out, and met the raja's mother returning from bathing. When about to put the garland round her neck, she demanded the reason of this strange conduct ; which the bramhūn explained. The old lady told him to wait, and she would bring about what he wanted. She sat at the door of the palace, and compelled her son to come and invite her in. She replied, that she was become the wife of such a bramhūn, and that she must go with her new husband. The raja, thunderstruck, called for the bramhūn, gave him a thousand rupees towards his wedding, and brought his mother into the house again.

^{*} Pools are dug every year in all parts of Bengal, and offered to all creatures, accompanied with a number of ceremonies.

^{*} The height of these mountain-gifts is given in the Pooshkūrū-khūndū of the Pādmū-pooranū. It must not be supposed that they are very large ; but it is necessary that figures of trees, deer, &c. should be seen on them. In one of the smrites is an account of a prostitute, who offered a mountain of gold. About the year 1794, Chūnooghoshū, a kaist'hū of Midnapore, gave to the bramhūns an artificial mountain of gold. A little before this, Gopalū-krishnū, a voidyū of Rajū-nūgūrū, presented to the bramhūns three mountains, one of gold, another of rice, and another of the seeds of sesamum.

^{*} It is very common for rich land-owners to make presents of land to bramhūns. At a shraddhū for a father or a mother, a piece of land, or its value in money, is invariably given to bramhūns, unless the person be poor. Many of the Hindoo rajas sought out poor bramhūns, and gave them grants of land. A story is related of Kēerttee-chūndrū, raja of Bardwan, who once found a poor fatherless boy, the son of a bramhūn, tending cattle : he gave him a village, with as much land as he could run over without stopping ; and disinherited the shōōdrū who had dared to employ the son of a bramhūn in so mean an occupation. The same raja ordered a man to be cut in pieces, for refusing to restore to a bramhūn a grant of land which the former had bought in a lot offered for sale.



to bramhūns, he will obtain a palace in heaven ; if an umbrella to a bramhūn, he will not suffer, in another world, from the rays of the sun ; if shoes, in his way to heaven he will not suffer from the heat of the ground ; if perfumes to bramhūns, he will never, after death, receive an offensive smell ; if medicine to the blind, he will be delivered from darkness hereafter ; if a daughter to a bramhūn, without a fee, he will gain as much as if he had given the whole world.

SECT. XVIII.—*Entertaining Bramhūns.*

As might be expected in a system formed by bramhūns, honouring them with a feast is represented as an act of the highest merit. At the close of all religious ceremonies, bramhūns are entertained ; private individuals, during particular holidays, make a feast for one or more bramhūns ; a person on his birth-day, on the anniversary of the day in which received the initiating incantation, or at the full moon, or at any feast, entertains bramhūns. During the whole of the month Voishakhū, it is very meritorious to give feasts to bramhūns.

SECT. XIX.—*Various Works of Merit.*

THE Hindoo lawgivers have established several customs, which, if separated from idolatry, would be worthy of the highest commendation : they promise to the obedient the greatest rewards in a future state.

Among these we may place hospitality to strangers.* The traveller, when he wishes to rest for the night, goes to a house, and says, 'I am ūtit'hee' ; i. e., I am to be entertained at your house. The master or mistress of the house, if of a hospitable disposition, gives him water to wash his feet, a seat, tobacco, water to drink, &c. After these refreshments, they give him fire-wood, a new earthen pot to cook in,† rice, split peas, oil, spices, &c. The next morning he departs, sometimes without saying any thing, and at other times he takes leave.‡ In the

* Munoo says, 'No guest must be dismissed in the evening by a house-keeper : he is sent by the returning sun, and whether he come in fit season or unseasonably, he must not sojourn in the house without entertainment. Let not himself eat any delicate food, without asking his guest to partake of it : the satisfaction of a guest will assuredly bring the housekeeper, wealth, reputation, long life, and a place in heaven.'

† A'most every Hindoo is either constantly or occasionally his own cook.

‡ The Hindoos have no word for 'thank you' in their common language, and gratitude itself appears to constitute no part of their virtues. The greatest benefits conferred very rarely meet with even the least acknowledgment. I have known

houses of the poor or the covetous, a stranger meets with worse entertainment. Not unfrequently the mistress of the house excuses herself to a person wishing to become a guest, and among other things alleges, that there are none but women and children at home. It is not very uncommon for a traveller to go to several houses, and to be refused at all. This is partly owing to fear, that the stranger may plunder the house in the night. Where persons have porches at the outside of their houses, they have less fear, as the stranger is then kept at a distance. This hospitality to strangers is indeed sometimes abused by a thief, who robs the house and decamps. Yet if a person refuse to entertain a stranger, the shastrū declares that all the sins of the guest become his, and his works of merit become the guest's. The traveller sometimes murmurs on going away, exclaiming that the people of this village are so depraved, that they refuse a handful of rice to a traveller. If a family are unable through poverty to entertain a guest, the shastrū orders that they shall beg for his relief. The stranger after eating must take nothing uncooked from the house.

A person of the name of Golūkū-Chūndrū-Rayū, of Serampore, formerly sirkar to the Danish East India Company, has particularly distinguished himself in the present day, as the most eminent Hindoo in Bengal for liberality to strangers. Upon an average, two hundred travellers or mendicants were formerly fed daily at and from his house; and it is said that he expended in this manner fifty thousand rupees annually.

Another work of charity is the digging of pools by the side of public roads, to supply the thirsty traveller with water. The cutting of these ponds, and building flights of steps in order to descend into them, is in many cases very expensive: four thousand rupees are frequently expended in one pond, including the expense attending the setting it apart to the use of the public; at which time an assembly of bramhūns is collected, and certain formulas from the shastrū read by a priest; among which, in the name of the offerer, he says, 'I offer this pond of water to quench the thirst of mankind.' At the close of the ceremony, a feast is given to the assembled bramhūns, who are also dismissed with presents.

European physicians perform the most extraordinary cures on the bodies of the natives gratuitously, without a solitary instance occurring of a single individual returning to acknowledge the favour. Amongst the higher orders of Hindoos, however, the master of a house sometimes says to a guest on his departure, 'You will excuse all inattention;' and the guest replies, 'Oh! sir, you are of a distinguished caste! What shall I say in return for the manner in which I have been entertained? Such food! such a bed! But this is like yourself. No one entertains a guest as you do. May Lākshmī (the goddess of riches) ever dwell in your house.'

I suppose, that in all eastern countries it is a custom for guests to be thus entertained at private houses. The address of our Lord to his disciples seems to intimate that such was the case among the Jews: 'And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And whosoever shall not receive you, when ye depart out of that house, &c.'



It is unlawful for the owner ever afterwards to appropriate this pond to his own private use. If the water be very clear and sweet, the offerer is complimented as a person with whose merits the gods are pleased. A person of Burdwan, of the name of Ramū-pālū, is mentioned as having prepared as many as a hundred pools in different places, and given them for public use. Persons inhabiting villages where water was scarce, used to petition this public benefactor to cut a pool for them; and, after obtaining leave of the raja, he bestowed upon them this necessary blessing.^b

The planting of trees to afford shade to travellers is another act of merit among the Hindoos, and, in a hot climate like this, deserves to be classed among actions that are commendable. Some trees also are considered as sacred, and the planting of them is therefore deemed a religious act. The trees thus planted are generally the ūshwūt'hū,^c the vūtū,^d vilwū,^e ūshokū,^f vūkoolū,^g plākshū,^h oodombūrū,ⁱ shingshūpa,^k tūmalū,^l jēēvu-pootrēē,^m &c. At the time of planting these trees, no religious ceremony takes place; but when they are dedicated to public or sacred uses, the ceremony called prūtisht'ha is performed. The person who plants one ūshwūt'hū,ⁿ one nimbū,^o two chūmpūkū,^p three nagūkēshwūrū,^q seven talū,^r and nine cocoanut trees, and devotes them with their fruit, shade, &c. to public uses, is promised heaven.

About twenty years ago, a landowner of Patū-dūhū, about fourteen miles from Calcutta, planted an orchard by a public road, placed a person to keep it, and dedicated it to the use of travellers of all descriptions; who are permitted to enter it, and take as much fruit as they can eat on the spot. Krishnū-vūsoo, of Calcutta, made a road^s from Kūtūkū to the temple of Jūgūnnat'hū, in Orissa, and planted a double row of fruit trees on the sides of this road for the use of pilgrims going to the temple. The pilgrims cook their food, sleep under the shade of these trees, and eat the fruit which they yield. He also cut a large pool near the temple, to supply these pilgrims with water. Raja Sookhū-mūyū, of Calcutta, who died in the year 1811, left 100,000 rupees to be appropriated to the repairs and improvement of the road to the temple of Jūgūnnat'hū, in Orissa, and to assist pilgrims going there in paying the tax to Government.

In some parts, in the sultry months Voishakhū and Jyoisht'hū,

^b Cutting wells made a man famous in patriarchal times: a well, said to be Jacob's well, existed in Samaria at the commencement of the Christian era. John iv. 6, 12.

^c *Ficus religiosa*. ^d *Ficus Indica*. ^e *Egle marmelos*. ^f *Jonesia asoca*.
^g *Mimusopa eleugl*. ^h *Ficus venosa*. ⁱ *Ficus glomerata*. ^k *Dalbergia Sisso*.
^l *Xanthochymus pictorius*. ^m Unascertained. ⁿ *Ficus religiosa*. ^o *Melia azadirachta*. ^p *Michelia champaca*. ^q *Mesua ferea*. ^r *Borassus flabelliformis*.

^s There are very few good public roads in Bengal.



rich Hindoos, as an act of merit, erect sheds by the public roads, and supply travellers gratis with water and other refreshments.

For the comfort of travellers, lodging-houses are erected by opulent Hindoos on the side of public roads, in some of which travellers are supplied with refreshments gratis.

SECT. XX.—*Reading and hearing Pooranŭs.*

At the close of most of the pooranŭs, the writers affirm, that it is an act of the greatest merit, extinguishing all sin, for the people to read these works, or hear them read. Those principally recited in Bengal, as an act of merit, are the Mūhabharatū, the Shrēe-bhagŭvātū, the Kalikū pooranū, the Ootkūlū and Kalēe-khūndŭs.*

Some auspicious day, in the month Kartikū, Maghū, or Voi-shakhū, is chosen, on the day preceding which the bramhŭns are entertained. A shed, covered with thatch and open on all sides, is prepared, sufficiently large, if the ceremony be on a grand scale, to accommodate four or five thousand people. At one end, a place rather elevated is prepared for the person who is to read; and the other end, if there be a portico to the house, is enclosed by a curtain, from whence the women hear, and peep through the crevices. Mats are spread for the people to sit on, the bramhŭns in one place, and the kayŭst'hŭs in another, and the shōōdrŭs in another. On the appointed day all take their places: the people, on entering, make prostration to the shalgramū and to the bramhŭns. The person at whose expense this is performed, after bathing, enters the assembly, acquaints the pūndits with his design, and asks leave to choose those who are to read; to each of whom he presents a piece of cloth, directing him what to do. The reader (Pat'hukū) sits on the elevated seat; below him, on the right and left, sit the examiners, (Dharūkŭs); and before him the Sūdŭsyŭs, who decide upon the exactness of the copy. Two persons (Shrotas) sit in front, and in the name of the householder hear it read. Before the recitation begins, a bramhŭn in his name presents a garland of flowers, and some white paint, to the shalgramū; places very thick garlands on the neck, arms, and head of the reader, and anoints his breast and forehead with white paint; and afterwards places garlands round the necks of the bramhŭns and some of the

* The two last works are parts of the Skūndū pooranū.

a When a kayŭst'hŭ has a pooranū read at his own house, before the recital commences the officiating bramhŭn worships the book, the author, and the person whose actions are celebrated in this work. Flowers, rice, a burnt-offering, &c. are presented to the book, and to the persons worshipped.



shōōdrūs. The Pat'hūkū then (about nine or ten o'clock in the forenoon) beings to read one of these pooranūs aloud. The first day they sit about an hour; but on the succeeding days they begin at seven and continue till twelve; and in the afternoon meet again, when the meaning of what was read in the forenoon in Sūngskritū is to be given in Bengalee, by the Kūt'hūkū, or speaker; who takes the seat of the Pat'hūkū, placing the shalgramū upon a stand before him. At times the passions of the multitude are greatly moved; when some one perhaps presents the reader with a piece of money. The whole is closed at dusk, when the people retire, and converse upon what they have heard. This method is pursued from day to day till the book is finished. The recitation of the Mūhabharūtū occupies four months, of the Shrēī-bhagūvūtū about one.

Some persons entertain the guests on the last day instead of the first, dismissing the bramhūns with presents. It is said, that not less than 100,000 rupees have been sometimes expended by rich men at such recitals. The person who causes these books to be read, is promised great future rewards.

SECT. XXI.—*Sacred Rehearsals, (Gēētū.*)*

THE Hindoos, as an act of merit, employ persons to sing those parts of their shastrūs, which contain the history of their gods. These songs have been composed in the Bengalee from the following, among other shastrūs: the Chūdēē, Ramayñnū, the Mūhabharūtū, the Shrēē-bhagūvūtū, the Gūnga-vakyū-vūlēē, the Kalikū, Pudmū, and Shivū pooranūs, and the Kashēē-khūdū. The names of the songs are: Kalēē-kēērtūnū, Unnūdamūngūlū, Krishnū-mūngūlū, Gūnga-bhūktee-tūringinēē, Kūveekūnkūnū, Mūnūsa-mūngūlū. Hūree-sūngkēērtūnū, Pēērér-ganū, Dhūpér-ganū.

As a specimen of the manner in which this singing is conducted, I insert an account of the performance called Kūvee-kūnkūnū. —Sometimes a rich man bears the expense, and at others half a dozen persons join in it. If the former, he has the rehearsal in his own yard; and if several unite, it is done in some suitable place in the village, after the place has been swept, and an awning put over it. Eight or ten singers of any caste, attended by four or five musicians are employed. Upon the ancles of all the singers are loose brass rings, which make a ginglyng noise: in the left hand is held a brush made from the tail of the cow of Tartary; and in the right, round flat pieces of metal, which by being shook, make a jinglyng noise. The drum continues to beat till all the people

* From goi, sing.

have taken their places; after which the chief singer steps forth, and after a short preface begins to sing, moving his feet, waving his hands, and now and then dancing. The softer music also plays at intervals, and the other singers take parts, waving the cow-tails, and dancing with a slow motion. When the passions of the hearers are affected, some throw small pieces of money at the feet of the principal singer. The performance continues during the day for nearly six hours, and is renewed again at night.

These rehearsals are in some instances continued a month: each day a new song is chosen. The inferior singers receive about eight-pence a day each; and for this trifle sing till they are black in the face, and become quite hoarse. The performance being out of doors, is very unfavourable to vocal efforts, and the exertions of the singers are in consequence very painful. The gifts to those singers who excel, often increase the allowance considerably; and at the time of their dismissal, the performers have garments, &c. presented to them. A feast to the brambhūns concludes the rehearsal. Sometimes women are employed, though not frequently.

The hearing of these songs, however filthy some of them may be, is considered as an act of religious merit.

SECT. XXII.—*Hanging Lamps in the Air.*

IN the month Kartikū, the Hindoos suspend lamps in the air on bamboos, in honour of the gods, and in obedience to the shastrūs. I cannot learn any other origin of this custom than this, that as the offerings of lamps to particular gods is considered as an act of merit, so this offering to all the gods, during the auspicious month Kartikū, is supposed to procure many benefits to the giver.

SECT. XXIII.—*Method of preventing Family Misfortunes:*

IF a Hindoo die on an unlucky day, the shastrūs declare that not only the whole race of such a person, but the very trees of his garden will perish. To prevent these direful effects, a ceremony called Pooshkūra-shantee is performed in the night, by the river side, or in some plain; where two brambhūns sit on an altar, and worship the nine planets, also Yūmū, Chitrū-goopṭū, Pooshkūrū-poorooshū,¹ and the shalgramū; and afterwards offer a sacrifice. One of the brambhūns then makes the images of Yūmū

¹ Yūmū is the judge of the dead; Chitrū-goopṭū is his recorder; and Pooshkūrū poorooshū, a kind of inferior deity, who resides with Yūmū.



and Pooshkūrū-poorooshū ; one with cow-dung, and the other with paste made of rice. To these images he imparts souls, worships the knife, slays a fish, and offers it in two parts, with some blood, to the cow-dung and paste images. The person who performs this ceremony then dismisses the two bramhūns with fees, and avoids seeing their faces any more on that night.

SECT. XXIV.—*Ceremony for removing the Evils following bad Omens.*

IF a thunder-bolt fall on a house ; if a vulture, or hargilla (the gigantic crane,) alight on it ; or if shackals or owls lodge in it ; or if a shackal howl in the yard in the day-time, some evil will befall the persons living in this house. To prevent this, the ceremony called Udbhootū-shantee is performed ; which comprises the worship of Brūmha and other gods, the burnt-sacrifice, repeating the name of a certain deity, &c.

SECT. XXV.—*Ceremonies performed while sitting on a dead Body.*

IN the former edition of this work, I inserted a pretty long account of a number of strange ceremonies, principally drawn from the tūntrūs, and known under the name of Sadhūnū. One of these rites is performed while sitting on a dead body ; and the whole are practised under the superstitious notion that the worshipper will obtain an interview with his guardian deity, and be empowered to work miracles.

The late Ramū-Krishnū, raja of Natorū, employed the greater part of his time in repeating the name of his guardian deity, and in other gloomy and intoxicating rites. The princess who had adopted him, and who had become his spiritual guide, was offended on perceiving his turn of mind. A little before his death, he performed the Shūvū-sadhūnū, and his house steward, a bramhūn, provided for him a dead body and other necessary articles ; and it is affirmed, that while the raja was sitting on the dead body, (which was placed in the temple of Kalēē, built by the raja at Natorū,²) he was thrown from it to the river Narūdū, a distance of about half a mile. After a long search, the raja was found on this spot in a state of insensibility, and in a few days after he died. I give this story as it was related to me by two or three bramhūns. That the raja performed the Shūvū-sadhūnū is very probable.

² The raja is said to have endowed this temple with-lands, &c. of the annual value of 100,000 rupees.

SECT. XXVI.—*Ceremonies for removing, subduing, or destroying Enemies.*

THE tñtrū shastrūś, and even the védūś, have laid down the forms of an act of worship to remove an enemy to a distance, to bring him into subjection, or to destroy him. This worship is addressed to the yoginēś, or other inferior deities, before a female image made of cow-dung, or a pan of water, on a Tuesday or Saturday, at the darkest hour of the night. Many incantations are repeated, and some bloody sacrifices offered. The worshipper expects, that by the power of these incantations his enemy will be seized with some dreadful disease, and will thus perish by the unseen hand of the yoginēś. If a person hear that his enemy is performing these ceremonies for his destruction, he pays another person to perform similar rites, to prevent any evil arising to him.

The Hindoos have also a great variety of incantations, which are supposed to possess the same power as charms in Europe.* For destroying the cattle or goods of an enemy, incantations are used; as well as to hinder cows from calving, milk from yielding butter, &c. Another incantation is used to extract fish bones from the throat. They have incantations also for almost every disease; as, the head-ache, tooth-ache, fever, dysentery, leprosy, madness, burns, scalds, eruptions on the skin, &c. In the tooth-ache they are taught to imagine, that by the power of the incantation a small grub is extracted from the tooth. An incantation is repeated to make a tree grow in the belly of an enemy, as well as to obtain preservation from snakes, tigers, witches, ghosts, and all other destructive things; and to drive away serpents, or wild beasts. If any one has been robbed, he prevails upon a person to read an incantation to discover the thief. If any one, who has power to injure another, be offended, the Hindoos read an incantation to appease him. If a person has a trial depending in a court of justice, he reads an incantation while putting on his turban, that he may gain his cause. The caste of Hindoos who keep snakes for a show, repeat incantations that they may handle these snakes without harm. Other incantations are mentioned, by which a person is able to conceal himself, when in the act of doing any thing requiring secrecy.

SECT. XXVII.—*Impure Orgies, with Flesh, spirituous Liquors, &c. (Pōōrnabhishékū.)*

SOME of the worshippers of the female deities assume the profession of brūmhūcharēś; among whom the ceremony called pōōrnabhishékū is known, and which is performed in the night, in

* Some incantations must be read every day, others preserve their power three, and some eight days; but no incantation will keep good longer than eight days, without being read afresh.



a secret manner, at the house of the person who understands the formulas. He who wishes to be initiated into these rites, raises an altar of earth in the house appointed, and scatters some peas on it, which sprout out by the time the altar is used. On the day preceding the rites, he performs the *vriddhee-shraddhū* in the name of his deceased ancestors; and during the whole of the following night, repeats the name of the goddess to be worshipped, rehearses her praise, eats flesh, drinks spirits, &c. On the following day, he takes to the house appointed some flesh, (of any animal,) spirituous liquors, rice, fish, and many other offerings; with nine females of different castes, (one of which must be a *brāmhūn's* daughter,) and nine men, (*brūmhūcharēēs*;) with one female for the priest, and another for himself. The priest next takes nine pans of water, and places on them branches of different trees, and sets up some plantain trunks around them; after which the person to be initiated presents a garment to the priest, and intreats him to anoint him. The priest then offers to the goddess, an intoxicating beverage made with the leaves of hemp; of which all present, both women and men partake. He next rubs on the foreheads of the persons present some red lead, and worships the goddess, the guardian deity of the person to be initiated, making the latter repeat it; and worships the men and women who are present, presenting to each a piece of cloth and other offerings. Next the priest gives to the women spirituous liquors, in cups made of the cocoanut, or of human skulls. What they leave is taken out of the cups, mixed together, and given to the men. The women then arise one by one, and, dipping the branches into the pans of water, sprinkle the person to be initiated, repeating incantations. This action is repeated by the priest, who changes the name of the disciple, and gives him one expressive of the state into which he is entering, as, *Ānūndū-nat'hū*, i. e., the lord of joy. If after this the disciple should become a religious mendicant, he is called a *Vyūktavū-dhōōtū*: if he continue in a secular state, he is called a *Gooptavū-dhōōtū*.^b All the persons present continue repeating the names of their guardian deities, and at intervals partake of the offerings, without considering the distinctions of caste, or the unlawfulness of the food. After midnight, acts of obscenity are perpetrated so abominable, that the *brāmhūn* who gave me this account could only repeat them in part.^c After this, the priest worships one or more females, the daughters of *brāmhūns*, and sacrifices a goat to *Bhūgūvūtēē*. The initiated then offers a

^b The first of these two names implies, that the person makes no secret of his being in the order into which he is initiated. He therefore becomes a religious mendicant, and publicly drinks and smokes intoxicating herbs. The latter, after initiation, continues in a secular state, and drinks spirituous liquors in secret.

^c *Ramū-nat'hū*, the second *Sāṅskritū pūndit* in the college, informed a friend of mine, that he once watched one of these groups unobserved, when spirits were poured on the head of a naked woman, while another drank them as they ran from her body.



present of money to the priest, and to the females and males present. The remainder of the night is spent in eating, drinking spirits, and repeating the names of different deities. These abominable ceremonies are enjoined in most of the *tūntrū* *shastrūs*. The *brāmhūn* who gave me this account had procured it from a *brūmhūcharēē*, by pretending that he wished to perform these rites.

In the year 1809, *Trikonū-goswamēē*, a *vyūktavū-dhōōtū* died at *Kalēē-ghatū*, in the following manner :—Three days before his death he dug a grave near his hut, in a place surrounded by three *yilwū* trees, which he himself had planted. In the evening he placed a lamp in the grave, in which he made an offering of flesh, greens, rice, &c. to the shackals, repeating it the next evening. The following day he obtained from a rich native ten rupees worth of spirituous liquors, and invited a number of mendicants, who sat drinking with him till twelve at noon, when he asked among the spectators at what hour it would be full moon ; being informed, he went and sat in his grave, and continued drinking liquors. Just before the time for the full moon, he turned his head towards the temple of *Kalēē*, and informed the spectators that he had come to *Kalēē-ghatū* with the hope of seeing the goddess, not the image in the temple. He had frequently been urged by different persons to visit the temple ; but though he had not assigned a reason for his omission, he now asked, what he was to go and see there :—a temple ? He could see that where he was. A piece of stone made into a face, or the silver hands ? He could see stones and silver any where else. He wished to see the goddess herself ; but he had not, in this body, obtained the sight. However, he had still a mouth and a tongue, and he would again call upon her. He then called out aloud, twice, '*Kalēē ! Kalēē !*' and almost immediately died ;—probably from excessive intoxication. The spectators, though *Hindoos*, (who in general despise a drunkard,) considered this man as a great saint, who had foreseen his own death when in health : he had not less than four hundred disciples.

The persons who have gone through the ceremony of *Pōornabishékū* conceal this fact as much as possible, as the drinking of spirits is disgraceful. They renounce all the ceremonies of the other *Hindoos*, as far as they can do it without incurring disgrace and loss of caste.

Two *brāmhūns*, who sat with me when I was finishing this account, assured me, that the drinking of spirits was now so common, that out of sixteen *Hindoos*, two drank spirits in secret, and about one in sixteen in public.⁴ Several of the *Hindoo* *rajas*, who

⁴ They offer, or pretend to offer, these spirits to the idols, and then the drinking, or drinking to excess, is no crime in the opinion of these *brūmhūcharēēs*. Amongst the regular *Hindoos*, the eating of flesh is a crime, but eating flesh that has been offered to an image is an innocent action.



had received the initiating incantations of the female deities, are said to have given themselves up to the greatest excesses in drinking spirits.

SECT. XXVIII.—*Burning of Widows alive.*

THE following and other passages from the Hindoo shastrūs have no doubt given rise to this singularly shocking practice.

‘O Fire, let these women, with bodies anointed with clarified butter, eyes (coloured) with stibium, and void of tears, enter thee, the parent of water, that they may not be separated from their husbands, but may be in union with excellent husbands, be sinless, and jewels among women.—*Rig-vedū*.

‘There are 35,000,000 hairs on the human body. The woman who ascends the pile with her husband, will remain so many years in heaven.—As the snake-catcher draws the serpent from its hole, so she, rescuing her husband, (from hell,) rejoices with him.—The woman who expires on the funeral pile with her husband, purifies the family of her mother, her father and her husband.—If the husband be a bramhūicide, an ungrateful person, or a murderer of his friend, the wife by burning with him purges away his sins.—There is no virtue greater than a virtuous* woman’s burning herself with her husband.—No other effectual duty is known for virtuous women, at any time after the death of their lords, except casting themselves into the same fire.—As long as a woman, in her successive transmigrations, shall decline burning herself, like a faithful wife, on the same fire with her deceased lord, so long shall she not be exempted from springing again to life in the body of some female animal.’—*Ungira*.

‘If a woman who had despised her husband, and had done what was contrary to his mind, should (even) from mercenary motives, as fear, or a suspension of the reasoning powers, die with her husband, she shall be purged from all (crimes).’—*Māhabharātū*.

‘Though he have sunk to a region of torment, be restrained in dreadful bonds, have reached the place of anguish, be seized by the imps of Yūmū, be exhausted of strength, and afflicted and tortured for his crimes; still, as a serpent-catcher unerringly drags a serpent from his hole, so does she draw her husband from hell, and ascend with him to heaven by the power of devotion.—If the

* The terms Sadhwēē and Sūtāē, here rendered virtuous, are thus explained by Harētū:—‘commiserating with her husband in trouble, rejoicing in his joys, neglecting herself when he is gone from home, and dying at his death.’ In the Mītshyū pooranū it is said, ‘By the favour of a chaste woman (Sadhwēē) the universe is preserved, on which account she is to be regarded by kings and people as a goddess.’



wife be within one day's journey of the place where the husband died, and signify her wish to burn with him, the burning of his corpse shall be delayed till her arrival.—If the husband die on the third day of the wife's menstrual discharge, and she desire to burn with him, the burning of his corpse shall be delayed one day to accommodate her.—*Vyāsī*.

'If the husband be out of the country when he dies, let the virtuous wife take his slippers, (or any thing else which belongs to his dress,) and binding them (or it) on her breast, after purification, enter a separate fire.'—*Brāmkū pooranī*.

'A brāmhūnēē cannot burn herself on a separate pile.' *Goūtāmā*.
—'But this is an eminent virtue in another woman.' *Ooshāna*.

'A woman with a young child, pregnant, doubtful whether she is pregnant or not, or menstuous, cannot ascend the pile. *Vrihūn-narūdēyī pooranī*.—The Vishnū pooranī adds, 'or lately brought to bed, (within 20 or 30 days,) cannot,' &c.

I do not find, that it is common for women to reveal their intention of being burnt with their husbands while both parties are in health. A few, however, avow this in confidence to their husbands, and there may be circumstances in the family which may lead to the expectation of such an event. In some families, for several generations, the widow invariably perishes at the death of her husband; and thus established custom exacts this self-immolation from every woman, who has been so unhappy as to have become united to such a family. How shocking to the female herself, had she Christian feelings, to know that such a death awaits her! How shocking to the son, had he the feelings of a man, to know that he is doomed to perpetrate so horrible a matricide!

When the husband is directed by the physician to be carried to the river side, there being then no hopes of his recovery, the wife declares her resolution to be burnt with him.' In this case, she is treated with great respect by her neighbours, who bring her delicate food, &c., and when the husband is dead, she again declares her resolution to be burnt with his body. Having broken a small branch from the mangoe tree, she takes it with her, and proceeds to the body, where she sits down. The barber then paints the sides of her feet red; after which she bathes, and puts on new clothes. During these preparations, the drum beats a certain sound, by which it is known, that a widow is about to be burnt with the corpse of her husband. On hearing this all the village assembles. The son, or if there be no son, a relation, or the head man of the village

'Dying in the sight of the Ganges is not considered as absolutely necessary, however, if a woman perish with the dead body; and sometimes a wife forbids the removal of her sick husband, assuring her friends, that she means to be burnt, and thus make the salvation of her husband certain without the help of Gūṅga.



provides the articles necessary for the ceremony. A hole is first dug in the ground, round which stakes are driven into the earth, and thick green stakes laid across to form a kind of bed; and upon these are laid, in abundance, dry faggots, hemp, clarified butter, pitch, &c. The officiating brāmhūn now causes the widow to repeat the formulas, in which she prays, that 'as long as fourteen Indrūs reign, or as many years as there are hairs on her head, she may abide in heaven with her husband; that the heavenly dancers during this time may wait on her and her husband; and that by this act of merit all the ancestors of her father, mother, and husband, may ascend to heaven.' She now presents her ornaments to her friends, ties some red cotton on both wrists, puts two new combs in her hair, paints her forehead, and takes into the end of the cloth that she wears some parched rice and kourees. While this is going forward, the dead body is anointed with clarified butter and bathed, prayers are repeated over it, and it is dressed in new clothes. The son next takes a handful of boiled rice, prepared for the purpose, and, repeating an incantation, offers it in the name of his deceased father. Ropes and another piece of cloth are spread upon the wood, and the dead body is then laid upon the pile. The widow next walks round the funeral pile seven times, strewing parched rice and kourees as she goes, which some of the spectators endeavour to catch, under the idea that they will cure diseases.^s The widow now ascends the fatal pile, or rather throws herself down upon it by the side of the dead body. A few female ornaments having been laid over her, the ropes are drawn over the bodies which are tied together, and faggots placed upon them. The son then, averting his head, puts fire to the face of his father, and at the same moment several persons light the pile at different sides, when women, relations, &c. set up a cry: more faggots are now thrown upon the pile with haste, and two bamboo levers are brought over the whole, to hold down the bodies and the pile.^h Several persons are employed in holding down these levers, and others in throwing water upon them, that they may not be scorched. While the fire is burning, more clarified butter, pitch, and faggots, are thrown into it, till the bodies are consumed. It may take about two hours before the whole is burnt, but I conceive the woman must be dead in a few minutes after the fire has been kindled. At the close, each of the persons who have been employed, takes up a burning stick and throws it on the remaining fire. The bones, &c. that may be left, are cast into the Ganges. The place where the bodies have been burnt is plentifully washed with water; after which the son of the deceased makes two balls of boiled rice, and, with an incan-

^s Mothers hang the kourees round the necks of sick children.

^h A person sometimes takes one of these bamboos, after the bodies are burnt, and, making a bow and arrow with it, repeats incantations over it. He then makes an image of some enemy with clay, and lets fly the arrow into this image. The person whose image is thus pierced is said to be immediately seized with a pain in his breast.

tation, offers them in the name of his father and mother, and lays them on the spot where they were burnt. The persons who have been engaged in burning the bodies now bathe; and each one, taking up water in his hands three times, and repeating incantations, pours out drink-offerings to the deceased. The son binds upon his loins, in coming up out of the water, a shred of new cloth; which he wears, if a bramhūn, ten days. After this the family return home, or remain till evening; or, if the burning has taken place in the evening, till the next morning. Before entering the house, they touch a piece of hot iron, and also fire. This is done as a charm against evil spirits.

Soon after my arrival in Bengal, I was an eye-witness to two instances of the burning of widows to death:—on the latter occasion two women were burnt together; one of them appeared to possess great resolution, but the other was almost dead with fear. In the year 1812, I saw another widow burnt to death at Soondūrū-poorū, a distance of about three miles from Serampore; and in the month of November, 1812, the wife of Ramū-nidhee, a banker, of Serampore, was burnt alive with the dead body of her husband, not half a mile from the Mission-house. These facts respecting the murder of the helpless widow as a religious ceremony are indeed so notorious, that the most careless traveller may convince himself, if he take the least notice of what is doing on the banks of the river. The natives do not attempt to hide these murders, but rather glory in them as proofs of the divine nature of their religion. The facts hereafter inserted have been voluntarily given to me by respectable natives, most of whom were eye-witnesses of what they here testify.

Several years ago, Ram-Nat'hū, the second Sūngskritū pūndit in the College of Fort-William, saw thirteen women burn themselves with one Mooktūa-ramū, of Oola, near Shantee-poorū. After the pile, which was very large, had been set on fire, a quantity of pitch being previously thrown into it to make it burn the fiercer, another of this man's wives came, and insisted on burning: while she was repeating the formulas, however, her resolution failed, and she wished to escape; but her son, perceiving this, pushed her into the fire, which had been kindled on the sloping bank of the river, and the poor woman, to save herself, caught hold of another woman, a wife also of the deceased, and pulled her into the fire, where they both perished.

About the year 1789, Ūbhāyū-chūrūnū, a bramhūn, saw four women burnt with Ramū-kantū, a koolēēnū bramhūn, at Vasū-dūroonēē, near Kalēē-ghatū. Three of these women were already surrounded by the flames when the fourth arrived. She insisted on being burnt with them: accordingly, after going rapidly through the preparatory ceremonies, (the bramhūns in the mean time bringing a large quantity of combustible materials,) some fresh wood was laid near the fire already kindled, upon which this infatuated female



threw herself. In a moment faggots, oil, pitch, &c. were thrown upon her, and, amidst the shouts of the mob, she expired.

Ramū-Hūree, a bramhūn, had three wives living at Khūrūdūh, near Calcutta, at the time of his death, about the year 1802. One of them was deranged; with another he had never cohabited, and by the other he had one son. The latter had agreed with her husband, that, whenever he should die, she would burn with him; and he promised her, that if he died at Patna, where his employer lived, the body should be sent down to Khūrūdūh. This woman touched her husband's body at the time of this agreement, as a solemn ratification^b of what she said.^c After some time this man died at Patna, and a friend fastened the body in a box, and sent it down on a boat. As soon as it arrived at Khūrūdūh, the news was sent to his relations. The wife who had made the agreement failed in her resolution, and sat in the house weeping. Her son, who was grown to manhood, ordered her repeatedly, in the most brutal manner, to proceed to the funeral pile; and reminded her, that it was through her that his father's body had been brought so far: but she refused, and still remained weeping. While this was going forward, the deranged wife, hearing that her husband was dead, and that his body had arrived at the landing-place, instantly declared that she would burn with him. The people endeavoured to terrify her, and divert her from her purpose; but she persisted in affirming that she would positively burn. She came to the house, and poured the most bitter reproaches on the wife who was unwilling to die. This poor deranged wretch had a chain on her leg: a spectator proposed to take it off, and lead her to the funeral pile; and the third wife arriving, she was led with this deranged woman to the body: the wood and other articles for the funeral pile were prepared, and a large crowd had assembled by the river side. As soon as the deranged wife saw the dead body, which was very much disfigured, and exceedingly

^b The Hindoos also make oath while touching one of the shastrās, or the shal-gramū, or a cow, or fire, or the toolūsee, or a roodrakshū string of beads, or rice. When made before a bramhūn, or in a temple, or by laying the hand on the head of a son, an oath is ratified.

^c The Hindoos relate a number of stories respecting women who promised their husbands to burn with them, but afterwards shrank from the task. A story of this kind is related of a man named Gopalū-bharṭ, who pretended to die, in order to try the faithfulness of his wife. As soon as she thought he was really dead, she declared she would not die on his funeral pile; when the (supposed) dead man arose, and upbraided her for her insincerity. Another story is related of Shūmbhoo-ramū, of Arachya, in Burdwan, who had three wives, but was most attached to the youngest. This woman had promised her husband to burn with him after his death, and he had in consequence behaved with the greatest coolness towards his other wives, and had heaped all his wealth on this favourite. A person suggested doubts respecting the sincerity of this woman's declaration. To try her, on a certain occasion, when absent from home, her husband sent a relation to say he was dead, and to urge her to go to the spot to be burnt with him. As soon as she heard the tidings, instead of proceeding to the spot where the body was supposed to be waiting, she locked up all the jewels, &c. her husband had given her, and set her husband's relations at defiance. In a few hours the (dead) husband arrived, degraded this wife, and for the future became more attached to the other two.



offensive, she declared it was not her husband; that in fact they were going to burn her with a dead cow. She poured curses on them all, and protested she would not burn with a dead cow.^k The other female, who had never touched her husband, except at the marriage ceremony, was then bound to this putrid carcase, and devoured by the flames.

About the year 1796, the following most shocking and atrocious murder, under the name of *sūhū-mūrūnū*,^l was perpetrated at Mujil-poorū, about a day's journey south from Calcutta. Bancha-ramū, a bramhūn of the above place dying, his wife at a late hour went to be burnt with the body: all the previous ceremonies were performed; she was fastened on the pile, and the fire was kindled; but the night was dark and rainy. When the fire began to scorch this poor woman, she contrived to disentangle herself from the dead body, and creeping from under the pile, hid herself among some brush-wood. In a little time it was discovered that there was only one body on the pile. The relations immediately took the alarm, and searched for the poor wretch; the son soon dragged her forth, and insisted that she should throw herself on the pile again, or drown or hang herself. She pleaded for her life at the hands of her own son, and declared that she could not embrace so horrid a death—but she pleaded in vain: the son urged, that he should lose his caste, and that therefore he would die, or she should. Unable to persuade her to hang or drown herself, the son and others present then tied her hands and feet, and threw her on the funeral pile, where she quickly perished.

Gopē-nat'hū, a bramhūn employed in the Serampore Printing-office, was informed by his nephew, that in the year 1799, he saw thirty-seven females burnt alive with the remains of *Unūtū-ramū*, a bramhūn of Bagna-para, near Nūdēya. This *koolēnū* bramhūn had more than a hundred wives. At the first kindling of the fire, only three of them were present; but *the fire was kept burning three days!* When one or more arrived, the ceremonies were performed, *and they threw themselves on the blazing fire!* On the first day, three were burnt; on the second fifteen; and on the third nineteen! Among these, some were forty years old, and others as young as sixteen. The three first had lived with this bramhūn; the others had seldom seen him. From one family he had married four sisters; two of these were among the slaughtered victims.

In the year 1812, a *koolēnū* bramhūn, who had married twenty-five women, died at Choonā-khalee. Thirteen died during his life-

^k In the month of January, 1813, a poor deranged woman was burnt alive with the corpse of her husband, *Rūgho-nat'hū*, a bramhūn, at Bājā-poorū, in the zillah of Krishnū-nāgūrū.

^l *Sūhū*, with; *mūrūnū*, death.



time; the remaining twelve perished with him on the funeral pile, leaving thirty children to deplore the fatal effects of this horrid system.

Some years ago, a koolēñū bramhūn, of considerable property, died at Sookhūchūrū, three miles east of Serampore. He had married more than forty women, eighteen of whom perished on the funeral pile. On this occasion a fire extending ten or twelve yards in length was prepared, into which they threw themselves, leaving more than forty children.

About the year 1802, the wife of a man of property of the writer caste was burnt at Kashēē-poorū, in the suburbs of Calcutta. The bramhūn who witnessed this scene informed me, that when he went to the spot, he saw a vast crowd of people assembled; and amongst the rest the above female, a girl about fourteen years old, and another female, of a different caste, who had cohabited with the deceased. The girl addressed herself to the mistress of her husband, and asked her what she did there: it was true, her husband had never loved her, nor had he for one day since their marriage lived with her; yet she was now resolved to enjoy his company after death. She added, (continuing her address to the mistress of her husband,) 'If, however, you will accompany him, come, let us burn together; if not, arise and depart.' She then asked the woman what her husband had bequeathed to her, and was answered that he had given her twenty-five rupees, and some clothes. To this the wife of the deceased added twenty-five more. After this conversation, the bramhūns hastened the ceremonies; her friends entreated her to eat some sweetmeats, but she declined it, and declared that she would eat nothing but that which she came to eat, (fire.) At this time the clouds gathered thick, and there was the appearance of heavy rain: some persons urged delay till the rain was over; but she requested them to hasten the business, for she was ready. A bramhūn now arrived, and entreated the favour of this woman to forgive a debt due to her husband, for which his brother was in confinement. She forgave it, leaving a written order behind her, to which she affixed her mark. After the ceremonies by the side of the river, and near the pile, were concluded, she laid herself down on the pile, placing one arm under the head of the deceased, and the other over his breast, and they were thus tied together. At the time of lighting the pile, the rain fell in torrents, and the fire was so partially lighted, that during half an hour it only singed her clothes and her hair. This devoted female, however, remained in the same posture on the pile till the rain ceased, when, in a few seconds, the fire devoured her. It was reported that she had cohabited with others, but she denied it before she ascended the pile.

An English clergyman, now deceased, once related to me two scenes to which he had been an eye-witness:—one was that of a

young woman, who appeared to possess the most perfect serenity of mind during every part of the preparatory ceremonies : calm and placid, she acted as though unconscious of the least danger ; she smiled at some, gave presents to others, and walked round the funeral pile, and laid herself down by the dead body, with as much composure as though she had been about to take rest at night. The other scene was very different ; the woman, middle-aged and corpulent, appeared to go through the business with extreme reluctance and agitation ; the bramhūns watched her, followed her closely, held her up, and led her round the funeral pile, and seemed to feel uneasy till they had tied her fast to the dead body, and had brought the faggots and bamboo levers over her. This clergyman added, that he saw one of this woman's arms move, as in convulsive motions, for some time after the pile was lighted. The Hindoos say, that it is a proof the woman was a great sinner, if any part of her body is seen to move after the pile has been lighted ; and, on the contrary, if she is not seen to move, they exclaim, ' Ah ! what a perfect creature she was ! What a blessed sūhū-mūrūnū was her's ! ' A respectable native once told me, that he had heard of a woman's shrieking dreadfully after she was laid on the pile, which, however, did not save her life."

Instances of children of eight or ten years of age thus devoting themselves are not uncommon. About the year 1804, a child eight years old was burnt with the dead body of Hūree-nat'hū, bramhūn of Elo, near Calcutta. At the time the news arrived of the death of this child's husband, she was playing with other children at a neighbour's house. Having just before been severely chastised by her aunt, and having formerly suffered much from her, she resolved to burn with the dead body, in order to avoid similar treatment in future ; nor could her relations induce her to alter her resolution. She said she would enter the fire, but would not go back to her aunt. As soon as she was laid on the pile, she appeared to die, (no doubt from fear,) even before the fire touched her. The Hindoos say, it is often the case, that the female who is really Sadhwēē, is united to her husband immediately on hearing the news of his death, without the delay of the fire.—Another instance of the same kind occurred in the year 1802, at Vūrishā, near Calcutta ; a child, eight years old, was burnt with her husband. Before she went to the funeral pile, she was compelled to put her hand upon some burning coals, and hold it there for some time, to convince her friends that she should not shrink at the sight of the fire.—About the year 1794, a girl, fifteen years old, who had been delivered of her first child about three weeks, was burnt with her husband, Dāvēē-chūrūnū, a bramhūn of Mūniramū-poorū, near

* I am credibly informed, that on the banks of the Brāmhu-pootrū, the Hindoos do not lay faggots on the bodies, nor are bamboos used as levers to hold them down ; but the widow lies on the pile with her arms round her husband, and fire is kindled beneath them.



Barrack-poorū. Her friends remonstrated with her, and did all except (what they ought to have done) use force. When they urged the situation of the infant she would leave, she begged they would not disturb her mind with such things: it was only a female child, and therefore the leaving it was of less consequence. After she had mounted the pile, she sat up, and assured the officiating bramhūn she then recollected, that in a former birth he was her father.

Women eighty years old and upwards sometimes burn with their husbands. About the year 1791, Gopalū-nayalūnkarū, a very learned bramhūn, died at Nūdēya. He was supposed to have been one hundred years old at the time of his death; his wife about eighty. She was almost in a state of second childhood, yet her gray hairs availed, nothing against this most abominable custom. —A similar instance occurred about the year 1809, at Shantee-poorū, when the wife of Ramū-chūndrū-vūsōo, a kayūst'hū, at the age of eighty or eighty-five, was burnt with the corpse of her husband.

Mrityoonjūyū, the first Sūngskritū pūndit in the College of Fort-William, once saw a bramhūnēē at Rūngū-poorū, who had escaped from the pile. She was carried away by a mat-maker, from whom she eloped, and afterwards lived with a Mūsūlman groom. —About the year 1804, a woman who had lived with a man as his wife, burnt herself with his body at Kalēē-ghatū, near Calcutta. —Some years ago, a sepoy from the upper provinces died at Khiddirū-poorū, near Calcutta. The woman who had cohabited with him went to the head land-owner, and requested him to provide the materials for burning her with the dead body. He did so, and this adulteress entered the flames, and was consumed with the dead body of her paramour.

In Orissa, the defenceless widow is compelled to cast herself into a pit of fire. If, on the death of a raja, his wife burn herself with him, his concubines are seized, and by beating, dragging, binding, and other forcible methods, are compelled to throw themselves into the pit, where they are all destroyed together. On this subject I beg leave to insert a letter drawn up by Pūrūshoo-ramū, a learned bramhūn: —Shrēē Pūrūshoo-ramū writes: I have myself seen the wives of one of the rajas of Oorisyā burn with their husband. These are the particulars: —after the death of raja Gopēē-nat'hī-dēvū, the head-queen, of her own accord, being prepared to be burnt with the body, a pit was dug, and quantities of wood piled up in it, upon which the corpse was laid, and upon this more faggots: when the fire blazed with the greatest fury, the head-queen cast herself into the flames and perished. The two other wives of the raja were unwilling to follow this example; but they were seized by force, and thrown into the pit, and consumed. This happened about the year 1793.'



The widows of the *yogēēs*, a description of weavers, are sometimes buried alive with their deceased husbands. If the person have died near the Ganges, the grave is dug by the side of the river, at the bottom of which they spread a new cloth, and on it lay the dead body. The widow then bathes, puts on new clothes, and paints her feet; and after various ceremonies, descends into the pit that is to swallow her up: in this living tomb she sits down, and places the head of her deceased husband on her knee, having a lamp near her. The priest (not a *brāmhūn*) sits by the side of the grave, and repeats certain ceremonies, while the friends of the deceased walk round the grave several times, repeating 'Hūree bū! Hūree bū!' (that is, literally, 'Repeat the name of Hūree,' but in its common use it is equivalent to 'Huzza! Huzza!'). The friends (if rich) cast into the grave garments, sweetmeats, sandal wood, rupees, milk, curds, clarified butter, or something of this kind; and the widow directs a few trifles to be given to her friends or children. The son also casts a new garment into the grave, with flowers, sandal wood, &c. after which earth is carefully thrown all round the widow, till it has arisen as high as her shoulders, when the relations throw earth in as fast as possible, till they have raised a mound of earth on the grave; when they tread it down with their feet, and thus bury the miserable wretch alive. They place on the grave sandal wood, rice, curds, a lamp, &c. and then, walking round the grave three times, return home.—Among the *voishnūvūs* also are instances of widows being buried alive with the dead bodies of their husbands.—On enquiring among the *brāmhūns*, and other Hindoos employed in the Serampore printing-office, I found that these murders were much more frequently practised than I had supposed: almost every one had seen widows thus buried alive, or had heard of them from undoubted authority.

I could easily increase the number of these accounts so as to form a volume; but I am not anxious to swell this work with more facts of this nature: these are sufficient to fill the mind of the benevolent with the deepest compassion for the miserable victims of this shocking superstition.

The Hindoo *shastrūs* permit a woman to alter her resolution, even on the funeral pile, and command such a person to observe a severe fast as an atonement. This fast, however, may be commuted by gifts to *brāmhūns*. The *Vishnoo pooranū* directs such a female to become a *brūmhūcharēē*; which profession obliges the person to abstain from every pleasure, from chewing betel or other exhilarating herbs, from anointing herself with oil," &c. Notwith-

ⁿ This anointing is called *ūbhishékū*: when oil is applied to the crown of the head, and reaches to all the limbs, it is called *ūbhayūgū*. There seems to be a strong affinity betwixt the Jewish and Hindoo methods of anointing in this respect: 'It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.'



standing this provision of the shastrū, I am informed that at present a widow, if she go to the dead body, declaring that she will be burnt with it, is never permitted to return: or, should such a case occur, she is delivered up to persons of the lowest caste to do what they will with her; she never goes back to her relations.

The desire of Hindoo women to die with their husbands, and the calmness of many in going through the ceremonies which precede this terrible death, are circumstances almost, if not altogether, unparalleled. It is another proof of the amazing power which this superstition has over the minds of its votaries.* Among other circumstances which urge them to this dreadful deed, we may rank the following:—First, the védūs, and other shastrūs, recommend it, and promise the widow that she shall deliver her husband from hell, and enjoy a long happiness with him in heaven; secondly, long custom has familiarised their minds to the deed; thirdly, by this act they escape the disgrace of widowhood, and their names are recorded among the honorable of their families;† fourthly, they avoid being starved and ill-treated by their relations; and lastly, the Hindoos treat the idea of death with comparative indifference, as being only changing one body for another, as the snake changes his skin. If they considered death as introducing a person into an unalterable state of existence, and God, the judge, as requiring purity of heart, no doubt these ideas would make them weigh well a step pregnant with such momentous consequences.

The conduct of the bramhūns at the burning of widows is so unfeeling, that those who have represented them to the world as the mildest and most amiable of men, need only attend on one of these occasions to convince them, that they have greatly imposed on mankind. Where a family of bramhūns suppose that the burning of a mother, or their brother's or uncle's wife, or any other female of the family, is necessary to support the credit of the family, the woman knows she must go, and that her death is expected. She is aware also, that if she should not burn, she will be treated with the greatest cruelty, and continually reproached, as having entailed disgrace on the family. The bramhūn who has greatly assisted me in this work, has very seriously assured me, that he believed violence was seldom used to compel a woman to ascend the pile; nay, that after she has declared her resolution, her friends

* Such a widow reflects thus: 'It is right that the wife leave the world with her husband; a son can never be to a mother what a husband is to a wife; the extinction of life is the work of a minute; by strangling, by drowning, how soon does the soul leave the body: there are no terrors then in the funeral pile, and I shall at once enter on happiness: what multitudes have died in this manner before me; and if I live, I have nothing but sorrow to expect.'

† It is common at Benares to set up, by the side of the river, stone monuments to the memory of widows who have been burnt with the bodies of deceased husbands. Persons coming from bathing bow to these stones, and sprinkle water on them, repeating the words *Sūtēē, Sūtēē*, i. e., *chaste*.



use various arguments to discover whether she be likely to persevere or not; (for if she go to the water side, and there refuse to burn, they consider it an indelible disgrace on the family;) that it is not uncommon for them to demand a proof of her resolution, by obliging her to hold her finger in the fire; if she be able to endure this, they conclude they are safe, and that she will not alter her resolution. If, however, she should flinch at the sight of the pile, &c. they remain deaf to whatever she says; they hurry her through the preparatory ceremonies, attend closely upon her, and go through the work of murder in the most determined manner.

Some years ago, two attempts were made, under the immediate superintendence of Dr. Carey, to ascertain the number of widows burnt alive within a given time. The first attempt was intended to ascertain the number thus burnt within thirty miles of Calcutta, during one year, viz. in 1803. Persons, selected for the purpose, were sent from place to place through that extent, to enquire of the people of each town or village how many had been burnt within the year. The return made a total of **FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHT**. Yet very few places east or west of the river Hoogly were visited. To ascertain this matter with greater exactness, ten persons were, in the year 1804, stationed in the different places within the above-mentioned extent of country; each person's station was marked out, and he continued on the watch for six months, taking account of every instance of a widow's being burnt which came under his observation. Monthly reports were sent in; and the result, though less than the preceding year's report, made the number between **TWO AND THREE HUNDRED** for the year!—If within so small a space several hundred widows were burnt alive in one year, **HOW MANY THOUSANDS OF THESE WIDOWS MUST BE MURDERED IN A YEAR—IN SO EXTENSIVE A COUNTRY AS HINDOOSTHAN!** So that, in fact, the funeral pile devours more than war itself! How truly shocking! Nothing equal to it exists in the whole work of human cruelty! What a tragie history would a complete detail of these burnings make!

SECT. XXIX.—*Voluntary Suicide, (Kamyū-Mūrūnū.*)*

A NUMBER of expressions in several shastrūs countenance the practice of voluntary suicide;† and some of the smritees, and pooranūs, lay down rules for Kamyū-mūrūnū; declaring it, however,

* It will easily occur to a person familiar with the Holy Scriptures, what a great difference there is betwixt the commands of these Scriptures respecting the widow and the orphan, and the Hindoo shastrūs. In the former the Divine Being declares himself to be 'the father of the fatherless, the husband of the widow.'

† From kamū, desire, and mūrūnū, death.

‡ Many modern works in the English language give too much countenance to this dreadful crime. What is it that unites nominal Christians and Heathens in so many points of doctrine and practice? Mūnoo says, 'A mansion infested by age and by sorrow let its occupier always cheerfully quit.' Mr. Hume says, 'Whenever pain or sorrow



a crime in a bramhūn; but meritorious in a shōōdrū. The person is directed first to offer an atonement for all his sins, by making a present of gold to bramhūns, and honoring them with a feast; afterwards, putting on new apparel and adorning himself with garlands of flowers, he is accompanied to the river by a band of music. If he has any property, he gives it to whom he pleases. then, sitting down by the side of the river, he repeats the name of his idol, and proclaims, that he is now about to renounce his life in this place in order to obtain such or such a benefit. After this, he and his friends proceed on a boat, and fastening pans of water to his body, he plunges into the stream. The spectators cry out, 'Hūree bul! Hūree bul! Huzza! Huzza! and then retire. Sometimes a person of property kindly interferes, and offers to relieve the wants of the victim if he will abstain from drowning himself; but the deluded man replies that he wants nothing, as he is going to heaven!

When a person is afflicted with a supposed incurable distemper, or is in distress, or despired, it is common for him to form the resolution of parting with life in the Ganges; or the crime is committed after a vow, at the time of making which the person prayed for some favour in the next birth, as riches, freedom from sorrow, &c. Sick persons sometimes abstain from food for several days while sitting near the river, that life may thus depart from them in sight of the holy stream: but the greater number drown themselves in the presence of the relations; and instances are mentioned, in which persons in the act of self-murder have been forcibly pushed back into the stream by their own offspring! There are different places of the Ganges where it is considered as most desirable for persons thus to murder themselves, and in some cases auspicious days are chosen on which to perform this work of *religious merit*; but a person's drowning himself in any part of the river is supposed to be followed with immediate happiness. At Sagūrū island it is accounted an auspicious sign if the person is speedily seized by a shark, or an alligator; but his future happiness is supposed to be very doubtful if he should remain long in the water before he is drowned. The British Government, for some years past, has sent a guard of sepoy to prevent persons from murdering themselves and their children at this junction of the Ganges with the sea, at the annual festivals held in this place.

so far overcome my patience, as to make me tired of life, I may conclude that I am recalled from my station in the plainest and most express terms. Where is the crime of turning a few ounces of blood from their natural channel? These are the opinions of Mūnoo and Hume. The Christian system, in every part, teaches us to say, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.' In England, where the idea prevails that self-murder excludes from the hope of mercy in the next world, suicides are very common. What then must they be in a country containing so much unrelieved distress as this, and where the inhabitants are persuaded, that self-murder in the Ganges is the very road to future happiness?

' In the year 1806, at this place, I saw a bramhūnēē (dripping with wet and

Some years ago, as Shivū-Shiromūnee,^a a bramhūn, was returning from bathing with Kashēē-nat'hū, another bramhūn, at Shantee-poorū, they saw a poor old man sitting on the bank of the river, and asked him what he was doing there. He replied, that he was destitute of friends, and was about to renounce his life in the Ganges. Kashēē-nat'hū urged him not to delay then, if he was come to die ;—but the man seemed to hesitate, and replied, that it was very cold. The bramhūn (hinting to his companion that he wished to see the sport before he returned home) reproached the poor trembling wretch for his cowardice, and seizing his hand, dragged him to the edge of the bank; where he made him sit down, rubbed over him the purifying clay of the river, and ordered him to repeat the proper incantations. While he was thus, with his eyes closed, repeating these forms, he slipped down, and sunk into the water, which was very deep, and perished!

About the year 1790, a young man of the order of dūndēes took up his abode at Kakshalēē, a village near Nūdēēya, for a few months, and began to grow very corpulent. Reflecting that a person of his order was bound to a life of mortification, and feeling his passions grow stronger and stronger, he resolved to renounce his life in the Ganges. He requested his friends to assist him in this act of self-murder, and they supplied him with a boat, some cord, and two water pans. He then proceeded on the boat into the middle of the stream, and, filling the pans with water, fastened one to his neck, and the other round his loins, and in this manner descended into the water—to rise no more! in the presence of a great multitude of applauding spectators. A few years after this another dūndēē, while suffering under a fever, renounced his life in the Ganges at Nūdēēya; and nearly at the same time, a dūndēē at Ariyadūh, about four miles from Calcutta, in a state of indisposition, refusing all medical aid, (in which indeed he acted according to the rules of his order,) cast himself into the river from a boat, and thus renounced life.

Gūnga-dhūrū-shastrēē, a learned bramhūn, informed me, that in the year 1806 he spent near two months at Prūyagū, during which time he saw about *thirty persons drown themselves!* Almost every day he saw or heard of one or more sūnyasēes who thus terminated their existence; and several instances occurred in which a man and his wife, having no children, drowned themselves together, praying for some blessings in the next birth.

A friend, in a letter written in the year 1813, says, 'The circumstance which you heard me relate of the poor leper, took

shivering with cold) who had just been prevented by the sepoys from drowning herself;—and during my continuance there I heard of several mothers who had been prevented from murdering their children.

^a This man related the fact to me himself.



place at Futwa, a little more than a year ago. On hearing the people of my boat declare that a man was going to be drowned, I looked out, and saw the poor creature, who had been deprived by disease of his fingers and toes, but who in other respects appeared healthy, eating very heartily in the presence of his friends. The bank being high, I could not leave the boat till we had proceeded to a considerable distance from the place where the man sat. As I was running towards the spot, I heard the people on the top of the boat call out, "He is drowned! he is drowned!" His attendants, who appeared to be his relatives, had assisted him to descend the bank; but whether they pushed him in, or whether he went into the water of his own accord, I cannot tell. He made great efforts to resist the stream, and reach the side, and struggled much before he sunk.—I endeavoured to impress on the spectators the heinousness of this crime; but they smiled at my concern, and said, 'they had only complied with the wishes of the deceased, who had been deprived by disease of his hands and feet.'

Another friend, in a letter written at Cutwa, in the year 1812, says, 'Last week I witnessed the burning of a leper. A pit about ten cubits in depth was dug, and a fire placed at the bottom of it. The poor man rolled himself into it, but instantly on feeling the fire begged to be taken out, and struggled hard for that purpose. His mother and sister, however, thrust him in again; and thus, a man who to all appearance might have survived several years, was cruelly burnt to death. I find that the practice is not uncommon in these parts.' This poor wretch died with the notion, that by thus purifying his body in the fire, he should receive a happy transmigration into a healthful body: whereas, if he had died by the disease, he would, after four births, have appeared on earth again as a leper.

Mr. C. in a letter from Agra, dated in the year 1812, says, 'I went out a few mornings ago, and came to an enclosed place, which, on enquiry, I found had been rendered sacred by ten persons having been buried alive there. I am informed, that many persons visit the place every Monday afternoon for worship; and that once or twice a year large crowds assemble here, and at another similar place near the city. There is great reason to fear that this practice is very common in these parts. At Allahabad many drown themselves every year; and at Vrindavūnū many are buried alive or drowned every year, probably every month.'

The Hindoos relate that there existed formerly at Kshēerū, a village near Nūḍēya, an instrument called kūrūvūt, which was used by devotees to cut off their own heads. The instrument was made in the shape of a half moon, with a sharp edge, and was placed at the back of the neck, having chains fastened at the two

extremities. The infatuated devotee, placing his feet on the stirrups, gave a violent jerk, and severed his head from his body.

SECT. XXX.—*Persons casting themselves from
Precipices, &c.*

ANOTHER way in which the Hindoo shastrûs allow a person to renounce life, is by throwing himself from a mountain, or some other eminence. Bengal is a perfect plain; and I have not learnt how far this permission of the shastrû is acted upon in the mountainous parts of Hindoost'hanû.

SECT. XXXI.—*Dying under the Wheels of
Jûgûnnath'kû's Car.*

AMONGST the immense multitudes assembled at the drawing of this car, are numbers afflicted with diseases, and others involved in worldly troubles, or worn out with age and neglect. It often happens that such persons, after offering up a prayer to the idol, that they may obtain happiness or riches in the next birth, cast themselves under the wheels of the car, and are instantly crushed to death. Great numbers of these cars are to be seen in Bengal; and every year, in some place or other, persons thus destroy themselves. At Jûgûnnath'kû-kshétrû, in Orissa, several perish annually. Many are accidentally thrown down by the pressure of the crowd, and are crushed to death. The victims who devote themselves to death in these forms have an entire confidence that they shall, by this meritorious act of self-murder, attain to happiness.

I beg leave here to insert the following extract of a letter from an officer to a friend, to confirm the facts related in this and the two preceding sections: 'I have known a woman, whose courage failed her on the pile, bludgeoned by her own dear kindred.' This I have told the author of 'The Vindication of the Hindoos.'—I have taken a Gentoo out of the Ganges: I perceived him at night, and called out to the boat-men.—'Sir, he is gone; he belongs to God.' 'Yes, but take him up, and God will get him hereafter.' We got him up at the last gasp: I gave him some brandy, and called it physic. 'O Sir, my caste is gone!' 'No, it is physic.' 'It is not that, Sir! but my family will never receive me. I am an outcaste!' 'What! for saving your life?' 'Yes.' 'Never mind such a family.'—I let above one hundred men out of limbo at



Jūgūnnath'hū: there were a thousand dead and dying;—all in limbo starving, to extort money from them.*

SECT. XXXII.—*Infanticide.*

THE people in some parts of India, particularly the inhabitants of Orissa, and of the eastern parts of Bengal, frequently offer their children to the goddess Gūnga. The following reason is assigned for this practice:—When a woman has been long married, and has no children, it is common for the man, or his wife, or both of them, to make a vow to the goddess Gūnga, that if she will bestow the blessing of children upon them, they will devote the first-born to her. If after this vow they have children, the eldest is nourished till a proper age, which may be three, four, or more years, according to circumstances, when, on a particular day appointed for bathing in any holy part of the river, they take the child with them, and offer it to this goddess: the child is encouraged to go farther and farther into the water till it is carried away by the stream, or is pushed off by its inhuman parents. Sometimes a stranger seizes the child, and brings it up; but it is abandoned by its parents from the moment it floats in the water, and if no one be found more humane than they, it infallibly perishes. The principal places in Bengal where this species of murder is practised, are, Gūnga-Sagūrū, where the river Hoogly disembogues itself into the sea; Voidyūvatēē, a town about fourteen miles to the north of Calcutta; Trivénēē, Nūḍēēya, Chakdūh and Prūyagū.

The following shocking custom appears to prevail principally in the northern districts of Bengal. If an infant refuse the mother's breast, and decline in health, it is said to be under the influence of some malignant spirit. Such a child is sometimes put into a basket, and hung up in a tree where this evil spirit is supposed to reside. It is generally destroyed by ants, or birds of prey; but sometimes perishes by neglect, though fed and clothed daily. If it should not be dead at the expiration of three days, the mother receives it home again, and nurses it: but this seldom happens. The late Mr. Thomas, a Missionary, once saved and restored to its mother, an infant which had fallen out of a basket, at Bholahatī, near Malda, at the moment a jackal was running away with it. As this gentleman and Mr. Carey were afterwards passing under the same tree, they found a basket hanging in the branches containing the skeleton of another infant, which had been devoured by ants. The custom is unknown in many places, but, it is to be feared, is too common in others.

In the north western parts of Hindoostanū, the horrid practice of sacrificing female children as soon as born, has been known

* I have not the authority of this gentleman for inserting this extract: but I rely on his known benevolence to excuse the freedom I have thus taken.



from time immemorial. The Hindoos ascribe this custom to a prophecy delivered by a bramhūn to Dwēēpū-singhū, a rajū-pootū king, that his race would lose the sovereignty through one of his female posterity. Another opinion is, that this shocking practice has arisen out of the law of marriage, which obliges the bride's father to pay almost divine honours to the bridegroom :^{*} hence persons of high caste, unwilling thus to humble themselves for the sake of a daughter, destroy the infant. In the Pūnjab, and neighbouring districts, to a great extent, a caste of Sikhs, and the Rajū-pootūs, as well as many of the bramhūns and other castes, murder their female children as soon as born. I have made particular enquiry into the extent of these murders; but as the crime is perpetrated in secret, have not been able to procure very exact information. A gentleman, whose information on Indian customs is very correct, informs me, that this practice was, if it is not at present, universal among all the rajū-poots, who, he supposes, destroy all their daughters: he expresses his fears, that, notwithstanding their promises to the Government of Bombay, made in consequence of the very benevolent exertions of Mr. Duncan, the practice is almost generally continued. He adds, the custom prevails in the Pūnjab, in Malwa, Joud-poorū, Jesselmere, Guzerat, Kutch, and perhaps Sind, if not in other provinces.

A friend at Ludhana, in a letter written in the year 1812, says, 'The horrible custom of murdering female infants is very common among the rajū-pootūs. One of these fellows had been induced, by the tears of his wife, to spare the life of a daughter born to him. The girl grew up, and had arrived at the age of thirteen; but, unfortunately for her, had not been demanded in marriage by any one. The rajū-pootū began to apprehend the danger of her bringing a disgrace upon the family, and resolved to prevent it by putting the girl to death. Shortly after forming this atrocious design, he either overheard, or pretended to have overheard, some of his neighbours speak of his daughter in a way that tended to increase his fears; when, becoming outrageous, he rushed upon the poor girl, and cut her head off. The native magistrate confined him for a year, and seized all his property. But this was only because the girl was marriageable; infants are murdered with perfect impunity.'

'The Jatūs, a people who abound in these parts,' says a friend, in a letter from Agra, dated May, 1812, 'destroy their female children as soon as born; but being now afraid of the English, they remove their pregnant women before the time of delivery into the district of the raja of Bhūrūtūpoorū, that they may there commit these horrid murders with impunity. 'Oh! the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty! In these parts

^{*} At the time of marriage, the girl's father, taking hold of the knee of the boy, worships him, by presenting offerings of rice, flowers, paint, &c., and promising to give him his daughter.



there are not many women burned with their husbands, and when they do burn, they are not held down with bamboos, but left to themselves and the fire ; but if any one run away or jump out, they cut her down with a sword, and throw her into the fire again. This was done at a flight of steps just by, a little before the English took this place ; since which time I have not heard of any such events occurring.

SECT. XXXIII.—*Ascetics devoured in Forests by Wild Beasts.*

BESIDE the dreadful waste of human life in practising superstitious austerities, great numbers of Hindoo devotēes, who visit forests as an act of seclusion from the world, perish by wild beasts. The author, when on a visit to Sagūrā island in the year 1806, was informed by a yogēe that six of his companions had been devoured there by tigers in the three preceding months ; that while absent in the forest gathering sticks, he heard their cries, and looking over the wall of the temple-yard in which they lived, he saw the tigers dragging them by the neck into the forest. Other forests infested by wild beasts are visited by these yogēes, many of whom are devoured every year. Numbers of secular persons too, drawn to the annual festivals celebrated in these forests, fall victims to the tigers.

SECT. XXXIV.—*Perishing in Cold Regions.*

THE Hindoos have a way to heaven without dying. If the person who wishes to go this way to heaven, through repeating certain incantations, survive the cold, he at last arrives at Himālyū, the residence of Shivū. Such a person is said 'to go the great journey.' Yoodhisthirū, according to the pooranūs, went this way to heaven ; but his companions Bhēmū, Ūrjoonū, Nūkoolū, Sūhūdévū, and Droupdēē, perished by the cold on the mountain. This forms another method in which the Hindoos may meritoriously put a period to their existence. It is also one of the Hindoo atonements for great offences.

It is difficult to form an estimate of the number of Hindoos who perish annually, the victims of superstition ; and the author fears any reasonable conjecture would appear to many as highly exaggerated, and intended to prejudice the public mind against the Hindoos as idolaters. He wishes to feel and avow a just abhorrence of idolatry, and to deplore it as one of the greatest scourges ever employed by a Being, terrible in anger, to punish nations who have rejected the direct and simple means which nature and conscience supply of knowing himself ; but he would use no unfair means of rendering even idolatry detestable : and with this assurance, he now enters on as correct a conjecture res-

NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF HINDU SUPERSTITION, &c.

pecting the number of victims annually sacrificed on the altars of the Indian gods, as he is able :

Widows burnt alive on the funeral pile, in Hindoost'hanū,	5,000
Pilgrims perishing on the roads and at sacred places,*	4,000
Persons drowning themselves in the Ganges, or buried or burnt alive, ...	500
Children immolated, including the daughters of the raju-pootās,	500
Sick persons whose death is hastened on the banks of the Ganges,*	500
Total, ..	<u>10,500</u>

Supposing there to be five thousand towns and large villages in Hindoost'hanū, and that one widow is burnt from each of these places in one year, no less a number than *five thousand helpless widows are annually burnt alive* in this country ; but if we are guided by the calculation made at Calcutta (see p. 246) it will appear, that at least two widows in every large village must be murdered annually, including all the large towns in the same ratio. If so, instead of five thousand murders, the number must be doubled ; and it will appear that ten thousand widows perish on the *funeral pile* in the short period of twelve months. Nor is this havoc like the irregular return of war ; on the contrary, it is as certain and as fatal as the march of death itself.

The second calculation will not appear exaggerated, I am persuaded, when we consider the testimony of Dr. Buchanan, added

* *'Buddruck in Orissa, May 30th, 1806.* We know that we are approaching Juggernaut (and yet we are more than fifty miles from it) by the human bones which we have seen for some days strowed by the way. At this place we have been joined by several large bodies of pilgrims, perhaps 2,000 in number, who have come from various parts of Northern India. Some old persons are among them, who wish to die at Juggernaut. Numbers of pilgrims die on the road ; and their bodies generally remain unburied. On a plain by the river, near the pilgrim's caravansera at this place, there are more than a hundred skulls. The dogs, jackals, and vultures, seem to live here on human prey.

'Juggernaut, 14th June. I have seen Juggernaut. The scene at Buddruck is but the vestibule to Juggernaut. No record of ancient or modern history can give, I think, an adequate idea of this valley of death ; it may be truly compared with the 'valley of Hinnom.' I have also visited the sand plains by the sea, in some places whitened with the bones of the pilgrims ; and another place a little way out of the town, called by the English the Golgotha, where the dead bodies are usually cast forth, and where dogs and vultures are ever seen.

'Juggernaut, 21st June. I have beheld another distressing scene this morning at the place of skulls: a poor woman lying dead, or nearly dead, and her two children by her, looking at the dogs and vultures which were near. The people passed by without noticing the children. I asked them where was their home. They said, 'they had no home but where their mother was.' O, there is no pity at Juggernaut ! no tenderness of heart in Moloch's kingdom.'—*Buchanan's Researches in India.*

A person who has lived several years near the temple of Jāgūnnathā, in Orissa, in a letter to the author, says, 'I cannot pronounce on the numbers who annually perish at Jāgūnnathā, and on their way thither : in some years they do not amount to more than 200 perhaps, but in others they may exceed 2,000.'

* A gentleman, whose opinion is of great weight, says, 'I believe this estimate is far below the truth.'



to that of an officer inserted in page 252 of this volume ; to which I could add, that of many respectable natives.—By fevers, by the dysentery, and other diseases arising from exposure to the night air, and the privations of a long journey, crowds are carried off in a few days : sometimes numbers involuntarily fall under the wheels of the monstrous car of Jügünnat'hü : five or six hundred persons, principally women, I am informed, were crushed to death before the temple of Jügünnat'hü, in the year 1810, by the mere pressure of the crowd. The reader must consider that these sacred places, the resort of pilgrims, are spread all over Hindóost'hanü, and that pilgrims travel to them from distances requiring journeys of three, four, and five months.

In the opinion of every person to whom I have shewn the manuscript, the other calculations fall far below the real fact.

But if these calculations are not beyond the truth, what a horrible view do they present of the effects of superstition. Since the commencement of the bramhinal system, millions of victims have been immolated on the altars of its gods ; and, notwithstanding the influence of Europeans, the whole of Hindóost'hanü may be termed 'a field of blood unto this day.'

I must leave it to the pen of the future historian and poet to give these scenes that just colouring which will harrow up the soul of future generations : I must leave to them the description of these legitimate murders, perpetrated at the command and in the presence of the high-priests of idolatry ; who, by the magic-spell of superstition, have been able to draw men to quit their homes, and travel on foot a thousand miles, for the sake of beholding an idol cut out of the trunk of a neighbouring tree, or dug from an adjoining quarry ;—to prevail on men to commit murders to supply human victims for the altars of religion ;—on mothers to butcher their own children ;—on friends to force diseased relations into the arms of death, while struggling to extricate themselves ;—on children to apply the lighted torch to the pile that is to devour the living mother, who has fed them from her breasts, and dandled them on her knees. To crown the whole, these priests of idolatry have persuaded men to worship them as gods, to lick the dust of their feet, and even to cut off lumps of their own flesh,^b their own heads,^c as offerings to the gods.

SECT. XXXV.—*Ceremonies performed on visiting Holy Places.*

THE founders of the Hindoo religion have taught that certain places (Tēert'hü-st'hanü^d) are peculiarly sacred ; that the perform-

^b See p. 93.

^c See p. 249.

^d The place where persons obtain salvation ; from *tree*, salvation, and *st'hanü*, place.



ance of religious rites at these places is attended with peculiar merit, and followed by extraordinary benefits. The source and confluence of sacred rivers; places where any of the phenomena of nature have been discovered; or where particular images have been set up by the gods themselves; or where some god or great saint has resided; or where distinguished religious actions have been performed have been pronounced sacred.

Excited by the miraculous accounts inserted in the shastrus, multitudes visit these places; others reside there for a time; and some spend the last stages of life at a holy place, to make sure of heaven after death. Rich men not unfrequently erect temples and cut pools at these places, for the benefit of their souls.

When a person resolves to visit any one of these places, he fixes upon an auspicious day, and, two days preceding the commencement of his journey, has his head shaved; the next day he fasts; the following day he performs the shraddhū of the three preceding generations of his family on both sides, and then leaves his house. If a person act according to the shastrū, he observes the following rules: First, till he returns to his own house, he eats rice which has not been wet in cleansing, and that only once a day; he abstains from anointing his body with oil, and from eating fish. If he ride in a palanqueen, or in a boat, he loses half the benefits of his pilgrimage: if he walk on foot, he obtains the full fruit. The last day of his journey he fasts. On his arrival at the sacred spot, he has his whole body shaved;^e after which he bathes, and performs the shraddhū. It is necessary that he stay seven days at least at the holy place; he may continue as much longer as he pleases. Every day during his stay he bathes, pays his devotions to the images, sits before them and repeats their names, and worships them, presenting such offerings as he can afford. In bathing he makes kooshū grass images for his relations, and bathes them. The benefit arising to relations will be as one to eight, compared with that of the person bathing at the holy place. When he is about to return, he obtains some of the offerings which have been presented to the idol or idols, and brings them home to give to his friends and neighbours. These consist of sweetmeats, flowers, toolūsee leaves, the ashes of cow-dung, &c. After celebrating the shraddhū, he entertains the bramhūns, and presents them with oil, fish, and all those things from which he abstained. Having done this, he returns to his former course of living. The reward promised to the pilgrim is, that he shall ascend to the heaven of that god who presides at the holy place he has visited.

^e At Benares, Shivī is said to have set up with his own hands an image of the lingū.

^f If it be a woman, she has only the breadth of two fingers of her hair behind cut off. If a widow, her whole head is shaved.



The following are some of the principal places in Hindoost'hanū to which persons go on pilgrimage :—

Gāya, rendered famous as the place where Vishnōo destroyed a giant. To procure the salvation of deceased relations, crowds of Hindoos perform the shraddhū here ; on whom Government levies a tax. Rich Hindoos have expended immense sums at this place.

Kashēē, (Benares.) To this place multitudes of Hindoos go on pilgrimage ; the ceremonies of religion, when performed at the different holy places in this city, are supposed to be very efficacious. It is the greatest seat of Hindoo learning in Hindoost'hanū. Many Hindoos spend their last days here, under the expectation, that dying here secures a place in Shivū's heaven. To prove that a man dying in the very act of sin at this place obtains happiness, the Hindoos relate, amongst other stories, one respecting a man who died in a pan of hot spirits, into which he accidentally fell while carrying on an intrigue with the wife of a liquor merchant. Shivū is said to have come to this man in his last moments, and, whispering the name of Brūmha in his ear, to have sent him to heaven. Even Englishmen, the Hindoos allow, may go to heaven from Kashēē, and they relate a story of an Englishman who had a great desire to die at this place. After his arrival there, he gave money to his head Hindoo servant to build a temple, and perform the different ceremonies required ; and in a short time afterwards obtained his desire, and died at Kashēē. I suppress the name of my countryman from a sense of shame.

Prūyagū, (Allahabad.) The Hindoos suppose that the Ganges, the Yūmoona, and the Sūrūswītēē, three sacred rivers, unite their streams here. Many persons from all parts of India bathe at this place, and many choose a voluntary death here. Government levies a tax on the pilgrims. He who has visited Gāya, Kashēē, and Prūyagū, flattered himself that he is possessed of extraordinary religious merits.

Jūgūnnat'hū-kshūtrū, (in Orissa.) Several temples and pools attract the attention of pilgrims at this place ; but the great god Jūgūnnat'hū is the most famous object of attention to pilgrims, who come from all parts of India at the times of the thirteen annual festivals held in honour of this wooden god. All castes eat together here, the rise of which custom is variously accounted for. The Hindoos say, that 200,000 people assemble at this place at the time of drawing the car ; when five or six people are said to throw themselves under the wheels of the car every year, as a certain means of obtaining salvation. When I asked a bramhūn in what way such persons expected salvation, he said, that generally the person who thus threw away his life was in a state of misfortune ; and that he thought, as he sacrificed his life through his faith in Jūgūnnat'hū, this god would certainly save him.—The pilgrims to



this place, especially at the time of the above festival, endure the greatest hardships; some from the fatigues of a long journey, others from the want of necessary support, or from being exposed to bad weather. Multitudes perish on the roads, very often by the dysentery; and some parts of the sea-shore at this holy place may be properly termed Golgotha, the number of skulls and dead bodies are so great. In no part of India, perhaps, are the horrors of this superstition so deeply felt as on this spot: its victims are almost countless. Every third year they make a new image, when a bramhūn removes the original bones of Krishnū,^a from the belly of the old image to that of the new one. On this occasion, he covers his eyes lest he should be struck dead for looking at such sacred relics.^b After this, we may be sure, the common people do not *wish* to see Krishnū's bones.

It is a well-authenticated fact, that at this place a number of females of infamous character are employed to dance and sing before the god. They live in separate houses, not at the temple. Persons going to see Jūgūnnat'hū are often guilty of criminal actions with these females.^c Multitudes take loose women with them, never suspecting that Jūgūnnat'hū will be offended at their bringing a prostitute into his presence; or that whoredom is inconsistent with that worship from which they expect salvation, and to obtain which some of them make a journey of four months.

Before this place fell into the hands of the English, the king, a Mahratta chief, exacted tolls from pilgrims for passing through his territories to Jūgūnnat'hū. At one place the toll was not less than one pound, nine shillings for each foot-passenger, if he had so much property with him. When a Bengalee raja used to go, he was accompanied by one or two thousand people, for every one of whom he was obliged to pay the toll. The Honorable Company's Government levies a tax of from one to six rupees on each passenger. For several years after the conquest of Kūtūkū by the English, this tax was not levied; when myriads of pilgrims thronged to this place, and thousands, it is said, perished from disease, want, &c.

Some persons, on leaving this holy place, deposit with the bramhūns of the temple one or two hundred rupees, with the interest of which the bramhūns are to purchase rice, and present it daily to Jūgūnnat'hū, and afterwards to dūndēes or bramhūns.

^a The tradition is, that king Indrū-dyoomā, by the direction of Vishnū, placed the bones of Krishnū, who had been accidentally killed by a hunter, in the belly of the image of Jūgūnnat'hū.

^b The raja of Burdwan, Kēertee-Chūndrū, expended, it is said, twelve lacs of rupees in a journey to Jūgūnnat'hū, and in bribing the bramhūns to permit him to see these bones. For the sight of the bones he paid two lacs of rupees; but he died in six months afterwards—for his temerity.

^c The officiating bramhūns there continually live in adulterous connection with them.



Deeds of gift are also made to Jūgūnnat'hū all over Hindoost'hanū, which are received by agents in every large town, and paid to the Mūth'hū-dharēēs* at Jūgūnnat'hū-kshūtrū; who by this means (though professing themselves to be mendicants) have become some of the richest merchants in India.

Raméshwīrū, (Ramiseram.) This place forms the southern boundary of the bramhinical religion. It is famous for containing a temple said to have been erected by Ramū on his return from the destruction of the gaint Ravūnū. None but wandering mendicants visit it.

Ghāndrū-shékūrū, a mountain near Chittagong, on which stands a temple of the lingū. Over the surface of a pool of water inflammable air is said to be perceived, from the fire of which pilgrims kindle their burnt-offerings. The water oozes from one side of the rock, and as it falls below, the pilgrims stand to receive the purifying stream.

Gānga-Sagūrū, (Sagūrū-island.) At this place the Ganges runs into the sea; and this circumstance, it is supposed, gives an efficacy to the waters. Vast crowds of Hindoos visit this island twice in the year, and perform religious ceremonies for the good of themselves and ancestors: some are guilty of self-murder, in which they are assisted by a number of alligators which visit this spot: the infant is cast into the jaws of this voracious animal by its infatuated mother; and thus the religion of Brūmha transforms the mother into a monster, and tears asunder the tenderest ties of nature.—Ruins and pools still exist on the island, which prove that, though now the haunt of wild beasts, it was once inhabited.

Uyodhya, (Oude,) the ancient capital of Ramū, situated by the river Sūrūyoo, is still inhabited. The pilgrims are generally Ramats. *Mithila*, (Tirhoot,) the birth-place of Sēeta, and the capital of her father Jūnūkū, is resorted to by pilgrims; as well as *Mulhoora*, the birth-place of Krishnū; and *Vrinda-vānū*, the scene of the revels of this licentious deity, whose followers visit many sacred retreats, the resort of Krishnū and the milkmaids. *Gokoola*, the place where Krishnū was educated, is also visited by pilgrims, who are shewn the various spots which have been consecrated by the gambols of their favourite god.

The forest of Noimishū, near Lucknow, is celebrated as the place where Sōotū, the sage, read the pooranīs to 60,000 disciples.

Voidijūnat'hū, a place in Birboom, contains a celebrated image called Ramū-lingū. Some pilgrims, afflicted with incurable distempers, fast here till they die: others make vows, sometimes in

* These Mūth'hū-dharēēs are found at every holy place. One person presides over the house, which is the common resort of pilgrims, who are entertained there.

some such words as these :—‘ Oh ! Voidyūnat’hū, give me a wife, and I will bring a pan of water from the Ganges and bathe thee ;’ or, ‘ I will present thee a mūn of milk, for frumenty.’

At *Vūkréshavūrū*, another place in Birboom, an image of the sage Ūshtavūkrū is set up, where several warm springs attract the attention of devotees, who bathe in their waters, not to heal their bodies, but their souls.

Kooroo-kshūtrū, a place near Delhi, where the dreadful battle betwixt Yoodist’hirū and Dooryodhūnū was fought. Here Fūrūshoo-ramū also is said to have filled five pools with the blood of the kshétriyūs, from which he offered a libation to his deceased father.¹

Hingoolā, a cave or excavated rock on the sea-shore. Offerings are presented to the regents of the place on a stone in the cave.

Ekamrū-kanūnū, a place on the borders of Orissa, containing 6,000 temples dedicated to Shivū. Not less than 70 or 8,000 people are said to visit this place at the drawing of the car of Jūgūnnat’hū when all castes eat together.

Hūree-dwarū, (from Hūree, a name of Vishnū, and dwarū, a door,) or the mouth from which the Ganges issues. An account of this place, inserted in the 6th volume of the Asiatic Researches, declares, that 2,500,000 people assembled here at a festival in 1796.

Kanchēē, a town in Telinga, divided into two parts, Shivū-Kanchēē and Vishnū-Kanchēē. At a festival held here in the month Choitrū, the disciples of Shivū and Vishnū quarrel, and often murder one another.

Multitudes of other places in India are venerated and visited by pilgrims. When I was writing this account, on describing Bristol Hot-wells, with all its gilt crutches hanging in the pump-room, to the learned bramhūn who assisted me, he confessed that it would make a famous holy place, and attract immense crowds of pilgrims. It is a deplorable circumstance, that such a waste of time, of life, and of property, should be incurred, through the fatal deception, that the sight of a holy place will be accepted by the Judge of heaven and earth, instead of repentance and conversion, instead of a contrite heart and a holy life.

SECT. XXXVI.—*Ceremonies at Death.*

A SICK person, after his removal to the banks of the Ganges, if he possess sufficient strength, directs quantities of food, garments,

¹ To satisfy his revenge. There is nothing revolting to the feelings of the Hindoos in this dreadful act of revenge: which has made Kooroo-kshūtrū a *holy* place. When a Hindoo is describing a dreadful quarrel, he says, ‘ It was a perfect Koorook-shūtrū.’



&c. to be presented to the bramhūns. That he may not be compelled to cross Voitūrūñē, whose waters are hot, on his way to the seat of judgment, he presents to a bramhūn a black cow. When about to expire, the relations place the body up to the navel in the river, and direct the dying man to call aloud on the gods, and assist him in doing so.

The burning of the body is one of the first ceremonies which the Hindoos perform for the help of the dead in a future state. If this ceremony have not been attended to, the shraddhū, tūrpūnū, &c. cannot be performed. If a person be unable to provide wood, cloth, clarified butter, rice, water pans, and other things, beside the fee to the priest, he must beg among his neighbours. If the body be thrown into the river, or burnt, without the accustomed ceremonies, (as is sometimes the case,) the ceremonies may be performed over an image of the deceased made of kooshū grass.

Immediately after death, the attendants lay out the body on a sheet, placing two pieces of wood under the head and feet; after which they anoint the corpse with clarified butter, bathe it with the water of the Ganges, put round the loins a new garment, and another over the left shoulder, and then draw the sheet on which the body lies over the whole. The heir-at-law next bathes himself, puts on new garments, and boils some rice, a ball of which and a lighted brand he puts to the mouth of the deceased, repeating incantations. The pile having been prepared, he sets fire to it, and occasionally throws on it clarified butter and other combustibles. When the body is consumed, he washes the ashes into the river; the attendants bathe, and, presenting a drink-offering to the deceased, return home: before they enter the house, however, each one touches fire, and chews some bitter leaves, to signify that parting with relations by death is an unpleasant task.

SECT. XXXVII.—*Rites for the Repose of the Soul, (Shraddhū.)*

THE Hindoo shastrūs teach, that after death the soul becomes *prétū*,^m viz: takes a body about the size of a person's thumb, and remains in the custody of Yūmū, the judge of the dead. At the time of receiving punishment, the body becomes enlarged, and is made capable of enduring sorrow. The performance of the shraddhū delivers the deceased, at the end of a year, from this state, and translates him to the heaven of the Pitrees, where he enjoys the reward of his meritorious actions; and afterwards, in another body, enters into that state which the nature of his former actions assign to him. If the shraddhū be not performed, the deceased remains in the *prétū* state, and cannot enter another body. We are here

^m A departed ghost.



strongly reminded of the 325th and six following lines of Virgil, in the 6th book of his *Æneid*, as well as of the 28th Ode of the 1st book of Horace.

The offerings made in a person's name, after his decease, and the ceremonies which take place on the occasion, are called his *shraddhā*, which the Hindoos are very anxious to perform in a becoming manner. The son who performs these rites obtains great merit: and the deceased is hereby satisfied,^u and, by gifts to the *brahm̐ns* in his name, obtains heaven.

There are three *shraddh̐s* for the dead: one, eleven days after death; another, every month; and another at the close of a year after a person's decease. During the ten^o days of mourning, the relations hold a family council, and consult on the means of performing the *shraddh̐*; on the last of these days, after making an offering for the dead by the side of the river, they are shaved. This offering consists of boiled rice, sugar, curds, sweetmeats, milk, plantains, &c. made into ten balls, and presented with prayers.

The next day, after bathing,^v the family prepare an open place for the ceremonies. If it be the *shraddh̐* of a rich man, all the learned Hindoos and respectable people of the neighbouring villages are invited. The company being seated under an awning, the sons and the other relations of the deceased, dressed in new garments, place themselves in the midst of the company with their faces eastward, having near them sixteen different gifts, as brass cups, candlesticks, umbrellas, shoes, &c. Next are brought seeds of sesamum, a small piece of gold, and another of a different metal, wrapt up in new cloths. The son of the deceased now puts a piece of new cloth across his neck, and offers an atonement for the sin of having killed insects in sweeping the room, in cooking, grinding spices, and in moving the water jar; then follows an offering to the sun; then, rising, and bringing his hands forward in a supplicating posture, he solicits leave from the company to make the offering; after which he offers the sesamum, gold, and metal, for the happiness of the deceased; takes the *kosha*, and sprinkles the sixteen gifts with water; then, placing a flower on each, and repeating prayers, he offers them in the presence of the *shalgram̐*, one by one, in the name of the deceased, that he may obtain heaven. The son after this, if in circumstances sufficiently affluent, presents large gifts to the *brahm̐ns*, as elephants, horses,

^u Mīnnoo says, 'What sort of oblation, given duly to the manes, is capable of satisfying them for a long time, or for eternity, I will now declare, without omission.'

^o *Brahm̐ns* are unclean for ten days after the death of a relation; *ksh̐triya̐s*, twelve; *voishya̐s*, fifteen; and *sh̐ōdr̐s*, thirty.

^v At the time of bathing, the person who will perform the *shraddh̐*, purifies himself by putting water, seeds, fruits, &c. in parts of the trunks of four plantain trees, repeating incantations. He sends some of this water home to purify the family.



palanqueens, boats, &c. the receiving of which, however, is not honorable. A bramhūn then marks the foreheads of all present with sandal powder, and puts round the neck of each a garland of flowers. To the ūgrūdanē^a bramhūns and others are now given, amidst much confusion among the receivers, the sesamum, the morsel of gold, the metal, a large bason full of kourees, and a couch or two, as well as the sixteen different gifts; after which the assembly breaks up. The son then goes into the house, and placing a bramhūn and his wife on a seat, covers them with ornaments, worships them, and, adding a large present of money, dismisses them.

After this, the son of the deceased requests five bramhūns, of some note for learning, to offer a male calf; in doing which they take two cloths each, four poitas, four betle-nuts, and some kourees, provided for the purpose, and go with the company to a spot where an altar has been prepared, one cubit high, and four cubits square. Four of the bramhūns sit on the four sides of the altar, and there worship certain gods, and offer a burnt-sacrifice. Near the altar are placed the shalgramū, four female calves, a male calf, and a vilwū post. The fifth bramhūn reads certain parts of a pooranū, to drive away evil spirits. The female calves are tied to four vilwū posts, and the male calf to a post called vrishū post.^b To the necks of the female calves four small slender baskets are suspended, in which are placed, among other things, a comb, and the iron instrument with which the Hindoo women paint their eyebrows black. A sheet of metal is placed under the belly of the male calf; on the back a sheet of copper: the hoofs are covered with silver, and the horns with gold, if the shraddhū be performed by a rich man.^c On the hips of the male calf, marks of Shivū's trident are impressed with a hot iron. After this, the son of the deceased washes the tail of the male calf, and with the same water presents a drink-offering to his deceased ancestors; and afterwards marries the male calf to the four female calves, repeating many formulas, in which they are recommended to cultivate love and mutual sympathy. The son next liberates the female calves, forbidding any one to detain them, or partake of their milk in future. In liberating the male calf he says, 'I have given thee these four wives;' live with them. Thou art the living image of Yūmū; thou goest upon four legs. Devour not the corn

^a Bramhūns who receive the first gifts at shraddhūs are called by this name.

^b Vrishū is the name for a bull. A rough image of one of these animals is carved in the middle of the post, which is afterwards set up in a public road till it rots or falls down. It is often full of rough carved figures. A good one costs about four rupees.

^c If by a poor man, imitations of these things are used.

^d Here the Hindoos marry cattle! In another part of this work the reader will find an account of the marriage of monkies!!



of others, go not near a cow in calf, &c.' The female calves are generally taken by bramhūns:^a the male calf is let loose, to go where he pleases.[†]

To this succeeds what is peculiarly termed the shraddhū. The river side, or the cow-house, or some retired place, is chosen; after cleansing which, they collect all kinds of eatables, cloth, sesamum, flowers, &c. and place them in dishes made of the excavated trunks of the plantain tree. The son then washes his feet, and sits with his face towards the east, with a shalgramū before him, and repeats many incantations to purify himself; he then worships the shalgramū; presents to his deceased parent the seven dishes placed to the east, repeating various incantations; and worships Gūnga, Vishnoo, and the household gods, adding an offering to the ancestors of the king, as an acknowledgment for using the king's land at worship. He then, turning his face to the south, reads many incantations, and with five, seven, or nine blades of kooshū grass, makes the image of a bramhūn, which he places on a plantain before him; then with joined hands he repeats before this image many incantations, to the following purport: 'Before thee, O bramhūn, I perform my father's shraddhū.' He next offers to his deceased parent, on a plantain-trunk dish, seven blades of kooshū and seven of dōōrva grass, flowers, dry rice, cloth, red paint, and a brass lamp. He next cleanses the place before him with his hands, and scattering upon it a few blades of kooshū grass, presents other offerings to his deceased father, repeating many incantations, which contain the names of the offerings, and an invitation to the deceased father to partake of them. From what remains of these offerings the son makes two balls, the smallest of which is offered in the name of those of the family who have not received the benefits of the shraddhū, and the other he presents to his deceased father, and then lays it on some kooshū grass as before, and worships it, presenting flowers, water, &c. He now places both hands open against a lamp which is burning, as though he were warming himself; after which he prostrates himself to the sun, and presents a fee of from one rupee to five to the officiating bramhūn; salutes all the bramhūns present, and makes prostrations to the shalgramū, which he afterwards sends into the house. All the offerings are sent to the houses of bramhūns. The family now return home, where an entertainment is provided, both for bramhūns and others, consisting principally

^a Yet the receiving of these and other gifts at shraddhūs is supposed to disgrace a person.

[†] These bulls wander about, and are treated by the Hindoos with great respect. No one can claim any redress for the injury they do, and no Hindoo dare destroy them. In large towns they are often mischievous. The English call them bramhūnūē bulls.

[‡] The shastrī directs that a living bramhūn shall be chosen; but a grass bramhūn is generally substituted.



of sweetmeats, milk, curds, sugar, cakes, &c. The bramhūns eat in an enclosed spot, the uninvited bramhūns near the house, and the poor in the street or road. At the close of the entertainment, if the person making the shraddhū be rich, he gives presents to all those who are not guests, whether bramhūns or the poor, and thus dismisses them. The next morning he dismisses the learned bramhūns with presents: to the most learned he gives five rupees perhaps, and to those less learned one. The bramhūns who were invited are also dismissed with presents. About one o'clock a feast is provided for the relations, who are dismissed the next morning with presents of money, cloth, &c., and on this day another dinner is provided for nearer relations. At the close of the shraddhū a number of mendicant musicians play on certain instruments of music, and sing verses celebrating the revels of Krishnū; they are often dismissed with large presents.

The next day the family return to their accustomed diet; but the sons, for twelve months after the decease of the father, must refuse every gratification, and cook with their own hands, or eat what has been prepared by a wife, or some near relation dwelling in the house.

Gūnga-Govindū-Singhū, a person of the writer caste, head-servant to Mr. Hastings, expended, it is said, 1,200,000 rupees at his mother's shraddhū; and Raja Nūvū-Krishnū of Calcutta, nearly as much in the shraddhū for his mother. This expense was principally incurred in presents to the bramhūns, such as bedsteads, at two or three hundred rupees each; water pitchers of silver and gold, some worth a thousand, and others two thousand rupees; dishes of silver and gold, at five hundred, two hundred, and one hundred: silver and gold cups and lamp-stands, at two hundred, one hundred, &c.; covered bowls for betle-nut, and gold and silver water jugs, at from five hundred down to one hundred; and cloths at ten or fifteen rupees a piece.

Vast crowds of mendicants^a and poor people fill the roads at the time of a large shraddhū for two or three days together, each of whom obtains a rupee, or half a rupee; sometimes nothing. The lower orders expend three hundred, two hundred, or one hundred rupees at a shraddhū. Many persons reduce themselves to beggary to procure the name of having made a great shraddhū. If a man delay this ceremony, the priest urges him repeatedly to what he calls his duty. According to the Hindoo law, a person cannot inherit an estate who has not performed the shraddhū.

The monthly shraddhū for the first year after the death of the parent, is upon a very small scale, and the expense is from ten rupees to twelve annas.

^a Some of the mendicants come journies of four or five days.

Beside these, there are other shraddhās for deceased ancestors, as, in every month at the total wane of the moon; on the last fifteen, or ten, or five days of the moon in Bhadrā; once during the first fifteen days of the moon in Ūgrāhayānā; and again in the same months,^b in Poushā,^c and Maghā,^d on the eighth of the wane of the moon; in Voishakhā^e and Shravānā,^f on any of the first fifteen days of the moon. At some of these times all Hindoos perform this ceremony; at other times only a few persons. The expense is trifling, as scarcely any persons are entertained at them.

SECT. XXXVIII.—*Purifications.*

A HINDOO becomes unclean by various circumstances, during which he is interdicted almost every religious ceremony, and forbidden to shave or cut his nails. In the act of purification the person shaves the head, bathes, and puts on clean apparel.

A Hindoo becomes unclean after the death of persons related to him by birth. If a child die before he has teeth, the family bathe immediately, and become clean; or if a child die before its ears are bored, the family remain unclean one night. If a woman miscarry, the family become impure for ten days. After a birth, all the members of the family in a direct line become unclean. A woman in her courses is unclean for three days; but on the fifth day, after bathing, she may again perform religious ceremonies. Every person is considered as in some measure unclean while in a state of sickness, and from some religious services a sick person is wholly excluded. A bramhūn becomes unclean by the touch of a shōōdrū, a dog, a Mūsūlman, a barbarian, &c. and all castes, by touching a woman in her courses, a dead body, ordure, urine, the food of other castes, &c.

SECT. XXXIX.—*Atonements for Offences.*

THE ancient Hindoo laws on this subject are very numerous, and in many instances very severe and unjust. By these laws the whole property of the country was put into a state of requisition

^b In this shraddhā, the flesh of cows was formerly offered in sacrifice. In the kālā-yogā this is forbidden, and that of deer or goats is substituted.

^c This shraddhā is performed principally with herbs.

^d In this shraddhā bread is chiefly used.

^e Barley is the principal thing used in this shraddhā. At this time the Hindoo women scatter the husks of barley in the public roads, in imitation it is said of the mother of Rūghoo-nāndānā, compiler of a number of the smritees.

The newly descended rain is the principal article in this shraddhā.



by the bramhūns. At present, very few offences expose a person to the penalties of the canon law : among these, however, are the killing a bramhūn, a religious mendicant, or a woman ; striking a bramhūn ; killing a cow. Slight atonements are also offered by some when labouring under certain diseases, and for unintentional offences.

I here insert some extracts from the work on atonements called *Prayūschittū-Nirnūyā*.—There are nine sorts of sins requiring atonements : 1. *Jatee-bhrūngshū-kūrū*, in which is included the eating of onions, defrauding relations, &c. 2. *Shūnkūrē-kūrūnū*, viz., sodomy. 3. *Upatrē-kūrūnū*, which includes receiving presents from barbarians ; bramhūns, entering into trade ; and bramhūns serving *shōōdrūs*.* 4. *Mūlavūhū*, in which is included destroying insects ; eating fruit which has lain near a person who has drank spirits ; excessive grief for a trifling loss ; and stealing wood, fruit, or flowers. 5. *Prūkērmnūkū*, which includes various offences against the caste. 6. *Oopūpatūkū*, which includes many actions : among the rest, killing cows ; becoming priest to the low castes ; a person's selling himself ; forsaking father, mother, sons ; neglecting the *védūs*, or consecrated fire ; giving a daughter in marriage to a younger brother before the elder ; giving a younger son in marriage before the elder ; in the two last cases also becoming priest at the time of such marriage ; usury in lending goods ; not completing a *vrātū* ; selling a pool of water, a garden, a son, &c. ; not performing any one of the *sūngskarūs* ; forsaking a friend ; obtaining instructions from a disciple ; killing a woman, or a *shōōdrū*, a *voishyū*, a *kshūtriyū*, &c. ; cutting green trees for fire-wood ; neglecting to pay debts ; subduing or driving away a person not an enemy by the power of incantations ; denying a future state, &c. 7. *Ūnoopatūkū*, which includes many different actions, viz., a son's having intercourse with a woman who is a wife (though of another caste) to his father ; adultery with an uncle's wife ; with the wife of a grandfather ; with an aunt by the mother's side ; with the wife of a king ; with a father's sister ; with the wife of a *shrotriyū* bramhūn ; with the wife of a priest ; with the wife of a teacher of the *védūs* ; with the wife of a friend ; with the friend of a sister ; with any woman in the line of consanguinity ; with any woman of a caste superior to that of the man ; with the wife of a *chandalū* ; with a virgin, the daughter of a bramhūn ; with a woman while in her courses ; with a woman who has embraced the life of a *brūmhūcharinē*. 8. *Mūhapatūkū*, which includes five different offences, viz., killing bramhūns ; a bramhūn's drinking spirits, or a *shōōdrū*'s intercourse with the wife of a bramhūn ; stealing gold from a bramhūn to the amount of a gold mohur ; adultery with the wife of a gooroo, viz., with the wife of a father,

* In many places bramhūns, at present, become clerks, cooks, &c. to the higher classes of *shōōdrūs*.

if she be of a superior caste, or if she be of the same caste. Whoever commits these actions is called *mūhapatūkēē*, and whoever lives in familiar habits with this person becomes also *mūhapatūkēē*: this includes sleeping on the same bed; sitting together on one seat; eating together; drinking out of one cup; eating together of food cooked in one vessel; becoming priest to a *mūhapatūkēē*; teaching the *védūs* to such an offender. If a person converse with a *mūhapatūkēē*, or touch him, or if the breath of this offender fall upon him, and these familiarities be continued for twelve months, this person also becomes *mūhapatūkēē*. 9. *Ūtipatūkū* includes incest with a person's own mother, or daughter, or son's wife.

If a person kill a *bramhūn*, he must renounce life, or offer the *prajapūtyū* atonement for twenty-four years;^b or, in case of inability, he must offer 360 cows with their calves, and 100 cows as a fee; or 470 rupees, besides 24 rupees as a fee. If a person murder a *bramhūnēē*, whose husband is ignorant of the *védūs*, the offender must perform the *prajapūtyū* atonement for six years. This may be commuted for ninety cows and calves, or 270 *kahūnūs* of *kourees*. For murdering the wife of a *kshūtriyū*, this atonement must be repeated three years; of a *voishyū*, one year and a half; and of a *shōōdrū*, nine months. If the woman was with child, or in her courses, the atonement must be doubled. If a *bramhūn*, or a *kshūtriyū*, murder a *kshūtriyū*, the *prajapūtyū* atonement must be repeated for three years. This may be commuted for forty-five milch cows and their calves, or 135 *kahūnūs* of *kourees*. If a *bramhūn*, a *kshūtriyū*, or *voishyū*, murder a *voishyū*, the above atonement must be repeated for one year and a half. This may be commuted for twenty-three cows and their calves, or 67½ *kahūnūs* of *kourees*. For murdering a *shōōdrū*, the above atonement must be repeated for nine months. This may be commuted for twelve cows and their calves, or 36 *kahūnūs* of *kourees*; (about one pound sterling.)

If a *bramhūn* have killed a cow belonging to a *bramhūn*, he must offer the following atonement:—he must have his head shaved; for thirty days, dwell with cows, eat barley boiled in the urine of cows, and wear a cow's skin. For the next two months, he must eat only once a day. For the two following months, he must bathe with the urine of cows. During these days of penance he must abstain from sin; he must follow a herd of cows;

^b The following is the law respecting this atonement:—The offender, for three days, is to eat, each day, only twenty-six mouthfuls of rice, clarified butter, milk, &c. boiled together; for the next three days he must eat in the evening twenty-two mouthfuls; for the next three days he is to ask for nothing, and, unless spontaneously given him, to eat nothing. If any food be given him, it must be twenty-four mouthfuls of the same kind of food as mentioned above; for the next three days he must eat nothing. If he abstain from food on those days in which he is allowed to take food if given to him, he does not commit a fault. If a person be unable to fast so long, he may make a commutation by fasting six days. If a person be not able to fast six days, he may be exempted, on making an offering of a cow and calf; or, in case of inability to do this, he may offer three *kahūnūs* of *kourees*.



stand when they standⁱ, and eat the dust which they throw up with their feet. At night, after putting the cows in the stall, he must bow to them, and then sit upright, cross-legged, and watch them all night. If one of the herd be sick, or have met with any misfortune, he must expose his own life for its preservation. He must not seek the preservation of his own life from the scorching sun, the chilling cold, the pelting rain, or the driving storm, till he have secured the herd. If the cows be feeding on another person's ground, he is not to drive them away, nor inform the owner. He must not prevent the calf from sucking, though the cow should not have been milked. After the person has thus gone through this atonement without fault, he must offer to a learned brahmūn ten cows and a bull. If this be beyond his ability, he must give up all he has. If an offender be unable to go through all his penance, he must, besides the above fee, offer seventeen new-milch cows. If he be poor, he may offer sixty-six kahūnūs of kourees^k. This is the atonement, if the cow was wilfully killed by a brahmūn. If accidentally killed, the offender must go through half the penance, and offer one cow. Besides offering the atonement, the person who has wilfully or accidentally killed a cow, must give to the owner another cow equally good. If he cannot give such a cow, he must give a proper price, to be ascertained by five respectable neighbours. If a brahmūn castrate a bull, he must offer the six month's atonement as for killing a brahmūn's cow. If a cow die accidentally in the field, it is taken for granted that it was not properly taken care of, and an atonement must be offered. Such a person must have his head shaved; bathe three times a day; wear a cow's skin with the horns, hoofs, &c. on it; follow the herd; watch the herd by night, &c. If the animal died at night in the cow-house, and the keeper was permitted to go home, instead of watching over the cattle, the atonement must be offered by the owner. If in consequence of the fulling of a bell from a cow's ear^l the cow die, the owner must offer half of the prajāpūtyū atonement. If a Hindoo sell a cow to a barbarian, he must eat only one mouthful in the morning for four days, and for the next four days four mouthfuls each day in the evening. If the buyer kill and eat the cow, the person who disposed of the animal must offer the same atonement as a brahmūn for killing a cow.

ⁱ If, however, part of the herd be lying down, and part be standing, he must do as the greater number do. If the number lying down and the number standing be equal, he must do that which is most painful to himself; of course he must stand.

^k In the work called *Prayāścittā-vivēkā* it is declared, that if a person be unable to pay this fine, he must beg for twelve years, and whatever he is able to procure, he must give as a commutation for the atonement. At the present period, persons may be seen, having the head shaved, making a noise like the lowing of a cow; having a rope, with which cow's are tied by the leg, in the hand, &c. begging for this avowed purpose: yet most of these persons make this a contrivance to obtain money.

^l Hung there like an ear-ring, or ornament, but with the intention of keeping the herd together by the sound.

ATONEMENTS FOR OFFENCES.

If a man kill a horse, he must make an offering of cloth to a bramhūn.^m If an elephant, he must give to the bramhūns five blue bulls. If an ass, a goat, or a sheep, a male calf, one year old, must be given to a bramhūn. If a goose, a peacock, a white heron, or a hawk, he must give a cow to a bramhūn. If a tiger, a milch cow. If a camel, or a buffalo, he must forfeit a rūtākū of gold. If a hog, he must present to a bramhūn a pitcher of clarified butter. If a parrot, a calf, one year old. If a snake, an axe for cutting wood. If a cat, a guano, an ichneumon, or a frog, he must for three days partake of nothing but milk. If any one of these offences have been done repeatedly, the offender must offer a fourth of the prajapūtyū atonement. If a person have killed a thousand larger insects, he must offer the same atonement as for accidentally killing a shōōdrū. For killing a few small insects, the person must repeat an incantation, while squeezing his nose with his fingers.

If a bramhū, ignorantly, have intercourse once with the wife of a chandalū, he must offer the prajapūtyū atonement during twelve years. If done wilfully, he must renounce life as the expiation of his sin. If done repeatedly, the offence cannot be expiated. If a bramhūn have improper intercourse with a virgin, or with his own daughter, or with his son's wife, he must become an eunuch, and renounce life. If a person of any other caste commit such sin, he must renounce life by the toosh-anūlū atonementⁿ.

^m The atonements for killing horses and other animals, as well as insects, are alike to all the castes. Shoolāpance, a pūndit, however, maintains, that in all these cases a shōōdrū, a female, a child, and an aged person, are to offer only one half of the atonement.

ⁿ In the work called prayāshchittū-vivēkū, the method in which this person must renounce life is thus related :—After shaving his head, bathing, &c. he must cover himself with chaff, and, lying down, the fire must be kindled at his feet; and in this way, by slow degrees, he must give up his life to expiate his crime. In another work, the following story is related respecting this method of expiating sin :—In former times, it was common for very learned pūndits, to go from kingdom to kingdom, challenging each king to bring forth his pūndits, to hold disputations on the subjects contained in the shastrū. Oodāyūnācharyū had, in this manner, obtained the victory over all the pūndits in the world. He was also the great instrument in overcoming the bouddhās, and in re-establishing the practice of the vēdās; but in arming the kings against the bouddhās he had been instrumental in destroying many bouddhā bramhūns. Towards the close of his life he went to Jāgūnnat'hik-kshetrū; but when he arrived at the temple, the door shut of itself against him, and he sat at the door, sorrowful, and keeping a fast. In the midst of his fast the god appeared to him in a dream, and told him, he had been guilty of killing many bramhūns; he could not, therefore, see his face: he must renounce life by offering the toosh-anūlū atonement. Oodāyūnācharyū was angry with Jāgūnnat'hū, and pronounced a curse upon him, telling him, that in some future period, when he should be destroyed by the bouddhās, he would remember his benefactor. This pūndit soon afterwards, however, obeyed the command of Jāgūnnat'hū. When he had been several days suffering in the chaff-fire, and his lower parts were burnt, Shūnkūracharyū called on him, and challenged him to dispute. Oodāyūnācharyū declined it, on account of the pain which he endured; but Shūnkūracharyū promised to cure the burnt parts, and told him, that after the dispute was over, he might offer the atonement. Oodāyūnācharyū ridiculed him for pretending to dispute with him, since he had not sense to judge in a case so obvious: half his body was burnt already; and yet he (Shūnkūracharyū) advised him to have the burnt parts restored, in order to dispute with him, in which case he would have to endure these sufferings twice over. Shūnkūracharyū, being thus overcome at the commencement, retired. The other continued the atonement, and thus expiated his sin of killing the bouddhā bramhūns.



If a *shōōdrū* live with a *bramhūnē* of bad character, he must renounce life by casting himself into a large fire. If a *shōōdrū* live with a *bramhūnē* of unsullied character, he must tie straw round the different parts of his body, and cast himself into the fire. The woman must be placed on an ass, and led round the city, and then dismissed, never to return. If a *voishyū* commit the same offence with a *bramhūnē*, or a female *kshūtriya*, he must renounce life, tying *kooshū* grass round his limbs, and then throwing himself into the fire. If a person defile the bed of his mother-in-law, he must put a red hot piece of stone or iron into his mouth, and become an eunuch. If any person have unnatural connection with a cow, he must repeat the *prajapūtyū* atonement four times.

If a person marry his paternal or maternal niece, he must perform the *chandrayūnū* atonement, and the marriage becomes void, though the maintenance of this woman for life will fall upon the offender. [For marrying within the degrees of consanguinity, many different atonements are ordered, according to the nearness of relationship.]

If a *bramhūn* eat without having on his *poita*, he must repeat the *gayūtrē* 100 times, and partake of nothing that day but the urine of cows. If a person eat cow's flesh unknowingly, he must offer the *prajapūtyū* atonement. If he have repeatedly eaten cow's flesh, he must perform the *chandrayūnū vrūṭū*, and forfeit a bull and a cow. If a person eat the flesh of elephants, horses, camels, snakes, or dogs, he must continue offering the *prajapūtyū* atonement during twelve months. If a *bramhūn* drink spirits, he must again undergo investiture with the *poita*. If a *bramhūn* repeatedly eat onions, he must perform the *chandra-yūnū vrūṭū*, and be again invested with the *poita*. If a person drink the milk of a cow, before the expiration of ten days after she has calved, he must fast two days. If any man drink the milk of sheep or buffaloes, he must fast two nights.

If a *bramhūn* eat once with a person whose father was a *shōōdrū* and his mother a *bramhūnē*, he must perform the *chandrayūnū vrūṭū* or make an offering of eight cows and their calves, or 22½ *kahūnūs* of *kourees*. If a *bramhūn* eat the food, or semen, or urine, or ordure of a *voishyū*, he must perform the *prajapūtyū vrūṭū*; or perform the other things prescribed instead of this atonement. If any person be compelled to eat the boiled rice of a *chandalū*, he must fast twelve days; but this may be commuted by giving to a *bramhūn* five cows with their calves, or 15 *kahūnūs* of *kourees*. If the rice be unboiled, the eater must fast three days. If a *bramhūn* unknowingly drink water from the pitcher with which a *chandalū* draws water from his well, he must fast three nights, and the next day he must eat cow-dung, cow's urine, milk, clarified butter, and curds, mixed toge-

ther.° If he do this designedly, the atonement must be doubled. If a bramhūn drink water from, or bathe in, a pool dug by a chandalū, he must eat cow-dung, cow's urine, milk, curds, and clarified butter, mixed together. If a dog touch a bramhūn while he has food in his hand, the latter must fast one day. If a chandalū touch a bramhūn before he have washed his hands and mouth after eating, the latter must fast three days, and repeat the gayūtrēe a thousand times.

If a chandalū or meléhcchū break a bramhūn's poita, the bramhūn must offer the mūha-santūpānū atonement⁹ twice.

A person, having finished the ceremonies of an atonement, must lay a handful of grass before a cow; which if she eat, it is a proof that the sin of the offender is removed. If she refuse it, the atonement must be offered again.⁹

If sins be not expiated by the necessary atonements, the offenders will descend into hell; from whence, after expiation, they will again arise, perhaps, to human birth, in consequence of some fragment of merit which they possessed in the preceding birth; but they will continue to wear the marks of the sin in which they died.⁹ Such persons must offer the proper atonements, when these

° In proportion to the quantity of cow-dung, he must take twice as much urine, four times as much milk, eight times as much clarified butter, and of curds the same as clarified butter.

9 In this atonement the person must mix water steeped in kooshū grass, milk, curds, clarified butter, cow-dung, and cow's urine together, and eat them, and the day after he must fast.

9 Some years ago, a rich Hindoo of Calcutta, who had committed many sins, thought it necessary to expiate them by an atonement. He invited learned natives from Nūddēya to ascertain the proper atonement, which he afterwards offered; but when he came to finish the ceremony by giving grass to the cow, she would not receive it. This excited the greatest anxiety, and several pūndits were consulted, to ascertain whether the law for the ceremony had been properly laid down. They all affirmed that it had; but on Jūgūnathū-tīrkū-pūnchanūnū being interrogated, he declared, that the commutation, instead of three, should have been five kahūnūs of kourées for each cow. Upon this information the increased sum was paid; the cow then ate the grass, and the offender's sin was known to be expiated! Several other anecdotes of this kind are in circulation among the natives.—There is a remarkable coincidence betwixt this story and that related of Apis, the ox worshipped by the Egyptians, of whom it is said, that he took food from those that came to consult him; but that he refused to eat from the hands of Germanicus Cæsar, who died not long after.

9 Mūnoo says, 'A stealer of gold from a bramhūn has whitlows on his nails; a drinker of spirits, black teeth; the slayer of a bramhūn, a marasmus. The violator of his gooroo's bed shall be a deformed wretch.—For sinful acts mostly corporeal, a man shall assume after death a vegetable or mineral form; for acts mostly verbal, the form of a bird or a beast; for acts mostly mental, the lowest of human conditions.—The slayer of a bramhūn must enter, according to the circumstances of his crime, the body of a dog, a boar, an ass, a camel, a bull, a goat, a sheep, a stag, a bird, a chandalū, or a puccassa.—A priest, who has drank spirituous liquors, shall migrate into the form of a smaller or larger worm or insect, of a moth, of a fly feeding on ordure, or of some ravenous animal.—He who steals the gold of a priest, shall pass a thousand times into the bodies of spiders, of snakes and carnations, of crocodiles and other aquatic monsters, or of mischievous blood-sucking demons.—He who violates the bed of his natural



sins will be removed. If such a diseased person die without having offered the atonement, the funeral rites must be refused. Should any one burn his body, he must perform the chandrayānū vrātū.

If a person weep for the death of a self-murderer, or for a person killed by a cow, or by a bramhūn, he or she must offer an atonement. If a woman repent after ascending the funeral pile, or after resolving to renounce life in any way allowed by the shastrū, he or she must perform the prajapūtū vrātū.

For expiating the sin of falsehood, a person must repeat the name of Vishnū once.* To preserve the life of a bramhūn, and to appease an angry wife, falsehood may be spoken innocently.

When there are many offenders in his kingdom, who are unable to offer the proper atonements, a king must perform the chandrayānū vrātū; by which he will obtain the pardon of the sins of these subjects, and deliver his kingdom from the effects of sin remaining unexpiated.[†]

or spiritual father, migrates a hundred times into the forms of grasses, of shrubs with crowded stems, or of creeping and twining plants, of vultures and other carnivorous animals, and other beasts with sharp teeth, or of tigers, and other cruel brutes.—They who hurt any sentient beings, are born cats and other eaters of raw flesh; they who taste what ought not to be tasted, maggots or small flies; they who steal ordinary things, devourers of each other; they who embrace very low women, become restless ghosts.—If a man steal grain in the husk, he shall be born a rat; if a yellow mixed metal, a gander; if water, a plava, or diver; if honey, a great stinging gnat; if milk, a crow; if expressed juice, a dog; if clarified butter, an ichneumon.—If exquisite perfumes, a muskrat; if potherbs, a peacock; if dressed grain in any of its various forms, a porcupine; if raw grain, a hedgehog.—If a deer or an elephant, he shall be born a wolf; if a horse, a tiger; if roots or fruit, an ape; if a woman, a bear; if water from a jar, the bird chataca; if carriages, a camel; if small cattle, a goat.—Women, who have committed similar thefts, incur a similar taint, and shall be paired with those male beasts in the form of their females.—As far as vital souls, addicted to sensuality, indulge themselves in forbidden pleasures, even to the same degree shall the acuteness of their senses be raised in their future bodies, that they may endure analogous pains.—They shall first have a sensation of agony in Tāmīrū, or utter darkness, and in other seats of horror; in Usipū-trāvīnū, or the sword-leaved forest; and in different places of binding fast and of rending.—Multifarious tortures await them: they shall be mingled by ravens and owls; shall swallow cakes boiling hot; shall work over inflamed sands, and shall feel the pangs of being baked like the vessel of a potter.—They shall assume the forms of beasts continually miserable, and suffer alternate afflictions from extremities of cold and of heat, surrounded with terrors of various kinds.—More than once shall they lie in different wombs, and, after agonizing births, be condemned to severe captivity and to servile attendance on creatures like themselves.—Then shall follow separations from kindred and friends; forced residence with the wicked; painful gains and ruinous losses of wealth; friendships hardly acquired, and at length changed into enmities.—Old age without resource; diseases attended with anguish; pangs of innumerable sorts, and, lastly, unconquerable death.[‡]

* On the other hand, it is a common saying among the Hindoos, derived from some of their shastrū, that if a person utter a lie, his family, for fourteen generations, will successively fall into hell.

† I have heard a native Christian, when preaching to his countrymen, mention this atonement, to illustrate the fact of God's having given his Son as an atonement for sins committed in his earthly kingdom.

BOOK IV.

DOCTRINES OF THE HINDOO RELIGION.

The reader is referred to another part of this work for the speculative theories of the Hindoo Mythology. The author has begun these theories where they appear to be interwoven with the popular superstition.

CHAP. I.

OF THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS.

AFTER death, the person is conveyed by the messengers of Yŭmŭ through the air to the place of judgment. After receiving his sentence, he wanders about the earth for twelve months, as an aerial being or ghost; and then takes a body suited to his future condition, whether he ascend to the gods, or suffer in a new body, or be hurled into some hell. This is the doctrine of several pooranŭs; others maintain, that immediately after death and judgment, the person suffers the pains of hell, and removes his sin by suffering; and then returns to the earth in some bodily form.

I add a few particulars respecting the transmigration of souls from the work called Kŭrmŭ-vĭpakŭ:—He who destroys a sacrifice will be punished in hell; he will afterwards be born again, and remain a fish for three years; and then ascend to human birth, but will be afflicted with a continual flux. He who kills an enemy subdued in war, will be cast into the hell Krŭkŭchŭ; after which he will become a bull, a deer, a tiger, a bitch, a fish, a man: in the last state he will die of the palsy. He who eats excellent food without giving any to others, will be punished in hell 30,000 years, and then be born a muskrat; then a deer; then a man whose body emits an offensive smell, and who prefers bad to excellent food. The man who refuses to his father and mother the food they desire, will be punished in hell, and afterwards be born a crow; then a man. In the latter birth he will not relish any kind of food. The stealer of a water-pan will be born an alligator, and then a man of a monstrous size. The person who has lived with a woman of superior caste, will endure torments in hell during seventy-one yoogŭs of the gods: after this, in another hell, he will continue burning like a blade of grass for 100,000 years. He will next be born a worm, and after this ascend to human birth; but his body will be filled with disease. The stealer of rice will sink into



hell ; will afterwards be born and continue eighteen years a crow ; then a heron for twelve years ; then a diseased man. He who kills an animal, not designing it for sacrifice, will, in the form of a turtle, be punished in hell ; then be born a bull, and then a man afflicted with an incurable distemper. He who kills an animal by holding its breath, or laughs at a pooranū at the time of its recital, will, after enduring infernal torments, be born a snake ; then a tiger, a cow, a white heron, a crow, and a man having an asthma. He who steal alms will sink into hell, and afterwards be born a blind man, afflicted with a consumption. A beautiful woman who despises her husband, will suffer in hell a variety of torments ; she will then be born a female, and, losing her husband very soon after marriage, will long suffer the miseries of widowhood.

The Ūgnee pooranū says, that a person who loses human birth, passes through 8,000,000 births among the inferior creatures before he can again obtain human birth : of which he remains 2,100,000 births among the immoveable parts of creation, as stones, trees, &c. ; 900,000 among the water tribes ; 1,000,000 among insects, worms, &c. ; 1,000,000 among the birds ; and 3,000,000 among the beasts. In the ascending scale, if his works be suitable, he continues 400,000 births among the lower castes of men ; during 100 births among bramhūns ; and after this he may obtain absorption in Brūmhū.

Whether the doctrine of the metempsychosis originated with the politician or the philosopher, its influence on the state of society might form an interesting subject of enquiry. As far as I have been able to trace its influence, it appears to have the most unhappy effects upon the present race of Hindoos. All their sins are considered as necessary consequences of actions done in a former life, on which account they seldom charge their consciences with guilt for committing them. If a Hindoo be attacked with some disease, or fall into peculiar misfortunes, he immediately traces the cause to the sins of a former birth ; and, instead of using measures to extricate himself, he sits down in despair, thinking that these things are inseparably attached to his birth, and that he can get rid of them only with life itself. In a religious view, this doctrine is very pernicious : the Christian is taught, that every thing depends upon the present state, and he therefore 'works out his salvation with fear and trembling ;' but the Hindoo, like all other men, being always disposed to procrastinate in religion, finds this disposition greatly encouraged, by the hope that a future birth will be more favourable to him ; that he shall be born to better fortunes, be rich, or be placed in happier circumstances for pursuing the concerns of religion. The next birth, in the mouth of a Hindoo, is the same as 'to-morrow' in the mouth of a nominal Christian.

The faith of the Hindoos in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls often appears in their conversation, especially when either prosperous or adverse circumstances have arisen in a family. When a person is in deep sorrow for the loss of a child, and is addressed by another on the subject, the former perhaps utters her grief in some such words as these :—‘What have I done, that I am thus grievously afflicted? When I examine my life from my childhood, I cannot see that I have done any harm. Why then does God thus afflict me? Why did he give me a child? Why did he take it away?’—She next vents her grief in a torrent of abuse on Yümū :—‘Oh! Yümū! What did I do to thee? I am sure I never injured thee. Thou knewest that I had none else: I am in this world like a blind creature; this child was my staff,—and thou hast taken him away. O thou wicked Yümū!—I will put a wisp of fire in thy face.—I will flog thee with the broom.—My breast is rent with grief.’ Another female now joins her, and says, ‘Oh! sister! What! is your child gone? Ah! Ah! Ah!—that vile Yümū—he is full of injustice. If I could see him, I would cut him into a thousand pieces. He has taken all mine; but he has left you one.’ Ah! if I were stone, I should split into pieces; but I am earth—only flesh and blood, and therefore I am sunk into nothing. But why do I thus complain? I am not singular; every one’s house is plundered.’ Another person now comes in, and says, ‘Why do you blame Yümū? What fault has he done? In former births you must have committed many crimes; otherwise I cannot see why you should suffer in this dreadful manner: you have done nothing but works of merit in this birth. You must have injured some one’s child in a former birth, and now yours is taken from you. Yümū has done nothing wrong. He is justice itself. He never errs. Nor ought you to think it extraordinary that a person dies. It is more extraordinary that a person desires to live. If you confine a bird in a cage, though you cherish him with the greatest care, if the door be open he flies away. But though there are nine openings in the body by which the soul may make its escape, and though the person be suffering the deepest distress, yet the soul is not willing to depart;—this desire of life is more wonderful than death itself.—When the soul has taken its flight, then, why should you think it such an extraordinary thing? You are suffering for the sins of many former births; which sins, like a shadow, will pursue you, go where you will, and assume whatever shape you may, till they be expiated by suffering. If this were not so, why is it that a good man suffers, while a wicked man is raised to the pinnacle of prosperity? If men suffered only for the

* The Hindoo women are excessively fond of their children. When a mother pays her respects to an aged female, she presents her child to receive her blessing, and says, ‘Mother!—give my child your blessing.’ The old woman says, ‘Live, live, as many years as there are hairs on my head.’ When a mother takes her child into company, to prevent its being hurt by a witch, she rubs its forehead with earth thrown up by worms, or with the end of a lamp-wick, and spits on its breast.



sins of this life, the good would have nothing but happiness, and the wicked nothing but sorrow.”^b

Sometimes the doctrine of transmigration appears in the conversation of widows, when they are talking over their sorrows one amongst another. One begins the conversation, by addressing one of the company, recently become a widow, in some such words as these :—‘ Ah ! why is so much trouble fallen upon you ? You have continually performed works of merit. I have observed, that from your childhood you have been very religious.’ Another replies,—‘ How you talk ! What ! do you think she is suffering for sins committed in this birth ?’ The widow addressed now adds :—‘ Ah ! my sorrows are indescribable. I am now suffering for the sins of many births ; the sins of birth after birth, birth after birth, are fallen upon me. If the sins of numerous births had not been cast upon me, would my husband (a lac of lives in one) have been taken from me ? O God, do not bring upon my worst enemy the misery which I endure. What had I done against God, and what against him, (her husband,) that I suffer thus ? I must have injured him in a former birth, and therefore he was married to me on purpose to bring upon me the sorrows of widowhood. He was born in one womb, and I in another ; we were perfect strangers ; fate brought us together, and I began to flatter myself that I should long enjoy the blessings of a married state, when he was seized with sickness, and, without making the least provision for me, has left me to crouch and fawn for a handful of rice. When waiting upon him in his last moments he did not say, ‘ I leave you this or that ; you will not be destitute :’ but, shutting up my food and garments, he has thus abandoned me. He ! he was my greatest enemy. If I meet him in a future state, I’ll certainly revenge myself. Instead of putting fire into his mouth after death, if I had known that he would have served me thus, I would have put fire in his mouth while living. I entreat the gods, that in the next birth I may be a man, and he my wife, and that I may bring upon him exactly what he has brought upon me ; and that this may be continued through numerous births. Vile enemy.—’ Continuing her address to a married woman, she says :—‘ See ! you have two meals a day,

^b I have heard it urged, in proof of the reality of successive births, that if a child had not drawn the breast in a former birth, it would not, as soon as born, cling to the breast, and know how to suck. A person before whom this argument was once urged, asked how this was to be accounted for when the person arose from the state of a fish to human birth ?

^c When a Hindoo female child shews her attachment to religion, she gathers wilw leaves and flowers, and making an image of the lingit, attempts to worship it ; or she sits down attentively, and watches others while they perform the ceremonies of worship ; or she goes to a festival, and assists the females in making the necessary preparations. When she is grown to maturity, she performs different ceremonies to obtain the blessing of a good husband. After marriage she worships Shivr and other gods, and prays that her husband may love her, and live long, so that she may not endure the hardships of widowhood. When she becomes a mother, she daily bows to the gods, repeats their names, and prays that they will bless her child.



while I have but one ; you have all manner of ornaments, and I am naked ; you are invited to all the feasts ;^d you can eat of all kinds of delicacies, but I must live on the meanest food ; I must fast twice a month ;—^e there is no end of my sorrows.'

If a person die an untimely death, it is attributed to crimes committed in a former state of existence. A person born blind, is supposed to have destroyed the eyes of some one in a former birth. A few neighbours sitting together, as a person afflicted with an incurable distemper passes along, observe, 'Ah! no doubt, that man was guilty in a former birth of such or such a crime, and now the consequences appear in his present state.'

The prosperity of persons, especially if they have suddenly risen from poverty to affluence, frequently gives rise to remarks on the merits of such persons in a former birth : 'See,' says one, 'such a person was poor, and is now worth so many lacs of rupees. He must have performed acts of extraordinary merit in former births, or he could not have so suddenly risen to such a state of affluence.' When conversing on this subject with a Hindoo, he instanced the case of Ramū-Hūree-Vishwasū, late of Khūrdah :—'He was so poor,' said he, 'that he was indebted to others for a place to lodge in. After a few years of service with a European, he obtained a fortune of thirty lacs of rupees. He bought an estate ; erected a number of temples to Shivū, and then went to Kashēē, (Benares,) where he died in a very short time. Such an auspicious life and death' can only be attributed to some wonderful acts of devotion or liberality in former births.'

A very learned man is complimented with having given learning to others in a former birth.

When the Hindoos see any of the animals used cruelly, especially cows, they exclaim :—'Ah ! how many sins must that creature have committed in a former birth !' They say the same if they see a dog eating ordure. When they see a dog riding with his master in his palanqueen, they say, 'True, thou art born a dog, but some good works have made thy fate tolerable.'

The pooranūs and other shastrūs promise deliverance from future birth upon the performance of different religious ceremonies.

^d A widow can take no share in marriage ceremonies, &c. She is not even permitted to touch the bride.

^e This fast is kept by widows on the eleventh of the increase and decrease of the moon in every month ; and is observed so strictly among the higher castes, that notwithstanding a widow has eaten only once on the preceding day, she does not touch the least aliment, not even a drop of water, on this day.

^f Every one who dies at Kashēē becomes a god.



CHAP. II.

JUDGMENT OF MEN AFTER DEATH.

[From the Pūṣmī pooranī.]

AT the extremity of the earth southwards, floating on the waters, is Sūngyūmūnē, the residence of Yūmū, the judge of the dead, and of his recorder Chitru-goopṭū, and his messengers. Yūmū has four arms, is of a dark colour, with eyes like the petal of the water-lily; in his hands he holds a shell, a discus, a club, and a lotus; he rides on Gūroorū; wears a golden poita, and pearl earrings; and has a crown on his head, and a garland of flowers round his neck. Chitru-goopṭū, the recorder, and Yūmū's attendants, appear in the most pleasing forms.

Those who perform works of merit are led to Yūmū's palace along the most excellent roads, in some parts of which the heavenly courtezans are seen dancing or singing; and gods, gūndhūrṃvūṣ, &c. are heard chanting the praises of other gods; in others, showers of flowers are falling from heaven; in other parts are houses containing cooling water, and excellent food; pools of water covered with nymphœas; and trees, affording fragrance by their blossoms and shade by their leaves. The gods are seen to pass on horses or elephants, with white umbrellas carried over them; or in palanquins or chariots, fanned with the chamūrūṣ of the gods; while the dévūrshēes are chanting their praises as they pass along. Some, by the glory issuing from their bodies, illumine the ten quarters of the world.

Yūmū receives the good with much affection, and, feasting them with excellent food, thus addresses them:—'Ye are truly meritorious in your deeds; ye are wise; by the power of your merits ascend to an excellent heaven. He who, born in the world, performs meritorious actions, he is my father, brother, and friend.'

The wicked have 688,000 miles to travel to the palace of Yūmū, to receive judgment. In some places they pass over a pavement of fire; in others, the earth in which their feet sink is burning hot; or they pass over burning sands, or over stones with sharp edges, or burning hot; sometimes showers of sharp instruments, and at others showers of burning cinders, or scalding water, or stones fall upon them; burning winds scorch their bodies; every now and then they fall into concealed wells full



of darkness, or pass through narrow passages filled with stones, in which serpents lie concealed ; sometimes the road is filled with thick darkness ; at other times they pass through the branches of trees, the leaves of which are full of thorns ; again they walk over broken pots, or over hard clods of earth, bones, putrifying flesh, thorns, or sharp spikes ; they meet tigers, jackals, rhinoceroses, elephants, terrible giants, &c. ; and in some parts they are scorched in the sun without obtaining the least shade. They travel naked ; their hair is in disorder ; their throat, lips, &c. are parched ; they are covered with blood, or dirt ; some wail and shriek as they pass along ; others are weeping ; others have horror depicted on their countenances ; some are dragged along by leathern thongs tied round their necks, waists, or hands ; others by cords passed through holes bored in their noses ; others by the hair, the ears, the neck, or the heels ; and others are carried, having their heads and legs tied together. On arriving at the palace, they behold Yūmū clothed with terror, two hundred and forty miles in height ; his eyes distended like a lake of water ; of a purple colour : with rays of glory issuing from his body ; his voice is loud as the thunders at the dissolution of the universe ; the hairs of his body are each as long as a palm-tree ; a flame of fire proceeds from his mouth ; the noise of the drawing of his breath is greater than the roaring of a tempest ; his teeth are exceedingly long, and his nails like the fan for winnowing corn. In his right hand he holds an iron club ; his garment is an animal's skin ; and he rides on a terrific buffalo. Chitrū-gooptū also appears as a terrible monster, and makes a noise like a warrior when about to rush to battle. Sounds terrible as thunder are heard, ordering punishments to be inflicted on the offenders. At length Yūmū orders the criminals into his presence, and thus addresses them :—‘ Did you not know that I am placed above all, to award happiness to the good, and punishment to the wicked ? Knowing this, have you lived in sin ; Have you never heard that there are different hells for the punishment of the wicked ; Have you never given your minds to religion ? To-day, with your own eyes, you shall see the punishment of the wicked.—From yoogū to yoogū stay in these hells !—You have pleased yourselves in sinful practices ; endure now the torments due to these sins. What will weeping avail ?’ Yūmū next directs Chitrūgooptū to examine into the offences of the criminals, who now demand the names of the witnesses : let such, say they, appear, and give their evidence in our presence. Yūmū smiling, though full of rage, commands Sōōryū,^s Chūndrū,^h Pūvūnū,ⁱ Ūgnee,^k Akashū,^l Prit’hivēā,^m Vūroonū,ⁿ Tit’bee,^o Dinū,^p Ratree,^q Pratū-kalū,^r Sūndhya-kalū,^s and Dhūrmū,^t to appear against the prisoners ; who, hearing the evidence, are struck dumb,

^s The sun.^h The moon.ⁱ Wind.^k Fire.^l Æther.^m Earth.ⁿ Water.^o A lunar-day.^p Day.^q Night.^r Morning.^s Evening.^t A representative of Yūmū. All the elements, and the divisions of time, are thus called upon to witness against the prisoners.



and remain trembling and stupified with fear. Yūmā, then gnashing his teeth, beats the prisoners with his iron club till they roar with anguish; after which he drives them to different hells.

CHAP. III.

OF FUTURE HAPPINESS.

THE shastrūs teach that there are four kinds of happiness after death: 1. That possessed in the heaven of the gods;^u—2. That when the person is deified;—3. That which arises from dwelling in the presence of the gods^x;—and, 4. In absorption.^y In the three first, the person is subject to future birth, but not in the last. The three first are obtained by works; the last by divine wisdom.

The descriptions which the pooranūs give of the heavens of the gods are truly in the eastern style: all things, even the beds of the gods, are made of gold and precious stones. All the pleasures of these heavens are exactly what we should expect in a system formed by uninspired and unrenewed men: like the paradise of Mahomet, they are houses of ill-fame, rather than places of rewards for 'the pure in heart.' Here all the vicious passions are personified, or rather deified:—the quarrels and licentious intrigues of the gods fill these places with perpetual uproar, while their impurities are described with the same literality and gross detail, as similar things are talked of among these idolaters on earth. It would be a flagrant insult to compare these heavens with the place which our Saviour went to prepare for his disciples^z; but the serious enquirer after truth will be struck with this additional proof, that the Christian religion is 'worthy of all acceptance.'

I here subjoin an account of the heaven of Koovérū, the god of riches, from the Mūhabharūtū:—It is eight hundred miles long, and five hundred and sixty broad. The wind, perfumed with ten

^u The Mōemangśū writers have decided, that there is no separate place of future happiness; that whether a person enjoy happiness, or endure misery, the whole is confined to the present life. The pooranūs, on the other hand, declare, that there are many places of happiness and misery, and that persons go to these places after death.

^x All raised to heaven are not permitted to approach the god in whose heaven they reside. This privilege belongs only to favourites.

^y The vēdantā shastrūs teach, that wherever a person possessing divine wisdom dies, he is immediately received into the divine nature, as air, escaping from a vessel when broken, immediately mixes with the surrounding air. The pooranūs, however, teach, that the soul of such a person ascends to God inhabiting a certain place, and is there absorbed into the divine nature.

^z John xiv. 2.

thousand odours, blows in soft breezes; and the place, in every part adorned with gold and jewels, displays a glory like that produced by the rays of the full moon. Here are also canals of the purest water filled with fish, water-fowl, water-lilies, &c. with flights of steps made of gold; with forests and gardens in which Koovérū and his courtezans divert themselves. In the treasury of this god are immense heaps of jewels, gold, silver, &c. from which the gods and goddesses supply themselves with ornaments. Koovérū sits on a throne glorious as the meridian sun, and reposes on a bed equally splendid. He is surrounded by different gods, among whom are Shivū, Doorga, Shivu's bull, his servants Nūndee, Mūha-kaltū, Shūnkoo, Kūrū, &c. and by a thousand goddesses, or concubines, shining like the lightning, and adorned with loads of jewels; by the titans, by Ravūnū, Vibhēeshūnū, and other rakshāsūs, the pishachūs, the gūndhūrvūs, the kinnūrūs, the ūpsūras, the vidyadhūrūs, the mountain gods, &c. Before this assembly, the ūpsūras dance; the kinnūrūs, (with horses' mouths,) and the gūndhūrvūs, sing and play on heavenly instruments. All the pleasures of the other heavens are to be found here.

The following are esteemed works of merit, capable of raising a person to celestial happiness:—Honoring, entertaining, serving, and giving gifts to bramhūns: the more learned the bramhūn, the greater the merit. Worshipping and repeating the names of the gods, and particularly that of a person's guardian deity; visiting or residing at holy places, and performing the accustomed religious ceremonies there; performing the shraddhū for deceased ancestors; bathing in the Ganges and other sacred rivers; offering sacrifices; building temples; cutting roads and pools; planting trees, especially sacred trees; making and setting up images; repeating the gayātrēē, and other parts of the védūs; reading the védū and other shastrūs, or hearing them read; honoring and serving a spiritual guide; hospitality to guests, especially to bramhūns; fasting, particularly at times directed by the shastrus; burning with a deceased husband; parting with life in sacred places.

King Soorūt'hū was raised to the heaven of Indrū for performing the sacrifice of a horse.^a King Trishūnkoo obtained heaven by the power of the merits which Vūshisht'hū, a bramhūn, transferred to him.^b Ūmbūrēeshū, a king, was about to perform a human sacrifice, in order to obtain heaven; but when going to slay the victim, through the interference of Vishwamitrū, a bramhūn, his sacrifice was accepted of the gods, though the victim was not slain,^c and the king ascended to the heaven of Indrū.^d King In-

^a Shree-bhagūvūtū

^b Ibid.

^c He repeated an incantation given by Vishwamitrū, which destroyed the power of the fire.

^d Shitē-bhagūvūtū.



dr̥-dyoomnū, by performing austerities, offering sacrifices, and presenting gifts to bramhūns, obtained the power of going to heaven whenever he chose.*

Beside these 'works of merit,' performed by Hindoos under the hope of obtaining a heaven of sensual pleasures after death, there are a number of other actions performed by them, supposed to be meritorious in their nature, but which, in the opinion of a Christian, deserve punishment, even in this life:—The Hindoo widow, burning with the dead body of her husband, is promised a residence in heaven during the reigns of fourteen Indrās; yet no Christian doubts whether these are real murders or not. The deaths of vast multitudes of Hindoos are procured or hastened annually by immersing a part of the body, in a state of dangerous sickness, in the Ganges, and by pouring large quantities of this water into the body of the dying person: yet the Hindoos think it a work of great merit. Many persons voluntarily renounce life in the Ganges, under the hope of obtaining immediate entrance into heaven; and yet a jury of Englishmen would pronounce it self-murder. Infatuated mothers devote their children to this sacred river, not doubting but they are sending them to heaven; yet *we* feel certain that every such infant is murdered. Many of the practices in the presence of the Hindoo idols, in the very midst of worship, are so dreadfully obscene, that I am persuaded even a Billingsgate mob would not suffer the actors to escape without some marks of their disapprobation; and yet the Hindoos except nothing less than heaven for these *works of merit*. A great number of the Hindoo modern saints live in a state of perpetual intoxication; and call this stupefaction, which arises from smoking intoxicating herbs, *fixing the mind* on God. Nor do the br̥mh̥-charēts, who follow the rules of the T̃ntr̃ shastr̃s, and practise unutterable abominations,† under what they call the forms of religion, ever doubt whether these acts are meritorious, and capable of raising the person to heaven or not. Even women of the town have worship performed by bramhūns in brothels, from which they expect rewards in a future state: so completely absent from the Hindoo mind is the Christian idea of purity of heart, and of the necessity of this in order to approach God.

The Hindoos profess to have a great reliance upon the merit of their works, though they do not depend upon any one ceremony to procure future happiness: one Hindoo travels to the south, another to the north, to obtain some salvation-giving charm: but after all, he listens to any new nostrum with as much eagerness as

* Māhabharat̃i.

† Though the author has drawn away the veil from some of the scenes, yet the Christian public must give him credit respecting the rest; for they are so intolerably gross, that they cannot be fully dragged into public view.

though he had hitherto done nothing towards obtaining heaven.* As a person's continuance in heaven depends on the quantity of his merit, this may be another reason why the Hindoo performs so many different works to obtain the same thing.

After the death of a Hindoo who has been particularly diligent in practising the ceremonies of his religion, his neighbours speak of him with much respect: one person perhaps asks another, 'Who has been burnt at the landing place to-day?' The other answers:—'Such an one: he was an excellent character; he assisted others; he was very strict in performing his daily ablutions; he visited such and such holy places; he was very generous to bramhūns and to strangers; he venerated the gods, &c. No doubt he will obtain a place in heaven.' When a person dies who has not been liberal to bramhūns, nor expended any thing in the ceremonies of his religion, his neighbours doom him to hell without ceremony. When a neighbour mentions him, the person to whom he speaks affects perhaps to be alarmed that the sound of such a person's name has entered his ear; and, to remove the evil effects of such a circumstance, he repeats the names of several gods in some such form as this:—'Ah! Ah!—Mūhabharūtū! Mūhabharūtū! Mūhabharūtū!—Doorga! Doorga! Doorga! I must fast to-day, I fancy, for hearing this vile person's name repeated.' If the person has lived in all manner of impurity, and, in the language of Scripture, 'has drank iniquity like water,' and yet has performed the popular ceremonies with a degree of regularity, he is spoken of with respect; for it is a principle of the Hindoo religion, that good words absolutely atone for bad ones.^b Notwithstanding it is common for survivors to speak in high terms of the future state of those who were zealous idolaters, it is a doctrine repeatedly inculcated in the Hindoo shastrūś, that those who have not overcome their passions, (pure and impure,) though they may have performed the usual ceremonies of their religion, cannot obtain celestial happiness. The doors of heaven are therefore shut against the great bulk of the people: they have neither performed splendid religious actions, nor subdued their passions, nor fixed their minds on God, nor performed severe religious austerities. The shōōdrū, also, having no inheritance in the védūś, is placed in far worse circumstances than the bramhūn. Heaven was made for bramhūns, as well as the earth; and in general a Hindoo must be raised to bramhinal birth before he can raise his eyes towards heaven as his home.^c Very few therefore indulge the hope

* The Hindoos have as great a propensity to embrace new theories of religion as any other heathens whatever, where the caste does not interfere.

^b Nominal Christians little imagine how heathenish many of their religious notions are.

^c How different the spirit of the true religion:—'To the poor is the gospel preached.—Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.'



of heaven.^k On the contrary, when at the point of death, almost every Hindoo is in a state of the most perplexing anxiety, like mariners in a storm when the vessel has become wholly unmanageable. Such a wretched Hindoo, in these moments, is often heard giving vent to his grief and fears in the midst of his relatives, as he lies by the Ganges. If he be advanced in years, they endeavour to comfort him by reminding him, that he could not expect to have lived much longer; that he leaves a numerous family in comfortable circumstances; and further, that his merits will certainly raise him to heaven. The dying man however, finds no comfort in the merit of his works, but gives utterance to excessive grief in some such language as this:—‘I! what meritorious deeds have I performed?—I have done nothing but sin.—Ah! where shall I go?—Into what hell shall I be plunged?—What shall I do?—How long shall I continue in hell?—What hope can I have of going to heaven?—Here I have been suffering for sin; and now I must renew my sufferings!—How many births must I pass through?—Where will my sorrows terminate?—As a forlorn and miserable hope, he calls upon his friends to give him their blessing, that Gūṅga may receive him, and he takes leave of them in the utmost perturbation of mind. A Hindoo knows nothing of that hope which is ‘as an anchor to the soul, both sure and stedfast.’

When I urged upon a brambūn with whom I was in conversation, that the shastrūs made large promises^l to those who repeated the name of a god, or bathed in sacred rivers, or visited holy places, &c. I was told by a learned brambhūn, that the same shastrūs declared, that these promises were only made to allure men to the performance of their duty, and were not meant to be literally fulfilled.^m

Absorption.—God, as separated from matter, the Hindoos contemplate as a being reposing in his own happiness, destitute of ideas; as infinite placidity; as an unruffled sea of bliss; as being perfectly abstracted, and void of consciousness. They therefore deem it the height of perfection to be like this being. Hence Krishnū, in his discourse to Ūrjoonū,ⁿ praises the man ‘who forsaketh every desire that entereth into his heart; who is happy

^k As all other ways of obtaining heaven are rendered so difficult to the poor, this is one reason which reconciles a Hindoo widow to the funeral pile; as by this act she is quite certain of obtaining future happiness both for herself, her husband, and several generations of her ancestors.

^l He who bathes in the Ganges at an auspicious junction of certain planets, is assured that by this act he delivers himself and 3,000,000 of ancestors from hell.

^m What a contrast is this to the doctrine of the gospel!—‘Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.’—Heb. vi. 17, 18.

ⁿ Bhagvān Gēsta,